

The Fifth Trumpet Judgment

Chapter Three - Verse Three

And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power
(Revelation 9:3)

Locusts emerge from within the midst of the smoke that ascends up from the bottomless pit. Thus far in chapter nine every detail spoken of has been depicted in a symbolic language while disclosing a spiritual story. God has written the Bible in such a way that it will interpret itself entirely. In trying to understand its contents, we must not go outside of Scripture for man's interpretation, but we must stay within the confines of Scripture, for it is only there wherein truth will be found. However, it is God who ultimately reveals these truths to us. God embraces the use of parables throughout Scripture, and this truth cannot be over emphasized. If we dismiss Old Testament stories as all being past history, then the conclusion man arrives at is that these accounts hold only good moral lessons for us today, but spiritually can have nothing much of value with regard to Christianity or the true Gospel of the New Testament Era. Those who hold to this thought are woefully missing out on the fullness of God's Word, whose plan of salvation begins at Genesis chapter one.

LOCUSTS FROM THE PIT

We see locusts mentioned in Scripture as far back as Exodus chapter ten. In recalling the ten plagues that God brought upon Pharaoh, king of Egypt, a severe plague of locusts was the eight plague brought upon the land of Egypt. We read the following in Exodus 10:14-15 -

14 - And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such.

15 - For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

"Swarms of Locusts Invade Egypt," was the headlines in many countries in late 2004. Some even used this news event as proof that the end time had come upon us. Well, it has, but not because we see swarms of these locusts in Egypt. There have been reports of enormous swarms in many other countries in addition to Egypt. This is

merely a fact of nature that has been occurring throughout history. In the above two verses of Exodus we have much spiritual insight on not only what took place in ancient Egypt during those days, but these verses tell us precisely what will happen near the end of time when **spiritual locusts** will be sent from God as an end-time judgment. This time it will be on a worldwide scale, as Egypt typified the world in the historic parable of Exodus. First, notice carefully that in verse fourteen God says that this plague is of such magnitude that before this plague came upon Egypt there was never one such as this, and there will never be another one such as this one again. “...before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such,” (Exodus 10:14). Even as this literally took place, God was using this historic parable to tell of the great spiritual plague that is to come near the time of Judgment Day itself. The plagues upon Egypt were all real and showed how God freed the Hebrew slaves and brought the children of Israel into their literal promised land. In the spiritual realm, this was all a picture of how God would use spiritual locusts as plagues and judgment upon the unbelieving world (especially the church) during these end-times. As these plagues typified a time of trouble in Egypt such as shall never be again (verse 14), likewise Christ says the same thing in relation to this coming time of spiritual darkness. “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be,” (Matthew 24:21).

As we see in Revelation 9:3, these locusts are coming upon the whole earth, just as the parable in Exodus showed the literal locusts covering the face of the whole earth. “For they covered the face of the whole earth...” (Exodus 10:15). This word earth is a general term and is also translated as land or country. We know from scripture that it was the land of Egypt that received the plagues, due to Pharaoh refusing to free the children of Israel. This same verse also states: “...the land was darkened...” In our last chapter we saw that the air and the sun were darkened by reason of the smoke. Now we see that amid the smoke are found locusts. Exodus was indeed foretelling, in a literal manner, a great spiritual truth.

Joel Chapter Two Sees These Same Locust -

The Great Tribulation period is spoken of in many places throughout Scripture. The Old Testament Book of Joel is very explicit in telling of this time, and denotes locusts as the fixed enemy of God. In speaking of this time, Joel chapter two begins with the blowing of a trumpet!

Joel 2:1-2 -

1 - ¶Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;

2 - A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. (Cross Reference: Matthew 24:21 “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”)

The blowing of the trumpet announces the imminent judgment that is to come upon Zion. We must realize that in this Church Age and New Testament Era Zion is not representative of national Israel. Rather it is a term for God's global Israel on earth, the corporate New Testament church. This fact cannot be arrived at by reading any one certain verse; it must be studied in depth. Joel declares that this time brings with it **clouds and thick darkness**. In the natural realm of things, if one should ever have the opportunity of witnessing a devastating attack upon farm crops by many large swarms of locusts - numbering into the hundreds of thousands - **one would see the sky turning dark because the light of the sun will be dimmed from the thickness of the swarms of locusts**. In like manner God uses locusts to portray the enemies of the Word of God eating away at the truth. What is the spiritual meaning to be derived at from these locusts? What are their ambitions and motives? In verse fifteen of Exodus chapter ten we read of these locusts attacking **herbs** and the **fruit of the trees**. Verse fifteen reads: "...and there remained not any **green thing** in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt." These locusts are devouring all vegetation. **Green represents life, and that which is living**. The Bible is concerned with only one type of life, and this is eternal life which Christ purchased with His blood. **It is this eternal life that is represented in Scripture as anything that is green and living**. For example:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in **green pastures...**" (Psalm 23:1-2)

"The Lord called thy name, a **green olive tree**, fair, and of **goodly fruit...**" (Jeremiah 11:16).

