

CHRONOLOGICAL SECTION TWO: THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS (REV. 8-9)

1. THE SEVENTH SEAL AND THE RELEASING OF THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS (REV. 8:1-6)

Rev. 8:1-6 When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. ³ And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, ⁴ and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

⁶ Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

- a. The seventh seal is the final seal to release judgment, just prior to unrolling the scroll, finally revealing its long-anticipated contents. The seventh seal judgment upon the Antichrist is the strengthening of the prayer movement at the hand of angels, offering heavenly incense, as directed by the Spirit (vs. 3-4). This results in fire being cast to earth (v. 5), which is followed by the seven angels who have the seven trumpets preparing themselves to sound (Rev. 8:6).
- b. The seventh seal is the most misunderstood and by far, the greatest in intensity, having nine aspects which include:
 - i Silence, as the contents are made known;
 - ii Seven trumpets are given to seven angels;
 - iii An angel is given heavenly incense to offer upon the golden altar;
 - iv The prayers of all the saints are received by God, strengthening the prayer movement;
 - v Divine fire is cast to the earth;
 - vi Cosmic disturbances of noises, thunderings and lightnings occur in the sky;
 - vii An earthquake occurs on earth;
 - viii Seven angels prepare themselves to sound;
 - ix Followed by the seven bowl judgments (Rev. 15-16).
- c. **Silence in heaven:** When the seventh seal is opened there will be silence in heaven for the first recorded time since its creation. There will be a dreadful, yet glorious silence in heaven due to seeing the seven angels and coming from the awful, yet wonderful anticipation of the release of God's judgment, contained within the newly opened scroll (Rev. 5:1-5). The certainty of the soon coming judgment causes all to be speechless, as there is no adequate response for what will come.
 - i Silence will envelop heaven and will cover the earth, as Jesus begins to release His final judgments.

Ps. 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations...

Hab. 2:20 The LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.

Zech. 2:13 *Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!*

Zeph. 1:7 *Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD; for the day of the LORD is at hand...*

- ii The terrifying silence of the seventh seal stands in great contrast to the other six seals, which are clearly associated with sound. The first four are released by a “voice like thunder”. The fifth describes the intercessory “cry” from beneath the altar and the sixth describe the kings of the earth “crying out”.

- d. Interestingly, under the Old Covenant it took the priesthood “about half an hour” or 30 minutes to offer the prescribed incense in the temple (Lev. 16:12-13).

Lk. 1:9 *The custom of the priesthood... to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. ¹⁰ The multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.*

2. HEAVENLY HELP FOR THE END-TIME PRAYER MOVEMENT (REV. 8:3-4)

- a. **Heavenly incense:** the “much incense” offered by the angel consists of the intercession of Jesus and the intercession of the Spirit, along with the prayers of all the saints, both past and present, including saints in heaven and upon the earth, which strengthens the prayer movement. Whenever the prayer movement in heaven is strengthened and increases, there is an earthly correspondence of increase upon the prayer movement on the earth in the grace of God (Isa. 42:10-16; Mal. 1:11; Rev. 22:17). In the fifth seal, the prayer movement was strengthened by the martyrs in heaven (Rev. 6:9-11). In the seventh seal it is strengthened by heavenly incense at the hand of angels (Rev. 8:1-7).

Mal. 1:11 *For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations,” says the LORD of hosts.*

Rev. 22:17 *And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”*

- b. **Premise:** The power of our prayers ultimately come from the generosity of the Father’s heart in desiring to answer them (Mt. 7:7-11), Jesus ministry and work upon the cross that makes them acceptable (1 Pet. 2:4-10), and the Holy Spirit’s activity upon earth and in heaven, helping us throughout the entire process of our praying (Rom. 8:26-27; Rev. 22:17). The heavenly incense is a composite of these three realities.

