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**A0548 – November 27, 2005 – Revelation 9:1-12 – The 5th Trumpet: Demonic
Locusts**

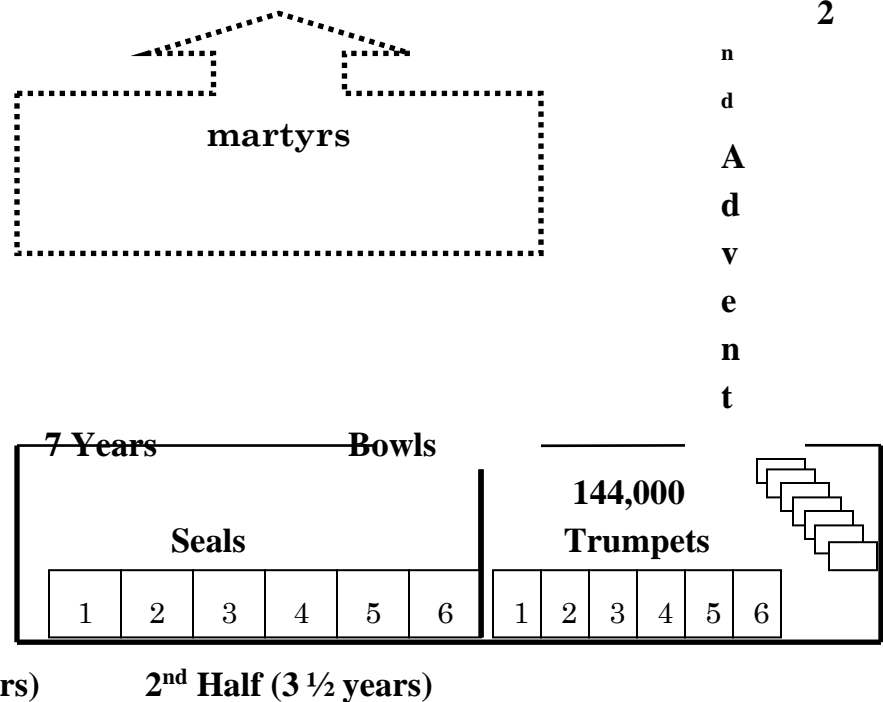
Revelation 9:1-12 Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. ² He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. ³ Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ⁴ They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. ⁶ And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them. ⁷ The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. ⁸ They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like *the teeth* of lions. ⁹ They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. ¹⁰ They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months. ¹¹ They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon. ¹² The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

Outline

- I. The First Six Trumpets (Rev 8:7-9:21)**
 - A. 1st Trumpet: 1/3 of Land Burned (8:7)**
 - B. 2nd Trumpet: 1/3 of Sea Became Blood (8:8-9)**
 - C. 3rd Trumpet: 1/3 of Rivers Made Bitter (8:10-11)**
 - D. 4th Trumpet: 1/3 of Heavenly Bodies Darkened (8:12-13)**

- E. **5th Trumpet (1st Woe!): Demonic Locusts (9:1-12)**
1. **The Origin of the Locusts (9:1-3a)**
 2. **The Authority of the Locusts (9:3b-6)**
 3. **The Description of the Locusts (9:7-12)**

