

Fifth Trumpet, part 4

Revelation 9:1-6, part 4

By Phillip G. Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2016-9-11

Fifth Trumpet, part 4

Revelation 9:1-6, part 3

By Phillip G. Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2016-09-11

Text

Revelation 9:1 So the fifth angel trumpeted, and I saw a 'star' that had fallen out of the sky to the earth. And to him was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. 2 So he opened the shaft of the Abyss and smoke went up out of the shaft, like the smoke of a burning furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke from the shaft. 3 And 'locusts' exited from the smoke into the earth. And to them was given a capability just like the scorpions of the earth have capability. 4 And they were told not to harm the grass of the earth, nor any green plant, nor any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And it was designated to them [locusts], not to kill them [men] but, to torment them five months. And their torment is like the torment of a scorpion whenever it strikes a person. 6 And in those days the people will seek death but not find it; they will want to die but death will run away from them.

7 Now the appearance of the 'locusts' was like horses prepared for battle, and something like a golden crown was on their heads, and their faces were like human faces. 8 They had hair like a woman's and their teeth were like a lion's. 9 They had breastplates like breastplates of iron and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. 10 And, they have tails like scorpions and stingers precisely in those tails! They have the capability to hurt the populace five months, 11 having as king over them the angel of the Abyss—his name in Hebrew is Abbadon, while in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

12 The first woe is past, but, two woes are still coming, after these things.¹

Introduction

You don't have to read very far in the Gospels before you realize that battling demons was a big part of Christ's ministry. Yet strangely, it plays almost no part in many churches' ministries. For some that is because of radical cessationism, which we have already discounted. We have seen that God intended for the church to actively bind demons for as long as demons are around on planet earth.

For others (like Jay Adams) it is because they falsely believe that all demons were consigned to the pit in AD 70. And we saw last week that that is not true - that there are multiple bindings and unleasings that have happened in history.

Others ignore the demonic simply out of ignorance. But ignoring the enemy does not make him go away.

¹ Translation of the Majority Text by Wilbur M. Pickering - [The Sovereign Creator Has Spoken](#).

So this is our fourth sermon on the Fifth Trumpet. I hope to finish up these first twelve verses by examining the power and characteristics of these demons.

I. Demons, though powerful, are on a leash (v. 4 - "they were told not to")

But before I do that, my first point is setting an important context. In verse 4 we are reminded once again that demons, though powerful, are on a leash - and God holds that leash, not Satan. Those demons are instruments of God's judgments. Last week we saw that Satan and demons are restricted by a legal and covenantal framework, outside of which they cannot operate. And we saw that from the Greek word ἐξουσία, which occurs four times in this chapter. If they are not given authority to do something, they have no authority to do it. They know they can get bound in the pit at any time that God pleases, and if they don't mind their ps and qs, that is exactly what will happen. They are given a very limited leash.

But verse 4 starts by saying, "And they were told not to..." and it goes on to give further restrictions. God doesn't loose a bunch of wild dogs on His people and let demons do whatever they want to do. No, He puts them on a leash. Don't get so focused on demons that you miss the point that God is sovereign, not Satan.

Earlier we saw that God used angels (both fallen and elect) to bring various judgments, including statism, inflation, bureaucracy, famines, plagues, turning water into blood, poisoning underground water and rivers, killing off the grass, and bringing in wild animals, and bringing meteorites, etc. Out in Ethiopia we saw demons first-hand handling fire, water, animals, and even snakes to try to keep people in line. And we will be looking in these verses at their power over things like grass, trees, tormenting humans physically and emotionally.

And when you start looking at the incredible power of the demons it is easy to think that demons are invincible. But God wants us to remember that He alone got them out of the pit. He alone gave them permission to come to Israel. He alone limits what they can do or expands what they can do. They may seem like tough stuff when they first come billowing out of the pit, but they start looking pretty lame in this chapter when you realize that they can't do a thing without God's permission. They are like wild dogs on a leash.

