

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

Orcutt Christian Church

A Grace Driven Church for Grace Needing People!

Rambling Round Revelation #25 *Cycle 4*

The Fifth Trumpet

The First Woe

Revelation 9:1-12

September 8, 2019

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Care Calling: The Saunders

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Saturday 9/7: Clean Up: The Felix's
BOARD

- 1 🎵 **How Majestic Is Your Name** 121
- 2 🎵 Now I belong to Jesus [ALL] 501
- 3 🎵 Be Strong in the Lord [ALL] 734
- 4 🎵 **Doxology**
- 5 🎵 Like a River Glorious [ALL] 737
- 6 🎵 The Wonder of It All [ALL] 738
- 7 🎵 Find Us Faithful [Once] 456

Revelation 9:1-12 (NASB)

¹ 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.

Let's recall last Lord's Day's sermon.

Remember we saw **The Eagle**

Revelation 8:13 (NASB)

Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

One Eagle flying at an altitude that can be seen by every inhabitant on earth.

The Eagle is calling on all unbelievers, those who have not conformed to the terms of the Lamb's pardon to repent.

Eagles endlessly circle above, looking and waiting for prey.

This eagle cries out: "Woe! Woe! Woe!"

Why three times?

Because there are three more trumpets blasts to come. "Woe! Woe! Woe!"

This tells us that the next three trumpet judgments are worse than the first four trumpet judgments.

You think the first four trumpet judgments are awful and horrible and terrible?

Well, you have seen nothing yet.

"Woe! Woe! Woe!"

Notice who is the target of these judgments?

"Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth"

The Greek actually says "**earth dwellers.**"

We have come across this phrase repeatedly in the Revelation.

Who are the earth dwellers?

These are people who reject God and Christ.

These are people who have joined with the devil in opposing God.

In Egypt, they worship the sun and moon and Nile River, etc.

In Rome, they worship the god of thunder and war and sun.

Today, they are called secular humanists, New Agers, atheists.

"Woe! Woe! Woe!" to everyone of these people unless they repent.

But do they repent?

Remember what happened at the opening of the sixth seal?

They wanted mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of God and the Lamb.

In other words, they know judgment has come.

They know the Lamb has come.

They know the wrath of the Lamb.

Yet, there is no repentance.

Do we see confession of faith that Jesus IS the Christ?

Do we see repentance, the change in the way they think and act?

Do we see them willing to sacrifice their pride and immerse themselves in the Name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit?

Do we see conversion?

No. No. No.

They remain in their sin.

They remain in their unbelief.
They remain in their rebellion.
"Woe! Woe! Woe!" because if they do not comply with God's terms of pardon what awaits them is the awful and terrifying wrath of God and the Lamb!

We really need to realize that

I. God Is totally Supreme!

Many Christians struggle with the Supremacy of God.
Is Satan on a equal basis with God.
Many people believe in two opposite but equal powers at work in our universe.
There are good forces and bad forces.
They are in a struggle for supremacy and the hope is that the good forces win.

The good force or power is God.
The bad force or power is Satan.
All the good things comes to us from God.
All the bad things comes to us from Satan.
But one day, God will prevail over Satan and sin will be vanquished forever.

The Bible teaches – from beginning to end – that God alone is sovereign, that God is absolutely sovereign, that God is in control, that God reigns, that God is King.
Some Christians give way to much power and authority to Satan.
It's crazy, but some Christians make Satan the opposite but equal of God.
Don't forget, Satan is but a finite creature like us whereas God is the infinite Creator.
Look at verse 1...

¹ 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.

In the book of Revelation, the picture that John paints of Satan is scary.

In this verse, John is making it clear that God – not Satan – is in control.

God – not Satan – has the last word.

We see the sovereign control of God throughout the Revelation.

Let me remind you of where we have seen and heard this:

Rev 1:8 - God is the Alpha and Omega, the One Who is and Who was and Who is to come.

Remember what this means?

It means He is the eternal God Who is sovereign over time itself.

Rev 1:8 - God is the Almighty.

This speaks of the sovereignty of His power.

Rev 1:9 - Christ holds in His hands the keys of death and Hades.

His sovereignty extends over death.

Rev 1:16 - Christ holds seven stars in His right hand.

This shows His sovereignty over the church.

Rev 2 & 3: God commands a letter to be written to the angel of each of the seven churches.

This shows His sovereignty over angels and churches.

Rev 2:7 - Christ gives the right to eat from the tree of life.

He is sovereign over the blessings of eternity.

Rev 2:10 - It is Christ Who gives the crown of life.

