

“UNLOCKING & UNLEASING HELL”

Revelation 8 has revealed devastating images of judgment as God unleashes his wrath because of the sins of the Jewish nation. These were partial judgments intended to bring about their repentance (a point that is made clear in Revelation 9). Revelation 9 is going to reveal from where these judgments are coming. That is, we are going to learn *who* is doing the destroying against the Jewish nation.

Trumpet 5 & “Woe 1”: The Unlocking and Opening of the Abyss

Revelation 9:1-3 (NIV) ... “The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. (2) When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. (3) And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth.”

The Bible says repeatedly that “*the Great Tribulation*” will be the worst time in all of human history. Jeremiah, Daniel and Jesus Himself all said this. **Three important terms in Revelation 9:**

1. The Fallen Star

First of all, we see **that a star** that had fallen from heaven is given a key (*to him*) to open the Abyss. So, who or what is this star? Obviously literal ‘stars’ aren’t given keys so this is a symbolic use of the word ‘star’. In verses 1 and 2 this star is called ‘**he**’ indicating that it is a creature and not a literal star. When used symbolically in Revelation, ‘**stars**’ speak of the angelic beings according to Revelation 1:20.

Now this ‘star’ has fallen from heaven indicating that it is a fallen angel. It is likely that this is a reference to Satan Himself. The Old Testament connection is Isaiah 14:12 which speaks of Satan stating ‘**How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!**’

So at some stage in the latter part of the Tribulation, Satan will be ‘given’ a key to the Abyss. Satan is ‘given’ a key ... he didn’t steal it and he cannot just do what he wants. He needs permission to open the Abyss. But within the Great Tribulation, he will be given that permission!

2. The Unlocked Abyss

So what is the Abyss, v. 2 (*the Bottomless Pit*) that is opened? In the Bible the word translated 'Abyss' is the Greek word '**abussos**' meaning 'depthless, bottomless pit'. It is used nine times in the New Testament and seven of those are in the book of Revelation. One interesting passage outside of Revelation comes in the Gospels where we read of a well known interaction between Jesus and demonic entities inside a wild and uncontrollable man:

Matthew 8:29-31 ... "And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have **You come here to torment us before the time?**" (30) Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them. (31) The demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." **Luke 8:30-31** Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. (31) **And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss."**

There are some simple interesting points to take from this encounter:

1. The demons knew all about the Abyss (*the bottomless pit*)
2. The demons knew Jesus had the authority to send them to the Abyss
3. The demons knew that there was a time coming when they would be tormented - but this age was not yet that time.
4. The demons begged Jesus not to send them to the Abyss. Even demons, it seems, are fearful of the Abyss. They do not want to go there!

Now we don't normally think demonic spirits are fearful. They are meant to be the scary ones. But they are fearful of the Abyss and Jesus' authority to send them there!

Concerning who is currently imprisoned there ... it is important to note that there are two times in scripture that angels have '*fallen*'. **The first was with those that followed in Satan's initial rebellion against God.** For the most part, these don't seem to have been locked up. *Satan roars around like a lion seeking whom he may devour*, Peter tells us, and the other fallen angels do likewise. These are the principalities and powers that oppose the work of believers according to Ephesians 6:12.

There was also a second serious rebellion in the days of Noah. Some fallen angels left their 'abode' or 'proper place' and mated with human women resulting in the Nephilim. These were locked up. Jude discusses the rebellion of these fallen angels stating: **Jude 1:6-7** ... ***"And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, (7) just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire."***

You will note that Jude compares what these fallen angels did with the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah stating that both examples *'went after strange flesh'*. From this we know that both cases relate to sexual sin. Peter, likely referencing the same event, also speaks of certain angels that were locked up in a special place called **Tartarus**: **2 Peter 2:4 ... "God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell."** (Note: not *'hades'* but the Greek word *'Tartarus'*) and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.

Tartarus, which is only mentioned here in the Bible, was *'the subterranean abyss of Greek mythology ... where demigods were punished'* according to The Complete Word Study Dictionary. So, it seems that Tartarus and the Abyss of Revelation are the same location ... though Tartarus is likely a special and deepest region of the Abyss.

It is here that the worst of the fallen angels were locked up ... and from both Jude and Peter it seems these angels are locked until the day of their judgement. However, we also see in Revelation 9 that the Abyss is going to be unlocked and opened. Whoever it is that is allowed out ... you don't want to meet them and now you can understand why the prophets and Jesus described this coming time like none before or after it!

The fallen star opens the shaft of the abyss and billows of smoke come out of the shaft and darken the sun. The darkening of the sun represents the doom and destruction of a nation. The end is coming for a nation. Smoke also represents divine judgment. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah used the same language. (Genesis 19:28)

3. The Coming 'Locusts'

Revelation 9:2-3 ... **"The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth."**

This opening brings forth both a spiritual and physical darkness. The natural sun and the sky are darkened by the smoke that comes forth from the Abyss, but there is a worse darkness for out of the smoke comes 'locust' like creatures. The Old Testament background to this is the book of Joel, which speaks of a plague of locusts that invaded and decimated the land ... and will again in a spiritual sense in the day of the Lord.

We see here in Revelation that these 'locusts' are not natural. They originate from the Abyss, this bottomless pit where demonic entities are kept, and are given power like that of scorpions. And as we'll see, John even had trouble trying to describe them!

Mankind is not able to find death!