Now, of course, if you get too close to a dog on a leash, you can get bit. And we looked last week at the legal ground that even believers can give to

demons to negatively influence them. But 1 John 5:18 says that when you guard yourself, there really is nothing to fear from demons. They are powerful, but they are kept away from believers who have the character of the 144,000. And I examined that portion of verse 4 last week.

II. Demons desire to harm and destroy all of God's creation, and have the ability to harm both humans and creation itself (v. 4)

But I want you to notice the specifics of what these demons are forbidden from doing in the first part of verse 4. It is very interesting. God warns them "not to harm the grass of the earth, nor any green plant, nor any tree..." Why would he have to warn those demons not to harm grass, plants, or trees? We can understand why they would want to harm humans, but why would they want to harm grass? Why did the demons Thanatos and Hades relish their new-found liberty to harm the grass in chapter 6? I believe it is because demons want to destroy anything made by God if they get a chance to do so. And if they don't have permission to destroy creation, they will try to harm humans. And if they don't have permission to do that, they will try to get people to worship creation.

But back to the demonic urge to ruin nature, you don't have to read very much in history to see that the nations that have been under the most demonic bondage have also been the nations with the most ecologically disastrous policies. Think of the animistic hunter-gatherer cultures. They did not steward the environment (as liberals would have you believe). Nor did the animistic farming communities. Their slash and burn techniques often decimated vast swathes of territory. E. Calvin Beisner points out how destructive some of the Indian tribes in America were to the environment - stampeding huge herds of buffalo over cliffs and only cherry picking a tiny portion to consume. In His books and articles on Ecology as well as in his book, *Prosperity and Poverty*, he has documentation of the demonic ways that they handled the environment. They are not models of stewardship.

What about Islam? Can you name a single Muslim country that has not to some degree turned productive land into less productive land? I can't. Actually, the history of most Muslim countries is a transformation of good land into desert. Why? We need to realize that demons not only hate men, they hate the beauty of God's creation. They hate everything about God's order, and to the degree that they are given permission by God, they harm it. And these civilizations illustrate that demonic urge.

Can you think of a single communist country that has not polluted and mismanaged its waters, forests, and animals? Colin Grabow wrote an article for the Federalist titled, "If you think communism is bad for people, check out what it did to the environment." The article points out not only that communism has brought untold misery and death to humans (we know all about that, right?), but he also said, "communism's impact on the planet's ecology has proven consistently ghastly."² When the Berlin Wall came down, the West Berliners were horrified to discover that over half of the country's lakes were either completely dead or on the verge of death from pollution - unable to sustain fish or other forms of life. 44% of their forests were damaged by acid rain. Pollution hit all five senses wherever you were. It is utter hypocrisy for the modern Green movement to claim that capitalism ruins nature and communism would be the answer. No, all of the evidence points to the fact that Communism has had demonic attitudes to ecology.

In Russia, 75% of all waters were significantly polluted, with 50% of all water not being potable. I think the Danube river is a vivid example. Aerial photos of this river a few decades ago showed it running clean and blue through Germany and Austria but becoming dark black in Hungary due to various forms of pollution. Budapest, once called the "fresh air" city, was so filled with smog under communism that it often didn't even appear on satellite photos.

And the same was true of communist satellite countries in Africa and Asia. Mugabe took over Rhodesia, renaming it Zimbabwe, and turned a productive paradise into a wasteland. His cronies shot elephants and other animals in the game parks just for the fun of mass killing, nearly exterminating many animal populations. After robbing the productive farms that made Rhodesia the breadbasket of Africa, the farms and orchards were so poorly cared for that they had difficulty feeding their own population.

Now, why am I spending more time on this point? It is because if you understand the demonic urge to harm God's creation, you will be a better social critic of the unbelieving political systems that are out there - including the demonically inspired Spencerian version of capitalism that thrived in the 1800s. Spencerian capitalism was based on evolution's survival of the fittest and was quite different from Biblical capitalism. It was quite content to destroy both environment and men in order to get ahead, and far from being free market, Spencerian Capitalism used the civil government as a weapon for big corporations to eliminate the competition. Unfortunately, some

² <http://thefederalist.com/2014/01/13/if-you-think-communism-is-bad-for-people-check-out-what-it-did-to-the-environment/>

Christians defend all capitalism. You can't do that. It is God's blueprints, and God's blueprints alone that are safe for planet earth.

