

## WEEK 11: CHAPTER 9B

### CHAPTER 9:7-12 ~ THE 5<sup>TH</sup> TRUMPET: THE LOCUSTS DESCRIBED

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**Revelation 9:7-12** “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.”

- John now gives us a description of these demons...it is important to note that the word *like* is used 8 times in these verses.
- This is how hard it was for John to try and describe what he was seeing and hearing.
- “The description of the locusts given in these verses makes it clear that they are not ordinary locusts and are so named only because of their function as a judgment and plague from the Lord.” (Walvoord)
- In other words, *locust* was the best word that John could use to describe what he saw was going on.
  - It would be like us saying *he ate as much as a horse!* We would know that someone is not eating 20,000 calories in a day or spending 16-18 hours a day eating. But the point is made.
- **He describes what he sees:**
  - Like a horse prepared for battle and crowns on their heads and faces like men.
    - He saw a military force, ready to go out and conquer. John had seen horses before that were ready for battle and this is what it looked like to him.
    - Perhaps crowns mean that for a limited time, these demonic creatures were going to have victory over the people.
    - Human faces could suggest that these beings are capable of rational and cunning thoughts. They were not just aimlessly wandering but had specific goals and purposes.
  - They had hair like that of women and teeth like lions.
    - Long hair and sharp teeth; they were ready for battle.
    - Long hair could symbolize anything from attractiveness and seduction to a tool to cover their hideous faces and intent.
    - Lion’s teeth could symbolize their ability to consume victims; at least emotionally.
  - They had breastplates of iron and sounded like horses running to battle.

- They are immune, at least temporarily, to any human counterattacks. They are not going to be stopped any anything man-made.
  - Their sound was likely due to the sheer number of them as they are just rolling out of the abyss and eager to wage war against people on earth.
  - This is the dreadful advance of demons who have not seen the light of day in thousands of years. They have been waiting for their release and wreak absolute destruction upon anything that comes in their path.
- They had tails to hurt humans for 5 months.
  - Again, some sort of supernatural weapon that is specifically designed for intense but non-lethal torment.
  - Whether their torment was ongoing for 5 months or their “sting” hurt men for 5 months is unknown, but it is quite clear that this is going to be the longest 5 months for those who are alive during this time.
- “This awesome combination of the qualities of beasts and men depicts the utterly fearful character of these instruments of divine judgment. This is in keeping with the general character of the book of Revelation as an unmasking of the true nature of Satan and evil.” (Walvoord)
  - While it is very hard for us to understand or even picture this, it is true that these demons are going to be ferocious in how they look and in what they do.
- They also have a king over them, the angel of the abyss, Abaddon or Apollyon.
  - “The Hebrew name “Abaddon” and the Greek name “Apollyon” both mean “destroyer.” Such is the character of Satan and those who affiliate with him as wicked or fallen angels. Though in the modern world Satan often appears as an angel of light in the role of that which is good and religious, here the mask is stripped away and evil is seen in its true character. Satan and the demons are seen as the destroyers of the souls of men and as those who can only bring affliction. When divine restraint is released, as in this instance, the true character of the evil one is manifested immediately.” (Walvoord)
  - “There is a hierarchy of power among the demons, just as among the holy angels. Apparently, “the angel of the abyss” is one of Satan’s most trusted leaders or possibly Satan himself.”<sup>1</sup>
  - Whether this *angel of the abyss* is Satan or one of his high ranking demons, the point is clear...there is a “death squad” which is going to be sent out upon the earth to specifically target unrepentant mankind with the righteous judgment of God.

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<sup>1</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Re 9:11.

- **Why would John use the picture of locusts?**

- While not for certain, locusts are frequently used by God to enact His divine judgment upon wicked mankind and to show that God can use a small creature to bring great devastation.
- **Exodus 10:12-14** “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up on the land of Egypt and eat every plant of the land, even all that the hail has left.’ {13} So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD directed an east wind on the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. {14} The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled in all the territory of Egypt; they were very numerous. There had never been so many locusts, nor would there be so many again.”
- **Joel 1:4-7** “What the gnawing locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten; and what the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten; and what the creeping locust has left, the stripping locust has eaten. {5} awake, drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you wine drinkers, on account of the sweet wine that is cut off from your mouth. {6} For a nation has invaded my land, mighty and without number; its teeth are the teeth of a lion, and it has the fangs of a lioness. {7} It has made my vine a waste and my fig tree splinters. It has stripped them bare and cast them away; their branches have become white.”
  - Interesting to note about these words from Joel. The locusts were sent and were meant to awaken the nation.
  - As MacArthur states, “[this is] a literal, historical disaster—a massive locust plague—that serves as a sobering preview of a future, even more devastating judgment known as the ‘**Day of the Lord**’”
  - Just like in Joel’s day, the locusts came and devastation followed, but still no repentance.

