

**MANKIND IS SMITTEN IN THE LAST
THREE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS
Revelation 9:1-21**

The key to this section of Revelation is found in 8:13. The three woes proclaimed by the angel (a messenger from God) are addressed to the inhabitants of earth. God warns the earth that what is about to happen is of such intensity that it is described as being a "woe." A "woe" is an expression of extreme grief and grievous mourning. What is about to befall the earth will be terrible beyond description? These three woes are the last three trumpet judgments.

Some Bible scholars believe that the phrase, "inhabitants of earth" does not mean all people living on earth at that time. They believe it is a moral expression, referring to a class of worldly people whose hearts and hopes are set upon earth.¹ Paul refers to them as "earthly minded people." (See Phil. 3:19) However, there is nothing in the passage to indicate that it should not be taken literally. Clearly these woes are warnings to all those on earth that are still rejecting God and refusing to repent.

A STAR FALLS FROM HEAVEN. Revelation 9:1

The fifth angel sounds his trumpet, and the immediate result is a star falls from heaven. In Revelation 8:11:12 God says a great star will fall on the earth in the third Trumpet judgment. It can be easily seen that this is literally a meteor or some heavenly object which falls on the earth and causes great devastation. However, this star of Revelation 9:1 cannot be a literally "star," because it is referred to as being a "him." Verse 2 explains that this "star" is a creature that has the key to the "bottomless pit." In other words the use here of a masculine pronoun means this is a personage.

The question is then: who is the star? Lehman Strauss and John Walvoord both believe it is a reference to Satan and his original fall. The text says it is simply an angel who has charge of the "bottomless pit." The "bottomless pit" or abyss is mentioned several times in the Book of Revelation. It is first mentioned here in Chapter 9:1-2, 11. However, verse 1 says "star" was given the keys to the bottomless pit. It would not seem logical that Satan would be given the keys to the bottomless pit where he will be imprisoned at the end of the Tribulation for a thousand years.(Rev. 20:1-3) Verse 11 explains that the name star is an angel whose name is Abaddon or Apollyon, which means "destroyer." Satan is certainly a destroyer, but so are the other angels that God uses in pouring out the various judgments on earth. Further the context is chronologically the first "woe" or the fifth Trumpet judgment which falls in the middle of the Tribulation.

Revelation 20:1 reveals that an angel comes down from heaven and he has the keys to the bottomless pit. It is this particular angel that binds Satan and casting him into the pit for a thousand years. This angel is certainly not Satan. The creatures which are unleashed on to the earth are described as like locust, but with a stinging tail like a scorpion. (Rev. 9:3-11) The best identification is to accept what the text literally

says, that this being is an angel and apparently the same angel who locks up Satan at the end of Daniel's 70th Week. (See Rev. 20:1)

The King James translators struggled with the Greek word "abussos" and translated it "bottomless" to convey the meaning of the Greek word, "abussou" of being an unbounded, or immeasurable a depth or an "abyss." (Rev. 9:2) This angel then opens the pit and from out of it comes smoke "as" from a great furnace. The smoke is so extensive that it backs out the sun and the air was darkened. The scope of the smoke seems to be large in scale covering a great deal of the earth. This is the same abyss where Satan is to be later held.

Hoyle Bowman explains the orders of angels saying:

"There are two orders of fallen angels, those that are bound and those that are free on the earth. Satan is the leader of the free fallen angels or demons. (Matt. 12:24, 26; 25:41; Eph. 6:11-12; Rev. 12:7, 9) Some of the fallen angels have possessed humans or animals. Upon being cast of the humans or animals these evil spirits or demons are temporarily cast into the bottomless pit (Luke 8:31) until they are permitted to come out of the pit under the fifth trumpet judgment. (Rev. 9) Evidently during the Millennium all demons will be bound along with their leader Satan (Rev. 20:1-3) ²

Jude 6, records that angels who rebelled with Satan were bound in everlasting chains unto the Day of Judgment. Peter also says that, "*God shared not the angels that sinned, but cast the down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.*" (2 Pet. 2:4) This seems to be the place where God bound them. The word "hell" is the Greek word, "*tartaros*" not "*Hades*" and is a special place where God has had these fallen angel locked up since they rebelled in heaven with Satan. Ephesians 4:9 says the abyss is in the lower parts of earth.

THE BOTTOMLESS PIT IS OPENED. Revelation 9:2-12

The angel now opens the bottomless pit and the smoke from it filled the air and darkened the sun. Out of the smoke there will come the terror of demonic locusts which have the power to sting as a scorpion. These locusts are described as being shaped like a horse; they have a head ornament which looks like gold. Their faces are like a man's face and they had hair as a woman, teeth like a lion, breastplates like iron and wings that sound like many chariots drawn by horses. (See Rev. 9:7-10)

In the tails of these demon locusts are stingers like scorpions whose wound lasts for five months. (Rev. 9:10) The pain inflicted by the sting of these demons is slow and painful. A normal scorpion sting produces immediate pain or burning. There is very little swelling, but sensitivity to touch, numbness, a tingling sensation, a blurry vision, or muscle twitching. However, these locusts are not scorpions, but demonic locust.

Men who are stung desire to die, but are not able too. (Rev. 9:6) It appears that some try to commit suicide yet they revive and are not successful. One can imagine people taking poison and getting sick, or even shooting themselves, yet do not

die. Death has always been the enemy of man, but here men seek death, but it eludes them.