He sovereignly determines the reward for faithful service.

Rev 4:4,10 - God's throne is surrounded by other thrones.

Those sitting on the other thrones take off their crown and lay them before His feet.

His sovereignty comes over theirs and is the supreme sovereignty.

Rev 4:11 - God is declared to be the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

In His providence, God is Lord of everything.

Rev 5:1 - God holds in His hand the scroll of destiny.

He determines all things.

Rev 6 - Christ is the One Who opens the seals of the scroll of destiny.

His sovereignty therefore includes the execution of justice upon the enemies of the cross and the church.

Rev 7 - God ordains a protective seal to be placed upon His people.

His sovereignty determines their eternal security.

Rev 7:17 - Christ wipes away every tear from the eyes of His people.

His sovereignty is over the curse and all its effects.

Rev 8:2 - to the angels who stand before His throne, God gives seven trumpets to sound.

When they sound them, expressions of divine wrath come hurtling down from heaven.

His sovereignty expresses itself as a righteous judge over a rebellious human race.

It is impossible to miss the message: God is King, God is sovereign.

To Asia Minor Christians facing the loss of job and family, the confiscation of homes and businesses, imprisonment and whipping, hunger and the reality of persecution unto death, – to these Gospel martyrs, God's sovereignty is incredibly comforting. John is telling them that life is not under the control of either Satan or Rome or Satan.

All of life is under the control of God.

Neither Rome nor Satan is a threat to our Almighty King.

We can't escape the FACT that God is supreme.

II. The Star

¹ Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth;

This star is nothing like the star called Wormwood we talked about last week.

It's definitely not a meteor or a shooting star or a comet.

And John tells us that...

and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.

The star was given a key.

And the star has masculine gender.

Did you notice that John says the star had fallen to earth?

“Had fallen: is equivalent to “thrown out.”

When the 70 returned with joyful reports of their evangelistic campaign,

Luke 10:18 (NASB)

18 And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

Fall sounds sorta like it was accidental.

Like I tripped over the dog.

But Satan didn't trip, he was thrown head over heels out of heaven.

Revelation 12:9 (NASB)

9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

All authority is given to Christ.

He declares

Revelation 1:17-18 (NASB)

17 Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Matthew 28:18 (NASB)

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Christ is saying He possesses control, power, and authority over death and Hades.

However, Christ has delegated a measure of control, power, and authority over **the bottomless pit** to Satan.

Not only is he given the key but he also uses the key.

III. The Bottomless Pit

When John wrote Revelation, he wrote about something called the **abussos**, which is an adjective meaning “bottomless, unfathomed, without limits.”

Translators simply took the Greek word and changed it to **abyss**. Some translations say “deep pit,” some say “bottomless pit,” some say “abyss.”

The abyss or bottomless pit is the place where demons don't want to go.

You remember the gadarene Demonic who was tormented by demons?

When Jesus met the man, Jesus commanded the demon inside him to leave.

The demon replied **Luke 8:28 (NASB)**

28 “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.”

How, you are wondering, would Jesus torment the demon?

They full well knew His power and sovereignty.

Luke 8:31 (NASB)

31 They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

The bottomless pite or abyss is a place even the demons don't want to be, and yet it is inhabited by evil spirits, but who are still under God's control.

The Abyss is the home of Satan and his demons.

John tells us

Revelation 20:1-3 (NASB)

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid

hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him,

The Abyss is the exact opposite of God's throne room we learned about in Revelation 4 and 5.

What an awesome and glorious place!

We saw a throne, a rainbow, twenty-four elders, four living creatures, seven blazing lamps, a crystal sea, flashes of lightning, thousand of angels.

We heard thousands upon thousands of voices praising God.

Well, the Abyss is the exact opposite of heaven's throne room.

The Abyss is a horrible place, a terrifying place.

The demons begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

The Abyss must be a horrible place if even demons dread going there.

Notice what the Revelation says next:

He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace;

Last Lord's Day we read about the sweet smell of incense.

Revelation 8:3-4 (NASB)

³ Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints became the power of God that produces change on earth.

The sweet smell of heavenly incense is contrasted with **the smoke of a great furnace**

The smoke of incense is offered by a heavenly angel.

The smoke of the Abyss is released by Satan.

The smoke of incense is a pleasing aroma.

The smoke of the Abyss produces a stench.

Notice how much smoke:

and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

What does John have in mind?

Think about it: where there is smoke, there is fire.

Eternal fire.

The fire of judgment.

John has judgment in mind when he talks about smoke.

The Lake of Fire that burns with brimstone.

