

**Revelation Chapter 9 pt. 1**  
**The Fifth Trumpet**  
**Bible Study Notes**

*“A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; the land is like the Garden of Eden before them and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them.  
Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run. With a noise like chariots, over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array.”*

**Joel 2:3-5**

The seven churches, seven seals and seven trumpets cover the same basic historical events from different perspectives with regards to the Christian Church. The churches provide the chronological sequence for the rest of the book of Revelation. That is to say, the seven churches are to Revelation, what Daniel 2 is to Daniel.

1. The first **church, seal and trumpet** describe the period of the apostolic church.
2. The second **church, seal and trumpet** describe the period when the emperors of the pagan Roman Empire persecuted the church.
3. The third **church, seal and trumpet** describe the period when paganism penetrated the Christian church during the reign of Constantine, Emperor of Rome.
4. The fourth **church, seal and trumpet** describe the period when the **apostate** papal/catholic church eclipsed the Bible and the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, therefore substituting God’s Word for the commandments of men and tradition.

*“**The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era.** The **number 7** indicates completeness and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world.” AA p. 585*  
E.G White

The period of the **5<sup>th</sup> trumpet**, *the first woe*, came at a time when the papal reign of the Roman Catholic Church was coming to an end, *its mortal wound was nigh*, **Revelation 13:3**. By comparing historical events with Bible prophecy we can see that this trumpet covered a period of time when the devil was truly at work wreaking havoc as a result of the spiritual darkness which we see transpiring during the **4<sup>th</sup> trumpet**. Compromise was now fully rife within the Church, idolatry, spiritual adultery, and a number of false practices were promulgated by the Papacy, leading the masses astray.

We should note as well that both the **5<sup>th</sup>** and **6<sup>th</sup> trumpets** which we will cover in this chapter of Revelation are further expanded upon in further chapters in the Book of Revelation, so, we will need to go to other chapters to help to get a better understanding of the explanation of chapter 9.

## v.1

*"Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw **a star fallen from heaven** to the earth. To him was given the **key** to the **bottomless pit**."*

This is a clear reference to Lucifer, the great star which fell or was cast out from Heaven; **Revelation 12:7-9**, **Isaiah 14:12**. He was cast out of Heaven to the earth and to him was given a key to the abyss. The Abyss, in the original Greek, *Abussos*, is the abode of satan and his evil angels. Notice that John sees '*a star fallen from Heaven*', not falling, indicating that the falling of the star is already a past event, not that he looks and sees a star falling; this points us back to the beginning when satan sinned against God and was thus cast out from Heaven. We understand therefore that this star which John sees, is the same star which we saw at the blowing of the 3<sup>rd</sup> trumpet, thus, satan was already cast out and able to cause all of this destruction upon the earth.

*"Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into **the abyss**."* **Luke 8:30-31**

*"And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day."* **Jude 1:6**

## v.2

*"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."*

Notice that at the blowing of the 4<sup>th</sup> trumpet, there was a partial darkening of the sun (*a third*), **Revelation 8:12**, however, at the blowing of the 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet we get the impression here that the entire sun is darkened as well as the air; this shows us a period of total spiritual darkness as a result of the rejection of God's Word and His Law.

Where there is no light, there can only be darkness.

Says Jesus, *"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life."* **John 8:12**

By implication, what Jesus is saying here, is that whoever does not follow Him shall walk in *spiritual* darkness. This is exactly what we see during the period of the 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet. Total spiritual darkness as a result of not following Jesus.

### v.3

*"Then out of the smoke **locusts** came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power."*

Out of the **smoke** came **locusts**, here representing the **evil angels** of satan ready to do his bidding during this time. This **smoke** caused the nations to be **blinded** from the false teachings which were now about to come to the fore. The **sun** (*the greater light*) is a symbol of **Jesus**, and the **moon** (*the lesser light*) is a symbol of the **Scriptures** that give witness to Him, see: **Revelation 12:1**. The partial darkness of the fourth trumpet (when the two witnesses prophesied in sackcloth or obscurity), **Revelation 11:3**, **Revelation 8:12** becomes complete darkness in the fifth trumpet, after the 1,260-year reign of the Roman Catholic Church. For more information on the 1,260-year prophecy, see my study notes on **Revelation 13**, specifically **part 1**.

A comparison of **verse 2** with **Exodus 10:15** seems to indicate that the smoke was really composed of a huge cloud of locusts (demonic forces) that eclipsed the sun (the preaching of Jesus).