The point is that demons want to harm. If they can't harm creation itself, they will try to harm God's order. And if God puts limits on that, they will try to get people to worship creation. They will do anything possible to destroy God's purposes in creation. When you understand the demonic behind various humanistic systems, you will begin to understand why certain people (like Al Gore) can pursue such irrational and harmful policies in America even after those policies have been shown to be disastrous. You will not be able to talk sense into such people because there is a demonic element involved.

When the Soviets were asked why they polluted their own fishing industry with nuclear waste disposal and other pollutants, they had no good answer. They previously didn't care. It came out that they had been dumping large amounts of nuclear waste into the Barents Sea for nearly 30 years. Some areas of the Soviet Union had so much industrial waste that the water was like sludge.

Now, I have read numerous articles that try to explain this irrational behavior purely in terms of philosophy. For example, there is an excellent article put out by the Foundation for Economic Freedom that chalks up the self-destructive ecological activities to a rejection of capitalism and the tragedy of the commons.³ And that does explain a lot; that's true. Ideas do have consequences. It doesn't explain how some forms of capitalism have also had disastrous consequences - not to the same degree, but you do need to account for that.

Several authors have pointed out that certain actions of officials seem to consistently point to demonic activity behind the scenes. And I believe that is what the book of Revelation wants to teach us. It is helping to look at life through new eyes. It wants us to see that regardless of the visible point-men and the regardless of the wrong human philosophies, there are demonic beings behind nations that hate God.

III. Demons are rational and able to understand language (v. 4,5)

But the next point shows that it is not as if demons are crazy. They are rational creatures who have rational goals - their goal is to oppose God's

³ <https://fee.org/articles/why-socialism-causes-pollution/>

kingdom. So when you see what Satan's goals are, then the policies don't seem quite so irrational. They may not be consistent with human goals, but they are consistent with Satan's goals. Satan is achieving a purpose.

Anyway, verses 4-5 show this rationality - they show that demons are spoken to, can understand God's commands and restrictions, know what legal restrictions are in place, and can tell time. For the next five months they can torment. After that they will be able to join other demons in killing. So they can tell time. They are rational creatures. It's just that their rationality has been negatively affected by the Fall.

IV. Demons are able to kill (v. 5a)

And that demons have the ability to kill humans (with or without creature agency) can be inferred from God's command that for five months they not kill. "And it was designated to them, not to kill them but, to torment them five months." (v. 5) Why are they commanded not to kill? Because they are driven to kill; they want to kill. God would forbid them to kill if they couldn't kill. The next set of demons are given authority to kill one third of mankind.

And what is hinted at here was already made explicit in chapter 6:8. That chapter showed three ways that demons were able to kill humans. Let me read that verse, because it tells us the specific things that two demonic generals (Thanatos and Hades) had previously had authority to do in certain regions. Revelation 6:8.

And I looked and behold, a sickly pale horse! and as for the one sitting upon it, his name is Thanatos, and Hades follows with him. And authority was given to him over a fourth of the earth, to kill by sword and by famine and by death, even by the wild animals of the earth.

Notice how these demons killed. First, they could kill by the sword - that is, by human government. And Satanically inspired governments like Communism have killed hundreds of millions of people in the last century. So that speaks of demons not directly killing by their own hand, but instead, working through the agency of human governments. This book has a pretty negative view of any civil government that is not under God's law.

But those demons were also given authority to kill by famine. How would a demon bring famine? We saw before that angels do have power over wind and weather, so it is possible that God allowed demonic angels to control the weather. That passage speaks of plagues, so perhaps some famine could come from plague. But in that chapter we also saw that most of Rome's famines were brought about by stupid government policies. And today many

famines of the world are government induced. Could they bring famine through insects? I don't see any reason why not. Psalm 78:49 said that the ten plagues were brought by angels of destruction. Well, two of those plagues destroyed crops: hail and locusts. So that could be another means that was used. But they had authority to kill by famine.

