

Death's Day Off • Rev. 9:1-12

INTRO • Read vs.1-6

2-Parter

1. Our study today has 2 parts.
  - a. In the first half we'll look at the 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet-judgment in vs. 1-12
  - b. In the second half we've got some family-business to do.
2. If you're a visitor, you'll get a chance to see how we deal with things here at Calvary.
3. I realize that may sound ominous: It's not. We just need to do a brief update.

Difficult Stuff

1. For the first half By necessity, we have to get into some deep stuff.
2. As I've said several times, the key for understanding Revelation is to know the OT.
  - a. John just mentions something in Rev., because he knows his original readers had the backstory to it.
  - b. We're not as familiar with the OT; so we have to go back and study those stories all over again.
3. To do these 12 vs justice we'd need a couple hours.
4. So, what I suggest is that you jot down the passages I'll reference & talk about in brief – then go back & read for yourself.
5. Many of you who **have** a basic grasp of the OT, will find several things falling into place today.

God Backs Grace Out

1. We're looking at the 5<sup>th</sup> of 7 trumpet-judgments today.
2. We saw the first 4 last week.
3. These things take place during the Tribulation; a 7 year span that occurs right before Jesus returns to Earth.
4. What these judgments are, is God **backing His grace out of history**.
  - a. Humanity has rejected God and told Him to bug out & leave them alone.
  - b. These judgments are God giving man what he's asked for – a world w/o God.
5. What happens is that as grace pulls out, a few people come to their senses, repent of their rebellion and put their faith in Jesus.
6. But the rest only harden more and become even more wicked.
7. So another, more sever judgment falls & another round of repentance & hardening comes.
8. The first 4 trumpets were brutal, but the last verse of ch. 8 is an announcement the last 3 are even WORSE!

V.1

<sup>1</sup>Then the 5<sup>th</sup> angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.

1. The language in Greek is clear.
  - a. John didn't see a star **falling**.
  - b. He saw a **fallen** star. It had **already** fallen from heaven.
2. That John calls the star "him" means we're to understand the star **as a fallen angel**.
  - a. Rev. 12:4 & Job 38:7 refer to angels *poetically* as stars.
  - b. Isa. 14:12 asks "How are you **fallen from heaven**, O Lucifer, son of the morning?"
  - c. So many Bible students agree this fallen angel is none other than Satan.
3. He's given a key; symbolic of authority
  - a. It's **given** to him; meaning he's under God's control
  - b. As Job's story makes clear.
4. The word translated "bottomless pit" is **abussos**; where our word 'abyss' comes from.
  - a. In Luke 8, it's the place demons Jesus casts out of a man beg NOT to be sent to.
  - b. Then, 2 Pet. 2:4 & Jude 6 refer to a place where especially **bad** demons are locked up.
    - 1) Jude says these demons "left their proper place."
    - 2) They violated some God-set boundary and did something so heinous, they were locked up.
    - 3) The demons Jesus cast out in Luke 8 were **terrified** of being sent where those demons were.
  - c. A time's coming when the abyss will be opened & those demons well be loosed.
5. Before we go on, I want to share who I've come to believe these demons are because it'll help make the rest of this clearer.
6. In Gen 6 we read that part of the corruption of the world before the Flood & what helped lead to its

destruction, was that the sons of God & daughters of men united to produce children who became leaders in the rebellion against God.

- a. Since there's no explanation of what Moses means by "sons of God," commentators have come up with several different ideas.
  - b. Here's what I think. It's shaped by what we find here in Rev. 9.
    - 1) You see, Gen & Rev complement each other.
    - 2) What begins in Gen. ends in Rev. They're the great **bookends** of the Bible.
  - c. The "sons of God" in Gen. 6 are fallen angels, demons, who were able to see what unions between men & women would produce huge kids.
  - d. So those demons took possession of the men and forced themselves on the women.
  - e. Once the children were born, they possessed the children, who then became leaders that accelerated the corruption of humanity.
  - f. Things got so bad, the only way to stop it was by sending the Flood and starting over again.
7. Those demons were then locked up because they over-reached & proved themselves to be hardcore rebels who had to be restrained.
8. They're let loose at the end, because as God's grace is backed out during the Tribulation, Humanity once again moves to make a formal alliance of rebellion against God with the Antichrist.
9. And these demons will do something similar to what they did before.