Mt. 7:7-11 ⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

1 Pet. 2:5 *....you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

Rom. 8:26-27 ²⁶ *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because^[a] the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

- c. The prayers of the saints are imperfect because of human weakness. Even so, what best helps our prayers are the intercessory prayers of Jesus and the Holy Spirit arising as heavenly incense. There are divinely ordained moments of catalytic increase when the “spirit of prayer” energizes God’s people.

Zech. 12:10 *I will pour on the house of David... the Spirit of grace and supplication...*

- d. **Heavenly Fire:** Rev. 8:3-5 describes activity similar to what Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 9-10) when an angel took coals of fire from the same heavenly altar to scatter over Jerusalem (Ezek. 10:2, 6-7). This occurred after the righteous were sealed for protection from judgment (Ezek. 9:3-7) similar to Rev. 7:1-8.

Ezek. 10:2 *Then He spoke to the man [angel] clothed with linen, and said, “Fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.”*

- e. The seventh seal picks up where the sixth seal left off, continuing with similar cosmic disturbances as seen in Rev. 6:12-17. After the silence of Rev. 8:1, the fire cast to earth is followed by “noises, thunderings, lightnings and an earthquake”.

3. RELEASING THE SEVEN TRUMPET JUDGMENTS BY INTERCESSION

Rev. 8:6 *Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.*

- a. The trumpet judgments have three purposes: judgment on the Antichrist’s empire, a redemptive warning to unbelievers, and vindicating and rallying the saints. Trumpets warn and declare that more is coming. Their judgments are limited to 1/3 as highlighted 12 times in Revelation 8:7-12.
- b. The seven trumpets are **literal** (not merely symbolic), **future** (their fulfilment is future), **numbered** (released in a sequential order) and **progressive** (increasing in intensity). The first four trumpets punish the Antichrist’s empire through destroying natural resources that support life, yet without directly touching people. The next two trumpets are intensified in directly afflicting humans by demonic torment, then killing 1/3 of humanity.
- c. The trumpet and bowl judgments parallel the ten plagues of Egypt against Pharaoh (Ex. 7-12). They will destroy the resources of the Antichrist’s armies. The walls of Jericho fell after Joshua blew seven trumpets (Josh. 6). This is a prophetic picture of the fall of the Antichrist kingdom.
- d. As Moses released the plagues, or tribulation, on Egypt through prayer and as the first apostles released God’s power through prayer in the book of Acts, so God’s power will be released by the Praying Church. The miracles of Exodus and Acts will be combined and multiplied on a global level. The OT prophets prophesied that the miracles of Egypt would occur in the end times (Mic. 7:15; Isa. 10:22-25; 11:12-16; 30:30; Jer. 16:14-15; 23:7-8; Ezek. 38:22; Joel 2:30).

Jn. 14:12 *The works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do.*

Mic. 7:15 *As in the days when you came out of ... Egypt, I will show them wonders.*

- e. The book of Revelation is the *end-time book of Acts*, given so we may walk with a unified prayer focus by knowing the sequence of the judgments. It is a *canonized prayer manual*

that equips the Church to partner in prayer with Jesus. Imagine hundreds of millions unified with this *infallible prayer guide* that reveals Jesus' action plan. The end-time prayer movement will need global unified prayer to release this level of authority against the Antichrist to shift history.

- f. The primary theme of the book of Revelation is God's judgment against the Antichrist's empire being released by the end-time victorious Church under Jesus' leadership. The secondary theme is tribulation against the saints from the Antichrist (Rev. 12:12; 13:4, 8). In the book of Acts, some were martyred, yet its main theme was the acts of the Spirit through the praying apostles.
- g. Some are waiting to be raptured so as to escape the Tribulation. Jesus is waiting on the Church to be prepared in love, wisdom and faith to be victorious and full of glory. We need not fear the Great Tribulation as powerless victims who are seeking to escape it.

