

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 28TH–29TH, 2024 // REVELATION

FIFTH TRUMPET (REVELATION 9:1–6) THE WARNING IN CHAPTER 8 WAS TRUE

An angel warned humanity they must repent because the three remaining trumpets will be severe. The fifth and sixth trumpets are supernatural invasions during the Tribulation.

- The first four trumpets indirectly affected humanity, but the fifth and sixth will be direct curses (woes) on mankind.

“...A STAR THAT HAD FALLEN FROM HEAVEN”

An angel is given the key to unlock the abyss in order to unleash demonic forces. We will see this angel again in Chapter 20 when Satan is locked up in the same abyss.

- The angel is given direction from God to unleash “smoke” like from “a great furnace so that the sun and the air were darkened.”

LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE

The smoke from the abyss can be both literal (the chaos taking place) and figurative (a cloud of demonic forces coming from Hell).

- Heaven and Hell are not literally above and below us. The position of these places are spiritual not literal. This is called *theological geography of the universe*.

“THEN LOCUSTS CAME OUT OF THE SMOKE”

Locusts move in giant columns and rapidly destroy all green vegetation as they swarm through crops, but they do not harm people.

- These locusts are **demons. They don't harm the earth, but directly hurt people**, like a scorpion stings **but doesn't kill. This is demonic oppression and spiritual torture.**

THIS ONLY AFFECTS THE UNSAVED

The only people this special class of demon (Jude 1:6) can harm are those who “do not have God's seal on their foreheads.”

- **Demons cannot hurt those full of the Spirit without God's permission (Job), but people who are demonically possessed can hurt others and themselves.**
- **Matthew 8:28 (CSB)**

FIVE MONTHS OF PURE HELL?

Maybe John uses the analogy of locusts because, like locusts, the torture span of these demons is 5 months. In this time people will beg to die, but death will elude them.

- Is it possible that God will make suicide impossible in the hopes that the agony will cause some to repent?

UNFORTUNATELY, IT LOOKS BLEAK

Later, we will see these people will not repent and death only eludes them because they are too afraid to take their own lives.

- The opening of Chapter 9 is similar to the plagues inflicted on Egypt when the Pharaoh would not repent.

FIFTH TRUMPET (CONT.) (REVELATION 9:7–12)

WHAT DO DEMONS LOOK LIKE?

Again, we see John pan in to give us details about what is taking place.

- Vs. 7–12 are the most descriptive account of demons in the Bible. Though the description is figurative, we can get **an idea of how terrifying the forces of hell can be if we're not sealed with God's Spirit.**

DESCRIBING DEMONS

- **“like horses prepared for battle”** shows strength and endurance
- **“golden crowns”** indicates victory
- **“faces... like human faces”** shows deception and intelligence
- **“hair like women's hair”** is reminiscent of the Parthians (Iran) and fierceness
- **“teeth... like lions' teeth”** shows aggression
- **“chests like iron”** indicates it is almost impossible to penetrate them
- **“wings... like the sound of many chariots”** gives us an image of war
- **“stingers like scorpions”** shows that they will torture but will not kill

RANKS OF ANGELS AND DEMONS (PROVERBS 30:27)

We have seen different ranks of angels, now as John looks towards the leader of these demons, we also see their ranks.

- The leader is named Abaddon in Hebrew and Apollyon in Greek. This name simply means **destruction. The only way to avoid destruction is salvation through Christ.**

SIXTH TRUMPET (REVELATION 9:13–19)

WE SEE THE GOLDEN ALTAR AGAIN

The altar from chs. 6 and 8 is now personified and John hears it speak, “Release the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates.”

- The four angels of the Euphrates are high-ranking demons who will lead a large group of lower-ranking demons across the Euphrates.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EUPHRATES

The Euphrates was the place of the Garden of Eden and Babylon and was a strategic landmark for the Roman and Persian Empires. It was also the river that stopped military advancement from hostile forces from the East towards Israel.

THE 4 ANGELS (DEMONS) UNLEASH AN ARMY

The 200,000,000-person army has been a huge source of debate. John says **these “mounted troops” will kill 1/3 of the “human race.”** Is this army literal or metaphorical?

- More than likely this is a literal demonically possessed army led by evil to kill. One may reference events like the Holocaust.

IS THIS POSSIBLE?

This could be demons unleashed to not only torture but also kill people. Or, this could be a godless people that does Satan's will. But, is such a large army possible?

