

## THE FIFTH AND SIXTH TRUMPETS

### Chapter 9

In chapter eight, the first four trumpets announce the destruction of a third of the earth's ecology (8:7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13). The sounding of trumpets five and six herald judgment attacks on humanity from the spiritual realm (9:1-12, 13-21).

At the sound of the fifth angel's trumpet a 'star' descends from heaven, - from out of the sky, - to earth, and in his hand, he had been given the key to the bottomless pit. Job refers to the angels as 'stars' (Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy). This angel was sent from *heaven* down to *earth*, and down to the *bottomless pit*, into the 'underworld', the 'abyss' [ἄβυσσος]. The word 'abyss' comes from the Greek Old Testament and is used of the deep waters in Gen. 1:2; 7:11; Ps. 107:26. It is also used in Ps. 71:20 where it designates the realm of the dead, Ps. 71:20 Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from *the depths* of the earth. In this way, Paul asks, Rom. 10:7 Who shall descend into *the deep*? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. In the Old Testament, the after-life is divided into two departments, as illustrated by Jesus' story (Lk. 16:19ff) concerning the rich man (in agony, in the place of everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, Mt.25:41) and Lazarus (at rest). The unregenerate department is the 'abyss' and was created for the demons (Lk. 8:31). It is the abode of the beast, the antichrist, before he appears on earth - Rev. 11:7 the beast that ascendeth out of the *bottomless pit*. During Christ's millennial reign, it will be Satan's prison (Rev. 20:3).

Here in Rev. 9, at the sound of the fifth trumpet, the angel from Heaven descends to the abyss and unlocks the entrance out through which the smoke, as the smoke of a great furnace (v.2), erupted violently upward so that the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit (v.2). ... This entrance, - and exit, - was under the 'lock and key' of the sovereign control of God for it would not have been unlocked except for God despatching the angel from Heaven.

Then *out of* the billowing cloud of smoke which darkened the sky and caused panic among earth's inhabitants, John watched as a great swarm of locusts was unleashed upon the earth. Since these locusts ascended out of the 'abyss', they were not literal locusts but a vast multitude of creatures symbolic of demonic powers rising out of the smoke. A similar prophecy was made by Joel (Joel 2:4-10) which preceded 'the day of the Lord'.

This was God's wrath being released through the destructive power of these special locusts. Normally, as in the Egyptian plague, locusts did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt (Ex. 10:13.) However,

concerning these locusts, it was commanded them *[by God]* that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads (v.4). ... These locusts were specifically instructed not to kill human beings but to torment them for an exact period of five months. They were ordered to cause unimaginable misery and excruciating pain, *without* annihilating their prey! Their wickedness would be so terrible, their victims would cry out to die, but their cries would be unheeded for they were compelled to suffer the judgment of God through the work of the locusts (v.5,6).

These were obviously not ordinary locusts for they had the power of a scorpion (v.5), and they looked like horses prepared for battle. They were a demonic force ascended out of the abyss who were warlike, powerful, and defiant. Through them though, God's wrath will be exacted, <sup>7</sup> And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle. This is similar to Joel's prophecy, *Joel 2:3* A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth ... <sup>4</sup> The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. <sup>5</sup> Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. <sup>6</sup> Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.

The apostle John also describes how on their heads were *as it were* crowns like gold, and their faces *were as* the faces of men (v.7). It *looked* as if they were kingly, however, their victory was not as the consequence of their warfare skills, but they gained their success because it was the will of God within the plan of God. These demons are subservient to the authority of God for they are compelled to act according to His command. They are incapable of working outside what He permits. More of their features are described, <sup>8</sup> And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. <sup>9</sup> And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. <sup>10</sup> And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. Their wickedness exceeded the ordinary dimensions of such small creatures, and they brought untold misery, <sup>10</sup> The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. ... And leading them, <sup>11</sup> they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit *l'abyss'*, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon *l'destroyer'*, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon *l'destroyer'*. ... This 'king', - this angel of the bottomless pit, - is a high-ranking demon in Satan's hierarchy. It is not Satan because Satan is presently as a roaring lion, walketh about *lon the earth*, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8). Therefore, this is not Satan coming *out* of the bottomless pit but he *will* later be cast *into* the bottomless pit at the commencement of the Millennium (Rev. 20:2,3) and he will not be released until the one thousand years is completed (Rev. 20:7). ... As God has the archangel Michael who engages on God's behalf in spiritual combat (e.g. Dan. 10:13, 21;

Jude v.9; Rev. 12:7), this is Satan's equivalent to Michael in the satanic hierarchy. It is this 'king' (Rev. 9:11), - in the will of God, - who leads the 'locusts' against the ungodly, as the fifth angel sounded the fifth trumpet.