But the third way that Revelation 6:8 says that Thanatos and Hades were able to kill was by using the wild animals of the earth. Can demons possess animals? Absolutely yes. That's why the Legion of demons wanted to enter into the swine in Luke 8. Those swine were demons possessed. The history of demon-possessed animals is a rather bizarre one. Those of you who saw the 1996 movie, *The Ghost and the Darkness*, (<http://tinyurl.com/z2usgjq>) have a little bit of a feel for how scary demon-possessed animals can be. That was the true story of Lt Colonel John Patterson, and his run-in with the man-eating lions of Tsavo, Kenya. One of those lions was called *The Ghost* and the other lion was called *The Darkness*. Those lions appeared to kill humans for the fun of killing. But it was more than just killing - there was something demonic about those lions - and thus the names.

My parents saw demons controlling animals in Ethiopia. One python that was worshiped in the area only killed those that the witchdoctor told him to kill. Or would only kill the sheep and livestock of those who refused to sacrifice to the witchdoctor. Packs of demon-possessed hyenas would allow demon-possessed men to run in their pack but would attack those who were not demon-possessed.

Would the two female bears that mauled 43 youths in 2 Kings 2:23-24 be in this category? Possibly. They only killed in response to Elisha's curse, and they only killed those 43 youths. What about the lion that killed the disobedient prophet in 1 Kings 13:24? It was an unusual lion in that it neither ate the corpse nor touched the donkey standing there (1 Kings 13:28). In 1 Kings 17:25 it says that the Lord sent lions to kill the people, and it explicitly says that the lions were able to kill because the people did not know the rituals of the Lord. The word for "rituals" is *מִשְׁפָּט* (*mishpat*), and means that they did not know how to exercise God's authority. It's a very interesting phrase. In any case, there are several hints in Scripture of demons killing using the agency of animals.

Can demons kill without the use of agency? I don't see why they couldn't. If God's good angel killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night in Sennacarib's army in 2 Kings 19:35, it would seem that demonic angels have that power - if God allows them to use it. Here, this urge to kill is limited from October 31

of AD 66 to March 28 of AD 67. These demons will join with the next batch of demons in the second half of this chapter in killing one third of mankind in verse 18. Some of that killing happened by Vespasian's armies. Some of it happened by famine. Some of it happened by plagues that God sent to Israel and throughout the empire. But that demons have moved men to kill cannot be questioned.

V. Demons are able to torment (v. 5b). The nature of this torment:

A. Physical symptoms - Their demonic torment is "like" but not identical to the torment of a literal scorpion (v. 5)

But what is even worse than death is the torment these demons bring. Verse 5 goes on to say,

...not to kill them but, to torment them five months. And their torment is like the torment of a scorpion whenever it strikes a person.

This deals with the physical symptoms that can happen with demon-possession. If you go to Merck's manual,⁴ Mayo's clinic,⁵ emedicine,⁶ or other online medical sites you can see a common listing of physical symptoms from the kinds of scorpions found in Israel. And those symptoms are point-by-point matched by certain forms of demon-possession. Here are some of the symptoms of severe scorpion sting:

widespread numbness, muscle twitching unusual movements of head and neck difficulty swallowing, a thick tongue, blurred vision, roving eye movements, seizures, vomiting, excessive salivation, profuse sweating, difficulty in breathing, high or low blood pressure, irregular heart beat, restlessness and excitability, and inconsolable crying (especially in children)

That looks very similar to the symptoms of some of the demon possessed people in the Gospels. A scorpion sting is a perfect metaphor for the physical symptoms of demonic torment. My own exposure to demon-possessed people shows all of these symptoms, including the vomiting and seizures.