- As of now, the largest active military on earth is China's (2.53 million), but we will see that many countries will unite.
- The only nation currently that could come close to such a force is not a geographical nation, but a religious nation, Islam.
- Most studies show that 8–10% of Islam is radical jihadists. Currently, there are over 1.9 billion Muslims (fastest growing). 10% would be 190,000,000 radicals.

AGAIN, JOHN ZOOMS IN

John describes these horse-like demons that he saw in a vision. His description is both metaphorical and symbolic.

- **“Breastplates that were fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow”** is not talking about a nation, but more than likely the colors of fire, smoke, and sulfur.
- **“heads of the horses were like the heads of lions”** shows strength and brutality
- **“from their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur”** could refer to modern weaponry or some kind of supernatural plague (Job 41).
- **“tails, which resemble snakes”** shows that they don't just hurt, they kill

THE MAIN POINT SO FAR

The demonic “locusts” have the power to oppress and torture, but not kill. The second group of demons will possibly possess an army of 200 million that will cross from east of the Euphrates and begin to kill 1/3 of humanity.

- This attack will be against **“Christian” nations, Jews, and Christian people** as well.

THE WORKS OF THEIR HANDS (REVELATION 9:20–21)

WHAT WILL IT TAKE?

Though 1/3 of humanity had been killed by the end of the 6th trumpet, the “people...not killed by these plagues **did not repent.**”

- **Many times, people have become so hardened by sin, or they have fallen so in love with the darkness that they refuse to repent and turn to God.**

USELESS GODS

Throughout human history people have worshiped artificial gods made from human hands. Today these often come in the form of materialism, sex, entertainment, and success.

- John mentions that **these gods cannot see or hear, meaning they really have no power to help, let alone save humanity.**

THE 2 CATEGORIES OF THE SINS OF MANKIND

The first 4 of the 10 Commandments focus on our relationship to God. The last 6 of the 10 focus on our relationship with other people.

- Vs. 20–21 basically hit all ten. The people unwilling to repent have worshiped other gods (commands 1–4) and have practiced evils that hurt others (commands 5–10).

WITCHCRAFT AND DRUG OVERDEPENDENCE

Vs. 20–21 hit the 10 Cs, but John also throws in sorceries. This comes from the Greek *pharmakeus*, where we get the word *pharmacy*.

- John is alluding to a **time when drug dependency and abusive use will be an epidemic.** Big pharma, over-medicating, recreational drug use, addiction, etc....

IT ALL DERIVES FROM THE WORSHIP OF SELF

We commit sins against God and others because we are, either consciously or unconsciously, putting ourselves above them.

- **The lie of pursuing self first is at the core of satanic thought (Genesis 3, Matthew 4). Ironically, it is also the center of western society/culture.**

SATAN AND THE PURSUIT OF SELF

- **The greatest door for evil to slip in is self-centeredness** because our focus isn't on God or others but our own desires.

- Satan's greatest tactic isn't to persuade us to worship him, but to **worship self** (Genesis 3). This is **the foundation of all occult practice and satanic thought** (Law of Thelema).

EVIL AND DEMONIC INFLUENCE ARE REAL

- We are often ignorant or see ourselves as too refined to believe in spiritual warfare and demonic attack, but if the Bible is true, these things exist, and we should be aware and prepared for them (Ephesians 6:12).

- **We don't have to live in fear of evil as long as we are “sealed” (Ephesians 1:13) by Jesus.**

WE ARE VULNERABLE WITHOUT JESUS

- **Without the “seal” of the Spirit on our hearts and minds we are vulnerable to oppression and even possession by evil spirits.**
- We are also susceptible to just fleshly destructive behavior. Sometimes it isn't Satan, but just our **lustful appetites that get the best of us without Jesus' help.**

THE MEANS OF PROTECTION

- The pursuit of self leads to sin, spiritual attack, and irrational choices/actions that destroy the mind, heart, and soul.

- Protection from this destructive road is free and accessible. **Freedom, joy, and security begin when we seek Jesus first (Matthew 6:33) and they culminate in that relationship.**

SOME SIMPLE QUESTIONS

- Is the Kingdom of God our first pursuit?
- Are we loving and pursuing Jesus above our own desires (self)?
- Do we treat others in a Christ-like manner, loving them as we love ourselves?
- Are we being cautious about what we entertain and engage in?