2 Pet. 3:12 *Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.*

4. The seven trumpet judgements

- a. The **second chronological section** (Rev. 8:1-9:21), details the "sounding" of the first six trumpet judgments by angels, under Jesus leadership in partnership with the saints (Rev. 8:2, 6-7, 8, 10, 12; 9:1, 13; 22:17). The seventh trumpet is sounded in Rev. 11:15-19 to initiate the third chronological section "Jesus' second coming procession" and the "rapture of the saints" (Mt. 24:30-31; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thes. 4:15-17).
 - i **First trumpet** (Food Supply): fire - burning 1/3 of the earth's vegetation (Rev. 8:7)
 - ii **Second trumpet** (Food Supply): 1/3 of the sea becomes blood - fish and ships destroyed (Rev. 8:8-9)
 - iii **Third trumpet** (Water Supply): poisoning 1/3 of the fresh water - rivers and springs (Rev. 8:10-11)
 - iv **Fourth trumpet** (Light, Energy): darkening 1/3 of the earth's light (Rev. 8:12)
 - v **Fifth trumpet** (Torment): demonic locusts that torment for 5 months (Rev. 9:1-12)
 - vi **Sixth trumpet** (Death): 1/3 of the earth dies - 200 million demons (Rev. 9:13-21)
 - vii **Seventh trumpet** (Defeat): Jesus' second coming procession and rapture of the church (Rev. 11:15-19)
- b. Just as Jesus, the Lamb of God, opens each seal, releasing judgment against the kingdom of darkness (Rev. 6:1), so also He **commissions** the 7 angels with the 7 trumpets (Ps. 103:20; 104:4; Mt. 24:31; 26:53; Rev. 1:1; 22:6), who stand before God (Lk. 1:19), as He is now the One holding the scroll (Rev. 5:5, 7-10).
- c. Jesus commissions each angel, sounding one by one, releasing a very specific and terrifying judgment against the kingdom of darkness not God's people. All **7 trumpets** are released against the Antichrist Empire by angels under Jesus authority in **partnership** with the "**praying Church**" (Ps. 149:6-9; Isa. 42:10-16; Mt. 16:18-19; Lk. 18:7-8; Rev. 5:8; 6:10; 8:3-5;

9:13; 14:18; 16:7; 22:17), even as He released the 10 plagues of Egypt against Pharaoh through the prophetic decrees and prayers of Moses (Ex. 7-12; Mic. 7:15; Isa. 11:14-16).

- d. The **purpose** of all 7 trumpets is to
- i release judgment against the kingdom of darkness, thus hindering Satan and the Antichrist from spreading evil and from persecuting the saints,
 - ii cause the Church to mature in unity, purity and power in preparation for inheriting an unshakable kingdom,
 - iii cause unbelievers to cry out for salvation, as their confidence is severely shaken by the removal of those things that they falsely trust in and by having to face the reality of their own mortality (Hag. 2:6-9; Heb. 12:25-29).

Hag. 2:6-7 *I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; ⁷ and I will shake all nations, and they [nations] shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory, says the LORD...*

- e. We don't pray for these judgments now, but only after the Antichrist is revealed (2 Thes. 2:3-4) and the "abomination of desolation" set up (Mt. 24:15), when people begin taking the "mark" (Rev. 13:16-18), thus becoming "**reprobate**", where they don't desire to and won't ever repent (Rom. 1:28; 2 Thes. 2:9-12; 1 Tim. 4:1-4). They will severely persecute the saints, therefore God has ordained judgment to hinder, then stop and finally remove them from the planet (Ps. 7, 35, 55, 58, 59, 69, 79, 109, 137, 139).

5. PROMINENT END-TIME SIGNS: BLOOD, FIRE AND SMOKE

- a. The prophet Joel prophesied that **blood, fire** and **smoke** would be combined as the most prominent "**signs of the end-times**" (Joel 2:28-32). The first three trumpets involve all three. "Smoke" is usually underestimated, but is just as significant as the "fire" and "blood". Take the devastation of 9/11 or various volcanic eruptions with ash and debris, and multiply it beyond measure on a global scale to get an idea of these trumpet judgment events. Peter quoted Joel, emphasizing these three "signs" as well (Acts 2:16-19).

