

The Revelation

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Revelation 9:1-12

Vss. 1-2

- Now the terrors for disobedience are turned up a notch. More than mere forces of nature, these terrors are from the supernatural realm.
- In John's time stars were considered living beings, who traveled the night sky as God directed. The book of Enoch, written during the time between the Testaments, (300-200 BC), tells of disobedient, wandering stars who are bound and cast into the abyss.
- The abyss appears repeatedly in Revelation (9:1-2,11; 11:7; 20:1,3) and is seen as the intermediate place of punishment for fallen angels, demons, the beast, the false prophet and of Satan. It is the place where the worst of evil is imprisoned.

Vss. 3-6

- Throughout the Old Testament, the locust was a symbol for the most terrible kind of destruction. For a first-hand account of what a plague of locust is like, turn to Joel 1-2:10.
- A common locust is about 2' long with a wing span of 4" to 5". A swarm may be 4 miles wide and literally be like a dark cloud. At ground level they can limit vision to less than 200 feet. When the swarm is gone it looks as though there has been a great fire, which matches the sound of their gnawing. In 1866 a locust swarm struck Algiers and over 200,000 died over the course of the famine that followed. Nothing has been found to stop or even slow down a locust swarm.
- And these locusts are supernatural locusts, equipped with painful stingers, whose target is not grass or trees, but people who do not have the seal of God on their forehead (chapter 7).

Vss. 7-11

- It has long been thought that the face of a locust resembled that of a horse. In some languages (German, Italian, etc.) the words for locust and horse are similar.
- Scorpions in the middle east resemble small lobsters and can grow to six inches in length. Their sting is worse than a hornet's sting.
- The goal of these locusts is to torment those without the mark of God for 5 months, roughly the lifespan of a common locust. And during that time these people will beg to die but will not (Job 3:20-22).
- Witnesses say that a locust swarm appears to have leaders who coordinate and lead the assaults. Here the leader is an angel of the abyss: Abaddon (Destruction) in Hebrew, Apollyon (The Destroyer) in Greek. In the Old Testament "abaddon" is often coupled with other words: "death and destruction" or "hell and destruction" (Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12). But as with the plagues of Egypt, God's people are protected from the target of God's wrath.

Vs. 12

- The torment comes to an end after 5 months, but those hostile to God will not have long before the next torment comes. Yet what of those with the mark of God? Surely as they witness the terror they are witnesses to salvation through Christ. God's wrath is always bent towards the opportunity for repentance.
- Romans 1:18-20