John sees Satan, a star that had fallen from heaven; Satan opens the Abyss and releases the smoke and fire of judgment.

Now remember who is in control here.

God is in control, and against his own will, much to his wicked rage, Satan ends up being God's instrument, God's tool, for judgment.

But, please remember whom Satan will be tormenting.

IV. The Locusts

³ Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Now, use your imagination.

Imagine a giant hole opened somewhere on the earth's surface, and smoke pouring from it, bringing from the interior of the earth an immense plague of locusts such has never been seen before.

Armed like scorpions, shaped like horses, crowned like kings, with faces of men, hair of women, teeth of lions, armour plated, winged, and moving with deafening noise.

Attacking people not vegetation and able to discern between those those who have complied with the Lamb's terms of pardon and those who refuse to obey the Savior of humanity.

Are they really US Military attack helicopters?

Are they really stationed in the Middle East?

Well, if you research these locusts on the internet, that is what you will mostly find.

Some current religious news headlines:

ISIS in Bible Prophecy

Silent Ethnic Cleansing Underway in Crimea

Prophecy Comes Alive in Iraq!

The Fifth Trumpet a Fitting Description of the Far East Today

What or who are these locusts?

Don't forget, they come from the Abyss.

They have been released by Satan.

They are Satan's tools,

Satan's hosts,

Satan's followers.

They are demons – just like the ones that begged Jesus not to cast them into the Abyss .

What do they do?

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.

As you know, real literal locusts destroy vegetation.

These are not literal, rather they are symbolic, and have some symbolic meaning or function.

They were told not to harm grass, plants, or trees but only people.

Their job is to torment people.

But only certain people: **only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.**

The mission of the locusts who are demons is to torment unbelievers, those earth dwellers who refuse to believe in Jesus. It is not their mission to kill such people but to torment and torture.

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.

The important question about the locusts is not how such creatures could exist, but what they mean.

John is using the account of the Exodus to bring a spiritual message, just as the locust plague in Egypt.

That was the point of the the eighth plague of locusts in Egypt.

Exodus 10:12-15 (NASB)

12 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. 15 For they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt.

Locusts continue to pose a threat to this day.

In recent history, no year was worse than 1874 when millions of locusts descended on the prairies from the Dakotas to Texas.

Listen to this description:

In late July they came without warning in swarms so large they blocked out the sun and sounded like a rainstorm.

When a swarm landed, the omnivorous pests brought near total destruction. Crops were eaten out of the ground, as well as the wool from live sheep and clothing off people's backs. Paper, tree bark and even wooden tool handles were devoured.

The locusts of Revelation are different: they torment people rather than grass, plants, or trees.

John compares the demons to locusts because their mission is both devastating and unstoppable.

V. Satan is a Tool of our Supreme God

There are NOT two equal but opposite powers in this universe. In fact, the Bible's perspective is that Satan is but a tool, an instrument, a servant of God's sovereignty.

Yes, it is Satan's desire to only do evil and not good.

Yes, Satan hates Christ and the church.

Yet, Satan only exists and serves to accomplish the purposes of God.

What an expression of God's sovereignty!

God uses the wickedness of the Devil to accomplish His own eternal purposes.

And that is the powerful message of the Fifth Trumpet and the First Woe.

Satan always serves God.

God is sovereign over evil!

This message comes through so clearly in our text for today.

The Devil, the Abyss, smoke, locusts, demonic tormenters who are devastating and unstoppable.

This sounds like the stuff of nightmares.

Some of you are probably saying to yourself: *"I told you this is scary. Look at how powerful Satan is. Look at the destruction he causes."*

Yes, Satan is powerful.

Yes, Satan unleashes horrible destruction upon the earth.

Yet, Satan still serves God!

Satan serves God right here, in the passage in front of us this morning.

Let me explain what I mean.

Yes, it is Satan who unleashes the demons that execute God's judgment upon unbelievers!

I need to explain a strange theological principle here...so bear with me.

Think about this familiar passage of Scripture:

Matthew 5:4 (NASB)

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Now, ask yourself, "Comforted by whom?"

I would be willing to bet that you came up with the correct answer: God!

The subject of that verse is "who" "mourn"

"**mourn**" is passive, waiting for something to happen.

Sometimes in Greek translation when a verb is passive, God is doing the action of the verb.

And you know that God is doing the action of comforting.

Biblical translators call this principle the "divine passive."

You will see this principle a number of times in Revelation.

Take this passage

Revelation 8:2 (NASB)

2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

They "**were given** ."

They don't grab the seven trumpets for themselves.

