

## **Intro:**

1. Review the unrolling of the scroll, then from the seventh seal comes the seven trumpets. The last trumpet we saw ended with an eagle flying above saying, “Woe to the earth because of what is about to happen.” The next three trumpets is known as the three woes. Each one gets progressively worse. As bad as it has been, it is about to get worse.
2. Now let’s review the different viewpoints, because this next trumpet is where there is a lot of differences, and each one seems to have a great deal of validity to it. So I have prepared a little pop quiz test sheet to help us out. (Pass out quiz)
3. Now one thing to keep in mind, this stuff may seem scary but it is supposed to bring comfort. Remember one of the keys to Apocalyptic literature is its use of evocative images that are meant to shock you in many ways and remember that its purpose is not to merely tell you about the future but it is done so to get you to see the present in light of that future different. And remember this book is a book of hope and comfort (hard to see with this trumpet-or is it?).

## **I. Historicist Interpretation**

1. Now we have ridiculed this interpretation for the most part, but this section is a part in which even the futurist and spiritualist look at and say “hmmm...you may have gotten something there.”
2. To the Historicist commentators, the locust represent the Saracens (Muslim Arabians) and their campaigns against the Eastern Roman Empire from about 612 to 763. The king that is over them “Apollyon” or “Abaddon” which both mean “the destroyer” is believed to be the prophet Mohammed. Some things they point out is:
  - a. The star fallen from heaven (vs.1): This is believed to be a symbol for a prince who has been degraded or deprived of rank. Mohammed was of princely pedigree, but the previous generation of his family lost their rule.
  - b. In these times, the locust plagues came from most often Arabia.
  - c. The command is given not to harm the green grass or anything green by their leader (vs 4). This has a parallel from the Koran in which Mohammed says “Destroy no palm trees, nor any fields of corn, cut down no fruit trees.”
  - d. The Muslim invaders caused trouble for the Christian world, but they were not able to kill the papal Rome as a political body, just tormented it.
  - e. The seals on the foreheads: Steve Gregg quotes the “Treasury of Scripture Knowledge” as saying that the victims will be, “corrupt and idolatrous Christians; against whom the Saracens chiefly prevailed” that would be the Greek and the Latin churches.
  - f. Remember the day for a year principle-the five months (Vs 5,10) are seen as five prophetic months of 30 days each.  $30 \times 5 = 150$  days. Or according to the year for a day principle, 150 years. Now Mohammed adopted his policy of making coverts by sword in 612 when the Muslim Arabs began to attack the eastern churches and seek to forcibly convert Europe from Christianity to Islam. The invading Muslims were held in check at the battle of Tours by Charles Martel in 732. In 763 the Muslims ceased their policy of aggression and moved their capital to Baghdad. So as is quoted again in Treasury of Scripture Knowledge according to Gregg, “from the time that Mohammed began to propagate his imposture, 612, to the building of Baghdad, when they ceased from their attacks, 763, are just 150 years.”
3. Now Matthew Henry views this not as the Muslims but as the third bishop of Rome, Pope Boniface who took for himself the title of universal Bishop, the first to do so. Before then there were actually 5 popes. He says that this is the rise of the Roman Catholic Church with its false doctrines that kill the spirituality of Christianity but not physically harm anyone. The reign is 5 months which is symbolic for a brief time.
  - a. Interestingly, Some Roman Catholic commentators interpretation was that this was the Lutherans and the Reformers with Luther being the star the fell from Heaven.
4. Some other keys they point out is:

- a. Islamic tradition speaks of locust having dropped into the hands of Mohammed, bearing on their wings this inscription: “We are the army of the Great God”
  - b. Also, their traditional turbans can be seen as crowns (Vs 7)
  - c. The faces of men and hair like women (Vs. 8) is seen as a reference to their bearded, long-haired heads.
  - d. The breast plates of iron (Vs 9) were literal. The Saracens had iron coats of mail. The Koran says, “God has given you coats of mail to defend you in your wars.”
  - e. Sting in their tales (Vs 10) is seen as that the Saracens were known for fighting rearward on their horses.
5. Now like I said, most don’t hold to this interpretation, but it does make you stop and think about it.

