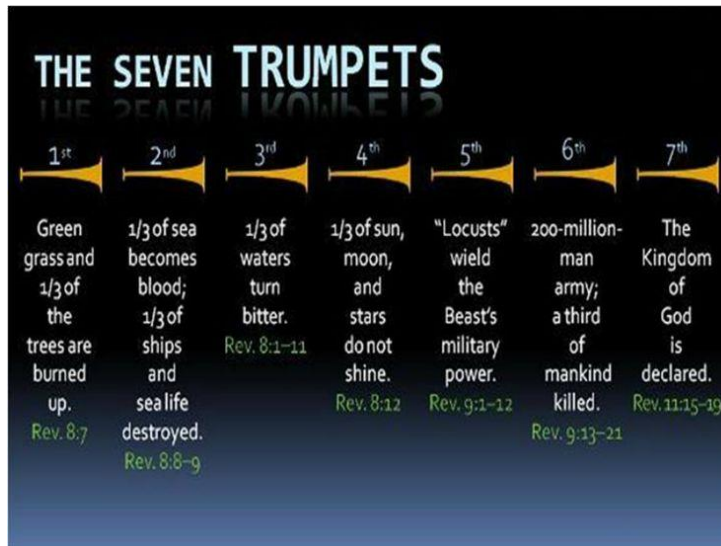


# THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS OF REVELATION 8-9 (PART 2)

## THE FIFTH AND SIXTH TRUMPET JUDGMENTS

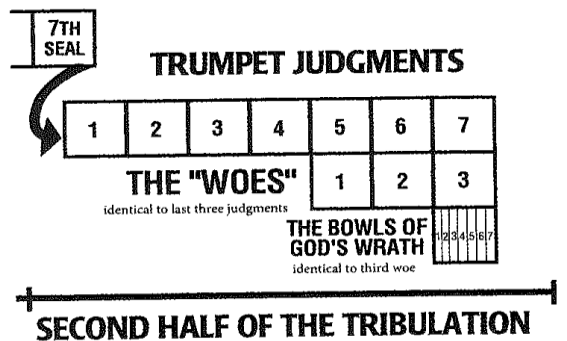
- Each of the first four trumpet judgments will affect the physical universe in some way; however, at the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets, the focus moves from the physical to the spiritual



- Each of the last 3 trumpet judgments are identified with a "woe," implying they will be more severe and destructive than the previous ones

**Revelation 8:13** ~ Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

## THE TRIBULATION JUDGMENTS (REVELATION 8-9, 16)



<sup>1</sup> Charles Ryrie, *Revelation*, 84.

## **Fifth Trumpet**

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- From the beginning, Satan has leveled his attacks against God and His people and has turned the world into a battleground
- This spiritual conflict began in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3)
- It was evident in the life of Job (Job 1-2)
- It was directed at God's people Israel (1 Chron 21:1)
- It was clearly displayed in Satan's attacks against Christ during His earthly ministry (temptation in Matt 4; opposition by Jewish leaders in John 8:44; attack on Peter in Luke 22:31-32; Judas in Luke 22:3)
- It is evident in his attacks on the church (2 Cor 4:4; 1 Pet 5:8)
- Satan will launch his most fierce and destructive attack against the human race during the Tribulation

### ***Their Unleashing***

**Revelation 9:1-3** ~ Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. 2 He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

- “a star from heaven” – this does probably not refer to a literal star as it has in previous contexts (Rev 6:13; 8:10-11, 12) but rather a created being referred to as “him,” namely a real person rather than a literal star or meteor
- Stars are often used to refer to an intelligent creature, often an angel (Rev 1:20; Job 38:7)
- Most likely this is a reference to Satan himself (a fallen angel) who is given the key to the bottomless pit from which he releases the demons God has bound
- John did not actually see the star fall, but only notes that it had already fallen
- Isaiah 14:12-15 describes Satan's original fall
- Revelation 9 does not refer to Satan's original fall but rather his being cast permanently down to the earth
- Although Satan and his demons were cast out of heaven after their original rebellion, they still have access to it (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1); however, a day is coming though when they will be permanently barred from heaven
- This event is described in Revelation 12

**Revelation 12:7-9** ~ And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, 8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

- The “bottomless pit” (Gr. *abyssos*) is likely the same as the “abyss” in which Satan will be bound for 1,000 years (Rev 20:1, 3)
- It is the abode of incarcerated demons