Acts 2:17-20 *"And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; ²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. (Joel 2:28-32)*

- b. Jesus used the actual word "**signs**", concerning God's judgments (Lk. 21:11). When God releases His judgments, they aren't arbitrary, but each one is a **literal sign**, deliberately designed to communicate a very specific message, meant to impact the nations in a very specific way to provoke a very specific response.

Lk. 21:11 *And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.*

- c. Since the trumpets are forecast in the "**Ten plagues of Egypt**" (Ex. 7-12; Micah 7:15; Isa. 11:14-16), it's not surprising that they show forth the "**signs**" of blood, fire and smoke. The trumpet judgments parallel the Egyptian plagues in **exposing the inferiority of false gods**

(Ex. 12:12; 18:10-11; Num. 33:4). Jesus will display His power as superior to the Antichrist, as he will be unable to explain away or solve this dilemma.

Num. 33:4 Also on their gods the LORD had executed judgments. (Ex. 12:12; 18:10-11; Num. 33:4)

Zeph. 2:11 The LORD... will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth; people shall worship Him,

6. FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS: SUPERNATURAL ACTS OF GOD THROUGH NATURE (REV. 8:7-12)

- a. There is a special recognisable relationship of the “**first four trumpets**” having similar characteristics, such as the **violent language** (thrown 2x, fell 2x, struck) of the **judgment** through **nature** (earth, sea, water, heaven) released at the hand of **angels** sounding trumpets. Jesus has all authority over nature (Rev. 14:6-7).
- b. The first four trumpets are “supernatural acts of God through nature” sent to destroy the Antichrist’s resources and his followers, while displaying Jesus’ power as superior to his. God’s judgments against the wicked in the “trumpets” affect various areas of the environment (trees, grass, sea, rivers, sky), food supply (vegetation, meat), sea trade (fish), water supply and energy (light and heat from sun, moon and stars). They are not merely “natural acts” portrayed in symbolic language, but are the supernatural power of God using and moving through God’s natural creation, affecting it in a supernatural way that has never been seen before in human history at this magnitude.
- c. The trumpets have a similar three-fold organisation like the seals (4-2-1). The first four trumpets are “**supernatural acts of God through nature**”, targeting the **material creation**. The fifth and sixth trumpets are “**supernatural acts of God through demons**”, targeting the **moral creation**, affecting unbelievers bodies, as God releases demons to afflict, torment and kill. The seventh trumpet is a “**supernatural act of God through Jesus**”, as He targets the kingdoms of this world and dashes them to pieces (Rev. 11:15-19).

Rev. 8:7-12⁷ *The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.*

⁸ *The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.* ⁹ *A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.*

¹⁰ *The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.* ¹¹ *The name of the star is Wormwood.*^[b] *A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.*

¹² *The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.*

- d. **The first trumpet** will destroy the food supply in burning 1/3 of the earth’s vegetation (Rev. 8:7). A supernatural meteor storm-like event with hail and fire will burn the earth’s trees and grass.

- e. **The second trumpet** will destroy food supply and sea trade (Rev. 8:8-9). A huge burning object like a mountain will fall from heaven, turning 1/3 of the sea into blood and destroying 1/3 of the sea and ships. This probably refers to one specific sea i.e. Mediterranean Sea (Rev. 18:18; Isa. 2:12-16) as it is in the singular. The second trumpet corresponds to the first plague of Egypt where the rivers became as blood, causing the fish to die and filling the land with pollution (Ex. 7:14-25; Ps. 105:2 9; 78:43-44).
- f. **The third trumpet** will poison 1/3 of the earth's fresh water supply (Rev. 8:10-11). A great burning star will fall from heaven. This meteoric mass will poison the fresh water (rivers and springs), causing the inland fresh water supply to be poisoned. The saints will be protected as they were during the Egyptian plague on the Nile river (Ex. 7:14-25).
- g. **The fourth trumpet** will destroy light and heat in darkening 1/3 of the sun, moon, and stars (Rev. 8:12). This supernatural work of God will affect heat, health, agriculture, navigation, etc. Our lack of understanding of how this will occur is not a sufficient reason to see this as symbolic. This trumpet corresponds to the ninth Egyptian plague, yet Israel was spared (Ex. 10:21-23).

