

REVELATION

The Trumpets - Part 3

Revelation 8:13

April 27, 2024

Before the 5th Angel sounded his Trumpet, John hears a vulture (eagle) announcing a Triple Woe "to the inhabitants of earth."

In Deuteronomy 28:47-49, Moses used the imagery of an eagle to indicate the swiftness by which the "nation" would destroy Israel should they choose to ignore the judgments of God and persist in open rebellion.

It also brings to mind the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:28: "Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather."

Worse judgments are coming for those who prefer darkness.

The description of the 5th and 6th Trumpets are more detailed and frightening.

- **The 5th Trumpet - 1st woe (9:1-12)**

John sees the same "Star" that had fallen to earth in the 3rd Trumpet. We already know this is Satan. Because people had chosen to reject the purity of the Gospel in favor of man-made traditions, Satan had successfully polluted the truth. Up until now, however, he has had limited freedom. As God withdraws, giving those in rebellion against Him what they want, His restraining hand is removed, giving Satan and His minions more freedom.

God has promised that all those who choose Him are protected from Satan's deceptions. All those who have rejected God and have chosen to live outside that protection are fully exposed to what Satan will bring next.

Think the Flood. A way of escape was provided for anyone who wanted it. They were told about what was coming for a really long time. Get on the boat = you are safe. Remain outside the boat = you are dead. Only 8 people chose to get on the boat.

Satan is given a key to open the abyss. A great cloud of Locusts, resembling smoke from a furnace, explodes from the abyss.

In the Old Testament, Locusts are a symbol of overwhelming judgment:

- **Exodus 10:13-15** - So Moses stretched out his staff over Egypt, and the LORD made an east wind blow across the land all that day and all that night. By morning the wind had brought the locusts; they invaded all Egypt and settled down in every area of the country in great numbers. Never before had there been such a plague of locusts, nor will there ever be again. They covered all the ground until it was black. They devoured all that was left after the hail -- everything growing in the fields and the fruit on the trees. Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt.
- **Jeremiah 51:14** - The LORD Almighty has sworn by himself: I will surely fill you with men, as with a swarm of locusts, and they will shout in triumph over you.

John uses eight symbols to describe this demonic swarm:

- **Revelation 9:7-11** - The locusts looked **like** horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something **like** crowns of gold, and their faces **resembled** human faces. Their hair was **like** women's hair, and their teeth were **like** lions' teeth. 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. They had tails and stings **like** scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon - which means "Destroyer."

This description echoes the prophecy of a locust plague in Joel 2:2-11.

These Demonic Locusts resemble a fast-moving powerful army.

They are not a real army, however, but a spiritual army.

Their weapons are scorpion-like tails, which they use to torment people.

In Isaiah 9:13-16, the prophets who teach lies are called "the tail".

John is using the imagery of Scorpion-like Locust to describe the demonic forces that will operate to overwhelm the world with the deceptions of their king - Satan the destroyer.

Paul, in his letter to the church in Ephesus, encouraged the believers to put on the full armor of God because the battle the Christian wages is not against a physical enemy, but a spiritual one.

Those who prefer to wear their own flimsy armor are no match for Satan.

This gigantic demonic swarm creates thick darkness, reminding us again of the prophecy in Joel 2, in which the locust plague caused a darkening of the sun, moon and stars.

The 5th Trumpet increases the intensity of the darkness of the 4th Trumpet. Just like those outside the ark were overwhelmed by the rising waters, so those, who prefer darkness to the light of the Gospel, will be overwhelmed by the terror and anguish of soul brought on by Satan's deceptions.

There are 2 things the demonic locust are not allowed to do:

- o They are not allowed to harm the grass, plants and trees - symbols God's people - who are protected by His seal.
Jeremiah 17:7-8 - "But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."
- o They are not allowed to kill people - only torment them for 5 months.

There is disagreement amongst scholars as to the time frame of the 5 months. The only other 5-month period mentioned in the Bible is found in Genesis (7:24; 8:3) in connection with the flood during which Noah and his family were under divine protection from the flood waters.

The 5th Trumpet, then, describes the spiritual condition of the world in the aftermath of the Enlightenment. Atheistic, human-centered philosophy replaced God-centered theology. When human reason and philosophies – which are a moving target – become the ultimate standard of truth, people are alienated from God and each other.