*"For they [the locust of verse 14] covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt."* **Exodus 10:15**

During the period of Catholic reign, **538AD-1798AD (Catholic rule over the Western Church, 1,260 years)**, there was a partial darkening of the Word as we have studied in the message to the **Church of Thyatira** in **Revelation 2:18-29**, the 4<sup>th</sup> seal in **Revelation 6:7-8** and the 4<sup>th</sup> trumpet in **Revelation 8:12**, however, after this period came to an end, the darkness spread and now there was total darkness specifically within the nation of **France**.

The French consistently rejected the Gospel truth and was one of the main proponents of the Papacy in persecuting the people of God in those days. After the Papacy fell in 1798 (*at the end of the 1,260 years*), France continued its persecution of the Christian people, to the point that it totally outlawed Christianity and was the first country to outwardly reject God; hence France became the first outwardly **atheist country**.

*"And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."*

*These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth."* **Revelation 11:3-4**

John sees the same events of the 4<sup>th</sup> trumpet in **Revelation 11**. He tells us that the two witnesses, prophesied for 1,260 prophetic days (literal years) in sackcloth. Sackcloth was used in Biblical times when one was in mourning and lamentation, it was also used to symbolize oppression. These 1,260 prophetic days are the same length of time in which the Papacy ruled, from **538AD-1798AD**, (1,260 literal years).

These two witnesses represent God's Word, **The Old & New Testament**.

Says the Psalmist David, "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*" **Psalm 119:105**

So, in essence, it was during this time of papal rule that the gospel message was preached in 'sackcloth'. Many were persecuted & martyred for their faith by the Catholic Church, using the kingdoms of Europe, and the gospel message was under pressure and oppressed for **1,260 prophetic days (literal years)** and spiritual darkness came upon the Church. See: **Numbers 14:33-34, Exodus 4:5-6**

However, after this time period, the 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet blew, the Catholic Church ceased to be a world power **for a time** and the spiritual darkness continued to spread, with its peak in the nation of France; the first nation to outwardly profess atheism.

*"In Scripture God's points of the compass are the **north** and the **east**. When Jesus came the first time, he came by way of the east (**Luke 1:78, 79**). The sealing angel comes from the east (**Revelation 7:1, 2**). When Jesus comes again with His armies it will be from the east (**Matthew 24:27; Revelation 16:12; Isaiah 41:25**). **The east is God's point of the compass because of the position of the sun. He is a God of light and sunlight originates/rises in the east (Malachi 4:3; Psalm 84:11).***

*Furthermore, according to **Isaiah 14:13, 14** and **Psalm 48:1, 2** God's throne is in the sides of the north because the sun reaches its brightest intensity when it is directly overhead. In **Ezekiel 1**, when God comes to Jerusalem for judgment He comes from the north (**Ezekiel 1:4**)*

***On the other hand, the west is the place where darkness begins, and the south (underworld) is the place where darkness reaches its deepest intensity at midnight. The ancients considered the south the realm of the underworld where demons thrive because it was the place of deepest darkness. For this reason, darkness in the fifth trumpet comes from the abyss, which is in the underworld." Pastor Stephen Bhor***

In short, the fifth trumpet is a clear description of an extraordinary manifestation of satanic power upon the earth especially in the nation of France around the time of the fall of the Papal Empire (Roman Catholic Empire).

#### **v.4-6**

*"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. And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.**"*

This language is highly unusual. **Grass, green things, and trees are what locusts eat** and yet they receive the command to **spare** the grass, the plants, and the trees. They are to attack only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

From our last study and even within the context of this verse we see that the grass, green things, and the trees **represent the righteous, Psalm 1:1-3; Jeremiah 17:8; Psalm 92:12**, all those who at that time were sealed with the seal of God, **The Holy Spirit**.

*"And do not grieve the **Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**" **Ephesians 4:30***

*"Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has **sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.**" **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1:22***

Applying the **prophetic day/year principle** which the Bible shows us in **Numbers 14:33-34, Exodus 4:5-6**, we see that the **five prophetic months** which the locusts were allowed to torment the wicked was a total of **150 prophetic days, which is 150 literal years. 1 day in prophecies that encompass a period of time, represent 1 literal year.**

This period commenced in **1637** with the '**Age of Reason**' and ended in **1787** with the commencement of the French Revolution, **150 literal years.**

**'The Age of Reason'** eventually **abandoned** the need for faith in God. It replaced faith in God with **human wisdom**, under the influence of satan and his evil angels. During this period, the sciences would come to believe that all could be saved through human devices without the need of a righteous God. Notably these philosophies would not kill people, but they would make them existentially miserable thus '**tormented**'. **The Age of Reason inspired the French Revolution.**

Notice then how the spiritual darkness which we see in **verse 2** is being fulfilled as a result of the widespread atheism, all of which was under the direct influence of the star which 'fell from heaven unto the earth [satan]', **verse 1**.

