

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Bottomless Pit Locusts

Rev. 8:13-9:11

INTRODUCTION:

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 8:13-9:11 (NASB)

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!"

⁹ 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. ⁴ 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.

⁷ 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.

Prayer

This is one of the strangest passages that we have come across in the Bible. It is pretty bazaar stuff. As we see scorpion like locusts swarming out of the smoke of a bottomless pit. Then we see horses from the East that have fire and smoke and brimstone proceeding from their mouths and have tails like serpents with heads which causes much harm and torment.

This, of course, has caused a lot of fanciful interpretations to emerge from many so-called Bible prophecy experts who have propped up over the last fifty years or so. They have had an absolute field day with these visions. And I am sure that any of you who have

spent any time in Bible prophecy books, prophecy broadcasts, or prophecy conferences have been subjected to many of these fanciful interpretations.

But for our part, the good news is that these visions are not as complicated as they sound. Nor are the interpretations as bazaar as they have been made out to be. On the contrary, what is being shown here in this vision is actually a pretty straight forward depiction of the very terrifying way God's judgment will intensify as we draw nearer and nearer to the time of Christ's return.

The first four bowls referred to judgments upon the earth. The reference to 1/3 suggests that the judgments are partial judgments pointing to a final judgment. As the trumpet blasts continue the judgments become more intense and closer to the final judgment. We also discover that they will begin to strike directly at rebellious humanity.

Is this saying that only unbelievers are left on earth during these woes? No! We will see that that these woes are directed only at "**the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads**". So God's people are on earth, but they are sealed and protected from these woes.

The three woes are introduced by an eagle flying in the midheaven who announces these final trumpet blasts as a series of woes. Saying "**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 eagle represents an angel of God who is sent out to declare that the next three trumpet blasts is going to intensify the judgment of God.

BODY:

I. THE FALLEN STAR AND THE BOTTOMLESS PIT.

Revelation 9:1-2 (NASB)

9 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.

John hears this fifth angel blow his trumpet. And then he sees a star falling from heaven to earth. We are told the star was given a key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.

Right away, our first question is "Who or what is this star?"

If we look elsewhere in scripture, as we always want to do, it seems clear that this star is Satan.

Jesus makes mention of the falling of Satan when He is talking to seventy of His followers who were going out ahead of Him into the cities where Jesus was going to come.

Luke 10:10-20 (NASB)

¹⁰ But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off *in protest* against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' ¹² I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

¹³ **“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴ But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the **judgment** than for you. ¹⁵ And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be **brought down to Hades!**”**

¹⁶ “The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.”

¹⁷ The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” ¹⁸ And He said to them, **“I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. ¹⁹ Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. ²⁰ Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”**

The fallen angel in verse 1 (Satan) was given the key or authority over the bottomless pit or abyss and its contents. However, Christ is ultimately the One who owns this key (or has control over it), because He has overcome Satan and now possesses **"the keys of death and of Hades"**.

We see that in Rev. 1 when John saw Christ in his first vision.

Revelation 1:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Neither Satan nor his evil servants can any longer unleash the forces of evil on earth unless they are given power to do so by the resurrected Christ.

God and the Lamb are in ultimate control of Satan's realm. And the saints are to remember this when they feel the forces of evil direct their wrath against them. They will understand the self-destruction that is happening to the followers of Antichrist. There is a grand purpose which God is working through it all, which is a basis for hope and encouragement for Christians.

This "fallen star" is the same one that we read of in Rev. 12 where we read of this war that broke out in heaven and the "Ancient Serpent", who is called the devil and Satan, was thrown down to the earth.

Revelation 12:7-10 (NASB)

⁷ 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.

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

So it is clear that this "fallen star" that came crashing down to earth refers to Satan.

What John is saying is that "I saw him! I saw him as a star fallen star from heaven". Notice that John does not say that he saw Satan FALLING from heaven, does he? John saw him as a star who had FALLEN. So he did not have a vision of that particular event. It means that John is seeing him as this FALLEN one. Then John says that he sees a key given to him. It is the key to the bottomless pit. We have already seen in Revelation that "keys" represent authority. So here, Satan is given authority over the abyss and what the abyss contains. Then John sees Satan given permission to open the bottomless pit.

Dense smoke arises from the abyss when the angel opens it. The smoke darkens both the sun and the air. Darkening of the sun and other part of the cosmos has already been seen to connote judgment. We saw this same reference to judgment in the Egyptian locust plagues in Exodus. **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.**

Fire, smoke, and darkness are all signs of judgment. So what we see coming out of this abyss is judgment.