Nor, did the trumpets belong to them.

Even though God is not mentioned, it is clear that the trumpets were given them by God and from God.

You see this principle in the next verse:

Revelation 8:3 (NASB)

3 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.

This angel didn't offer his own incense.

“ much incense was given to him”

Who gave him the incense?

The incense belonged to God and God gave it to the angel to offer as a fragrant sacrifice.

And, here it is again:

Revelation 9:1 (NASB)

1 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.

The key to the abyss or the bottomless pit didn't belong to Satan. God gave it to him.

God gave the key to Satan.

God gave power to the Locusts.

But God puts limitations on the use of that power.

Revelation 9:4-5 (NASB)

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.

“They were told”

By whom?

By God.

Do you realize what this means?

It means that God, not Satan, has the final authority over the Abyss.

It means that God, not Satan, exercises sovereignty over the Abyss.

It means that God holds the key to the Abyss just like Christ holds the keys to death and Hades.

Are you ready for this?

What does this delegated power to Satan mean?

How does that impact you and I?

The answer might shock you and dismay you and turn your world upside down.

This means that Satan and his demons only exercise the power given them by God.

This means that Satan's authority is a delegated authority.

This means that Satan and his demons only operate under the sovereignty of God.

The power of Satan and his demons to torment people is an authority granted them by God Himself.

We see that God is sovereign over evil.

Whenever we see Satan unleashing evil on the earth, we are to see an outworking of the sovereignty of God.

It means we are to see Satan as God's servant.

It means we are to see God is King!

But, I know this is not new to you who read your scriptures.

Let me share three illustrations of this principle in Scripture.

1. Remember Joseph being sold by his brothers as a slave? What an evil and wicked deed. Yet, Joseph ended up as the ruler of Egypt under Pharaoh. When he was reunited with his family, do you remember what Joseph said to his brothers?

Genesis 50:20 (NASB)

20 "As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it

for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

God is sovereign over evil!

2. Remember the story of Israel's return from captivity in Babylon?

This is what God says about Cyrus, the king of the Medes and Persian, at the time of Israel's return:

Isaiah 44:28 (NASB)

28 *"It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' And of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'"*

Cyrus is God's shepherd, God's servant, God's messenger, but did he love and fear God?

No. He was a pagan idolater.

But God used Cyrus and his sin and his evil and his unrighteous ways to accomplish His eternal purposes.

God is sovereign over evil!

3. Think of the cross.

Who was responsible for the death of Jesus?

Acts 2:22-23 (NASB)

22 *"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—* **23** *this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.*

Acts 4:27-28 (NASB)

27 *"For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of*

Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

Who was responsible for the death of Jesus?

Judas has no one but himself to blame for his greed.

Pilate's lust for political power made him fickle with justice.

The hatred of the Jewish leaders made them blind to Jesus as the Son of God.

Each party is fully responsible.

None of them acted contrary to their own desires.

And yet, the One Who is ultimately responsible for the cross is God.

Do you see the sovereignty of God over evil?

Do you see how God uses evil to advance His own eternal purposes?

God's plan allowed the sacrificial death of the Messiah.

But, what is our part in that?

Acts 2:36 (NASB)

36 "God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."

That "you" means you and I.

God is sovereign over evil!

Satan always serves God.

God has allowed Satan to be active on this earth to lead us in rebellion with God.

Over and over in the pages of the New Testament, we are given to understand that Satan and his demons tempt us.

I don't know how Satan tempts you, but I know as long as you are alive, Satan is actively tempting you to disregard the voice of the Lamb.

Hebrews 4:6-7 (GW)

6 However, some people ... who heard the Good News in the past did not enter God's place of rest because they did not obey

God.⁷ So God set another day. That day is today. ... “If you hear God speak today, don't be stubborn.”

One more thing about the demon locusts.

The only people whom they torment are those who have not been sealed with the mark of the Lamb.

Why are they being tormented?

Before The Day of Judgment, God is giving them ample opportunity to comply with the Lamb's terms of pardon.

2 Peter 3:9 (NASB)

⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

The Lamb has spoken.

He has revealed His terms of pardon for our sins against Him.

So the question for you today is “who's voice are you listening to?” Apparently Paul was delaying making a decision, so Ananias said to him

Acts 22:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

Are you being tortured because you are sitting on the fence?

Make your decision today.

If you have been immersed into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you need a family to serve with.

Please make your way down here and let your intent be clear.

If you haven't obeyed the Lamb's terms of pardon, and need to be immersed for the forgiveness of your sins, please make your way down here and let your intent be clear.