"...I am like a **green fir tree**. **From me is thy fruit found**." (Hosea 14:8) [God is as our green fir tree and our spiritual fruit is found no other place than the Holy Bible.]

"...but I am like a **green olive tree** in the house of God..., (Psalm 52:8).

These are but only a few examples of the light of Christ being compared to green and having life and producing much fruit. Briefly looking back to the **Book of Joel**, chapter one and verses four and five read:

4 - That which the **palmerworm** hath left hath the **locust** eaten; and that which the **locust** hath left hath the **cankerworm** eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the **caterpillar** eaten.

5 - Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the **new wine**; for it is **cut off from your mouth**.

The Mouth -

Verse four mentions not only the locusts, but in addition it mentions the palmerworm, cankerworm, and the caterpillar. These are all pests that eat up green types of vegetation. In **Joel 1:7** God tells us what the locusts and worms are feeding on - they are literally feeding on the **grape vines**. "...he hath laid my vine waste." God's

salvation plan is pictured in Scripture as a vineyard. We can read about this in the fifth chapter of the Book of Isaiah, among other chapters.

Spiritually speaking, **wine** in Scripture is always synonymous with the blood of Christ. His blood shed on the cross is equated to wine or new wine. At the last supper Jesus drank wine and said: "...this is my **blood** of the new testament, which is shed for many," (Mark 14:24). Christ also stated in John 6:54 that "whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood [spiritual wine], hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the Last Day." In the first chapter of Joel we have a picture of the Gospel of Salvation, represented by the new wine, being cut off by the locusts and worms. In verse seven God is saying that these locusts have laid His vine waste. Without vines there will be no grapes, and without grapes there can be no wine! It is God's vines that are in view here; these vines that in turn produce the spiritual wine which can be proven from Scripture to represent the one and only way in which man can enter into heaven - by being covered with the shed **blood** of Christ and that being the biblical wine of Scripture. Joel 1:5 says that the new wine is cut off from your mouths. This is not saying that there will be a shortage of wine. It is teaching that the Gospel (the true wine of Scripture) will not be spoken any longer; it will be cut off from the **mouth**! Yes, of course God's true elect will forever praise Him and proclaim the Good News of Salvation. However, from the standpoint of the corporate church, the true Gospel waters will be cut off in a discreet manner, as we clearly are witnessing today.

Because of these locusts, Joel 1:10 speaks of the **field** and the **corn** being wasted, the **new wine** being dried up (the silencing of the Gospel), and also states that the **oil** languisheth. The oil, of course, is a biblical term that signifies the Holy Spirit. So we see clearly what the spiritual implications are in relation to locusts. These locusts are false prophets and false teachers with their false doctrines that creep into the congregations of the corporate church to attack, poison, and dry up the true and pure Gospel of Christ. This is the ultimate purpose and meaning behind the attacks of the locusts throughout Scripture. Also notice above that the field and corn are being wasted. Corn is yet another term in Scripture depicting God's truth. Some examples:

Isaiah 36:17 - Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of **corn and wine**, a land of bread and vineyards.

Ezekiel 36:29 - I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the **corn**, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

Hosea 7:14 - And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for **corn** and **wine**, and they rebel against me.

Joel 1:10 also speaks of the **field** being wasted. In this passage the word field seems to allude to the field where the corn is grown, which would imply it too is symbolic for true believers, faithful congregations and the overall worshipping and preaching of the Gospel. This corn and its fields will wither as a result of spiritual judgment upon the world, once the locusts are loosed from the bottomless pit at the end of time.

LOCUSTS GIVEN POWER

Verse three in or study tells us that Locusts came forth from the smoke of the bottomless pit and these locusts were given their power. This word given is the same word used in verse one where we saw the star that fell to earth, and unto him was given the key to the bottomless pit. The meaning in both instances is the same. As God gives Satan this key, He in actuality is allowing Satan to exalt his authority. Satan would be powerless, were it not for God temporarily removing His restraining power. As God releases Satan from prison, this power and authority is given not only to Satan, but to his dominion as well. All those who are under his deception are lead by his power. In 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 we read of this time when Satan is once again allowed full authority.

7 - For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

8 - And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Satan is described in verse eight as that wicked. In verse seven the word letteth means to hold down or to retain. These two verses are speaking of the Holy Spirit as the he who retains or letteth until he (Holy Spirit) be taken out of the way. This is not teaching that the Holy Spirit will be taken off the earth during this time, it is simply showing that God will lift His restraining power, whereby releasing Satan and allowing him to wage war against the church. II Thessalonians chapter two is teaching the releasing of Satan near the end of time and the key to hell being given to Satan. Incidentally, please notice that verse eight tells us that Satan shall be destroyed with the brightness of Christ's coming. As we saw earlier, Christ is the brightness or light of the world. Brightness here in Thessalonians is also translated as appearing or manifestation, and we know that at the coming of Christ every eye shall see him, Revelation 1:7. His return to this earth cannot possibly be missed by anyone: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," (Matthew 24:30). It is Christ's brightness, the Creator of all things, who will shine forth at the last day, signifying Judgment Day. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so also shall the coming of the Son of man be," (Matthew 24:27).