These locusts do not sting the men on earth who have the seal of God in their forehead which would include the 144,000 Jews who were sealed in Chapter Seven and believers who are saved during this time. God limits these demons and does not allow them to hurt the remaining grass, vegetation, or trees on earth. Only those on earth who are in rebellion against God are stung. (Rev. 9:4) Although it appears these demonic locusts have the power to kill, God does not allow them to take the lives of unbelievers, but the effect of the sting is torment for five months.

God is just in all He does and even in judgment shows His willingness to offer grace. The fact that believers are spared from this judgment clearly shows the world that it is coming from God. To the unbeliever the terrible sting is not fatal which apparently allows them a further opportunity to believe and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. Yet, in spite God's staying their deaths it appears most will reject his grace.

Unlike normal locust, these demon locusts have breast plates apparently to protect their undersides. They have wings and fly which means they have unrestricted access to every place on earth. They seem to fly in swarms and the beating of their wings sounds like many rolling chariots.

This angel that has the keys to the bottomless pit is called Abaddon in Hebrew or *Apollyon* in Greek. The word means destruction. This angel is called a king meaning that he rules over the demonic creatures directing their activities and probably the extent of their power. This terrible event is the first woe or the fifth trumpet judgment is completed and verse 12 warns there are two more woes to come!

THE SIXTH TRUMPET JUDGEMENT: Revelation 9:13-21

Now the sixth angel sounds his trumpet and the second woe is begun which is the Sixth Trumpet Judgment. John says he now hears a voice that says to loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. The voice comes from the four horns that are before the Altar of God. The two horns with two prongs pointing to the middle seem similar to the altar of incense in Temple. (Rev. 9:13)

These four previously bound angels then begin their grim work. These wicked demons are said to be bound in the Euphrates River. The Euphrates river borders modern Iran and Iraq and the ancient city of Babylon is located approximately 250 miles west of the Persian Gulf and on the north bank of the river. These four demons who are presently bound there have been prepared to bring this specific judgment and to do it at this specific time (an hour, day, month and year). Their task is to slay a third of the men on the earth.

In the Fourth Seal judgment a fourth of all men on earth die of famine and

disease. Now God again allows one third of all men on earth to be killed. It seems that this judgment is given according to the hardness of people's hearts. Likely the first group that is to be killed could be those, although lost, who were not as sinful and rebellious and wicked as those that survived. Those that were left alive after the first mass killing of men on earth are hardened and terrible sinners. They have seen the judgments of God and they still refuse to repent of their sins and believe in Christ Jesus. They literally are despising God and in utter rebellion shaking their fists at Him. In these two judgments, over half the population of earth is killed.

Next God reveals there the scene of a demonic supernatural cavalry of 200 million creatures. (Rev. 9:16-19) At this very moment these demonic beings are waiting to unleash their terror on earth. Their breastplates are of fire, jacinth and brimstone. Jacinth is a yellow gem which sometimes has a ting of blue. This gem is one of the precious stones which make up the foundation of the New Jerusalem. The heads of these horses like creatures were like a lion's and out of their mouths came fire and smoke. They will kill by fire, smoke and brimstone. (Rev. 9:19) Their power is said to be in their in mouths and tails. Brimstone is a poisonous sulfurous gas.

To many this seems to be describing modern warfare and its weapons. There has been a great deal of speculation as to what this describes and attempts have been made to compare these things with today's weapons. It is my opinion that this unlikely refers to modern warfare or man-made modern weapons. The Bible says these are supernatural beings, created by God and reserved for this time to bring this judgment on the earth. It is best to avoid vain speculation and just accept what the Word of God literally says. There is nothing on the earth, familiar to man to compare these creatures with. They are truly more terrible than any man could possibly imagine. They are not man made, but come for God.

It is almost unbelievable that in the face of this great judgment from God, the rebellion among men grows! (Rev. 9:20-21) Until this time these unbelievers have seen God kill from 1 to 1 ½ billion people and still their hearts are so hard they reject God. This is why it appears that most of these evil men are killed in the later judgments of the Tribulation period. Those left on earth by this time are evil and harden unbelievers who hate God. God is longsuffering and offers grace, but there is an end to God patience and there comes a time when a man by his rebellion puts himself beyond God's mercy.

Hell will be occupied by unrepentant men, (Matt.13:42, 50) wailing, weeping, (Matt.22:13, 24:51, 25:30) and gnashing of teeth. Idolatry will be revived as verse 20 states and men will worship the gods of gold, silver, brass, stone and wood. The men described here appear to be very religious, worshiping the false manmade gods of the world. Some of the most harden of all sinners are religious, but lost men. For reasons of pride or a false sense of believing themselves to be right many even today reject God's truth and believe lies. It should be noted to that Satan is the author and object of all false religion. These people have bound themselves to the lies of the Devil and have wicked sinful hearts.

At this time there are still men left on earth who refuse to repent of their sins. They are described as murderers and sorcerers, meaning people who use or give drugs, potions, intoxications and magical arts and incantations. The occult will flourish as men in various forms worship Satan. They are fornicators doing all sorts of open sexual perversions. Honesty among men during this time will be obliterated and men practice uncontrolled fraud, deceit, and thievery.

The key phrase which damns men's soul to hell is that they refused to repent! (Rev. 9:21) God says they refused to repent, which indicates that if they wanted to they could have been saved. It appears the great revival of men turning to God in the first half of the Tribulation is now over and fewer men are turning from sin to God now.

² Holye E. Bowman, An Outline of Demonology, Piedmont Baptist College, p6)