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First Baptist Church ~ Covington, Louisiana

Waylon Bailey, Pastor

Revelation 9:1-21 - *Four trumpets are completed. The final three are described as "woes"; that is, curses.*

[1] And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key of the shaft of the bottomless pit;

The fifth trumpet prompts an angel to open the bottomless pit. Smoke pours forth and out of the smoke comes locust – hellish locusts.

Remember that the trumpets indicate a warning. God wants people to repent (v.21)

William Hendricksen notes "that this trumpet may represent those times in history when it has seemed as if all hell has been loosed on earth. "Under the symbolism of a locust – plague John describes the powers and influences of hell operating in the hearts and lives of wicked men."

The 1st four trumpets have involved the earth. The final three involve the spirit world.

The fallen star may be a fallen angel who introduces hell to earth.

Luke 10:18 describes Satan "fallen as lightning from the sky."

Satan rebelled against God.

The star fallen from heaven opens the pit, meaning that he invites evil and fills the world with demons (this, or course, has occurred).

Verses 2-4: The first four trumpets brought scourges of nature. The fifth trumpet signals an attack against humans – all evil men "who have not the sign of God on their foreheads". (v.4)

[2] he opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.

The smoke is the smoke of deception and delusion, of sin and sorrow that is constantly pouring up out of hell.

[3] Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth;

Both locusts and scorpions may be symbolic pictures of destruction and pain.

The destructive power of locusts can be seen in Joel's prophecy (Joel 1:1-7; 2:1-22; see also the plagues of Egypt concerning locusts, Exodus 10:4-15)

[4] they were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green growth or any tree, but only those of mankind who have not the seal of God upon their foreheads;

This power is given to the devil to deceive humans. The devil – not God – is responsible for this wickedness.

[5] they were allowed to torture them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torture was like the torture of a scorpion, when it stings a man.

God's mercy is seen in the fact that God has held back from these monsters the power to inflict death and that this will last for five months (half of ten, a limited and incomplete time).

[6] And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death will fly from them.

Seeking death shows the horror of this woe.

[7] In appearance the locusts were like horses arrayed for battle; on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces,

[8] their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth;

[9] they had scales like iron breastplates, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle.

[10] They have tails like scorpions, and stings, and their power of hurting men for five months lies in their tails.

[11] They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

These monsters are led by the angel of the bottomless pit. Apollyon means "destroyer."

Remember Satan comes "to kill, steal, and destroy."

[12] The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.

This completes the first of the three woes.

[13] Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God,

The sixth angel blows his trumpet, the sixth trumpet pictures a terrible war, a war which pictures all wars past, present, and future. This war is pictured as a punishment and a warning voice for unbelievers.

Men are again linked to the demonic powers of evil. The result is catastrophic. All people should repent, but they don't.

John's teaching is clear and explains a great truth to believers of how humans can go beyond any bounds in their descent into devil worship and vulgarity.

The voice from the four horns of the golden altar, a symbol of mercy. God hears the prayers of His people and responds.

[14] saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

The Euphrates represents Assyria and Babylon, that is, the wicked world. These are wicked angels who relish the idea of plunging mankind into war.

[15] So the four angels were released, who had been held ready for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, to kill a third of mankind.

[16] The number of the troops of cavalry was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number.

The armies can't be numbered! The number is 200 million, which is a symbolic number.

[17] And this was how I saw the horses in my vision: the riders wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulphur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulphur issued from their mouths.

[18] By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulphur issuing from their mouths.

[19] For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; their tails are like serpents, with heads, and by means of them they wound.

[20] The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot either see or hear or walk;

[21] nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their immorality or their thefts.

We now see God's purpose. The trumpets warn unbelievers and call them to repent.

This verse tells us what we have seen in the lives of unbelievers. Even though they are warned they – for the most part – refuse to repent. Evil exercises a tremendous sway over the minds and hearts of men and women.

The pull to worship that which is false and evil is so great that they often cannot let go their unholy union with sin and the devil.

Verse 20 could represent the first tablet of the law (10 commandments with verse 21 representing the second.)

Why doesn't God bring the judgment immediately?

He is a loving God who is slow to anger. Simon Peter expressed God's mercy

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Obviously, it is time for the seventh trumpet and the third woe.