

# Eschatology 12

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## The Great Tribulation 3

- a) **The Fifth Trumpet – 1<sup>st</sup> woe – Demonic locusts from the bottomless pit.**
  - i) I saw a star fallen from heaven: The text clearly shows us that this star is a person (to him), not a literal star. The verb tense (fallen) indicates that he already had fallen.
  - ii) To him was given the key to the bottomless pit: That this star is fallen makes us associate him with Satan, or another high ranking evil angelic being. *Isaiah 14:12, Ezekiel 28:14,*
    - (1) At the same time, we notice that the key is given to this being, and that it is given at a specific time and for a specific purpose that furthers God's plan. This angel - evil or good - serves God's purpose, even if he does not intend to. Revelation 1:18
  - iii) Bottomless pit: Is symbolic for the realm of the dead or hades.
    - (1) The shaft of the abyss (abyssos) is a prison for certain demons (*Luke 8:31; 2 Peter 2:4, and Jude 1:6*). This is probably the same place as this bottomless pit
      - 3) the abyss
        - a) the pit
        - b) the immeasurable depth
        - c) of Orcus, a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth used as the common receptacle of the dead and especially as the abode of demons
  - iv) Out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth: These are obviously not "natural" locusts. They avoid plants and attack men like scorpions attack. They are "A visual representation of the hordes of demons loosed upon the earth." (Walvoord)
    - (1) The idea is simply that as part of the judgment of the great tribulation, God will allow demonic hordes, previously imprisoned, to descend upon the earth like a swarm of destructive locusts.
    - (2) Those who have the seal of God on their foreheads (the 144,000 and perhaps more) are protected, but none other are. This is an inescapable judgment of God.
  - v) They were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months: Their purpose and period is expressly governed by God, and the purpose of all this to bring repentance (Revelation 9:20-21).
  - vi) In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them: Death will offer no escape from this prolonged torture. Their power is described like the power of scorpions, and the bite of a scorpion, though extremely painful, is rarely fatal.

(1) The idea of “Death as an escape” is a demonic deception. There is no escape in death for the unbeliever!

vii) (7-10) The appearance of these locusts. (7-10)

(1) Like horses . . . like gold . . . like the faces of men . . . like women’s hair . . . like lion’s teeth: The repetition of like indicates something other than a literal description is intended. The total impact of this picture is one of unnatural and awesome cruelty.

(a) Horses prepared for battle: Descriptive for strength.

(b) Crowns of Gold: Standing for power and authority (yet limited by God that they may not kill their victim)

(c) Human faces may imply intelligence.

(d) Hair like a woman’s hair would be totally unnatural for insect-like monsters and would add to the confusion about their nature. Perhaps it means it they possess a lure factor.

(e) Lions teeth symbolize ferocity

(f) Breastplates of Iron show that they are invincible.

(g) They have wings that symbolize mobility and speed.

(h) Their sound in flight is loud and terrifying because of their extraordinary powers. Like horses and chariots in battle.

(i) “There can be no specific answer to the question of exactly who or what is symbolized by the plague of locusts. All we can know for sure is that in the period immediately before the end the wicked will be subjected to a time of unprecedented demonic torment. Exactly how this will take place will remain unknown until disclosed by history itself.” (Mounce)

viii) The leader of these locusts. (11)

(1) Whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon: Their king is given a name. Abaddon and Apollyon both have the same thought of destruction or torment (perdition).

(2) The angel of the bottomless pit: Since this is the king of these locusts, and since he has the name Abaddon or Apollyon, this is obviously Satan himself or another high-ranking leader of demons. This is a Hebrew word that is used in connection with hell.

(a) Perhaps the most terrifying aspect of the fifth trumpet is that these monstrous locusts are actually the demons that have been imprisoned in the Abyss. (Luke 8:31; Jude 6, 1 Peter 3:19)

b) **The Sixth Trumpet –2<sup>nd</sup> woe - Slaying of One-Third of the population**

i) The four evil angels released. (14-15)

(1) They are **bound** at the Euphrates river. (v. 14)

- (a) The Euphrates was a landmark of ancient Babylon. It was the boundary of Israel's land as fully promised by God (*Genesis 15:17-21*). It was also the boundary of the old Roman Empire, which will be revived under the Antichrist.
- (b) The Euphrates is also associated with the first sin (*Genesis 2:10-14*), the first murder (*Genesis 4:16*), the first organized revolt against God (*Genesis 11:1-9*), the first war confederation (*Genesis 14:1*), and the first dictatorship (*Genesis 10:8-10*).
- (2) They would kill a 3<sup>rd</sup> of mankind
- (3) The evil spiritual powers that backed up the ancient world empires have been bound up during this age, but again will be released. (*Dan 10:13, 20*)
- ii) Description of the army. (*16-19*)
  - (1) Two hundred million (literal or not literal?)
  - (2) Breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone: They are given a weird, grotesque description. This is a powerful picture of horror, destruction and demonic association.
  - (3) Is this army literal or symbolic?
    - (a) a human army this size has never been seen. The total size of all armies - on both sides - at the height of the Second World War was only 70 million. In 1965 China claimed to have an army and militia of 200 million, but this claim was doubted by many. Even if such an army was assembled, and marched towards the west, it is hard (but not impossible) to see such an army killing a billion or more people - a third of mankind.
    - (b) Perhaps the safest interpretation is to see this as a literal 200 million strong army, but a demonic army invading earth. This continues the idea of the demonic army like locusts described earlier in the chapter.
- iii) The response of the people who survive. (*v. 20-21*)
  - (1) They did not repent! Even after all the agony and death inflicted by these judgments, the survivors are not willing to repent or stop worshiping demons and idols. There is a process of hardening one's heart. It is illustrated in the case of Pharaoh during the days of Moses. He hardened his heart repeatedly. As a result God hardened it more.
    - (a) God does not desire anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9), but when man's rebellion has reached a certain point, he "gives them over" to their lusts and degrading passions. (Rom 1:21-32)