The fifth trumpet was the sounding of the first 'woe' (cf. 8:13), <sup>9:12</sup> One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. The second woe relates to the sounding of the sixth trumpet.

After the sixth trumpet sounded, John hears a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God *[cf. 8:3, from where the saints prayed for deliverance]*, <sup>14</sup> Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose *the [recognized angels commissioned for this purpose]* four angels which are bound *[same word as Rev. 20:2]* in the great river Euphrates (v.14). These four angels are *bound [constrained, enslaved, obligated]* in the great river Euphrates. In other words, they are not free, they cannot do what they like, and they are not the angels of God. Instead, they are demonic angels who *must* do the bidding of God at the time and in the circumstances He decrees. ... Hell and its evil citizens are slaves to God's sovereign will! ... Since these four angels are bound on the banks of the great river Euphrates, they belong to the enemy nations *beyond* the great river Euphrates. They are symbolic of the enemies of Israel and of God, for example, <sup>Is. 7:20</sup> In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard. ... <sup>8:7</sup> Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks ... <sup>Jer. 46:10</sup> For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates. ... The river Euphrates was the eastern border of the land promised by God to the children of Israel, <sup>Joshua 1:2</sup> arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. <sup>3</sup> Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. <sup>4</sup> From the wilderness and this Lebanon *even unto the great river, the river Euphrates*, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

So, these four demonic angels specify the totality of the wicked forces on the eastern borders of the land given by God to Israel, and they are lining up in the concluding days of the end times, as they come from the countries of the east to threaten the people of God, and God issued the order for them to advance. These four angels were the instruments of Divine judgment, and they moved only on the instruction of the sixth angel, who was sent from Heaven by God, - the enemy could only move when God gave them His permission, <sup>14</sup> Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose *[λύω]* the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> And the four angels were loosed [*λύω*], which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year [*exact timing!*], for to slay the third part of men.

Under God's control, the evil angels began to relentlessly slaughter a third of mankind. What they did not realise though, was they were a warning from God to the remaining two-thirds of mankind to repent, <sup>16</sup> And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand [*two million!*] and I heard the number of them. <sup>17</sup> And thus [*the four angels of wrath having now dropped out of sight!*] I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them [*the demonic creatures!*], having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone [*indescribable, fiercely ferocious and monstrously barbaric, cf. Hab. 1:6-10!*]. <sup>18</sup> By these three [*plagues!*] was the third part of men killed, by the fire [*plague 1!*], and by the smoke [*plague 2!*], and by the brimstone [*plague 3!*], which issued out of their mouths. <sup>19</sup> For their [*demonic!*] power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents [*swiping backwards and forwards, inflicting great pain (as in the sounding of the fifth trumpet). And in addition, certain death ... "like unto serpents", as offshoots of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, Rev. 20:2!*], and had heads, and with them they do hurt [*their evil wicked power extends 'every inch' of their wicked bodies from their heads to their tails.*]

Amazingly, the remaining two-thirds of the global population stubbornly will not repent, despite having witnessed and learned of such devastation, - their hearts were so hardened against God, <sup>20</sup> And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. As the end draws nearer, they keep insisting on rejecting God and become even more rebellious towards Him. He pours out His mighty wrath upon defiant sinners, and still they will not believe, <sup>21</sup> Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries [*the occult, witchcraft!*], nor of their fornication [*sexual immorality and deviation!*], nor of their thefts. ... At a frightening speed, under the influence of increased demonic activities, the world will descend into a cesspool of false religion, murder, sexual perversion, and crime unparalleled in human history. ... Even under such circumstances *God* is in control and *He* is working out *His* purposes for *His* glory!