4 <https://www.merckmanuals.com/professional/injuries-poisoning/bites-and-stings/scorpion-stings> gives symptoms as, Restlessness Muscle spasms Abnormal and random head, neck, and eye movements Anxiety and agitation Sialorrhea and diaphoresis In adults, tachycardia, hypertension, increased respirations, weakness, muscle spasms, and fasciculations may predominate. Respiratory difficulties are rare in both age groups.

5 <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/scorpion-stings/basics/symptoms/con-20033894> gives symptoms as, Muscle twitching or thrashing Unusual head, neck and eye movements Drooling Sweating Vomiting High blood pressure (hypertension) or low blood pressure (hypotension) Accelerated heart rate (tachycardia) or irregular heart beat (arrhythmia) Restlessness or excitability or inconsolable crying (in children)

6 http://www.emedicinehealth.com/wilderness_scorpion_sting/page2_em.htm gives symptoms as, widespread numbness, difficulty swallowing, a thick tongue, blurred vision, roving eye movements, seizures, salivation, and difficulty breathing

For fun, I read some Emergency Room accounts of people who had been stung by a scorpion, and one doctor said that if he didn't know better, he would think that these scorpion-stung people were demon-possessed. Let me read you one account of a young child who was admitted to the ER for a scorpion sting.

The doctor assures us that all the symptoms we are seeing are the effects of the venom: screaming, thrashing, spitting, vomiting, eyes shuddering and unable to focus. He points out how easy it would be to believe in demon possession when you see all these symptoms exhibited at one time.

We have to keep holding her as we wait for the timer to tell us that it is time for the next round of medication...she doesn't like the cold feeling and gets amped up again when the fourth dose is started. That runs its course and her eyes settle down a little and she isn't thrashing so much. The vomiting has stopped, although she is still spitting a bit.

We still have to calm her as we wait for time for the fifth round. The timer is up again, and the fifth dose is administered. By the time the fifth round is done, her eyes are able to focus again, the saliva and spitting are under control, and she is still asking to go home now.⁷

So a scorpion sting is such an apt metaphor for what can happen when a fallen cherubim angel starts manifesting in a person. Familiar spirits seem to be different. But these warrior demons are pretty vicious. And by the way, demons don't do this for the whole time that they are influencing a person, but they do it frequently enough that books on demonology talk about it a great deal. So that is the physical side of this torment.

B. Psychological symptoms - such inner torment that people want to die, but can't. (v. 6)

What about the psychological side? Verse 6 says,

And in those days the people will seek death but not find it; they will want to die but death will run away from them.

This too fits the definition of the word torment that is used in verse 5. The Greek word, βασανισμός, can refer to severe suffering of body that comes from physical torture (Matt. 18:34) or it can refer to the severe suffering of soul that comes from psychological torture (2 Peter 2:8). The New Testament connects that word "torment" with demons at least five times (Matt. 4:24; 8:6; Luke 6:18; Acts 5:16). When they aren't using their host to attack others and to do evil things to others, these demons love to tease and torment their hosts. That was true of the demoniac in Mark 2 - a man who dwelt among the tombs and night and day with no rest would cry out or cut himself with stones. There is bodily pain; there is inward pain.

And as we will see, all of these descriptions perfectly fit the demonized

⁷ <http://www.sweetpeafamilies.com/tag/scorpion-stings/>

population of Israel from late AD 66 and beyond. Moses Stuart points out that John mysteriously changes his verb to the future tense, no doubt to signify that the torment these demons would produce would go way beyond the five month period. It was just that they couldn't kill during the five months from October 31 to March 28. But just because the killing starts after March 28 does not mean that they cannot also continue to torment. They did, and history shows that they did. Throughout the whole period Josephus speaks of men wishing that they could die. They were suicidal, but couldn't succeed in committing suicide. And if you read the Partial Preterist commentaries, you will see example after example given of the misery that the Jews were in. They were tormented in body and in soul.

VI. Demons persevere in their rebellion ("five months")

There are some other things that we learn in our passage about demons. Both verse 5 and verse 10 show that these demons persevere in doing the same thing for five months. This shows a sadistic ability to persevere in their rebellious and hurtful ways. They don't easily tire of their wicked ways. Demons are able to be focused for a long time.