II. THE TORMENTING LOCUSTS.

Revelation 9:3-6 (NASB)

³ Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ⁴ 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.

Locusts come out of the smoke and descend upon the earth. But these are not normal locusts. We are told that they were given power like the power of scorpions. And we are told that these locusts are not allowed to devour any vegetation. Historically, when God has brought locusts judgments like He did with the eighth plague upon Egypt, that was the judgment. The locusts destroyed all of the Egyptian's crops and fruit of the trees that was still standing after the hail plague. But these locusts are not allowed to harm the vegetation. Instead they are told to harm people. And specifically one group of people. Those who do not have the seal of God on their forehead.

There is a lot of recapitulation in Revelation. You see the same thing repeated multiple times in Revelation. So when John talks about **"only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads"** you know what that refers to, right? Remember in chapter 7 we saw the sealing of the 144,000 on their foreheads that represented all of the people of God? We looked at why it was symbolized that way and, to verify it, we jumped ahead to chapter 22 where we then see those with the name of God on their foreheads now in heaven. It is not a literal 144,000 people, but as Rev. 7:9 tells us it is **"a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes"**.

So here, the only ones that they can harm are those **who ARE NOT Christians**. They are to harm unbelievers. John is told that they are allowed to do this for a period of five months. Why five months? Well five months is a typical life cycle of a locust. So it is

fitting that five months would be used. We do not take numbers literally in Revelation. Instead we look at them symbolically. What this is saying is that these creatures coming out of the abyss are allowed to **torment** as long as they exist. When Christ comes again, these demons will be cast into the fiery furnace.

If you remember, the tenth and last Egyptian plague was the killing of all of the firstborn in the land of Egypt from Pharaoh on down including the cattle. The Israelites were told to sacrifice a lamb and put some of the blood on their door posts and beam over the door. (This was their mark of God.) When the death angel passed through, those with the mark were spared just as we see here in Revelation.

Exodus 12:30 (NASB)

³⁰ Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead.

Just as the torment of the Egyptians was brutal, the torment inflicted upon the unbelievers will be intense. It is likened to being stung by a scorpion. The sting or torment of these locusts will bring terrible pain, suffering, and misery upon unbelievers. Yet, verse 5 tells us that these creatures are not allowed to kill them. They are not allowed to take the lives of those they are tormenting. Nevertheless, the pain and the misery, would be so great, that they will seek death. They would prefer to die rather than continue to live under the agony and misery that is being inflicted upon them. This is the mission of these locusts that are coming out of the abyss.

Then John describes what these creatures look like in this vision.

Revelation 9:7-10 (NASB)

⁷ 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.

This is not like any locust that any of us have ever seen on earth. So what are these creatures? Well, once again, this is where the so-called Bible prophecy experts have really chimed in with some very creative interpretations.

I can't resist, Hal Lindsey, who wrote *The Late Great Planet Earth*, said these locusts were actually Bell Huey helicopter gunships. And that the sting in their tails was the nerve gas that they shoot out of the tails of these helicopters. Since this helicopter was built starting in 1952, modern experts would insist that it would have to be a much newer version. However, this is the type of fanciful interpretations that we hear. He is far from alone from taking this vision and trying to apply some modern military application to it.

The Revelation 9 Locust Hoax



L.A. Marzulli is one who attempts to interpret Revelation "literally". He was notified of a creature that was discovered on the side of a highway by a 13-year-old Mexican boy who didn't know what it was. He ultimately turned it over to a well known Mexican investigative journalist named Jaime Maussan. The creature was examined in Mexico, and the x-rays enabled researchers to see that the creature possessed a full skeletal structure. The x-rays even showed that the creature's left leg had been broken at one point and there was #7 birdshot in the body. In addition, DNA testing was done, and they reported that the DNA did not match any known animal.

In July of 2016, Marzulli reported the creature at the Prophecy Watchers Conference in Colorado Springs, CO.

Somewhere around mid-September, the creature arrived in Los Angeles for further testing. It was presented to two veterinarians who looked through their microscopes and declared that it "looked" real. Then they took it to a small side table and began to take samples from it for DNA testing. About an hour and a half into taking DNA samples, the skin of the creature, that had been stored in formaldehyde, started drying out and they discovered what turned out to be a wooden toothpick with globs of glue on each end. It was an elaborate hoax.