- **A word of caution; some modern interpretations take this passage to mean that John is talking about helicopters, cyborgs or drones.**

- Once again, we have no idea the time that John is seeing in his vision. Often times these interpretations are called “newspaper exegesis.”
- That means that the Bible interpreters are reading the news and then using the Bible to try and back up what the news is saying.
- Could that be what John saw? Perhaps, helicopters have pilots (faces of men), they have “breastplates of iron” and their rotors sound like “the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle” and they have missiles and guns which may look like “tails like scorpions.”

- While this may sound good and preach really well, I would assert that it is just not true. John adds other descriptions which do not necessarily fit the “newspaper exegesis” of overly zealous theologians.
- **Verse 12**, the announcement that the first judgment is done...but there are still 2 more.
  - “The tribulation period unmasks human wickedness and also demonstrates the true character of Satan. In our modern day while Satan is still restricted it is easy to forget the great conflict which is raging between the forces of God and the forces of Satan referred to in Ephesians 6:12. In the great tribulation, and especially in the time of the fifth trumpet, with the release of the confined demons the full character of Satan will be starkly manifested. For the first time in history all those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour will come under demonic possession and affliction. What is true in that hour is also true in some measure today, for there is no deliverance from the power of Satan nor from his affliction apart from salvation in Christ and the delivering power of God.”  
(Walvoord)

## **CHAPTER 9:13-15 ~ THE 6<sup>TH</sup> TRUMPET: DEMONS RELEASED**

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**Revelation 9:13-15** “Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, {14} one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.’ {15} And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind.”

- “With the sounding of the sixth trumpet, John hears a voice described as coming from the four horns of the golden altar before God. In 8:3, this altar is the scene of the offering of incense with the prayers of saints. Here in its final mention in the book of Revelation, it is related to the judgment of the sixth trumpet. The inference is that this judgment like those preceding is partially an answer to the prayers of the persecuted saints on earth and a token of divine response and preparation for their deliverance.” (Walvoord)
- Regarding the altar, “Normally a place of mercy, as God responds to His people’s prayers, the altar will resound with a cry for vengeance.”<sup>2</sup>
- **Verse 14**, as angel hears the trumpet, the voice from the altar calls out to the four angels who had been bound at the Euphrates river.
  - God’s angels are never said to be bound. Therefore, these bound angels must be demons.
  - We are not sure who these angels are; as their identity is never stated. But we do know they are going to be over massive armies that are specifically meant to destroy much of the unrepentant world.

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<sup>2</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Re 9:13.

- These four angels are not the same four angels mentioned in **7:1**, who were holding back the wind while the 144,000 were sealed.
- “The four angels in chapter 9, however, are obviously of different character, for they are described as bound at the great river Euphrates. It may be concluded that the four angels bound in the Euphrates River are evil angels who are loosed on the occasion of the sounding of the sixth trumpet in order to execute this judgment. They all are prepared for their hour of activity much as the whale was prepared to swallow Jonah and effect divine discipline upon the prophet. These are wicked angels designated to execute the great judgment of the sixth trumpet but prevented from doing so until the proper moment. It is declared that the angels’ function is to slay the third part of men and that they had been prepared to fulfill this purpose at the given hour.” (Walvoord)
- **Why is the Euphrates River mentioned?** This should be taken literally and perhaps points to the fact that the invasion is coming from the Orient or the East.
  - There are some that would see these 4 demons as being over 4 armies from 4 distinct nations.
  - Daniel 10 gives some insight into how demons influence nations:
    - **Daniel 10:13** “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.”
    - **Daniel 10:20** “Then he said, ‘Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.’”
  - Also, the Euphrates is “One of the 4 rivers that flowed through the Garden of Eden (cf. Ge 2:14). Starting with Babel, this region has spawned many of the world’s pagan religions.”<sup>3</sup>
  - Just by way of reference, John talks about the Euphrates during the bowl judgments in **Revelation 16:12** “The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east.”
    - As we will see, these God draws these kings so that He can destroy them at Armageddon.
- “God has arranged the angelic realm in differing ranks referred to as ‘rule, authority, power, and dominion’ (Eph. 1:21). Gabriel and Michael have been assigned authority over angels who administer God’s affairs for the nation Israel (cf. Michael in Dan. 10:21; 12:1; Jude 9). In imitation Satan has also apparently assigned high-ranking demons to positions of authority over each kingdom.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Re 9:14.

<sup>4</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* 1985: 1366.