POWER OF LOCUSTS: AS POWER OF SCORPIONS

The Greek word that is used for power simply means privilege, freedom, strength, authority, etc. These locusts are given this freedom and authority strictly because God is bringing judgment upon the unbelievers. God is allowing this plague to come upon the church through His instruments of judgment, the false messengers. One example of the word power is seen in Revelation 13:2, where the exact Greek word for power in Revelation 9:3 is translated also as authority:

2 - And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great **authority**.

This power that is given to the locusts seems to be the same AS the power of scorpions. “...as the **scorpions** of the earth have power,” verse three of our study tells us. God is contrasting the power of these locusts to the power of the scorpions. In both cases the locusts and the scorpions are actually one and the same thing and they derive their power from Satan. Is there some type of unique power that common earthly scorpions carry? In the literal sense, no there is not, but what does the biblical word **scorpion** represent?

Scorpions -

When we go to Ezekiel chapter two we get a clear-cut definition for the biblical term scorpion. In this chapter we see that Ezekiel is called to the prophetic ministry; God is calling him to be a prophet to Israel. We begin reading at verse three:

Ezekiel 2:3-6-

3- And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a **rebellious** nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day.

[Ezekiel’s call is to the rebellious nation of Israel.]

4 - For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. [Impudent children carries the meaning of **stubborn**.]

5 - And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a **rebellious** house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

6 - ¶And thou, son of man, **be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words**, though briars and thorns be with thee, **and thou dost dwell among scorpions**: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a **rebellious** house.

Here in verse six Ezekiel is told by God, not once but twice...not to be afraid of the words of these rebellious Israelites. **The danger lies clearly in their words**. Why? Consider the following few passages:

Matthew 15:11, declaring: “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, **but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.**”

Jeremiah 23:26 - “How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that **prophecy lies**? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart.”

Jeremiah 23:32 - “Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them and cause my people to err by their **lies**, and by their lightness; **yet I sent them not, nor commanded them**; therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.

James 3:6 - “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”

II Peter 2:1 - “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

As we stated in the Preface of this study, all seven trumpet judgments deal with one particular period of time, the Great Tribulation when Satan is loosed for a little season. The sixth trumpet judgment seems to be designed for and aimed at the same goal as the previous five trumpet judgments, which is to slay the third part of mankind, Revelation 9:15. Again we discover that the weapon of this destruction is the mouth itself. Consider Revelation 9:17-18 which reveals a part of the sixth trumpet judgment:

17- And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.
18 - By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

Yes, the weapon of destruction will be the mouths of all who teach false doctrines. Let us go back to Ezekiel 2:6 where Ezekiel is warned by God not to be afraid of the words spoken by rebellious Israel. Ezekiel is then told that this rebellious house is compared to briars and thorns. Briars and thorns can also be compared to tares, because none will bear fruit, spiritually meaning that this rebellious house of Israel will not bear fruit unto salvation. Their spiritual food was not the true Gospel of Salvation, thus in Ezekiel 2:6 God tells Ezekiel that he dwells among SCORPIONS. God is contrasting these scorpions to rebellious Israel, whose WORDS are not God’s words. Verse eight declares: “But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.” Ezekiel is to harken unto God’s true and pure words, unlike much of Israel of old.

Take notice: This Old Testament rebellious Israel most likely is foretelling the ultimate outcome of the New Testament Israel of God, in that the global church will become as scorpions at the end of time, as was many among Old Testament literal Israel.

Christ Himself defined spiritual scorpions as He commissioned His disciples to take forth the Gospel of salvation. We read of this in Luke 10:19 - “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

Those of us who have experienced the new birth have been given power to tread over the dominion of Satan. Here Christ is speaking of the dominion of Satan as the power of the enemy. Christ likens our enemy to serpents and to scorpions. In studying the fifth trumpet judgment, we should understand the spiritual symbolism embedded in these two words locusts and scorpions. This symbolism will become clearer as we study further details of the fifth trumpet judgment.

Deuteronomy 8:1-20 is a section of Scripture where God is reminding the children of Israel not to forget the Lord. There is much symbolism here to be interpreted from the literal forty years that Israel spent in the wilderness and this section requires a lengthy study. God is showing them an overview of how He - and He alone - brought them through the wilderness and provided their every necessity. In **verse fifteen** God states: “Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were **fiery serpents**, and **scorpions**, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;” The entire context of these twenty verses seem to summarize Israel’s forty years in the wilderness, but more than that they foretell a great spiritual truth as God’s eternal Israel sojourns through this earth, typified by the **wilderness**. As the wilderness of Egypt was filled with fiery serpents and scorpions of the desert, so to is the New Testament spiritual wilderness to be filled with symbolic serpents and scorpions. It is at the time of the end where they will be most threatening to the unsaved. Further mentioning of scorpions can be found in the following passages: **Kings 12:11,14** and **II Chronicles 10:11,14** .

END OF CHAPTER THREE