

## ***The Church of the Servant King***

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### **PROPHECY SERIES**

(Proph21J\_Revelation\_chp9\_Trumpet Judgments 5 & 6)

In chapter 9, John continues his description of the trumpet judgments that began with the opening of the seventh seal (8:1). When the seventh seal was opened, there was immediate silence in heaven for “about half an hour.” Until the opening of the seventh seal, heaven was filled with the sound of praises to God being made by the creatures in heaven (Rev 4:8).

All of heaven, certainly at God’s command, is silent in order to hear the prayers of the persecuted and suffering believers of the Tribulation era. The silence is like the calm before a storm. God is on the verge of responding to the prayers of His persecuted believers on earth and all heaven pauses in silence.

After the “half an hour,” the trumpet judgments begin. Each of the first four trumpet judgments are indirectly affect men.

- Trumpet #1 (8:7) – vegetation is decimated
- Trumpet #2 (8:8-9) – the seas are affected
- Trumpet #3 (8:10-11) – fresh water is made bitter
- Trumpet #4 (8:12) – the heavens (light) is affected

Prior to the sounding of the fifth, sixth and seventh trumpet judgment, John observes an eagle fly through heaven and pronounces three “woes” upon those who dwell upon the earth. The three “woes” correspond to trumpets five thru seven. The “woes” are pronounced because these trumpet judgments have a direct effect upon men – i.e. unbelievers.

### **THE FIFTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT (WOE #1) – THE LOCUSTS FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT (9:1-12)**

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. 2 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. 3 And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And they were told that they should not 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; and they will long to die and death flees from them. 7 And the appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. 8 And they had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. 9 And 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 And 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.

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
1	"...a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth..."	<p>There are probably two close, but different interpretations of this "star" which fell from heaven: 1) a fallen angel who is allowed by God to open the <i>Abyss</i>; or 2) Satan who is cast from heaven. The latter interpretation of the star as Satan has some good support from the context.</p> <p>Verse 11 provides the name of the angel (presumably the "star" of verse 1) – "Abaddon" in Hebrew and "Apollyon" in Greek. Both names mean "destruction." For similar references to Satan as a fallen "star," see Isaiah 14:12-17 cf. Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:9.</p> <p>However, the text only refers to him as an angel. The appearance of Satan later (Rev 12:3, 9) is much more dramatic than the introduction of this angel. It is possible that this "angel" is one of the fallen angels of Satan's demonic forces which engaged in war in heaven just before Satan and his forces are cast out of heaven to the earth (cf. Eph 6:12). As a part of their ouster from heaven, God grants this fallen angel permission to open the <i>Abyss</i>.</p> <p>Either way, it doesn't matter whether this angel is Satan himself, or a fallen angel, i.e. a demon. The <i>Abyss</i> is opened and the demonic hosts who reside there are allowed to torment unbelievers for five months. That is the key thing to understand.</p>

**Isaiah 14:12-17**

How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! 13 But you said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." 15 Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit. 16 Those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you, saying, "Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities, who did not allow his prisoners to go home?"

**Luke 10:18**

And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning."

**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.

**Revelation 12:7-9**

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And 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.

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
1	"...the key of the bottomless pit was given to him..."	The "bottomless pit" is translated from the Greek word <i>Abussos</i> (Gr. αβυσσος). Some translations render this word – the "Abyss." The "Abyss" is the temporary abode of demons (Rev 9:11; 11:7; 17:8). During the Millennium, Satan will be imprisoned in the <i>Abyss</i> (Rev 20:1-3). After the Millennium, Satan and his demons will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:10 cf. 20:7-9).
3	"...out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth..."	The Hebrew prophet Joel used a locust invasion as an analogy to what would occur in the earth during the day of the Lord (Joel 1-2). Locusts were often used as symbolic of destruction in the Old Testament (e.g. 1 Kings 8:37; Psa 78:46). However, the locusts that John saw had the power to hurt people like a scorpion – something locusts cannot do. They also had a leader (v. 11). These are demons who are released from the <i>Abyss</i> .
4-5	"...they should not 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 ...not permitted to kill anyone ... torment for five months...like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.	These verses are fairly self-explanatory. The boundaries or limits that have been imposed by God upon Satan and demons in their interaction with humans are loosened. Without limitations, Satan had the power to eliminate Adam and Eve or their descendants at any time in human history. The evidentiary matter in the appeal trial of Satan could have been destroyed apart from the limits God imposed upon Satan and his forces. Here in verses 4-5, God removes some of the restrictions and demons are permitted to afflict humans – specifically unbelievers. Obviously, Satan's desire is to align humans under his power via the Anti-Christ and Satan uses the afflictions imposed by his demon forces to push unbelievers to seek solutions via the Anti-Christ and alienate unbelievers from God's love. Because God knows the time is short, His desire is that the pressure brings these unbelievers to repentance (i.e. a change of mind). (See vv. 20-21).
6	"And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; and they will long to die and death flees from them"	The torment of these demons is enough to drive unbelievers to seek death; however, they will be frustrated in their efforts. We are not told how this happens, so any attempt at explaining it would be speculative at best.
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.	As discussed previously, this either one of the ruling angels of Satan's demonic legions or Satan himself. Both names mean "destruction."

### THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PAST AND FUTURE "WOES" (9:12)

The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

This verse is transitional and clarifies that the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpet judgments are also the first, second, and third woes. It is unclear whether the eagle (8:13) or John is the speaker, though John seems the more likely candidate. "After these things" indicates that the woes are consecutive, not simultaneous. The severity of the judgments increase with each "woe" or trumpet sounding.

### THE SIXTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT (WOE #2) – THE ANGELS FROM THE EUPHRATES (9:13-21)

And 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." 15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they might kill a third of mankind. 16 And the

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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. 20 And 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 immortality nor of their thefts.

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
13-14a	"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet..."	A voice near the four horns of the golden altar in heaven is heard by John once the sixth trumpet sounds. The voice is possibly that of the angel who had the golden censer before the altar who is mentioned in 8:3. This angel commands the angel that sounds the sixth trumpet.
14b	"Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates..."	These four angels are clearly demons since elect or holy angels are not bound (cf. 1 Pet 3:9; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). The Euphrates River undoubtedly refers to just that. We are provided no information in the text regarding why these angels are bound at the Euphrates river. However, historically, we know that this river, including the whole Mesopotamian region that it drains, had been the border between Israel and its enemies to the northeast, namely, Assyria and Babylonia. It was also the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire in John's day. They are particularly vicious once they are released.
15	"...kill a third of mankind..."	Their release is timed exactly for a specific (yet unnamed) hour, day, month and year. They will do more than torment man, they will kill a third of the population. The fourth seal (6:7-8) resulted in a fourth of the earth's population being killed. Here, we see a third of the remainder are put to death. Thus, the result of the fourth seal opening and the sixth trumpet judgment would be that over one-half of the earth's population is killed.
16	"And the number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million..."	The combined Allied and Axis forces at the peak of WWII totaled approximately 70 million. So, it is not hard to understand how the demonic forces of Satan could total 200 million.
17	"...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..."	Red (fire), blue (hyacinth flower), and yellow (brimstone – sulfur-like) breastplates covered both horses and riders. Their armor was defensive. Lions are terrifying (cf. 10:3), fierce (cf. v. 8), and destructive (cf. 13:2). Normal horses do not breath fire, smoke, and brimstone.  Some interpreters have suggested that what they represent are modern weapons that shoot both forward and backward, such as missiles. This force described here is connected to the army from the East that crosses a dried-up Euphrates River (Rev 16:12). A large invasion from the East and the North is predicted to occur in the end times by Daniel (Dan 11:44). However, to connect Revelation 9:13ff to the description found in Revelation 16:12 and Daniel 11:44 would require that the forces described here be interpreted symbolically.
20-21	"...did not repent of the works	Elsewhere in Scripture, the phrase "the works of their hands"

	<p>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 immortality nor of their thefts.”</p>	<p>refers to idolatry (e.g. Deut. 4:28; 27:15; 31:29; 2 Kings 19:18; 22:17; 2 Chron. 32:19; 34:25; Ps. 115:4; 135:15; Isa. 2:8; 17:8; 37:19; Jer. 1:16; 10:3, 9; 25:6, 7, 14; 32:30; 44:8; Hos. 14:3; Mic. 5:13; Hag. 2:14; Acts 7:41). Idolatry is ultimately nothing but the worship of demons – a practice that is usually attended by sorcery, magic (demonic manifestations), and immorality (sexual deviant practices). The Greek word translated “sorceries” is <i>pharmakon</i> (Gr. φαρμακων). This is an obvious reference to drug use – a practice that often attends occult rituals. It is very obvious that those addicted to illicit drugs often or eventually engage in stealing to fund their practice.</p>
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