Vs. 2-11

<sup>2</sup> And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. <sup>3</sup> Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for 5 months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. <sup>6</sup> In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

1. John's description proves they aren't **real locusts**.

<sup>7</sup> The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle.

2. They're armored.

On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. <sup>8</sup> They had hair like women's hair,

3. Long.

and their teeth were like lions' teeth.

4. Sharp.

<sup>9</sup> And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron,

5. Once again, John mentions they're armored.

and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. <sup>10</sup> They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men 5 months.

6. The usual lifespan of a locust.

7. But it's clear they aren't locusts because of

<sup>11</sup> And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

8. Proverbs 30:27 says specifically that locusts **have no** leader nor king.

10. That they have one here is meant to clue us in that these aren't regular run-of-the-mill locusts.

11. Abaddon & Apollyon both mean = "Destroyer"

a. This is a clue to who this is. In John 10, Jesus said Satan's agenda is to kill, steal & **destroy**.

b. In Rev. 20:3, THE angel of the abyss **is** Satan.

Here's What's Going Down ...

1. With the sounding of the 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet, the devil is given authority to unlock the abyss & release the demons who've been kept there since the Flood.

2. John sees them like a **massive locust swarm** that covers the Earth.
3. Locusts were a terrible scourge in the Middle East; still are.
  - a. Locusts are the largest of the grasshopper family & have 2 phases of life: solitary & communal.
  - b. They tend to produce only small numbers unless conditions are just right.
  - c. Then their population literally explodes into billions.
  - d. One swarm in 1889 was measured at 2,000 sq. miles & was so dense it turned mid-day into night.
  - e. When they land, they consume everything green; even the bark off trees.
  - f. When In flight, the swarm sounds like a huge waterfall.
  - g. When they eat, it sounds like a forest fire.
4. Coming from the skies as a plague of locusts did, the ancient understood it as a judgment from God.
5. That's what **this** is; judgment. But these locusts aren't interested in vegetation.
6. They torment those lacking God seal.
  - a. In Rev. 7 we read about the 144,000 who are sealed by God during the Tribulation.
  - b. That seal is for protection & it comes in handy here
7. For these supernatural bugs sting like a scorpion.
  - a. While scorpions in the Am SW aren't usually lethal, those in the Middle East are.
  - b. And if you don't die, you wish you could!
  - c. The sting is extremely painful; like a bee sting times 10.
  - d. The site swells up & the pain spreads to the whole limb.
  - e. Then the muscles start to spasm, the eyes twitch, there's mental confusion & drooling.
8. What's difficult in understanding this passage is that it when it starts it's clearly spiritual; the devil releases these bad-boy demons.
9. Then it become physical; actual physical torment is unleashed on people. It lasts for 5 months.
10. This is where we may see a tie in to what happened before the Flood.
11. Demons inhabited humans. They infested physical bodies to bring about destruction.
12. These stinging locusts may be actual bugs the **demons possess** to go after people.
13. If they are, they're unlike anything ever seen before.
14. So let me suggest what we're seeing here is an **experiment gone wrong**.
  - a. Some genetically engineered bug that's gone haywire.
  - b. Gene-splicing & hybridization is being conducted in dozens of labs.
  - c. Remember that at the breaking of the 4<sup>th</sup> seal, John said humanity would be beset by beasts, plagues & pestilence. This certainly sounds like that!
15. I need to pause here and say this. I'm not saying this is the way these vs WILL come to pass.
  - a. Only this maybe what John describes.
  - b. One thing is for certain; the day will come when John says here will happen and people will say, "This is it! **THIS** is what John was talking about."

#### Death Takes a Holiday

1. It's what John says in v6 that bothers me . . .
- <sup>6</sup>In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.
2. The pain inflicted by this judgment is so great, people will **want** to die, but be unable to.
3. Generally, people **hate** death. They do everything they can to avoid it.
  - a. Even to the point of ignoring it and pretending it's not real.
  - b. They cling to youth as long as they can.
  - c. But the statistics are overwhelming, apart from the Rapture, we're all going to die.
4. I was with my mother in the hospital as she took her last breaths.
  - a. She was a saint in the truest sense of the word & had wanted for a long time to put off her body & go home.
  - b. She had intense neuralgia for years that literally wore her out.
  - c. Her last night, she was unconscious. I watched her lying in bed, her breathing was labored.
  - d. It was obvious she just wanted to go, but her body struggled to hang on.
  - e. That night, she finally got her desire and stepped out of her broken body into the arms of Jesus.
5. Psalm 116:15 says , **Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints**.
6. While most people loath and fear death, it is in fact one more manifestation of God's grace that he permits it

to a fallen world.