- These verses give us a very unique view into what is taking place in the spiritual realm all around us.
- There is a heavenly battle that is taking place all the time that we cannot see.
- This would tell us that the real battle is not here on earth, but one taking place in the spiritual realm.
- “The teaching seems to be that unseen evil powers influence and control the kingdoms and governments of this world in order to inflict harm and havoc on the people of God. There is what we see on the surface, but then there is this whole unseen arena; an invisible war is going on behind the ‘scenes.’”<sup>5</sup>
- Abraham Kuyper noted about the spiritual realm, “If once the curtain were pulled back, and the spiritual world behind it came to view, it would expose to our spiritual vision a struggle so intense, so convulsive, sweeping everything within its range, that the fiercest battle ever fought on earth would seem, by comparison, a mere game. Not here, but up there – that is where the real conflict is waged. Our earthly struggle drones in its backlash.”<sup>6</sup>
- We must stop and notice that Satan’s demons believe they are acting at the will of their ruler. They believe they are conquering mankind.
- But, in reality, they are only doing what God allows them to do and what they have been prepared to do.
- There is nothing that is coming which God has not already ordained to pass.
- “The expression “an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year” designates not the duration of their activity but the fact that this judgment comes exactly at the hour of God’s appointment. On the basis that the article is used only before the word *hour* in the Greek construction it should be translated “the hour, and day, and month, and year,” to be interpreted as Alford does: “the appointed hour occurring in the appointed day, and that in the appointed month, and that in the appointed year.” Though the agency of men is used to accomplish the purpose of God, the time schedule is determined by God, not man, and even angels execute God’s will in God’s time.” (Walvoord)
- When they are released, their purpose is to kill 1/3 of mankind.
  - Never since the days of Noah and the flood has such complete and utter devastation come upon the inhabitants of earth.
  - With this judgment, when combined with the earlier 4<sup>th</sup> seal when ¼ of the earth’s population was destroyed, the total number of people left (after those raptured as well) will be about ½.
  - Once again, the exact language (1/3 of the population) shows us that this is not a random event, an earthquake or some other “natural” disaster.
  - This is divine judgment that has a purpose.

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<sup>5</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, *The Message of Daniel*, 146.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Sinclair Ferguson, *Daniel*, 199.

## CHAPTER 9:16-19 ~ THE 6<sup>TH</sup> TRUMPET: 200 MILLION MAN ARMY

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**Revelation 9:16-19** “The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. {17} And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. {18} A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths. {19} For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.”

- John then gives some more details about this army that is coming against the people of earth.
- Regarding John’s number of 200 million, “If considered a literal enumeration of the army, it would represent the largest armed force ever known to man. Considering the millions of people in the Orient, the literal interpretation is not impossible, especially in view of the population explosion. The number of the horsemen here is comparable to the innumerable chariots of God mentioned in Psalm 68:17.”
  - **Psalm 68:17** “The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; The Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness.”
  - Once again, I do believe this number, 200,000 million, should be taken literally. He says that he *saw* the number and *heard* the number.
- Remember, these 200,000 million are on top of the countless number of demons already released in the last trumpet judgment.
- John does say *armies*, not in the sense of many people in one army, but that there are multiple armies that are represented in this trumpet judgment.
- “Some have suggested that this is the human army referred to in **16:12** and led by ‘the kings from the east,’ noting that the Red Chinese army reportedly numbered 200 million during the 1970’s<sup>7</sup>. But no reference is made to the size of the army led by the kings of the East. Further, that army arrives on the scene during the sixth bowl judgment, which takes place during the seventh trumpet, not the sixth. Though there may be at that time an existing standing army of two hundred million, the impossibility of marshaling, supplying, and transporting such a vast human force all over the globe also argues against this army being a human army. The figurative language used to describe this army’s horses suggests that this is a supernatural rather than a human force, as does the fact that it is commanded by the four newly released demons.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The connection to China gained popularity in the 1960s and 70s due to two main factors: **Mao’s “People’s War” Boast:** In the 1960s, Chairman Mao Zedong reportedly claimed that China could field a “militia of 200 million.” This was a propaganda figure including almost every able-bodied civilian, not a professional standing army.

<sup>8</sup> MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, 271.

