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(Revelation 9:1-12)

**Intro.** It was February 1992—3,000 people were packed into a small gym in Southern Indiana to watch the South Knox Spartans take on the Tecumseh Braves. I had just finished playing a Junior Varsity basketball game where we killed a conference opponent on their home court. The fans even got lippy with me & my teammates after the game, telling us we were nothing. As I sat right behind the bench to watch my brother & the Varsity team play, I realized it wasn't going to be much of a game. Everyone witnessed a total blowout as our team dominated every facet of the game & their players were jawing & committing hard fouls & the refs weren't doing anything to stop it. Then the buzzer sounded & we watched the entire side of the bleachers empty on to the court as fans began attacking our players. It was absolute chaos. Black eyes, bloody noses, scratched arms as hundreds of fans took on 12 players & ours fans quickly rushed to their aid. It was Armageddon on the basketball court & yet it never had to happen. Everything was building up to it & the refs never stepped in to put a stop to it. As we continue our series on “Battle Trumpets” on Revelation 8-11, today we see things building up in Revelation 9 & “The Precursor to Armageddon.”

Theme: Tribulation/judgment of God

Background: Although John the Apostle is in exile on the island of Patmos at the end of the first century AD, the Lord gives him a revelation as a set of visions of what will take place in the future & it includes a series of judgments in the forms of 7 seals, 7 trumpets & 7 bowls.

- Whenever we read Scripture, we should use the plain meaning of Scripture—the literal sense—unless it doesn't make sense or if metaphors & similes are used—clearly we face figurative language a good bit in Revelation & that's especially true of this passage
- Understand what I'm talking about here: this particular judgment clearly affects unbelievers & yet I believe these unbelievers will be deceived & take out their frustration on the people of God as they prepare for the battle of Armageddon.
- I want to walk you through the text, pointing out some key truths & then give you some brief areas of application.

### Explanation of the Text:

#### I. The star fallen from heaven is probably Satan (9:1-2, 11)

- Fallen angels are called stars in 12:4, 9, so this is a fallen angel here (if not Satan, at least a chief demon)
- He has authority over the abyss—the bottomless pit (7x in Revelation—9:1-2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3)—a reference to hell (see Luke 8:31; see also Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; in Jewish literature, see 1 Enoch 18:12-16; 21:7-10; 108:3-6)
- He is called Abaddon or Apollyon—“Destroyer” (destruction)—occurs 6x in the OT with reference to the destruction of the grave
- He is described here as a “fallen” star, meaning he had already fallen

Illus: The fall of Satan is mentioned 3x in Scripture with the first two in the OT likened to the fall of kings, but more than the kings of Babylon & Tyre are being referenced (see Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28—see also Revelation 12:1-10; Luke 10:18)

#### II. The Lord has complete authority over Satan & the locusts (9:1-5, 12)

- He commands His angels to blow the trumpets as sounds of war
- He grants the giving of keys
- He is in charge of the woes (9:12; cf. 8:13)

Illus: Much like a parent watching over their toddler play with things which may result in an accident (like driving a toy car) & ready to stop things at any moment, so the Lord watches over all things & allows this evil to reign for a moment, but He can step in & stop it

#### III. The locusts are powerful demonic forces which have limits (9:3-11)

- The locusts remind the reader of the 8<sup>th</sup> Egyptian plague (Exodus 10:13-15) but they also remind us of Joel's prophecies about devastating locusts in the last days (Joel 1:4, 6-7; 2:2-11)

- They are demons because they come out of the abyss (out of hell)
- Illus: All demons are fallen angels (see Revelation 12:9)—be careful about calling your grandchildren “little angels,” because they will prove to be fallen angels!

➤ Areas of the Demons’ Limitation:

- 1) They are given power (by another) like scorpions which sting
- 2) They are not allowed to harm vegetation (9:4)—proving they aren’t real locusts, because locusts (or grasshoppers) devastate crops & vegetation
- 3) They are not allowed to harm those with the seal of God on their foreheads—the Jewish people mentioned in chapter 7, but it may be symbolic of all the people of God—just as God protected Israel in many of the 10 plagues on Egypt, so He can do so in the last days (cf. Ezekiel 9:4-6)
- 4) They are allowed to harm only for 5 months—locusts could harm up to 5 months in Palestine (mid-April—mid-September)
- 5) They are not allowed to kill unbelievers, but only torment them

**IV. The demons are deceitful & destructive (9:7-11)**

- They are described in metaphoric language & the language disguises them from being clearly identified (9:7-10)—they are “like” crowns, gold, human faces—they are imitations, masquerading to deceive people (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:14)
- “like horses prepared for battle” (9:7)—John gives us his best understanding of warlike descriptions some 2,000 years or so into the future
- “heads... like crowns of gold”—shiny metal
- “faces like human faces”—may speak to advanced intelligence or those operating such wartime vessels
- “hair like women’s hair” (9:8)—beautiful (the glory of a woman is her hair, cf. 1 Corinthians 11:15)—in this case, though the demonic forces appear beautiful, they are not
- “teeth like lion’s teeth”—fierce, damaging, consuming
- “breastplates like breastplates of iron” (9:9)—strong armor
- “noise of their wings like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle”—loud & growing, like engines revving up
- “they have tails and stings like scorpions” (9:10)—tormenting aches & pains

Illus: Some have wondered if this description is that of special Apache helicopters, decorated like war-planes of old or certain kinds of armored tanks (show picture of decorated plane)

- They serve under their king, the Destroyer (9:11)

**Application:**

**I. Get to know Scripture better**—some people read Revelation & get confused & assume the whole Bible is written this way. It isn’t & you should read it to get to know it more & when you come to incredibly difficult passages, say, “Lord, I don’t understand all of this, but I trust You & I thank You for giving us Your Word so that we can know You”

**II. Be on guard for Satan’s deceptive ways**—he presents certain things as beautiful which are nothing more than evil (drugs, abuse of alcohol, inappropriate sex, false religion, etc.)

**III. Get Right with God or face suffering**—unbelievers are targeted & tormented in this judgment & suffering will increase exponentially for unbelievers

**Conc.** Just as the refs never stepped in to stop things in that 1992 basketball game, God won’t step in to stop these demonic forces for 5 months. He’ll let it build up to Armageddon. After the game, the parents & adults formed a human wall to protect us on our way to the buses. We received a police escort. The school was taken off the schedule (nowadays they would have been put on probation & kicked out of the state tournament). In a very small way, they would pay for their crimes. That’s a microcosm of what will happen to those who aren’t right with God. Judgment day will come & you will pay for your crimes. But you don’t have to. You can admit your sin & repent & trust in Christ as the only hope for forgiveness of sins, peace with God & eternal life.