## II. The Preterist Interpretation

1. Some make the point that the name “Apollyon” was a name that Emperor Domitian took for himself. And see this as evil turning on itself.
2. Now what is interesting here is that the spiritualist and the preterist have remarkable similarities in this approach in that they both view the star falling from heaven as being a person, most think Satan others think it is some kind of religious leader. And they see the locust as demons that come and possess people causing moral and spiritual errors. That’s why the true servants of God weren’t touched by them.
3. Now they point that during the destruction of Jerusalem and the last days of the nation of Israel (66-70) that the people demonstrated these signs of demon possessions. A Preterist commentator named David Chilton says that from the time of the New Testament to the end of the “The Jewish Wars”, by historian Josephus, there is a clear indication that the people were becoming increasingly more demon-possessed. He states that the loss of all ability to reason, the frenzied mobs attacking one another, the deluded multitudes that followed every false doctrine, the crazed and desperate people who chased after food, the mass murderers, the executions and suicides, the fathers slaughtering their own families, mothers eating their own children. Satan and the host of hell simply swarmed through the land of Israel and consumed the apostates.”
  - a. They quote Jesus’ own words in Matthew 12:43-45 as proof for their interpretation.
4. Now this is interesting here. The idea that they had the face of a man and hair like a woman is believed to identify the transvestitism that hit Israel before its destruction. They quote the Jewish Historian, Josephus again in “The Jewish Wars: Vol. 4”:
  - a. *“With their insatiable hunger for loot, they ransacked the houses of the wealthy, murdered men and violated women for sport; they drank their spoils for blood, and from mere satiety and shamelessness gave themselves up to effeminate practices, plaiting their hair and putting on women’s clothes, drenched themselves with perfumes and painting their eyelids to make themselves attractive. They copied not merely the dress, but also the passions of women, devising in their excess of licentiousness unlawful pleasures in which they wallowed as in a brothel. Thus they entirely polluted the city with their foul practices. Yet though they wore women’s faces, their hands were murderous. They would approach with mincing steps, then suddenly become fighting men, and , whipping out their swords from under their dyed cloaks, they would run through every passerby.”*
  - b. It is also pointed out that in Jesus in John 8:44 called the Jewish apostates children of the Devil and that in Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 that they belonged to the synagogue of Satan.

## III. The Futurist Interpretation

1. Now the futurist approach tends to take this as the most literal interpretation. (Show picture of artist drawing of locust).
2. The Fallen Star is viewed as being Satan. Satan is viewed elsewhere as being fallen from Heaven.
  - a. Isaiah 14:12-15
  - b. Jesus said that He saw Satan fall from Heaven in Luke 10:18

3. Now John MacArthur thinks that this is not here in the text that this is not the first time Satan falls. He believes this because Satan still has access to the throne room of God where he is the accuser of the brethren. But that during the tribulation period there will be a war in heaven that is referenced in Revelation 12:7-9. When Satan is cast to the earth for good and he is limited to that sphere, that is when all heck breaks out on earth. Satan will seek to marshal his fallen troops from the bottomless pit so in this interpretation, the locust are actually demons let loose from the bottomless pit, a pit that Satan will be in eventually (Revelation 20:1,3).
4. The Pit is an image used throughout scripture for a place of torment for demons.
  - a. 2 Peter 2:4 says, “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell,<sup>[2]</sup> putting them into gloomy dungeons<sup>[3]</sup> to be held for judgment;
5. So who are these demons in this pit? They are the worse of the worse, but John MacArthur relates some scriptures to this.
  - a. **Jude 1:6-7** (NIV) which says, “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.<sup>7</sup> In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.” This passage describes certain fallen angels who left the angelic domain to indulge in sexual sin with humans, just as the men of Sodom and Gomorrah attempted to engage in perverted sex with angels (Gen. 19:1,4-5)
  - b. He then quotes 1 Peter to say when this action of the mixing of these demons and humans occurred. **1 Peter 3:18-20** says, “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,<sup>19</sup> through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison<sup>20</sup> who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water.”
  - c. He then says that those “spirits in prison” are the demons who cohabitated with human women in Satan’s attempt to corrupt the human race and make it unredeemable. They are found in Gen. 6:1-4, in the days of Noah.
  - d. Some awful demons are still being placed in that pit because in Luke 8:31, the demons asked to be sent to the swine instead of the pit.
6. So during this time, Satan is given the key to the bottomless pit and he releases those demons inside there.
7. When the demons are released, they are free to torment, but that torment has restrictions.
  - a. It is believed that when Satan releases these demons, his intentions is to harm the Christians, but they fail and can’t touch them so they end up hurting the wicked instead. They can only harm those who don’t have the seal of God, which means only those with the mark of the beast.
  - b. They couldn’t kill anyone, just cause severe pain, so bad that people will want to die but not be able to.
8. This is believed by some to be the last period during the tribulation period in which people will have a chance to repent and be delivered.
9. Apollyon is not viewed to be Satan himself but another high ranking demon.
10. Now other futurist disagree with this ultra literal interpretation, such as Hal Lindsey who sees these as being cobra helicopters.

#### **IV. Spiritualist Interpretation**

1. They point out that this keeps with the imagery of the Exodus and the plagues.
2. They believe that the point is to emphasize the demonic power at work within the world and through people, and they see the damage as evil being done, and then turning on itself by asking the question, “Who gave the power to cause torment in Vs. 5? Most spiritualist would say that it was the star who did this, and they then attack those who do not belong to God. So you have evil going against evil.

#### **Conclusion:**

1. The sad thing about all of this, is that this is the first woe, there are still two more woes to go.
2. So lets ask ourselves, what is the one things we can pull from this (besides not to play with locust!)?
3. My thought is that it shows the reality of evil in our world and the demonic influence behind it, and how God can use that to try to bring people to return to Him, but even then some folks will not. I see a little bit of vindication in there, as much as the Christians suffered, now its time for those who caused suffering to the Christians to suffer a bit. And I also see the power and grace of God.
4. Reminder that the notes are found on our website. I am doing this lesson at Longview as well, we are just starting in Chapter one and so as those notes are completed they will be updated on our website. If you want to join the bible study there, it is on Tuesday nights at 7 pm if there is a lesson you missed that you want to attend.