Then they had a zoologist take the thing apart and found the arms were made of toothpicks and that real bat wings had been glued on to a frame. The tail was a real bat's tail and the stinger was made from a squirrel claw.

On Sept. 27, 2016 Marzulli appeared on Prophecy Watchers studios with a book that he already had written and published about the creature called *Nephilim Hybrids*. With book in hand he had to declare the creature a hoax. The sad thing is that, if you search on the internet, for this story today, all you see is website after website reporting the story from 2016. Everyone rushes to get the information out there, but once it is discovered to be a hoax, no one is willing to add that to their story. So there are still people out there making it seem as though the Revelation 9 creature has been found.

See how weird the interpretations can get when we apply the wrong genre to the scripture! The genre here is apocalyptic. We interpret apocalyptic writings as symbolic.

III. THE INTERPRETATION.

So, I ask once again, what are these creatures? The answer can be found by looking at the context and comparing that to other scriptures. The context is really clear.

Revelation 9:11 (NASB)

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.

The transliteration of Abaddon in Hebrew is "destruction" and Apollyon in Greek is "destroyer".

So who is the king over the "locusts" coming from the bottomless pit?

It is Satan, the fallen star, that has been given authority over the abyss.

Who are the "locusts"?

The "locusts" that Satan has been given authority to release are **demons**. Authority was given to these demons to cause torment on **unbelievers**, just as scorpions on earth is given the power to sting.

These are not military helicopters coming out of a bottomless pit and they are not physical creatures, but spiritual demons (fallen angels). Demons are symbolized in this way for a very good reason. Locusts throughout the Old Testament always symbolized judgment. We see that in Exodus chapter 10 in the eighth (and last) plague. It is also found in Joel 2 where God actually associates the trumpet blasts with the last day judgments and it speaks of this terrible locust invasion that darkens everything. The trumpet blast clearly has this prophecy in mind as this locust army that Joel describes portrays these demon riders emerging from the bottomless pit. He does so in order to highlight just how destructive these demonic forces are. This torment is so terrible that people seek death as an escape from it. That is why their tail is described as scorpion's tail. It is not because they are helicopters or physical creatures that have these curled up little tails, but because they inflict this sort of pain. This is a physical and emotional pain caused by **sin** that is so great it would make you want to die.

We always want to consider how this would have impacted John's original audience in the first centuries? What is the meaning of this text to the original audience? To the original audience, this made all the sense in the world. They knew the devastation that locusts bring and they lived in an area that was infested with scorpions and understood the intense pain of their sting.

When we read these passages, it is tempting to try to apply it to our time and say, "No scorpions around here! Not many destructive locusts either, so it must be helicopters".

These demons would inflict upon the ungodly such torment so as to create a **spiritual famine**. An emptiness, like the locusts destroying all of the crops. These demonic forces and the torment that they inflict on the ungodly will leave them empty and miserable. Satan is given this authority so he could tempt mankind with sin that seems to be

pleasurable and for a short time it may be. But in the end it causes torment to his own followers.

That is the irony about this. Unlike Christ, Who blesses us by forgiving us of our sins and giving us eternal life with Him, Satan does not bless those who serve him. People who worship idols and earthly pleasures somehow think they are awarded for doing so. But what we see is the complete opposite. Just as locusts, they strip you of your life and leave you empty and miserable. How often do we **SEE** that in our world today. People who seek worldly things like immorality, illicit sex, drugs, and drunkenness for their own pleasure in the end are devastated by those decisions. Not only in this life, but eternally after death as well. That is what this imagery is meant to show us. This is a judgment from God on unbelievers for the purpose of bringing them to repentance. As men fall further from God, these judgments will intensify. With this judgment, He gives Satan authority over these demonic forces to torment his own.

The bright spot of this is that, for the Christian, we are safe. God does not allow these demons to harm any of His people when we are living a moral life patterned after Christ. It reminds me of Job. God tells Satan, "Here is what you can do, but you cannot do this". Satan always has to stay in his lane. Because any authority that has been granted to Satan is still under the overall sovereignty of God.

CONCLUSION:

Because of Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection, Jesus has been given authority over all heaven and earth. He has established a new kingdom. When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are promised that we become children of God and part of His eternal kingdom. Our testimony and faithfulness even unto death will allow us to overcome.

This is the Day!