Ex. 10:21-23 Over the land of Egypt ...²² there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days ...²³ the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

- h. The first five trumpets (Rev. 8:7-12) parallel the plagues of Egypt. The first (8:7) parallels the seventh plague of fire with blood (Ex. 9:22-26). The second and third (8:8-11) parallel the first plague of the Nile turning to blood (Ex. 7:19-25). The fourth (8:12) parallels the ninth plague of darkness (Ex. 10:21-23) and the fifth (9:1-11), the eighth plague of locusts (Ex. 10:12-20).

7. UNDERSTANDING THE FIFTH AND SIXTH TRUMPETS (REV. 9:1-21)

- a. **The three woes:** The fifth, sixth and seventh trumpets are associated together, being declared as the **"three woes"** (Rev. 8:13; 9:12; 11:14). Jesus used the word "woe" 23x in pronouncing imminent judgment. Paul and Jude 1x each and the angel of Rev. 8:13 used it 3x, totalling 28x that "woe" is used in the NT.

Rev. 8:13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

- b. The 5th and 6th trumpets release two demonic armies on earth. In one sense, the demons are released by God through the praying Church and in another they come in answer to the worshipful prayers of their devoted followers (Rev. 13:4, 8). In the final years before the Lord's return the primary conflict on earth will be between **"two houses of prayer"** that are global, supernaturally empowered and led by music with singing.

Rev. 13:3-4 And I saw... his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marvelled and followed the beast.⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast...

- c. Many will be deluded in thinking that Satan will give them favour for their loyal worship to him (Rev. 9:20-21). However, Satan is a liar and murderer from the beginning (Jn. 8:44). He only comes to steal, kill and destroy (Jn 10:10). His demons hate the people who worship

them as much as Christians, because they are filled with anger and hatred toward the human race who bear God's image (Gen. 1:27; 9:6). Beginning at the fifth and sixth trumpets, Satan's hatred begins to be openly manifest to all who are paying attention.

Rev. 9:20 *But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood...*

- d. As in the first four seals, God will continue to honour the free-will of the wicked by "turning them over" to the sin they so desperately love (1 Sam. 8; Rom. 1:18-32), along with the demons that they worship.

Rom. 1:24-28 *Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness...²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions...²⁸ God gave them over to a debased mind...*

- e. In these trumpets, people will be "**turned over to Satan**" to experience the terrors of his rage on a global level, so they'll have insight into his deceptions and opportunity to repent before progressing too far in evil by taking the "mark of the beast" (Rev. 13:16-18), which is equal to "blasphemy against the Spirit" (Mt. 12:31-32). In **God's mercy**, He wants unbelievers to see the truth about Satan, before it's too late and they follow him into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 14:9-11). Paul followed this theology (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:19).

1 Tim. 1:19 *Some... whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

1 Cor. 5:5 *Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

- f. In the **first four seals**, God lifts His restraints off humans, so their hatred is manifest. In like manner, in the **fifth and sixth trumpets**, God lifts His restraints off the demonic realm, so their wickedness is manifest. The **fifth and sixth seals** open the heavens above the earth, releasing angelic activity (Rev. 6:9-11; 8:3-5). In contrast, the **fifth and sixth trumpets** open the demonic realm beneath the earth, releasing demonic activity.

8. FIFTH TRUMPET (TORMENT): DEMONIC LOCUSTS TORMENT FOR 5 MONTHS (REV. 9:1-11)

And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.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.³ Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth.⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.⁵ They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone.⁶ And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

⁷In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared 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 breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle.¹⁰ They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is 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.