VII. Other images of demons (vv. 7-11):

A. Destructive (*locusts, Abbadon, Apollyon*)

Let me at least start the list in your outlines of some of the characteristics and powers in these demons. Verse 7 says, "Now the appearance of the 'locusts' ..." This repeated word, "locusts," focuses on the destructive nature of these demons. And of course, the two names for the king of the locusts both mean destroyer. Abbadon is the Hebrew name for this demon and Apollyon is the Greek name.

Some of the modern books on the occult emphasize some of the seductive and lovely aspects of demonology - the incredible pleasures they can give to lure people in. You may remember that Paul says that Satan sometimes appears as an angel of light. Some of these occultists have said that they have never experienced such intense pleasure as when the demons were on them. Kubler-Ross was made famous with her five stages of grief, which is not Biblical, yet which many pastors use as a paradigm. But what a lot of people don't know is that she was an occultist who taught people astral travel, out of body experiences, how to have communion with spirits, etc. And she describes her encounters with these spirits as being so enjoyable

that if you were to multiply her most intense pleasure on earth (which I won't mention) by one thousand times, she said it would still be a shabby comparison. Yet she also experienced these same beautiful beings turning ugly and viscious on occasion and terrifying the daylights out of her. Yet she kept being lured back because of the intense pleasure. Well, John makes clear that demons are not gods as the Romans called them. Demons are destroyers who don't even love the ones who worship them. Destruction is their king and destruction is their nature. John did not want his readers to be fooled about the nature of these beings. You do not want to mess with them. I've seen some homeschoolers who start playing around with the edges of the occult, and gothic makeup and clothing, and it troubles me. They are flirting with incredible danger.

B. Powerful and fast (horses)

Second, he reminds us of their power and speed by likening them to horses prepared for battle.

C. Urge to rule or take dominion (crown)

He goes on: "and something like a golden crown was on their heads..." A crown is an image of dominion or rule. And even though they are destroying true dominion, they cannot escape from this inbuilt urge to rule or take dominion. But when that urge is unleashed independently of God or in hostility to God, nothing good can result.

So what does demonic rule look like? It looks like a lot of the rule that you see out there in the world. It promises liberty and delivers anything but liberty. These demons move people to dominate, subdue, intimidate, abuse, put down, control, oppress, and in other ways they invert the true and godly urge to take dominion. And what an apt symbol this "something like a crown" is. Can patriarchy be distorted by the demonic? Absolutely yes, it can. We have seen some horrible abuses in the patriarchal movement that rival the demonic nature of feminism. Can God's institution of civil government be distorted and harmful? Yes it can? Can church rule be distorted and harmful? Yes it can. Diotrophes in 3 John is an example of abusive leadership. Both feminism and hyper-patriarchy distort the dominion God has built into us.

D. Rationality (faces like human faces)

In the last phrase of verse 7, we once again we see an image of rationality when it says, "their faces were like human faces..." The New King James

says, "like the faces of men" - it is masculine in the Greek.

E. Distortion of created order

But that male image is distorted when it says, "They had hair like a woman's..." Faces like men but hair like women. Why? Commentaries vary on their explanation. Vine's book suggests that Satan required the long hair as a sign of 1 Corinthians 11:10 submission to Satan, not caring that this would turn male creatures into females. Homer Hailey's commentary agrees. Others suggest that since long hair is the symbol of a woman, Satan simply seeks to do the opposite of everything that God stands for. Others suggest that these demons were the cause of homosexuality in Titus' armies and the sudden appearance of transvestitism and homosexuality in Israel's armies. Massyngberde Ford said, "The demonic character of the locusts is brought out by mixing both species and sexes."⁸ So there are various explanations, but what is common to them all is that they point to a demonic distortion of the created order. They turn everything upside down.