70th Week of Daniel 9
2 Divisions of Birth Pangs

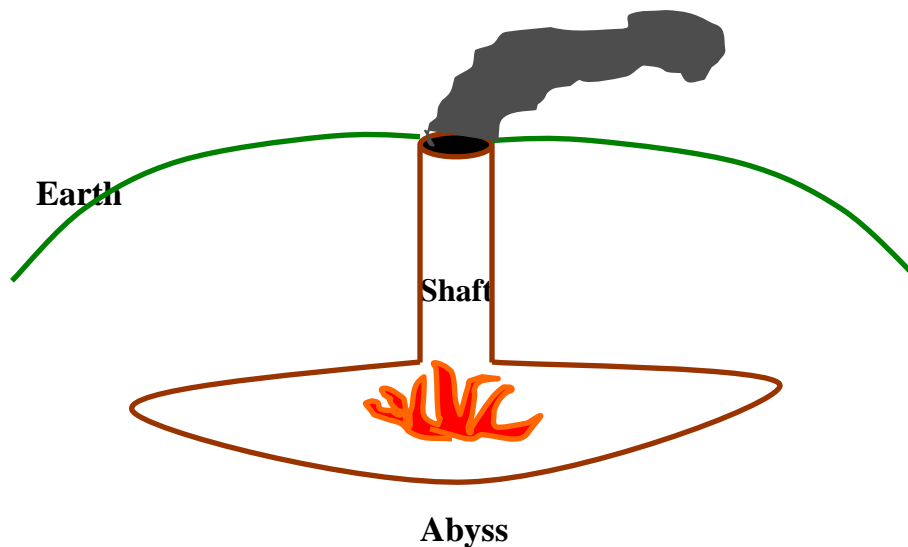


- E. **5th Trumpet (1st Woe!): Demonic Locusts (9:1-12)**
1. **The Origin of the Locusts (9:1-3a)**

Revelation 9:1-3a And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven having fallen to the earth; and to him was given the key of the shaft of the abyss. ² and he opened the shaft of the abyss, and up came smoke out of the shaft, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air became dark from the smoke of the shaft. ³ And out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth,

In answer to the martyrs prayer of Rev 6:9-10 God answers *and the fifth angel sounded*. The 5th Trumpet is also known as the first *woe* (cf Rev 8:13). The Greek word for *woe* is *ouai* and means “how horrible it will be!” Thus, the intensity heightens with the three *woes* as we near the “great and terrible day of the Lord” (i.e., the second coming, cf Joel 2:31; Mal. 4:5). These will truly be terrible judgments.

and I saw (kai eidon) indicates a new phase of John's vision. The vision of the eagle flying in midheaven fades into the background and now John sees *a star from heaven having fallen to the earth*. That this is an angel and not a literal star is clear from the context because this *star* is given a *key* to unlock the *shaft of the abyss*. Thus, the *star* is clearly an intelligent being. *aster* is sometimes used of "angels" (cf Rev 1:20 although initial exegesis led me to think of these as "human messengers" there is good evidence that they could be "guardian angels"). John sees this *angel which had fallen to the earth*. Some people think this refers to a *fallen angel* but the Greek indicates that this is an *angel which* descended to the earth rapidly. He is not a fallen angel but one who has been dispatched from heaven to earth to *open the shaft of the abyss* which contains the next divine punishment upon the earth dwellers. The *shaft of the abyss*, often translated *the bottomless pit* is a subterranean cavern connected to the earth's surface by a "shaft" which has a secured lid of some kind that keeps its inhabitants confined. It is apparent that the inhabitants are imprisoned within the earth.



The *abyss* is not "hell" or the "lake of fire" but a place of temporary incarceration for fallen angels, some of which will be released for this Trumpet judgment. The *angel* is given a *key* that will open the shaft of this abyss and release these fallen angels to cause havoc on the men of the earth.

Verse 2, *he opened the shaft of the abyss, and up came smoke out of the shaft, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air became dark from the smoke of the shaft*. The angel who has been given the key opens the *shaft of the abyss* and *smoke* came billowing out of the *shaft* like a huge furnace. This is literal smoke of such an immense volume that it will *darken the sun and the air*. The *smoke* will not affect the

sun in any way as did the 4th Trumpet but it will impede the ability for light from the earth to pass through.

Verse 3a *And out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth.* As the *smoke* billows forth from the shaft *locusts* come forth as well to bring havoc *upon the earth*. Identification of the *locusts* is not hard in the context. They have an angel as a leader (9:11). They do not eat grass or green things. They come out of an abyss where evil spirits are imprisoned. They have stingers on their tails unlike normal locusts. It is clear that these are demonic beings that take a locust-like form. What is released from the abyss then is a horde of demons bent on spreading as much misery as possible to the earth-dwellers.