*"Atheism can shed no ray of light into the grave. It cannot restrain crime or quicken the moral energies. It has no power to elevate the character or purify the soul. On the contrary, it always tends to degenerate the human race; it leads away from purity and peace. An instance of this is given in the history of the **French Revolution**. That period, when the existence of God was denied, and his commandments were abolished, was the most revolting that is recorded on the pages of human history."* Ellen G White

*"The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." **Psalm 14:1***

### **v.7-10**

*"The shape of the locusts was like **horses prepared for battle**. On their heads were **crowns** of something like gold, and their faces were like the **faces of men**. They had hair like women's hair, and their **teeth** were like **lions' teeth**. And 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. They had **tails like scorpions**, and there were **stings in their tails**. Their power was to hurt men **five months**."*

We find the backdrop of this imagery in **Joel 2:4-10** where God compares an invading army with a plague of locusts. It is of interest that the Italian word for locust is 'cavalletta', which means '**little horse**'. The German peasants call the locust 'hupferde', which means, '**hay horses**.'

At this point satan and his angels are already gathering their forces for the final battle against God, the Bible and His people from this time until the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ.

This, however, is not a physical battle, but a battle of the minds and who we worship, whether Christ or satan.

*"For the **weapons** of our warfare are not **carnal** [earthly] but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ..." **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 10:4-5***

*"Put on the **whole armour of God**, that you may be able to **stand against the wiles of the devil**. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the **rulers of the darkness** of this age, against **spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places**. Therefore, take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." **Ephesians 6:10-13***

The 5<sup>th</sup> as well as the 6<sup>th</sup> **trumpets** show us that there is a numbering of satan's followers ever since the period of the Roman Catholic Empire came to a **temporary end**; **Revelation 13:3** tells us that this power will be revived. Evil will persist and increase in this world until God withdraws his protection and hands the willingly ignorant over to a reprobate mindset.

This is in contrast to **Revelation 7**, where God's people are sealed and also numbered & empowered to stand under His divine protection.

We see that the locust had teeth like a lion which coincides with what the Apostle Peter tells us in **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8**

*"Your adversary the devil walks about like a **roaring lion**, seeking whom he may devour."*

The locusts also had tails as a scorpion, and just as a scorpion's tail is full of poison, so the teachings and doctrines that came to prominence during the '*age of reason*,' poisoned the souls of men from the lies and errors that permeated throughout society. The faces of men which the locusts had reveal to us that satan was using his



evil angels to influence mankind in order to execute his will. Satan is not permitted to appear to mankind in his physical form until the appointed time, therefore he uses the other fallen angels to tempt and influence mankind, especially those of prominence in the world.

*"In Scripture the tail represents lies (**Revelation 12:7-9; John 8:44; Isaiah 9:15**). It is significant that during the 1260 years, Satan deceived people by the **lie of false religion (false God)** but during the age of reason Satan deceived and hurt people **by the lies of secularism (no God/ Atheism)**.*

*According to **Daniel 11:40-45**, false religion [**King of the North**] and secularism [**King of the South**] are the two enemies that will face off during the time of the end. These two will eventually join forces for the final battle."*

*"**At the time of the end** the **king of the South [Atheism]** shall attack him; and the **king of the North [False Worship]** shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through. He [**the papacy**] shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also, the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels. But news from the **east** and the **north** shall trouble him; therefore, he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him." **Daniel 11:40-45***

*"The elder and **honourable**, he is the **head**; the prophet who **teaches lies**, he is the **tail**." **Isaiah 9:15***

## **v.11**

*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**.*

*One woe is past. Behold, still **two more woes are coming** after these things."*

The king who rules over the locusts is the angel of the abyss and his name in Hebrew is **Abaddon** and in Greek it is **Apollyon**, both of which mean 'destroyer.' The New Testament describes satan as the ruler/prince of demons and he is also referred to as the destroyer. This means then that the locusts are satan's angels.

*"Now when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by **Beelzebub** [another name for satan], the ruler of the demons... If **Satan** casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?" **Matthew 12:24,26***

*"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and he went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ"*

**Revelation 12:17**