- a. The fifth trumpet releases an army of demonic locusts who inflict great pain for five months by striking unbelievers who do not have the seal of God. The first seven verses speak of the origin of the demonic locusts (vv. 1-2), the effects of demonic locusts (vv. 3-6), and the description of demonic locusts (vv. 7-11)
- b. A “**star**” or angel “falls”, coming down from heaven with “the key” to open the bottomless pit. In Revelation, “stars” can speak of angels (Rev. 1:20; 12:4; Job 38:7) or inanimate objects (Rev. 6:13; 8:10).
- c. There is a debate whether this is a “good” or “evil” angel. The argument is focused on the meaning of the word “fallen”. Good angels are never described in Scripture as “fallen”. Therefore, if the angel “fell” in judgment, then this is an evil angel (Lk. 10:18; Rev. 12:7-9). If “fallen” means “descended” from heaven, then this is a good angel paralleling the activity of the angel who opens the bottomless pit to bind Satan in Rev. 20:1. Remember, all “fallen angels” were permanently cast to earth (Rev. 12:7-9).
- d. The star in Rev. 9:1 is an intelligent being who is able to use a “key”. Since Jesus has been given all keys or authority to open doors in heaven and earth (Mt. 16:18-19; 28:18; Rev. 1:18; 3:7-8) it would seem that the “star” is a holy angel who falls, comes down, or descends from heaven with the key to open the bottomless pit (abyss). The activity of this angel parallels that of a holy angel with the same key to the bottomless pit sent to bind Satan.

Rev. 20:1 *I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit...*

- e. **Bottomless Pit:** The bottomless pit or the abyss (Greek) is a temporary place of prison for fallen angels that will be released in the end-times (Rev. 9:1-2, 11; 11:7; 20:1-3). The bottomless pit or the “abyss” is not actually “bottomless” since it is in the earth. There is a huge shaft extending from the earth’s surface to its depths that is currently sealed and hidden from sight. The centre of the earth is 4,000 miles from the surface. The earth is literally 8,000 miles in diameter and 25,000 miles in circumference.
 - i The Antichrist beast comes from this pit (Rev. 11:7; 17:8)
 - ii Some demons are bound by chains (2 Pet. 2:4), reserved as instruments of God’s end-time judgment to inflict torment on those who receive the mark of the beast. They are not only **reserved to receive** judgment but also **reserved to release** God’s judgment as His agents during the Great Tribulation.

2 Pet. 2:4 *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment...*

Jude 6 *And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgement of the great day—*

- f. **Given Power:** It is commonly understood that God is always the One granting permission, as seen in the phrase “**it was given**” (9:1, 3, 4, 5), unless expressly stated otherwise and even then, He is still the ultimate Giver. God’s sovereignty is manifest over these demons, who can only move as far as they are allowed. The anguish of this sting was meant to cause men to repent. Multitudes will blaspheme God and refuse to repent.

- g. Divine limitations are given to these locusts in that they are not to hurt grass and trees, but only men without the seal and only for a five month period of time in which they couldn't kill anyone but only torment them (Rev. 9:4-5).

Rev. 9:4-5 *They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months... like the torment of a scorpion...*

- h. **Locusts:** These locusts are supernatural demonic beings not natural locusts. The details of this prophecy include specific names, rank, detailed description, type of torment and specific five-month period, demanding that it not be spiritualised away as figurative or symbolic. As is borne out by the description given later, these are not natural locusts, but a visual representation of the hordes of demons loosed upon the earth.
- i In Joel's day, there was a natural locust plague that was a prophetic foreshadow, alluding to the ultimate future fulfilment of this unprecedented event (Joel 1:4-6).
- ii The eighth Egyptian plague of natural locusts is a prototype of this judgment as well (Ex. 10:12). The Egyptian plague of locusts destroyed food, but it did not inflict pain on people.
- iii The locusts, while given this title because their function is similar to that of a locust, represent a divine judgment upon a wicked world. They are described as having the capacity to sting as the scorpions of the earth and as not eating the grass or green vegetation as ordinary locusts would do. Instead, they torment men in a way comparable to the torment of a scorpion. Apparently the entire human race is open to their activity except those who are sealed by God.

