

21. The Message of the Fifth Trumpet

In our last two topics, we saw the results of the first four trumpet judgments that will come on the earth during the tribulation. In this topic, we will see what happens when the fifth angel sounds his trumpet. This will be the first of the three woes that will come upon the people of the earth.

Revelation 9:1-3 says, “Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.” Here, we see that something much different happens when the fifth angel sounds his trumpet. We see that a star falls from heaven to the earth. This may be the time when Revelation 12:7-9 is fulfilled. Those verses say, “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” If so, it means that Satan will be temporarily allowed to let additional demons loose so that they can torment the people on the earth.

The “bottomless” pit is mentioned seven times in the book of Revelation. Revelation 20:2-3 says, “He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.” Here, we see that the bottomless pit is not the place of eternal judgment. Instead, it is the place where some of the demons are held prior to the final judgment. In fact, these verses show that Satan will be held there for a thousand years. When Christ cast the demons out of the man with the legion of demons, the demons begged not to be sent to this place at that time. Luke 8:31 says, “And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.” In that case, Jesus allowed the demons to go into the pigs.

We see that when the bottomless pit is opened that dense smoke will come up out of the pit. This smoke will be like the smoke of a very large furnace. There will be so much smoke coming out of the bottomless pit that it will cause the sun and the air to become dark. Demons, in the form of locusts, will come out of the smoke and they will torment the people of the earth with the power that they will be given. We see that their power will be like the power of scorpions. We see that their power will be limited so that they cannot do anything to those who have the seal of God on their foreheads.

Revelation 9:4-6 says, “They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not given *authority* to kill them, but to torment them *for* five months. Their torment *was* like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.” First, we see that these demons cannot harm any of the plants of the earth. Second, they will not be able to do anything to those who have the seal of God. Third, they will not have the power to kill those who are in rebellion

against God. However, they will have the power to torment those in rebellion for a period of five months.

This is a reminder of the fact that Satan and his demons can only do what God allows them to do. Job 1:9-11 says, “So Satan answered the LORD and said, “Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!” These demons will not be able to do anything to the tribulation saints because they have the seal of God. In fact, they are even limited to what they can do to those who are in rebellion against God, because they will not be allowed to kill them.

However, they will cause those in rebellion to experience great torment. A scorpion gives a very painful sting when it strikes a person. Here, we see that these demons will be given the power to give stings at least as painful as the stings of scorpions. In fact, it will probably be even more painful because we read that those who are struck will wish that they could die. This is an indication that many will have thoughts of committing suicide and many may even try to commit suicide but they will not succeed. However, they will not be able to die in order to escape their pain. Instead, we see that death will escape them. They will not realize that their suffering will be even worse when they die. Luke 16:22-24 says, “So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’” Here, we see that the suffering in future judgment will be even worse.

We are also given a description of these demons that look like locusts. Revelation 9:7-12 John wrote, “The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces *were* like the faces of men. They had hair like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ *teeth*. And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings *was* like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power *was* to hurt men five months. And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew *is* Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon. One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.” John could not fully describe these demons so he compared them to things that we might understand.

First, we see that the shapes of these demonic locusts are like horses that are ready to take their riders into battle. Second, on their heads they have crowns. These crowns look something like gold crowns but are not gold. Third, they have faces like men. Fourth, they have hair like women’s hair. Fifth, they have teeth that look like the teeth of lions. Sixth, they have breastplates that look like they are made of iron. A breastplate covers the part of the body from the neck to below the ribs and was worn as a form of protection. Seventh, their wings make a sound like the sound of many chariots being pulled by horses as they run toward a battle (very loud). Eighth, they have tails like scorpions. Ninth, they have stings in their tails. Here, we see that these demons will be very easy to recognize because of the way that they look. However, those in rebellion against God

will not be able to protect themselves from these demons.

We see that these demons will be allowed to hurt the rebellious people of the earth for only five months. For people who are feeling good five months seems to go very quickly. However, for people who are in extreme pain, five months seems like a very long time. Five months is the normal length of life for locusts as most of them are born in the spring, live through the summer, and die in the fall. The fact that God will limit the time that these demonic locusts are able to be freed from the bottomless pit to five months will actually be an act of compassion for the rebellious.

We also see that these locusts will have a king over them. Regular locusts do not have a king. Proverbs 30:27 says, “The locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks.” However, these locusts will have a leader that will lead them when they come out of the bottomless pit. We see that this king over these demonic locusts is called the angel of the bottomless pit. We are given the name of this demon who serves Satan as the king of the angels in the bottomless pit. In fact, his name is given in both Hebrew and Greek. In Hebrew, the name is “Abaddon”. In Greek, the name is “Apollyon”. In English, both of those names mean *destroyer*. This is a reminder that all of the demons who serve Satan have the same goal as Satan. Jesus contrasted Himself with Satan and his goal when he described Satan as a thief in John 10:10, where we read: “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” The goal of Satan, and all of his demons, is to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

Revelation 8:13 says, “And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!” In this verse, we see that the angel announced that there would be three woes that would come upon the people of the earth. Here, in Revelation 9, we see that verse 12 says that the first of these three woes is past. This means that the fifth trumpet judgment will only last for these five months and then it will be complete. However, we have seen that this time will be a very painful time for the rebellious of the earth.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what this judgment will be like. That will help them to understand the importance of regularly sharing the message of the Gospel with those who are not yet Christians, so those who are not Christians will have the opportunity to place their faith in Christ and escape any future judgment. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these future judgments.