

The First 2 Woes!

Revelation 8:13-9:21

I grew up in Windom in southwest Minnesota on the beautiful banks of the Des Moines River. Well, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, especially now since it is running over the banks and flooding the town.

The arrowhead area rivers are a torrent of power taking out bridges and roadways.

Homes are being flooded, upending families and communities.

All of this damage is being done by something as simple as rain. Leaving people homeless and in shock. Rain! We can't live without rain, but in the wrong amount it is a destructive force.

Our planet needs its molten core to generate our magnetic field which protects us from the sun's radiation. It is this same core which will affect the earthquakes and lava ejections which will do so much damage in the trumpet judgement.

Darkness turned lethal. Falling stones from the sky's all turned into tools of judgement.

We continue today in:

h. The 7th Seal 8:1-11:19

as we move on exploring the trumpet judgements. Last week we looked at the first 4 trumpet judgements. Today we will look at the next 2 judgements. Moving onto point:

(vi) The 5th Trumpet 8:13-9:12

Last week we saw the first 4 trumpet judgements wreak havoc with the earth and sky. Today we see a huge shift from natural disasters to spiritual destruction.

Revelation 8:13, "As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

The final 3 trumpet judgements are called the 3 woes. As we have seen, each judgement seems to get worst and that is certainly true with the coming 3 woes.

The first woe, the fifth trumpet judgement is released.

Revelation 9:1-11, “The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. 2 When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. 3 And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. 4 They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. 6 During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

7 The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. 8 Their hair was like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ teeth. 9 They had breastplates like breastplates

of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. 10 They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. 11 They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).”

In these 11 verses we could park for months, and I encourage you to study it for yourself. Get a commentary on Revelation and go verse by verse. Let me highlight some of the words in this passage that will help you understand what is going on here.

To get started, some have speculated that John is seeing helicopters in this part of his vision. I have to admit, I liked that view when I first heard it, but as you dig into the language, I believe it is pointing in a different direction. One reason I don’t believe that it is a modern military helicopter is that during these 5 months of torment the “stingers” don’t kill anyone. How weak of a helicopter would this be?

So, let’s dig a little deeper. John says a star fell from the sky to earth and that this star was given the key to the abyss. What fell from heaven to earth? The

angels that followed Lucifer fell from heaven. Lucifer fell from heaven. I believe the star here is Lucifer who now has the key to the abyss, the prison of Hell.

The abyss is now open and the smoke rising from it is so horrible that it darkens the sky, then out of this smoke arises a locust.

We remember seeing locust in the plagues released on Egypt. It was the 8th of the 10 plagues and is described in Exodus 10. These locusts are like the ones we see in summer, grasshoppers, flying around eating anything green.

This happened here in the US in 1874 when they covered 2 million sq. miles in the plains doing millions of dollars of damage to crops.

The plague in Egypt and the locust here in the US only affected vegetation. But here in Revelation we see that these locusts will leave vegetation alone and will over 5 months torture humanity. Get this point, torture.

But let's go back to this abyss. The smoke that arises, like smoke in other places in Scripture, represents judgement. And it arises from the abyss. Then the

locusts come out of the abyss. What comes out of the abyss?

What else comes out of the abyss?

Revelation 11:7, "Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them."

Then again, we see in:

Revelation 17:8a, "The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction."

The abyss is the prison of hell and it's a place of demons and as we see in these 2 verses, the home of the beast. It's a horrible place and the place the locusts come from...so the locusts are demons.

How bad is it? Do you remember the story of the man possessed by a legion of demons that Jesus cast out into a herd of pigs? Look at that passage a little closer. Right before Jesus cast them out the demons ask Jesus something.

Luke 8:30-31, "Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

“Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. 31 And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.”

Jesus showed the demons mercy by not sending them back to the abyss rather sending them into a herd of pigs. Do you understand what happened here?

Jesus knew these fallen angels. They had lived with him in heaven, they rebelled and were cast out of heaven and sent to the abyss and only escape from that pit by the will of God.

The locusts, the demons, would like nothing more than to kill everyone, but God forbids any killing in this 5-month period. The demons aren't allowed to destroy vegetation, only torture those without God's seal on their forehead.

Have you ever been so sick you think to yourself that you would like to die? During these 5 months man will long to die, they will seek death, but that will be denied them.

