

**VICTORIOUS LIFE CHURCH BIBLE STUDY SERIES:
THE BOOK OF REVELATION
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CHAPTER NINE- THE SEVENTH SEAL- THE FIFTH TRUMPET AND
THE FIRST WOE!**

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

Revelation 9:1-18

1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. 6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. 7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. 11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. 12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

The first four trumpets represented an awesome picture of divine judgments, These judgements had been directly against man's environment. In the first four seals, we saw the "four horsemen" bringing tyranny, war, famine, and death on the earth. In the first four trumpets, these were the ecological destruction of the vegetation, seas, fresh waters, and sky. The trumpets which are to follow, which are represented by the three woes, present the most drastic array of judgments so

far in the Book of Revelation. These judgements are directed specifically against man: he is directly afflicted under these plagues. His proclamation is introduced by a triple woe, followed by an urgent warning,

“Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants upon the earth at the rest of the sounds of the trumpets of the three angels that are about to trumpet.” (Rev. 8:13)

The woe is a well known word from the OT prophetic literature and was used as a divine warning and/or threat (Hosea 7:13; Isaiah 1:4; 10:5; Jeremiah 23:1; Ezekiel 24:6; and the sixfold woe in Isaiah 5:8-22). Here it appears in a threefold form, indicating something of great magnitude is about to follow. These woes are directed to **“the inhabitants of the earth”** reminding the hearers of the cry of the souls under the altar that their blood be avenged upon **“the inhabitants of the earth” (6:10)**. As these woes are clearly directed to those who stand in opposition to God and his people, we need to be mindful that the 144,000 have been sealed for protection by God’s angels. Despite the woes awaiting “the inhabitants of the earth,” those of “the tribes of the sons of Israel” will be protected. The three woes are explicitly tied to the remaining trumpets and the three angels about to trumpet.

1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

The mention of a star falling to earth is reminiscent of the blasting of the third trumpet, where a great star, burning as a torch, fell upon a third of the rivers and fountains of water (8:10-11).

Reference to the star’s fallenness indicates that the star has its origin in heaven. The warning given to the inhabitants upon the earth (8:13) suggests that the falling of this star has

repercussions for the earth's inhabitants. Unlike the star of 8:10, this star bears personal characteristics, for there was given to **him** "the key of the shaft of the Abyss,

But who is this **star**? Suggestions have included Nero, a fallen angel, an evil spirit, Satan, the Word of God, a good angel, or even Jesus Himself. In the context, this **star** is best seen as an angel; whether he is a good or bad angel depends on his relation to the *angel of the bottomless pit* in **Revelation 9:11**. If the angel of Revelation 9:1 is the same as the angel of Revelation 9:11, it is an evil angel – perhaps Satan himself. If it is a different angel, it may be a good angel sent by God to open up this **bottomless pit** for the purpose of judgment.

To him was given the key to the bottomless pit: That this **star** is **fallen** makes us associate him with Satan, or another high-ranking evil angelic being. But the fact that he is **given the key to the bottomless pit** makes us *not* want to associate him with Satan. The idea that Satan is the master of hell is foreign to the rest of Scripture. He will be hell's victim, not ruler. At the same time, we notice that the **key** is **given** to this being, the divine passive "was given" indicating the activity of God and that it is **given** at a specific time and for a specific purpose that furthers God's plan. This angel – evil or good – serves God's purpose, even if he does not intend to.

The articular phrase "the shaft of the Abyss" suggests that the Abyss is a familiar place to all who would read this. The shaft, mentioned four times in 9:1-2, is the place of access to the Abyss.

Earlier in the book Jesus claims to have the key of Death and Hell (Hades) (1:18), as well as the key of David (3:7).

Revelation 1:18

18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

Revelation 3:7

7 “To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

These keys indicate Jesus mastery over the former (death and hell) and authority to act on behalf of the latter (The Key of David). Owing to the widespread perception that the Abyss is the realm of the dead.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

At the opening of the shaft we see the release of the judgement of God into the world. Which is first represented by the cloud of smoke ascending out of the pit. It is as the smoke of a great fire, so great that it literally darkens the air. This is a description of the smoke, not the locust because the locust actually come out of the smoke. This scene continues the imagery of the day of the Lord as a day of darkness.

Zephaniah 1:14-15

14 The great day of the Lord is near— near and coming quickly. The cry on the day of the Lord is bitter; the Mighty Warrior shouts his battle cry. 15 That day will be a day of wrath — a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness—

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

Their emergence upon the earth would be a terrifying sight, for their destructive power was well known. Not only could locusts “travel in columns several feet deep, and up to four miles in length, stripping the earth of all its vegetation, but they also were widely regarded in the OT as a sign of God’s judgment (Deut 28:42; 1 Kgs 8:37; Ps 78:46).

Deuteronomy 28:41-42

41 You will have sons and daughters but you will not keep them, because they will go into captivity. 42 Swarms of locusts will take over all your trees and the crops of your land.

An infestation of locusts was the eighth plague sent upon Egypt during the period of the exodus (Exod 10:4-20). Joel described the locust plague as a phenomenon of the day of the Lord.