2. The Authority of the Locusts (9:3b-6)

Revelation 9:3b-6 and it was given them authority (exousia – delegated authority) as the scorpions of the earth have authority (exousia).⁴ And he ordered them not to harm the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.⁵ And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but that they will torment for five months; and their torment is like a scorpion's torment when it strikes a man.⁶ And in those days men will seek death and no they will not find it; and they will long to die, and death flees from them.

Verse 3b *and it was given them authority as the scorpions of the earth have authority.* *power* or *authority* is the Greek word *exousia* which refers to delegated authority. Clearly God has delegated this authority to them but it is probably communicated by the angel who unlocked the abyss to release them. Even demons are subject to the commands of God and they have no authority apart from God delegating authority to them. God permits them to use the *stinging power* of *scorpions* which are in their tails. The *scorpion* has always been a hideous insect that inflicts harm to humans with the stinger in its tail. The sting does not always kill but it can. The scorpion ranks along with the snake in its hostility toward mankind.

Verse 4 *And he ordered them not to harm the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were told* but the sense is that they were *ordered*. They are under strict orders from God which are delivered by the angel. The judgments of the first four trumpets were directed at the land, sea, rivers and heavens but the 5th, 6th, and 7th Trumpet judgments are directed against men. Thus, the demon *locusts* are *ordered not to harm the grass of the*

earth. The *grass* was the object of destruction under the 1st Trumpet. Then all the green grass at that time was burned up (cf 8:7). Because of the time delay between the 1st and 5th Trumpets as well as the seasonal nature of grass there is no problem with *grass* being present on *earth* at this time. Nor are they to *harm...any green thing*. It is the nature of locusts to *harm* all *green things* but these supernatural locusts are prohibited from harming them. *nor any tree*. 1/3 of the *trees* were burned up under the 1st Trumpet. Those remaining at this time are not approved for destruction. They must be left alone. It is apparent from the prohibition that the demon *locusts* desire to destroy God's creation because they hate God and are continually at enmity against Him. But the only thing these *demon locusts* are permitted to *harm* are the *men who do not have the seal of God upon their foreheads*. Since they cannot harm those with the *seal of God* they must be able to see *the seal*. The *seal of God* is, of course, on the *foreheads* of the 144,000 Jewish witnesses (Rev 7:1-8). The seal was originally given as a protective seal to protect them from the future Trumpet judgments (7:1-3). Here we see that protection (cf Exodus 8:22ff; 9:4ff; 10:23). Thus, the only object of harm allotted to these *demon locusts* are men who are not *sealed*.

Verse 5 *And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but that they will torment for five months; and their torment is like a scorpion's torment when it strikes a man*. God places another limitation upon the *demon locusts*. They are *permitted to kill anyone*. Under the 3rd Trumpet men could die by drinking the bitter waters but under the 5th Trumpet men will not be able to die. However, *they* are permitted to *torment for five months* (an accusative of duration). The word *torment* refers to acute pain, clearly physical in the context, due to stinging with a scorpion's tail. The duration of the swarm of *demon locusts* is five literal months or 150 days. After the 150th day they will no longer be permitted to *torment*. *their torment is like a scorpion's torment when it strikes a man*. Scorpions are nocturnal. They often ambush their prey, lying in wait as they sense its approach. The sting is not a pleasant one and though poisonous scorpions have killed younger and older people, these will not. Scorpions also have the ability to regulate the amount of venom they secrete depending on the size of the victim. Their venom is a complex mixture called a neurotoxin which affects the nervous system. The symptoms of scorpion stings are immediate pain or burning, sensitivity to touch, and a numbness/tingling sensation. Poisonous scorpions can cause blurry vision and muscle twitching.¹ This swarm of demon locusts will travel all over the globe, perhaps lying in wait, and striking men with their scorpion like tail causing acute pain and other neurological effects. Though this kind of punishment is offensive to the modern mind it nonetheless is the divinely appointed method for punishing sin (Thomas, 33).