And by the way, I might as well comment on it since it is in the text - it is clear from this passage that God intended women to have long hair, not men. And God intended men to have short hair, not women. This was clearly stated in 1 Corinthians 11, where Paul says,

Does not even nature itself teach you [and any time Paul appeals to nature he is appealing to the creation ordinances with Adam and Eve - does not even nature itself teach you] that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering. (1Cor. 11:14-15)

And this is not something unique to the New Testament. Ezekiel 44:20 commands priests to not "let their hair grow long, but they shall keep their hair well trimmed." God's ideal bride on the other hand, is described in Ezekiel 16:7 as being raised by God to have long hair. The one exception was the Nazarite vow in Numbers 6, which explicitly makes the reversal of this to be a shame. And of course, that's what 1 Corinthians 11 calls it - it is shame, but not a sin. But God does not want us perpetually living in shame. I find it interesting that it was only after Nebuchadnezzar was demon-possessed that his hair grew long and he ate grass like an ox - again showing two ways that demons sought to distort the creation order. Now I am not at all saying that men with long hair are demon possessed; I am just saying that God does have etiquette as well as ethics. There are things which are described as proper in the New Testament, even if they are not sin issues.

8 J. Massyngberde Ford, Revelation, (New York: The Anchor Bible, 1975), p. 151.

F. Another symbol of destruction and devouring (lions teeth)

Verse 8 goes on to say, "and their teeth were like a lion's." This is yet another symbol of destruction and devouring that was so appropriate to how the Romans and Jews acted after March of AD 67. The Romans were ghastly in their demonic behavior. The three armies of Jerusalem were particularly destructive - they ended up burning up all their reserve food and supplies. It was so irrational. And they were ravenous in going from house to house and plundering.

G. On guard (like breastplates of iron)

The next phrase says, "They had breastplates like breastplates of iron..." Why would they need breastplates? Presumably they needed this protection from the attack of good angels. So these demons are on guard. They know that they cannot let their guard down for a moment. As many times as they have been ambushed by God's forces, they are cautious. They put on armor.

H. multitudinous army (sound of wings...)

The next phrase says, "and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle." This gives the imagery of a massive army. Israel is being invaded by spiritual hosts who are going to do battle.

And of course, with the church having escaped from Jerusalem to Pella, there is no church present who is able to hinder this army. The Israelites are easy pickings. And it appears that even Josephus thought the whole population had become either insane or demon-possessed.

By the way, some of the descriptions of Titus given by both Roman and Jewish historians make him seem demon-possessed at times too. He certainly had hatred for God, for Christians, and for Jews. Let me read to you what Titus did when he entered the temple in AD 70. I know we are skipping ahead, but it gives you a little bit of a picture of the irrational hatred that Titus had for God's order. This Jewish account says,

He entered the Holy of Holies and with his sword slashed the curtain. Through a miracle blood spurted forth and he thought that he had killed God Himself. He brought two harlots and, spreading out a scroll [of the law of God] beneath them, transgressed with them on top of the altar. He began to speak blasphemies and insults against Heaven, boasting, "One who wars against a king in a desert and defeats him cannot be compared to one who wars against a king in his own palace and conquers him."⁹

⁹ Judah Nadich, *The Legends of the Rabbis*, vol. 1: *Jewish Legends of the Second Commonwealth* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1994), p. 350. Though this is legend, it is based on various rabbinic sources and may have a kernel of truth in showing the arrogance and blasphemy of Titus.

That's demonic.

I. capable of spiritually poisoning people (v. 10)

Moving on, verse 10 says, "And, they have tails like scorpions and stingers precisely in those tails!" This speaks of the capability of these demons to spiritually poison the people. The whole nation began to be in the paroxysms of scorpion stings. And we have already dealt with what that looks like. You don't want to be in a region that is given over to these kinds of demons.

J. limited authority (v. 10b)

Verse 10 reminds us a second time, "They have the capability to hurt the populace five months..." Literally, it says "they have the authority to hurt the populace five months." Where do they get that authority? From God. They are on a leash. Sometimes God extends the length of the leash and other times he makes it shorter. But God is sovereign.