**Luke 8:31** ~ They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

**Romans 10:7** ~ or ‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).”

- Note that the authority to open the abyss is delegated to Satan by God
- The number of demons released is so large that their swarm looks like a great cloud of smoke dense enough to darken the air and sun

- These locust swarms cause widespread devastation to crops and other vegetation by devouring them, leaving only barren, desolate desert in their wake
- This is a word picture meant to represent the hordes of demons released upon the earth in this judgment
- The demons take on a physical form similar to that of locusts that swarm over the face of the earth
- “These creatures are described as being very real, so we must not consider them as merely ‘symbolic representations of judgment.’ They are animal creatures, like locusts, though not ordinary locusts, for they are demonic in nature.”<sup>2</sup>
- Locusts are frequently used by the Lord as a divine judgment on a wicked world:

**Exodus 10:12-15** ~ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up on the land of Egypt and eat every plant of the land, even all that the hail has left.” 13 So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD directed an east wind on the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. 14 The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled in all the territory of Egypt; they were very numerous. There had never been so many locusts, nor would there be so many again. 15 For they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt.

**Joel 1:4-7** ~ What the gnawing locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten; And what the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten; And what the creeping locust has left, the stripping locust has eaten...6 For a nation has invaded my land, Mighty and without number; Its teeth are the teeth of a lion, And it has the fangs of a lioness. 7 It has made my vine a waste And my fig tree splinters. It has stripped them bare and cast them away; Their branches have become white.

- Though not actual locusts, this demonic force will function similarly to the devastation brought by real locusts
- Thus, the character of the judgment in the 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet is demonic oppression loosed upon the earth
- The torment they will inflict is similar to that of a scorpion sting, one of the most painful known to man (see vv. 5, 10)
- “Scorpions in all climates are fearful and painful scourges. In warm climates, they grow to such a size as to make their sting not only painful but dangerous. Frequently small children die from the sting of a scorpion in tropical countries. Though the affliction here described is not actually a sting of a scorpion, it is compared to the pain and suffering caused by such a sting.”<sup>3</sup>
- Demonic torment is evident in how demons afflicted people in the time of Christ:

**Matthew 8:28** ~ When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.

**Mark 5:2-5** ~ When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, 3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.

**Mark 9:20-22** ~ They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. 21 And He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. 22 “It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!”

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>3</sup> John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 161.

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## An Excursus on Demons

### A. There are Loose and Active Demons

**Ephesians 6:12** ~ *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

- These demons are free and active in the world, able to work Satan's schemes and oppose God's work

### B. There are Confined Demons

#### 1) Temporarily Confined

**Revelation 9:1-2** ~ *And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. And he opened the bottomless pit; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.*

**Luke 8:30-31** ~ *And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss.*

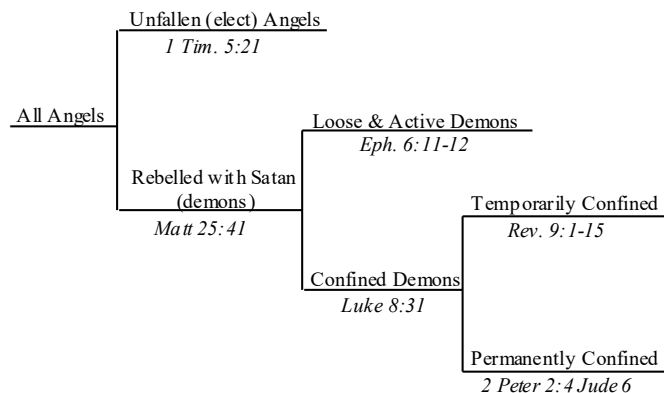
- These demons are confined in "the pit," apparently too depraved and harmful to be allowed to roam upon the earth

#### 2) Permanently Confined

**2 Peter 2:4** ~ *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;*

**Jude 6** ~ *And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.*

- These demons are permanently confined to *tartarus* (which is translated as "hell" in 2 Peter 2:4)
- They are confined because of some enormous sin they committed
- Perhaps the best explanation is that these demons were the "sons of God" who came down to the "daughters of men" and cohabitated with them, seeking to create a race of unredeemable people in order to thwart God's plan of redemption in Genesis 6
- Peter seems to confirm this in 1 Peter 3:18-20




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### ***Their Terror***

**Revelation 9:4-6** ~ They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. 6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