2 Tim.2:19 ¹⁹ *But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his"*

- iv The torment will last **five months** which corresponds to the time that a locust pillages an area (May-Sept) and the 150 days of Noah's global judgment of water (Gen. 7:24). Believers will speak this time frame to unbelievers ahead of time.

Gen. 7:24 *The waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days [5 months].*

- i. **Seal of God:** These locusts are supernatural demonic beings not natural locusts. They can distinguish between unbelievers and believers who have God's seal, which are not limited to the 144,000 in Rev. 7. The saints receive a divine sealing that gives them physical and spiritual protection. The saints aren't the objects of God's end-time judgments (Rev. 7:1-4; 9:4; 1 Thes. 1:10; 5:9; Rom. 5:9). All 21 judgments (7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls) are released in answer to the prayers of the saints.

1 Thes. 5:9 *God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord...*

- j. Unfortunately, this "sting" does not bring the desired repentance, but instead men desire death. The anguish of a scorpion sting drives men to great despair and even panic, so that men seek suicide instead of God, but are unable to do it.
- k. This is a horrible picture of domination by demons to such an extent that men lose their ability of free choice and are in agony of body and soul. What the Scriptures here convey is

that in addition to the natural plagues of the first four trumpets, now wicked men are afflicted by torment of demons.

- l. As is common in demonic affliction as recorded in the Gospels, those in the grip of demons are not free to exercise their own will and therefore are not free to take their own lives. Even the hope of death to deliver them from their present troubles is taken away from them in that dark hour. They are left to face their trial and affliction without any way of escape.
- m. John described the literal and actual demonic locust army (Rev. 9:7-11) by comparing them to horses prepared for battle wearing golden crowns with human faces. John uses “like” 8 times in describing them. He starts by describing the head, then moves down the demon’s body to their tail.
 - i **Heads:** Crowns with something like gold points to their supremacy (Rev. 14:14).
 - ii **Faces:** Human faces emphasise that these demons have human abilities like intelligence and emotion. If these demons were men then they would not be likened to men.
 - iii **Hair:** Like women's hair emphasises their human appearance.
 - iv **Teeth:** Locusts have teeth, but not strong ones like a lion with the ability to tear apart their prey.
 - v **Breastplates:** Iron speaks of durability in battle (like the other demons in Rev. 9:17).
 - vi **Wings:** Sound of chariots running into battle will cause terror.
 - vii **Tails:** Power of the sting in their tails (Rev. 9:3, 5, 10)
- n. **King:** Satan has a hierarchy, which includes a demonic king over the locusts from the bottomless pit named “**Abaddon**” (Hebrew) or “**Apollyon**” (Greek), which means **destroyer** (English), thus describing his purpose. This king is not Satan, who rules from the heavenly places and not the bottomless pit (Eph. 6:12). He is the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). Satan will be thrown into the bottomless pit after Jesus’ coming (Rev. 20:1-3).
- o. This demonic king reveals Satan’s forces as the destroyers of the souls of men and as those who can only bring affliction. When divine restraint is released, as in this instance, the true character of the evil one is manifested immediately.

9. SIXTH TRUMPET: DEATH BY DEMONIC HORSEMEN (REV. 9:12-21)

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

¹³ *Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” ¹⁵ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶ The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. ¹⁷ And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the colour of fire and of sapphire and of sulphur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulphur came out of their mouths. ¹⁸ By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulphur coming 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 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 worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, ²¹ nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.*

- a. With the sounding of the sixth trumpet, John hears a voice described as coming from the four horns of the golden altar before God. In 8:3, this altar is the scene of the offering of incense with the prayers of saints. The inference is that this judgment, like those preceding, is partially in response to the prayers of the persecuted saints on earth and a token of divine response and preparation for their deliverance.