Verse 6 describes the desperation of mankind due to this invasion. *And in those days men will seek death and no they will not find it; and they will long to die, and death flees from them.* The torment will be so great that *men will seek* death. Since God is the one who controls when a person dies, *they will not find it.* God has not permitted the stings to cause death (v 5). Even though *men will seek death...they will not find it.* Even so they will strongly desire or *long to die.* God's desired effect of the *stings* is for repentance (Rev 9:20-21) but man's response is to escape the physical pain. Physical pain often causes men to seek death when God's intention is otherwise. God knows that if they were to find death that the second death in the lake of fire would be far worse. Thus, he does not allow them to die. As severe as this is it should be viewed as an extension of God's grace to the earth-dwellers. They still have time to repent as long as this judgment continues. Thus, even though they will strongly long to die *death will flee from them.* Death will not just elude them but will aggressively run from them as they pursue it.

3. The Description of the Locusts (9:7-12)

Revelation 9:7-12 And the appearances of the locusts were like horses prepared for battle; and upon their heads appeared to be gold-like crowns, and their faces like faces of men. ⁸ And they had hair (imperfect) like the hair of women, and their teeth like lions (imperfect). ⁹ They had (imperfect) chests like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of many chariots of horses rushing into battle. ¹⁰ And they have tails like scorpions and stings; and in their tails is their authority to injure the men for five months. ¹¹ They have over them a king, the angel of the abyss, his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon. ¹² The first woe (ouai - how horrible it will be!) has gone away; behold, two woes still come after these things.

Throughout these verses John uses the words *hos* and *homois* nine times in description. These demons are like locusts but clearly, they are supernatural in origin. "Basically, they are like locusts, but their supernaturalness adds a degree of dreadfulness to their appearance for the sake of enhancing their terrifying effect" (Thomas, 35). Basically, the description of John begins at the head and works its way to the tail. First, they appeared like *horses prepared for battle* (for similarity see Joel 1-2) meaning they appear fully armed, powerful, and courageous. They also had something on their *heads* that appeared to be *gold-like crowns*. These *gold-like crowns* are *stephanos* crowns which are victory crowns. They look forward to the demons' victories over men for five months. Their faces are *like the faces of men*. They are not men but they are *like men*. The human face

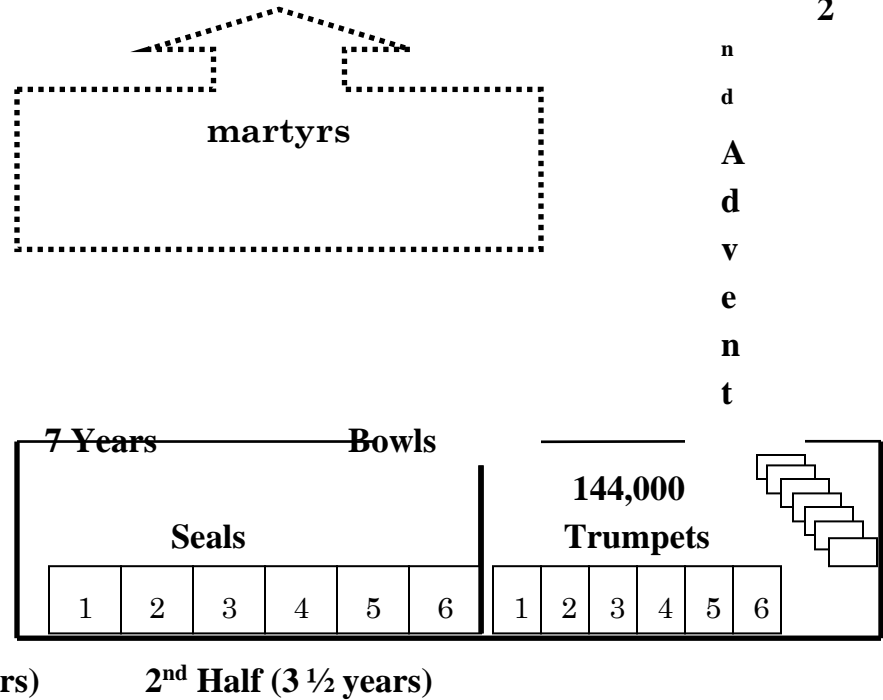
indicates that these are intelligent beings and not just natural insects. These creatures are superhuman and evil.