Revelation 9:4-6 (NIV) ... **"They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. (5) They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion**

when it strikes a man. (6) During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.”

With the abyss open and the smoke rising John sees locusts coming from the smoke. We know these locusts are symbolic for something because the locusts are told not to harm the grass, any green plant or tree, or those who have the seal of God on their foreheads. True locusts destroy plants, grass, and trees. **The locusts are symbolic and locusts are used as a symbol in the Old Testament.** In Joel 1:4-7 we read Joel describing a locust invasion that had struck the land of Israel. Based on this event, Joel describes a nation that will come against Israel ... like a locust invasion.

Notice that the locusts sound like a powerful army coming against the nation of Israel. Verses 4-5 make the connection that the locusts are an army very clear. The locusts have the appearance of horses and they leap like the rumbling of chariots.

Locusts were the curse promised by God for Israel's disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:38-42). The torment of the locusts is allowed for five months. **The lifespan of locusts is five months and the duration season when locusts would attack is five months.** This seems to be the reason for using this number of months for the duration of the torment. The suffering and torment will not be for a few days but for the duration of the life of the locusts. This attack will only end when the attackers have completed their devastation.

- ***The torment is as painful as the sting of a scorpion and the suffering will be so severe that people will want to die. They will seek death but not find it!***

Revelation 9:7-11 (NIV) ... “The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. (8) Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. (9) 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. (10) They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. (11) They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.

Characteristics of the Locusts

The locusts are described as a powerful army. Many of the descriptions in these verses are similar to what we read in Joel 1:4-7 and Joel 2:1-5. Revelation is showing us that this is not a literal locust attack. Rather the locust represent a terrifying ruling army.

Notice that ... the locusts are wearing gold crowns showing that they have authority over the earth. Verses 8-10 simply enhance the imagery of fierceness with which this attack will come. This invasion will be terrible and destructive. In Jeremiah 51:27 the prophet describes the coming of horses in war as locusts.

One word that you see often in this description is **'like'**. When John saw these locust-looking creatures, he had a hard time describing them. These locusts were *'like'* horses with something *'like'* a crown of gold on their head. They had something *like* a human's face and their hair was *like* woman's hair ... and it goes on to say that their teeth were *like* that of a lion. Obviously, these creatures aren't coming as angels of light. They don't come to deceive. Having been finally released from the Abyss, they come to inflict pain!

Now because of all these comparisons ... **some have said that possibly John was describing modern attack helicopters or some other modern gunship that John had never seen before.** This fits in a few cases (*like the sound of its wings being like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle*) but the commonalities may be more the exception than the rule. **But one thing is clear ... these are demonic spirits locked up for this day. What they use and how they attack we cannot be certain. However, we do read ... that they sting like a scorpion and have the power to torment a person, but not kill, for 5 months!**

REVELATION 9:7-10 THE LOCUSTS – DESCRIPTION & POSSIBLE REALITIES

"The shapes of the locusts were like horses prepared for battle; on their heads were something like crowns of gold, their faces were like the faces of men, they had hair like women's hair, their teeth were like lions' teeth. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle." – Revelation 9:7-9

WHAT THE TEXT SAYS

- Crowns like gold v.7
Authority, rulership, mocking royalty
- Faces like men v.7
Human appearance, intelligence, possibly fallen
- Hair like women's hair v.7
Long flowing hair, unusual for insects
- Teeth like lions' teeth v.8
Ferocious, terrifying biting power
- Breastplates like iron v.9
Strong, protected, military armor
- Wings with the sound of chariots & horses v.9
Loud, thundering, war-like noise
- Tails like scorpions with stings v.10
Tail weapon, brings pain & torment
- King over them: Abaddon (Apollyon) v.11
Destroyer, angel of the bottomless pit

POSSIBLE REAL-WORLD PARALLELS

- Crowns like gold
Resemblance to elite military headgear, advanced technology, or command systems.
- Faces like men
Human pilots, AI-controlled systems, or humanoid drones.
- Hair like women's hair
Long antennae, cables, or stylized designs mimicking human traits.
- Teeth like lions' teeth
Weapons, missiles, or devastating firepower. A "biting" attack.
- Breastplates like iron
Heavy armor, stealth coating, composite defense systems.
- Wings with the sound of chariots & horses
Helicopter rotors, jet engines, or drones in swarm formations.
- Tails like scorpions with stings
Missiles, stinger rockets, or tail-mounted weapons.

IDENTIFIED AS:
A HORDE FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT
Given authority to torment mankind for five months – not to kill, but to torment. (Revelation 9:5)

COMPARISON OVERVIEW	
BIBLICAL DESCRIPTION	POSSIBLE REALITY
Crowns like gold	Advanced command systems, elite units
Faces like men	Human pilots, AI, or humanoid machines
Hair like women's hair	Antennas, cables, or stylized designs
Teeth like lions' teeth	Weapons, missile systems, firepower
Breastplates like iron	Armor plating, stealth technology
Wings sound like chariots	Helicopters, jets, drones in formation
Tails like scorpions	Missiles, stingers, tail-mounted weapons
King: Abaddon	Supreme commander or destructive force

THE LOCUST ARMY – A VISION OF WAR

THE POINT: Revelation 9:7-10 describes a terrifying, highly organized, and technologically advanced army released for a limited time to bring torment. While symbolic, the imagery strongly resembles modern military machines, drones, and warfare technology.

Pastor Dale Crowley

NEXT ... REVELATION CHAPTER 9 Pt. 2 ...