Dan. 7:22 *The Ancient of Days [Father] came, and a judgment was made in favour of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.*

- b. The four horns seem to indicate that this altar is similar to the design of the altar of incense used in the Tabernacle and in the Temple. If the horns have significance, they refer to the sovereignty and judicial government of God.
- c. The voice instructed the sixth angel to loose the four angels declared to be bound in the great river Euphrates. The command to loose the four angels indicates that these angelic ministers of judgment are under divine control; they cannot act without express command. They are bound in or at the river Euphrates which could imply that this concerns an invasion from the lands beyond the Euphrates e.g. Iran/Iraq or beyond
- d. The four angels bound in the Euphrates River are evil angels who are loosed in order to execute this judgment. It is another instance of the loosing of wicked angels similar to the release of the demonic locusts earlier in the fifth trumpet. They all are prepared for their hour of activity much as the whale was prepared to swallow Jonah and effect divine discipline upon the prophet. It is declared that the angels' function is to slay the third part of men and that they had been prepared to fulfil this purpose at the given hour.
- e. The expression "an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year" designates not the duration of their activity but the fact that this judgment comes exactly at the hour of God's appointment.
- f. To emphasise the literalness of this judgment, John twice declared that one-third of the human race will be killed (Rev. 9:15, 18), and he told us the specific number of 200 million horsemen and what they specifically will look like. He also told us that there will be a specific hour, day, and month that the four demonic angels will be released.
- g. By 2025 AD, the world population will be about 8 billion people. After 1/4 of these die in the fourth seal in Rev. 6:8 (2 billion), about 6 billion will remain. The sixth trumpet points to an additional 1/3 of these 6 billion dying (another 2 billion), totalling 4 billion deaths in these two judgments. If 4 billion people die in the last 3½ years (1,260 days), then just over 3 million will die on average every day, or 50 million will die (death total of WWII) every two weeks. In just 3½ years, the total will be approximately 100 times the death toll of World War II.
- h. Isaiah prophesied of the time when God would destroy the wicked (Isa. 13:6-13; 24:6).

Isa. 13:9-12 Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger ... He will destroy its sinners ... ¹⁰ The stars ... will not give their light; the sun will be darkened ... ¹¹ I will punish the world for its evil ... ¹² I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold.

Isa. 24:6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.

- i. John also gives a graphic description of the horses as well as of the warriors who sit upon them and the fire, smoke and brimstone that came from their mouths. Whether these are symbols or the best description John can give of modern warfare, this is an awesome picture of an almost irresistible military force destroying all that opposes it. The terms “horses,” “lions,” and “serpents” all speak of deadly warfare.
- j. In spite of the dramatic judgment inflicted by this invading military force, those who survive are declared to be unrepentant. Such is the hardness of the human heart even though faced by worldwide destruction and divine judgment from God and a clear testimony of God’s power to deal summarily with every human soul.
- k. Society will be dominated by four primary strongholds of evil: murder, sorcery, immorality, and theft. The wheat and the tares, the righteous and the wicked, mature together at the end of the age (Mt. 13:29-30). Sin will reach its greatest heights in history with more demonized people than at any time.

Dan. 8:23 In the latter time... when the transgressors have reached their fullness...

Mt. 13:30 Let both (wheat and tares) grow together until the harvest...

- l. The Antichrist’s entire empire will have hardened hearts as Pharaoh did. God hardens the heart by turning multitudes over to the sin they love and allowing them to experience its consequences.

Rom. 1:24-28 God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts ... ²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions ... ²⁸ God gave them over to a debased mind.

- m. Though men can be made to fear God by demonstration of divine power, they are not brought to the place of repentance apart from faith in Christ and divine grace. The two closing verses of the chapter reveal an astounding picture of human depravity.