Jeremiah 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can understand it?

This creates a sense of loneliness, emptiness and meaninglessness. You may have 5,000 Facebook "friends", but what does that matter when you are sitting alone in the dark?

Satan all too happily fills this emptiness with lies and deceptions, causing further alienation. By rejecting the gospel, people are left defenseless against these demonic activities.

Psalm 118:8 - It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.

That brings us to Trumpet #6.

If the 5th Trumpet is an "amping up" of the 4th Trumpet, then the 6th Trumpet is an "amping up" of the 5th Trumpet.

Spiritual darkness has now been given the ability to kill.

- **The 6th Trumpet - 2nd woe (9:13-21)**

At the sound of the 6th Trumpet, John hears a voice coming from the 4 horns of the Golden Altar of Incense. The voice orders the release of the 4 angels *"who are bound at the river Euphrates."*

In the Old Testament, the Euphrates River separated God's people from her enemies.

- **Joshua 1:4** - Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates -- all the Hittite country -- to the Great Sea {the Mediterranean} on the west.
- **1 Kings 14:15** - And the LORD will strike Israel, so that it will be like a reed swaying in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land that he gave to their forefathers and scatter them beyond the River {the Euphrates} because they provoked the LORD to anger by making Asherah poles.
- **Isaiah 7:20** - In that day the Lord will use a razor hired from beyond the River {the Euphrates} -- the king of Assyria -- to shave your head and the hair of your legs, and to take off your beards also.

Whose attacks are described as an overwhelming flood sweeping over Israel:

- **Isaiah 8:7-8** - therefore the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the River -- the king of Assyria with all his pomp. It will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it, passing through it and reaching up to the neck. Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land, O Immanuel!"

At a specific point in time, determined by God, these 4 angels are loosed, releasing the forces beyond the Euphrates making it possible for Satan to act as never before in history. It is now that John hears the number of mounted troops in this demonic army - 200 million. Standing in stark contrast to the 144,000 of God's end-time army.

The demonic locusts of the 5th Trumpet have grown into a massive army who now has the power to kill.

- **Revelation 9:17-19** - 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. A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. 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.

Once again, John's description of fire, smoke and sulfur, are rooted in the Old Testament, where they are the means of divine judgment.

- **Genesis 19:24-25** - Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah -- from the LORD out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities -- and also the vegetation in the land.
- **Psalms 11:6** - On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a scorching wind will be their lot.
- **Isaiah 34:8-10** - For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold Zion's cause. Edom's streams will be turned into pitch, her dust into burning sulfur; her land will become blazing pitch! It will not be quenched night and day; its smoke will rise forever. From generation to generation it will lie desolate; no one will ever pass through it again.

A new weapon is introduced - the mouth. In Daniel 7:8, 20; 10:16 and Revelation 13:5-6; 16:13, the mouth is a symbol of spiritual weaponry used to blaspheme God.

In the 5th Trumpet, Satan was only allowed to afflict people with his deceptions. But now he is permitted to "kill" with both his tail and his mouth.

The nature of the final crisis is not physical, its spiritual.

- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** - For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
- **Ephesians 6:12** - For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

The prophecy of the 6th Trumpet represents those who reject the gospel – refusing the seal of God. They are helpless against demonic powers who are using both “tail” and “mouth” to deceive.

- **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10** – The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

However, instead of Satan’s activities awakening the wicked to their true condition and bringing them to repentance, the exact opposite happen:

- **Revelation 9:20-21** – The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshipping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood -- idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

They refuse to repent!!!

Even though they are tormented and killed by the lies of their leader, they continue to worship him.

We are living in the time of the sixth Trumpet.

God’s desire is still to save.

His heart breaks over the condition of those who have rejected Him, so, it is during this time that He makes a special effort to reach human hearts one last time (Revelation 14:6-13).

(Interlude - 10:1-11:14)

- **The 7th Trumpet - 3rd woe** (11:15-18)

The sounding of the 7th Trumpet signals the conclusion of earth’s history, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”

The proclamation of the gospel is complete and the fate of every person has been decided.

As the 6th Trumpet activities of Satan rage on, what are God’s people doing? What is their experience?

The answer comes in the Interlude.