Verse 8 ***And they had hair (imperfect) like the hair of women, and their teeth like lions (imperfect).*** They do not have the hair of women but ***hair like the hair of women***. This must refer to the distinctness of the length of women's hair from men's hair in the Bible. Thus, they have longer hair as do women. ***and their teeth are like lions***. Locusts have teeth but not teeth like these. These locusts have huge teeth that could rip apart and devour flesh. But they do not serve that function during these five months. Rather they add an element of fear and terror for the earth dwellers.

Verse 9 ***They had (imperfect) chests like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of many chariots of horses rushing into battle.*** Normally the translation says ***they had breastplates like breastplates of iron*** but the Greek word for ***breastplates*** is *thorax* and can also mean the "chest". Here John's intention is to describe the chest of these demonic locusts as ***similar to breastplates of iron***. The demon locusts have ***chests*** that are strong like ***iron*** and cannot be pierced. Moving on to ***their wings*** we find that this swarm of demon locusts makes a deafening sound. Like locusts they can fly and the sound of ***their wings*** will be like ***the sound of many chariots of horses rushing into battle***. The ***sound*** creates fear, anxiety, and dread in the earth-dwellers as this demonic army rushes to strike them.

Verse 10 ***And they have tails like scorpions and stings; and in their tails is their authority to injure the men for five months.*** Moving to the ***tail*** it is ***like scorpions and stings***. This is the part of the locusts that causes the pain. This will be what men want to avoid. They can't use their lion-like teeth to bite men but they will use their ***tails*** to ***sting*** them. The scorpion venom is a neurotoxin which affects the nervous system. A sting can cause muscle twitching and blurry vision. Both of these affects will only increase the difficulty of escaping their terror. It is ***in their tails*** where ***their authority*** lies ***to injure the men for*** the duration of ***five months***. The injury will not last for five months but the locust's ***authority to injure*** will last for ***five months***. This is the first time the duration of one of the judgments has been mentioned. This revelation is one of the main reasons I have taught you that the trumpet judgments are sequential and do not overlap. That is, the 6th Trumpet will not begin until the 5th Trumpet is completed and the locusts are locked away.

70th Week of Daniel 9
2 Divisions of Birth Pangs



Verse 11 *They have over them a king, the angel of the abyss, his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek, he has the name Apollyon.* The demon *locust...have over them a king*. This indicates that they are not natural locusts but supernatural. Their *king* is *the angel of the abyss*. At some point in history these fallen angels were confined to this *abyss* and in that *abyss*, there is one *angel* who serves as the *king*. The *king* is the commander in chief who organizes the battle against the earth dwellers. John gives him two names here. First, *his name in Hebrew is Abaddon* which means “destroyer”. Second, *in the Greek he has the name Apollyon* which also means “destroyer”. By using both languages John was able to appeal to Jews who spoke Hebrew as well as Gentiles. That this *king* is named “destroyer” characterizes his desires as leader of these *demonic locusts*. Though he will desire to *destroy* the earth dwellers he must remain within the limitations God places on him.

Verse 12 *The first woe (ouai - how horrible it will be!) has gone away; behold, two woes still come after these things.* At this point *the first woe is past* but a pure literal translation says *the first woe has gone away*. This again signifies that the first woe will end completely before the second *woe* will *come*. There are still *two woes to come after these things*. Remember, the word *woe* literally means “how horrible it will be!” and justifies saying that the intensity has increased from the first four trumpet judgments as we near the great and terrible day of the Lord. This intensification of judgment has the

intention of causing men to repent (9:20-21) but instead, many will seek death though God will extend grace to allow them time to repent.

- E. 5th Trumpet (1st Woe!): Demonic Locusts (9:1-12)**
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ⁱ <http://phoenix.about.com/cs/desert/ht/scorpionsting.htm>

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