The torment they endure is like the sting of a scorpion. I have no idea what that sting is like. If it is

like a hornet sting, no thank you! But this will be a constant punishment over these 5 months.

Finally, we are introduced to the angel of the abyss who is described by John with 2 names. The first name is from the Hebrew and is Abaddon which means a place of eternal punishment.

The second name comes from the Greek and is Apollyon, which means I destroy. This is not Satan but is one of his leaders among the fallen angels.

Later in Revelation we see this:

Revelation 20:1-3, “And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.”

YEAH!!!!!!

Revelation 9: 12, “The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.”

Each one of the woes will have this declarative statement. The woe is past. Unfortunately, here there are still two more to come.

(vii) The 6th Trumpet 9:13-21

Death had been held back during the 5th trumpet, that is about to change.

Revelation 9:13-21, “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.”

The 6th trumpet sounds and 4 angels that were bound are released. Do you think angels from heaven are bound? No! These are 4 fallen angels which God bound for this moment.

Just as we saw during the 5th trumpet judgement, angels, actually fallen angels, are released to torture and now here in the 6th judgement they are permitted to kill.

These demon angels were bound at the great river Euphrates. Look at this in:

Genesis 2:10-14, "A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. 11 The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) 13 The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates."

Man was cast out of Eden and one of the rivers coming out of Eden was the Euphrates. Do we see the symbolism in that God bound the 4 demons at the edge of the Euphrates, at the edge of Eden?

These demons lead an army of 200 million. This should not be confused with the army led by the king of the east found in Revelation 16:12 which is during the 6th bowl judgement.

This army isn't a human army like the one led by the kings of the east. This is an army of the fallen angels, 200 million. This army comes and kills 1/3 of the remaining people in the world. At this point of the tribulation more than 1/2 of the world population from before the tribulation has now died.

This is not the saddest point in this passage. We read in verse 20 that those who were not killed still did not repent. They know these judgements are coming from God and still they refuse to repent. John then addresses the sins to which they remain enslaved.

1. Idolatry

They worship little Knick knacks. Buddha's made of wood that can't even hear. Precious metals that can't speak. Objects made by human hands. This is what they worship.

That is not who I worship. I worship a God that speaks to me through the Holy Spirit and through His word. I worship a God who created all I can see. I worship a God not that I made but who created me.

This idolatry is going on all around us. People who worship mother earth. Who worships mobile technology. Who read their horoscope thinking the stars in the sky control their destiny and never read a word from the one true living God.

They place their hope in the false belief that they are good enough. But my God tells me that there is none righteous, no not one. We are all sinners, and no one does good, not even one.

2. Murderers

Wickedness will escalate in the end times and run rampant. Not like our orderly society today. No, not like an elderly Jewish woman walking the streets of LA being attacked by dozens of protesters chanting anti-Israeli slogans.

Not like wandering teens punching strangers and video recording it for some thrill. Not like young men raping and killing a 12-year-old girl or a 27-year-old mother out for a run.

Or is it like that? There is coming a day when lawlessness is so bad that anything can and will be done.

3. Sorcery

Horoscopes, witchcraft, drug induced states of spirituality. Have you heard about the force in nature all around us? That's sorcery!

Sorcery leads to things like human sacrifice, spells and incantations.

There is a power behind these things, but it isn't from heaven. It is the very power of hell in these things.

How often do we reduce God to some genie in a bottle there to grant us our greatest desires. That is not who God is for God will not be mocked.

4. Immorality

Immorality comes from the Greek word porneia, the word from which we get our word pornography. Immorality deals with every kind of sexual sin including adultery, rape, fornication and every kind of imaginable sexual sin.

Sex trafficking is a disease rampant in our culture and the country doesn't seem to have the stomach to address it. Children, boys and girls, young women, the vulnerable, orphans taken and trafficked to make some sick people rich.

Where is the cry shouting "no more?" No more!

Pornography at our fingertips. On our TV's slowly hardening our hearts since it is everywhere.

5. Theft

Is theft justified simply because you want or need something? Was Robin Hood, right? Steal from the rich and give to the poor? Where does one's trust in

God factor into that problem? Is it ever right to do wrong?

The second woe is not over yet. We see that in Revelation 11:14. But before this woe is over, we enter into the 2nd interlude which we will look at in 2 weeks.