- Certain limitations by God will be placed on the extent of destruction inflicted by these demons (which shows that God is in complete control)
- They will not be able to:
  - Destroy the vegetation of the earth – this shows that they are not real locusts; it also shows that some time passes after the first trumpet judgment in which all of the grass is destroyed
  - Harm those who have the seal of God – this protection certainly includes all of the 144,000 but also likely extends to all those who know the Lord in that day since believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14) and cannot be possessed by demons
  - Kill anyone
  - Persecute indefinitely, but only for five months (cf. v. 10) – five months is the normal lifespan of locusts (from May to Sept). “This is important as it refutes clearly the notion that all these judgments will occur in a brief span of time immediately before the second coming of Christ.”<sup>4</sup>
- So dreadful will their terror be, people will try to suicide, but they will not be able to
- “Bodies will not sink and drown; poison and pills will have no effect; and somehow even bullets and knives will not do their intended job.”<sup>5</sup>
- This shows the level of despair and agony that occurs when wicked men are afflicted by the torment of demons in addition to all the previous judgments...all hope will be gone

### *Their Description*

**Revelation 9:7-11** ~ The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. 8 They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. 9 They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. 10 They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months. 11 They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

- Note that the word “like” is used 10 times in these verses
- This shows how difficult it was for John to describe this demon horde...he was laboring for words to describe this supernatural and unfamiliar demonic force:
  - They looked like horses prepared for battle – pawing the ground and ready to charge into battle
  - They had what looked like golden crowns on their head – referring to their apparent victory
  - Their faces looked like human faces – intelligent, rational beings
  - They had long hair like women – perhaps speaking of their seductiveness
  - They had teeth similar to lions – ready to tear apart their victims
  - They had what looked like iron breastplates – speaks of their being impervious to destruction
  - They made sounds with their wings like horses going to battle – there will be nowhere to hide
  - They had the power to sting like scorpions – cf. vv. 3, 5
- Though it is hard for our finite human minds to comprehend, these demons will be ferocious in both looks and actions
- “This awesome combination of the qualities of beasts and men depicts the utterly fearful character of these instruments of divine judgment. This is in keeping with the general character of the book of Revelation as an unmasking of the true nature of Satan and evil.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 953). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>5</sup> Ryrie, *Revelation*, 88.

<sup>6</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 162-163

- Their leader is Abaddon (Hebrew) and Apollyon (Greek), both names which mean “destroyer,” probably referring to a high-ranking demon in Satan’s hierarchy
- “These terms identify this leader as the king of the demonic death squad.”<sup>7</sup>
- This clearly indicates the true nature of Satan and his demons...they are destroyers of people and those who can only bring affliction

**Revelation 9:12** ~ The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

- “woe” always refers to some great calamity as a result of a judgment from God (cf. Is 6:5; Matt 23)
- This first “woe” will result in literal hell on earth
- Two devastating trumpet judgments remain after this first “woe”
- “The tribulation period unmasks human wickedness and also demonstrates the true character of Satan. In our modern day while Satan is still restricted it is easy to forget the great conflict which is raging between the forces of God and the forces of Satan referred to in Ephesians 6:12. In the great tribulation, and especially in the time of the fifth trumpet, with the release of the confined demons the full character of Satan will be starkly manifested. For the first time in history all those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour will come under demonic possession and affliction.”<sup>8</sup>

## Sixth Trumpet

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- Unlike the previous judgment where death was prevented, this one brings death as a result of a severe demonic attack on sinful mankind

### *Their Release*

**Revelation 9:13-14** ~ Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”

- The voice could be that of Christ or the angel whom John had seen standing near the golden altar of incense (cf. 8:3), the priest angel
- The “four angels who are bound” must be demons since holy angels are never said to be bound (cf. Jude 6)
- These four fallen angels control a huge demonic army that stands prepared to wage war against fallen humanity when God releases them to do so
- Their exact identity is not stated but perhaps they were the demons who controlled the four major world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome
- Daniel 10 indicates that some nations are influenced by demons

**Daniel 10:13** ~ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.

**Daniel 10:20** ~ Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.

- “God has arranged the angelic realm in differing ranks referred to as ‘rule, authority, power, and dominion’ (Eph. 1:21). Gabriel and Michael have been assigned authority over angels who administer God’s affairs for

<sup>7</sup> John MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, 264.