- a. What a nightmare it would be to live forever in bodies that age, decay, & grow decrepit.
  - b. We hate death because it takes loved ones from us.
  - c. How much worse if those loved ones COULDN'T die & had to go on in broken and diseased bodies, tormented by endless pain!
7. Death can be a mercy. And THAT'S why death takes a day off; actually a 5 month vacation, during the Tribulation.
8. It's another phase in the removal of God's grace.
9. Everyone who's blamed death on God will come to see it in a very different light.
10. All of man's excuses for rejecting God will be stripped from him one by one till he's confronted with the fact that the problem has NEVER been with God; only with foolish, stubborn rebel man!
11. And **science & technology** rebel humanity has **elevated** to **replace religion** is the cause of man's new torment as these genetically-engineered bugs run amok.

V.12

<sup>12</sup> 1 woe is past. Behold, still 2 more woes are coming after these things.

1. The 1<sup>st</sup> 4 trumpets were bad. The 5<sup>th</sup> is terrifying. There's 2 more coming.

Our Future

1. And that brings us to part 2 of today's message.
2. What we've looked at today takes place during the Tribulation, which we don't believe we'll be here for.
3. We believe just before the Trib begins, Jesus will come for His people in an event called the Rapture.
4. In an instant, we'll be transformed from mortal, to immortal & relocate to heaven.
5. When the spiritual salt & light of God's people are removed from Earth, spiritual darkness takes over and evil will take over.
6. The Rapture could occur at any time. It could happen today; but it might not happen for another hundred years.
  - a. No one knows when it will be; so in the parables Jesus gave about His coming, He urged us to be ever ready morally & spiritually, while living faithfully in our affairs as they touch daily life.
  - b. Here's what that means for CCO.
7. God has given us a vision to be a church of 2000 adults & school of 500 students.
  - a. We can't do that at this location on Eastman.
  - b. With 3 English services, we have btwn 12 & 1300.
  - c. We've worked long & hard one seeing if we can grow to 2000 here. We can't.
  - d. We need a new campus of 12-15 acres.
8. In March last year we gathered for one big service at the OPAC and shared the vision with everyone.
  - a. The response was a solid affirmation on the part of you all.
  - b. Many shared their enthusiasm and giving went up significantly.
  - c. But we've seen a lot of new members at CCO since that time.
  - d. If you're new, we want you to know that we're engaged in a venture of faith to build a new campus.
9. We're still looking for land and have our eyes on a couple different sites.
10. So we can all be on the same page, we've set the history of CCO on the wall in the hall.
11. We ask everyone to take some time over the next few weeks to read the story of CCO, our past, present and future.
12. Even if I knew Jesus was coming back this afternoon, I would still share this with you.
  - a. Even if I knew for certain the Rapture was in 3 years, I'd still ask you to pray and give so we can get land and build.
  - b. You see, God's given us a vision.
  - c. When He comes, I want Him to find US faithfully pursuing the vision He's given.
  - d. Not sitting on our hands.
13. We're to **live** as though Jesus could come at any moment, but **work** as though He's coming for the next generation.
14. While I'd love to hear the trumpet and rise to meet the Lord in the clouds, another part of me wants to hand CCO off to some new young man who'll take it farther than I ever could.
15. I know you & believe that's what you want as well; that you would be the shoulders the next generation here

at CCO can stand on to reach even higher & further into our Community.

Finally ...

1. We are a blessed church. God has been so faithful to us.
2. There's no pressure in this; I'm not going to make an impassioned appeal to give.
3. The only giving we're interested in is that which is prompted by the Spirit of God.
4. But we're a spiritual family, and families talk about what's going on in the family.
5. That's what I'm doing today; renewing the vision God's given us and inviting you to be a part of it.
6. Let's get more people saved before the stuff we're seeing here in Rev. happens.
7. Let's accomplish all God's assigned us so when He comes, we'll hear those words we long for.