- John further describes the horses and their riders.
- “Whether these are symbols or the best description John can give of modern warfare, this is an awesome picture of an almost irresistible military force destroying all that opposes it. The terms “horses,” “lions,” and “serpents” all speak of deadly warfare.” (Walvoord)
- Again, in **verse 18**, these three plagues from the horses will result in 1/3 of mankind dying.
  - **Fire:** Literal or supernatural flames.
  - **Smoke:** Dark, suffocating clouds accompanying the fire.
  - **Brimstone:** Burning sulfur (associated with divine judgment and hellfire).
- Both MacArthur and Walvoord “agree that the use of **fire and brimstone** is a deliberate biblical ‘callback’ to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, signaling that the world has reached a level of depravity that requires total incineration.”
  - This does not seem to be modern warfare but supernatural death that is coming upon the planet. This is a “demonic weaponry that bypasses natural physics.”
  - **Luke 17:28-30** “It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; {29} but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. {30} It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.”
  - **2 Peter 2:6** “...and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, *having made them an example* to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter...”
- **Verse 19**, again, focusing on the power of the horses. Not only power in their mouths but also in their tails.
- Their tails were like serpents, and they were there to do harm to the people.
- “John’s language represents the demons’ ability to vent their destructive power in both directions.”<sup>9</sup>
- It is interesting to note that while their mouths kill by three plagues, their tails only do harm.
- That means there could potentially be millions on earth that are “harmed” but not dead. This would be a typical sight for a battlefield. There are the wounded that need help out, the wounded who can help themselves out, and then there are the dead.
- With these very descriptive pictures from John, it is hard to think that this is modern warfare as some have suggested. While it is true that we don’t know for sure what John is seeing; we know that it is not something that is natural.
- We also know that it has the power to travel across the world, take out 1/3 of the people, not be stopped by modern weaponry and be under the control of demons.

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<sup>9</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Re 9:19.

## CHAPTER 8:12-13 ~ THE 6<sup>TH</sup> TRUMPET: MAN'S RESPONSE

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**Revelation 9:20-21** “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; {21} and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.”

- All through this time of God’s judgment, the hope is to see people come to faith in Christ.
- But, because of the hardness of man’s heart and the spiritual darkness over their eyes, they dig their heels in further and continue to worship and follow all their wicked heart’s desire.
- “Such is the hardness of the human heart even though faced by worldwide destruction and divine judgment from God and a clear testimony of God’s power to deal summarily with every human soul. The character of their wickedness is unfolded in these verses.” (Walvoord)
- Look at the list that those who have lived through all the judgments still hold onto; refusing to repent:
  - **Worship of demons** (the ESV puts this better, *nor give up worshipping demons*)
    - This is probably because they just saw the absolute havoc these demons brought.
    - The people probably look at the demons as gods at this point and worship them.
  - **Worship of idols that they themselves made...**
    - These idols, since they are made from perishable goods, they can never see nor hear nor talk.
    - **Psalm 115:4-8** “Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man's hands. {5} They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; {6} They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; {7} They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat. {8} Those who make them will become like them, everyone who trusts in them.” (cf. 135:15-18)
      - “We resemble whatever we revere - either for ruin or restoration.”<sup>10</sup>
  - **Unrepentant murders**
    - Shows that man’s heart is still hard towards God and towards his fellow man. Even the greatest display of supernatural power is not enough to break man’s darkened heart.
    - Without God, man will hate God and show it in how he treats his fellow man.
  - **Unrepentant sorceries**
    - This is an interesting point that we perhaps miss in our modern culture.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.reallifeankeney.org/sermons/sermon/2020-11-01/psalm-115-you-become-like-what-you-worship>

- "...the Greek word **φαρμακεία (pharmakeia)**. MacArthur states, 'The word 'sorceries' comes from the Greek word *pharmakeia*, from which we get 'pharmacy' or 'pharmaceuticals.' It refers to the use of **drugs** to induce occultic trances and demonic worship.' He argues this will be a global characteristic of the Tribulation."<sup>11</sup>
- **Unrepentant immorality**
  - The word for *immorality* is *porneia*, which is a common word for sexual perversions of all kinds.
  - These sins, drug induced demon worship, always have a sexual component which accompanies them.
- **Unrepentant thieves**
  - At this time, law and order in society has been destroyed. Human depravity has reached its peak, and man is a law unto himself.
  - There is a total and complete rejection of God's moral law, and this further shows that being a firsthand witness to God's righteous judgment is not enough to change man's wicked heart.
- This is an interesting and specific list of sins.
- It should not be overlooked that these sins, which those who lived through these judgments hold on to, mirror the sins that mankind today refuses to repent of.
- These sins only further confirm the complete and total depravity of mankind.
- "MacArthur breaks down the list of sins in verse 21 (murders, sorceries, sexual immorality, thefts) as a 'deadly quartet' of sins. He links this back to **Exodus 10** (Pharaoh's hardening), stating that judgment without grace only results in a 'seared conscience' where people would rather worship their tormentors (demons) than repent to God."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Satanic Slaughter, Part 2* (GTY, Sermon 66-34) and *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Note on Revelation 9:21).

<sup>12</sup> *MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Revelation 1–11*, pages 272–274.