<sup>8</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 163-164.

the nation Israel (cf. Michael in Dan. 10:21; 12:1; Jude 9). In imitation Satan has also apparently assigned high-ranking demons to positions of authority over each kingdom.”<sup>9</sup>

- This shows what is taking place behind the scenes all the time.
- The conflict in the spiritual realm is a perpetual conflict, revealing that a heavenly battle rages continuously.
- This reveals the fact that the ultimate power struggle is fought in a realm which most people know nothing about.
- The primary power struggles in the universe are not between earthly nations or opposing political parties or world religions.
- Rather, the ultimate power struggle occurs between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness.
- Throughout all of human history Satan's network of demons have been behind the scenes, endeavoring to do all they can to foil the plan of God.
- “The teaching seems to be that unseen evil powers influence and control the kingdoms and governments of this world in order to inflict harm and havoc on the people of God. There is what we see on the surface, but then there is this whole unseen arena; an invisible war is going on behind the ‘seens.’”<sup>10</sup>
- Abraham Kuyper: “If once the curtain were pulled back, and the spiritual world behind it came to view, it would expose to our spiritual vision a struggle so intense, so convulsive, sweeping everything within its range, that the fiercest battle ever fought on earth would seem, by comparison, a mere game. Not here, but up there – that is where the real conflict is waged. Our earthly struggle drones in its backlash.”<sup>11</sup>
- What is ironic about this is that they believe they are doing Satan’s work, but in actuality they are God’s servants doing exactly what He has ordained

### ***Their Devastation***

**Revelation 9:15-19** ~ And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind. 16 The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. 17 And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.

- God has ordained these demons to exact their vengeance at a specific hour, day, month, and year
- This demonstrates God’s perfect sovereignty over everything
- Their release will result in the death of “a third of mankind”
- The release of the fourth seal resulted in the death of 25% of the earth’s population (cf. Rev 6:8)
- This additional death of the remaining third will bring the total death of the world’s population to at least 50%, if not more when the other judgments are taken into consideration
- The fact that 1/3 will die (cf. Rev 8:7-12) again demonstrates that this will be a divine judgment and not a natural disaster
- This army will be 200 million strong....we should likely take this number literally, especially since twice in v. 16 John states “the number of them”
- This army of demons is in addition to the demons already roaming the earth and the those released from the abyss in the fifth trumpet

<sup>9</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* 1985: 1366.

<sup>10</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, *The Message of Daniel*, 146.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Sinclair Ferguson, *Daniel*, 199.

- That “armies” is plural may indicate that this force will be made up of four divisions
- “Some have suggested that this is the human army referred to in 16:12 and led by ‘the kings from the east,’ noting that the Red Chinese army reportedly numbered 200 million during the 1970s. But no reference is made to the size of the army led by the kings of the East. Further, that army arrives on the scene during the sixth bowl judgment, which takes place during the seventh trumpet, not the sixth. Though there may be at that time an existing standing army of two hundred million, the impossibility of marshaling, supplying, and transporting such a vast human force all over the globe also argues against this army being a human army. The figurative language used to describe this army’s horses suggests that this is a supernatural rather than a human force, as does the fact that it is commanded by the four newly released demons.”<sup>12</sup>
- John describes the riders of the horses in v. 17 – “fire...and brimstone” captures the essence of hell (cf. Rev 14:10; 19:20; 20:10)
- “hyacinth” is a dark blue or black color like smoke
- The horses will spew from their mouths fire, smoke, and brimstone which will result in three plagues responsible for the death of 1/3 of mankind (v. 18)
- The power of this demonic force is further stated by the description of the horses in v. 19
- Their powerful destruction is illustrated by their mouths and serpent-like tails
- The use of horses, lions, serpents in describing this demonic force highlights their power and deadliness

### ***Their Reaction***

**Revelation 9:20-21** ~ The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; 21 and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

- One would think that, in the midst of this suffering, people would cry out to God for mercy
- However, despite the devastation the survivors experience and witness up to this point, they will still refuse to repent, demonstrating their hardness of heart
- John describes five sins they will refuse to repent of:
  1. Idolatry
  2. Murder
  3. Sorcery (*pharmakon*) – i.e. drugs, seances, witchcraft, incantations magic spells
  4. Immorality (*porneia*) – rampant sexual perversions
  5. Thefts
- These final two verses of the chapter provide one of the greatest evidences of human depravity and may point to the fact that these people are confirmed in their unregenerate state

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<sup>12</sup> MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, 271.