K. part of a kingdom with a king and orders under him (v. 11)

Verse 11 reminds us that there is a kingdom of darkness with a king and with authority structures under him: "having as king over them the angel of the Abyss — his name in Hebrew is Abbadon, while in Greek he has the name Apollyon." You don't have a king without a kingdom. But we saw in a previous sermon that Satan was more powerful than him. And if Satan is the emperor, then Apollyon is the king over a given jurisdiction that had previously been robbed from Satan.

I won't dive into all the structures of demons, but I will at least list them for you as summarized by various experts in demonology. Satan is at the top Then comes thrones or kings Then comes Lordships or dominions Then comes principalities or archai Then comes authorities or exousia Then comes powers or dunameis Then comes world rulers or kosmokrataras Then comes wicked spirits and angels. The wicked spirits would be the fallen Cherubim who bring torment and the angels would be the familiar spirits or those that Satan used to send messages.

But the point is that there is a kingdom and it is well-organized and its goal is the overthrow of Christ's kingdom. Everything we stand for, they stand against. And if the church is not prepared to resist Satan's kingdom, we lose ground. The only way these demons can be bound to the pit is when the church stands in the authority that Jesus gave us.

L. They bring woe (v. 12)

Well, verse 12 ends by saying, "The first woe is past, but, two woes are still coming, after these things." The third woe is the seventh trumpet, and it ends chapter 11. After that you go back to AD 30 again.

In any case, the last phrase reminds us that there is a perfect historical sequence in these first chapters. Every detail of this section was fulfilled between October 31 of AD 66 and March 28 of AD 67. The one exception is that the future tense indicates that these demons would continue to bring torment beyond the five month period. The only thing that was restricted for five months was the killing. During that time they were 100% restricted to torment.

Well, did the torment continue after the five months? Yes, it did. You don't have to read much of Josephus or the other historians before you shake your head at the irrationality and demonic changes in the people in Jerusalem. I will just end with one quote from Josephus that could be multiplied many times over to illustrate the demonic at work. This particular quote shows the transvestism that characterized the Jews during this war. Speaking of the Zealots, Josephus says,

With their insatiable hunger for loot, they ransacked the houses of the wealthy, murdered men and violated women for sport; they drank their spoils with blood, and from mere satiety they shamelessly gave themselves up to effeminate practices, plaiting their hair and putting on women's clothes, drenching 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 became fighting men, and, whipping out their swords from under their dyed cloaks, they would run through every passer-by. Those who ran away from John had an even more murderous reception from Simon, and anyone who eluded the tyrant within the walls was killed by the other outside the gates. Every avenue of escape was thus cut off for those who wished to desert to the Romans. (Wars, 4.10 [560-565])¹⁰

These demons were pretty effective as instruments of God's judgment. Next week we will pick up at verse 13 and show what happened after the five month period. But hopefully what we have covered thus far will motivate you to not take anything for granted and to not take anything as being neutral. We are either for Christ or we are against Him. If demons see even the smallest chink in our armor, they will take advantage. That chink in our armor could be prayerlessness, or bitterness, or gossip, or a rebellious spirit,

¹⁰ Translation by Gaalya Cornfeld (gen. ed.), Josephus The Jewish War: Newly Translated with extensive commentary and archeological background illustrations, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), p. 306.

or letting the sun go down on our anger. But as mentioned last week, if we daily confess our sins and walk in dependence upon Jesus, no matter how immature or weak we might be, Satan cannot have access to us. We need not fear him.

But everything we have seen should caution us about thinking that we can reason rebels into non-rebellion. If there is demonic involved, they will stick to their guns no matter what the evidence might be. When you are up against a brick wall in the family, work, or culture, try prayer. It might involve inviting some friends to do some prayer walking around the place of work, casting down the high things that have been exalted against the knowledge of God. It might involve getting together for political prayer meetings and praying the imprecatory Psalms. It might involve bringing covenant lawsuits against Satan for the damage he has already done in some believer's life. But let's stay together as David's 400 men stuck together, and let's do some serious damage to Satan's armies. Amen.