Joel 2:1-10

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand— 2 a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was in ancient times nor ever will be in ages to come. 3 Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste—nothing escapes them. 4 They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry. 5 With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle. 6 At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. 7 They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. 8 They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. 9 They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows. 10 Before them the earth shakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine.

These locusts receive divine authority, revealed in the use of the divine passive “was given,” a statement reminiscent of 6:8, where Death and Hades are given authority over a fourth of the earth to kill those who reside therein. The locusts’ authority is like the authority of the scorpions of the earth, who could dominate in the insect and animal world by using their poisonous

stingers. Although nonlethal in humans, the sting of a scorpion was an extraordinarily painful torment. The authority of the scorpions, which the locusts are given, is their ability to terrorize humankind owing to the fear of being stung. Men will not be able to escape their sting and torture not even by death.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

These locusts are images of demonic forces designed to show their terror, the agony which they inflict and the inescapability of their punishments.

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

These symbols are terrifying. The locust appears to be indestructible. They appear to be intelligent creatures who can stalk their prey. They have the power of a lion in their teeth. Their sound is terrifying and inescapable. The pain they inflict is the pain of a scorpion's sting.

11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

There is a King of the locusts who is the angel of the abyss. This is not the same angel who is described as the star who opened the abyss because this angel is given a particular name. He is given a name in the Hebrew and Greek Abaddon which means "destroyer", The Hebrew for is associated with hell in Proverbs 15:11, Job 26:6 and is a place of destruction and the personification of death. The king of the abyss is named to describe his realm and his very

character. John then ends this particular part of the vision by reminding us that this is only the first woe and two more are yet to be fulfilled.

12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET: AN ARMY OF DESTRUCTION

13 The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God. 14 It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” 15 And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. 16 The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number. 17 The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. 18 A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. 19 The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury. 20 The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. 21 Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar: In the tabernacle and temple of Israel, the golden altar was the altar of incense, which was a representation of the prayers of God’s people.

The four horns of the golden altar: These stood at each corner of the altar. Atoning blood was applied to the horns. From these horns, John heard a voice. In this, John recalled a repeated theme: the prayers of God’s people play a large role in the end-times drama.

Saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates:

These angels were connected with the Euphrates River because the Euphrates was a landmark of ancient Babylon. It was the frontier of Israel’s land as fully promised by God (Genesis 15:17-21).

It was also the boundary of the old Roman Empire, which will be revived under the Antichrist.

The Euphrates is also associated with the first sin (Genesis 2:10-14), the first murder (Genesis 4:16), the first organized revolt against God (Genesis 11:1-9), the first war confederation (Genesis 14:1), and the first dictatorship (Genesis 10:8-10). The Euphrates river was also used as a boundary for Abrahams inheritance. It distinguished Israel from her enemies territorially.

(Genesis 15:18, Deuteronomy 11:24, Joshua 1:4) Isaiah used this imagery and used the river Euphrates as a force for judgment against Judah. (Isaiah 8:5-8) The imagery here as that the angels of destruction are being held back by the river but now the river of Gods wrath is about to overflow and the river is not longer a protection.

These four angels have no *necessary* connection with the four angels of Revelation 7:1.

They may be the same **four angels** or they may not be. Whoever they are, they are **prepared for the hour and day and month and year** of the unleashing of this judgment. Time of their release has been ordained by God and they are only allowed to go as God has determined. The time and length of their affliction is also determined by God. The language shows that they are loosed for a particular time and for a particular time in this tribulation. The fact that they were released has caused many to believe that these are “bad” angels; they may or may not be, but they probably are evil angels. No matter what, they are servants of the divine purpose.

Were released to kill a third of mankind: The demonic locusts described earlier in the chapter were restricted to tormenting mankind. But these **four angels** have the authority to kill on a massive scale. These angels have a specific sphere of activity (**a third of mankind**), and are only activated in God's timing. They execute God's will in God's timing.

Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

The number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million:

Does this speak of a natural or a supernatural army? Is this an army of men or an army of demons? If this describes a natural army of men, then the weird description may speak of modern, mechanized warfare. It may be John simply describes modern machinery in the only terms he can, and the result is this weird, grotesque, terrifying account. But, a human army this size has never been seen. The total size of all armies – on both sides – at the height of the Second World War was only 70 million. In 1965 China claimed to have an army and militia of 200 million, but this claim was doubted by many. Even if such an army was assembled, and marched towards the west, it is hard (but not impossible) to see such an army killing a billion or more people – **a third of mankind**. Therefore, perhaps the safest interpretation is to see this as a literal 200 million strong army, but a demonic army invading earth. This continues the idea of the demonic army like locusts described earlier in the chapter.

But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone,

and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

In general, mankind showed no repentance, despite the presence of some pretty overwhelming signs and wonders. Instead, man continued with his idol worship in a business as usual sort of way. They continued in their worship of **demons**, whether their worship is witting or unwitting.

It is amazing to see how quickly things return to what is thought to be normal after some calamity such as an earthquake. We are quick to forget God's lessons, even the lessons that come in judgment. This list of sins is a striking accusation against our present age. Certainly, our modern world is characterized by **murders, sorceries** (associated with the taking of drugs), **sexual immorality and thefts.**