

# CHAPTER 9

In this chapter we have an account of the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets, the appearances that attended them, and the events that were to follow; the fifth trumpet (v. 1-12), the sixth (v. 13, etc.).

## ◀ REVELATION 9:1-12

### THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

Upon the sounding of this trumpet, the things to be observed are,

- 1.** *A star falling from heaven to the earth.* Some think this star represents some eminent bishop in the Christian church, some angel of the church; for, in the same way of speaking by which pastors are called stars, the church is called heaven; but who this is expositors do not agree. Some understand it of Boniface the third bishop of Rome, who assumed the title of universal bishop, by the favour of the emperor Phocas, who, being a usurper and tyrant in the state, allowed Boniface to be so in the church, as the reward of his flattery.
- 2.** To this fallen star *was given the key of the bottomless pit.* Having now ceased to be a minister of Christ, he becomes the antichrist, the minister of the devil; and by the permission of Christ, who had taken from him the keys of the church, he becomes the devil's turnkey, to let loose the powers of hell against the churches of Christ.
- 3.** Upon the opening of the bottomless pit *there arose a great smoke,* which darkened the sun and the air. The devils are the powers of darkness; hell is the place of darkness. The devil carries on his designs by blinding the eyes of men, by extinguishing light and knowledge, and promoting ignorance and error. He first deceives men, and then destroys them; wretched souls follow him in the dark, or they durst not follow him.
- 4.** Out of this dark smoke there came a swarm of locusts, one of the plagues of Egypt, the devil's emissaries headed by the antichrist, all the rout and rabble of antichristian orders, to promote superstition, idolatry,

error, and cruelty; and these had, by the just permission of God, power to hurt those who had not the mark of God in their foreheads.

**5.** The hurt they were to do them was not a bodily, but a spiritual hurt. They should not in a military way destroy all by fire and sword; the trees and the grass should be untouched, and those they hurt should not be slain; it should not be a persecution, but a secret poison and infection in their souls, which should rob them of their purity, and afterwards of their peace. Heresy is a poison in the soul, working slowly and secretly, but will be bitterness in the end.

**6.** They had no power so much as to hurt those who had the seal of God in their foreheads. God's electing, effectual, distinguishing grace will preserve his people from total and final apostasy.

**7.** The power given to these factors for hell is limited in point of time: *five months*, a certain season, and but a short season, though how short we cannot tell. Gospel-seasons have their limits, and times of seduction are limited too.

**8.** Though it would be short, it would be very sharp, insomuch that those who were made to feel the malignity of this poison in their consciences would be weary of their lives, v. 6. *A wounded spirit who can bear?* 9. These locusts were of a monstrous size and shape, v. 7, 8, etc. They were equipped for their work like horses prepared to battle.

**(1.)** They pretended to great authority, and seemed to be assured of victory: *They had crowns like gold on their heads*; it was not a true, but a counterfeit authority.

**(2.)** They had the show of wisdom and sagacity, *the faces of men*, though the spirit of devils.

**(3.)** They had all the allurements of seeming beauty, to ensnare and defile the minds of men — *hair like women*; their way of worship was very gaudy and ornamental.

**(4.)** Though they appeared with the tenderness of women, they had *the teeth of lions*, were really cruel creatures.

**(5.)** They had the defence and protection of earthly powers — *breastplates of iron*.

(6.) They made a mighty noise in the world; they flew about from one country to another, and the noise of their motion was like that of an army with chariots and horses.

(7.) Though at first they soothed and flattered men with a fair appearance, there was a sting in their tails; the cup of their abominations contained that which, though luscious at first, would at length bite like a serpent and sting like an adder.

(8.) The king and commander of this hellish squadron is here described,

[1.] As an angel; so he was by nature, an angel, once one of the angels of heaven.

[2.] *The angel of the bottomless pit*; an angel still, but a fallen angel, fallen into the bottomless pit, vastly large, and out of which there is no recovery.

[3.] In these infernal regions he is a sort of prince and governor, and has the powers of darkness under his rule and command.

[4.] His true name is *Abaddon, Apollyon* — a *destroyer*, for that is his business, his design, and employment, to which he diligently attends, in which he is very successful, and takes a horrid hellish pleasure; it is about this destroying work that he sends out his emissaries and armies to destroy the souls of men. And now here we have the end of one woe; and where one ends another begins.

## REVELATION 9:13-21

### THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

Here let us consider the preface to this vision, and then the vision itself.

**I.** The preface to this vision: *A voice was heard from the horns of the golden altar*, v. 13, 14. Here observe,

**1.** The power of the church's enemies is restrained till God gives the word to have them turned loose.

**2.** When nations are ripe for punishment, those instruments of God's anger that were before restrained are let loose upon them, v. 14.

**3.** The instruments that God makes use of to punish a people may sometimes lie at a great distance from them, so that no danger may be apprehended from them. These four messengers of divine judgment lay bound in the river Euphrates, a great way from the European nations. Here the Turkish power had its rise, which seems to be the story of this vision.

**II.** The vision itself: *And the four angels that had been bound in the great river Euphrates were now loosed*, v. 15, 16. And here observe,

**1.** The time of their military operations and executions is limited to *an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year*. Prophetic characters of time are hardly to be understood by us; but in general the time is fixed to an hour, when it shall begin and when it shall end; and how far the execution shall prevail, even to a third part of the inhabitants of the earth. God will make the wrath of man praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain.

**2.** The army that was to execute this great commission is mustered, and the number found to be of horsemen *two hundred thousand thousand*; but we are left to guess what the infantry must be. In general, it tells us, the armies of the Mahomedan empire should be vastly great; and so it is certain they were.

**3.** Their formidable equipage and appearance, v. 17. As the horses were fierce, like lions, and eager to rush into the battle, so those who sat upon them were clad in bright and costly armour, with all the ensigns of martial courage, zeal, and resolution.

**4.** The vast havoc and desolation that they made in the Roman empire, which had now become antichristian: A third part of them were killed; they went as far as their commission suffered them, and they could go no further.

**5.** Their artillery, by which they made such slaughter, described *by fire, smoke, and brimstone*, issuing out of the mouths of their horses, and the stings that were in their tails. It is Mr. Mede's opinion that this is a prediction of great guns, those instruments of cruelty which make such destruction: he observes, These were first used by the Turks at the siege of Constantinople, and, being new and strange, were very terrible, and did great execution. However, here seems to be an allusion to what is mentioned in the former vision, that, as antichrist had his forces of a spiritual nature, like scorpions poisoning the minds of men with error and

idolatry, so the Turks, who were raised up to punish the antichristian apostasy, had their scorpions and their stings too, to hurt and kill the bodies of those who had been the murderers of so many souls.

**6.** Observe the impenitency of the antichristian generation under these dreadful judgments (v. 20); the rest of the men who were not killed repented not, they still persisted in those sins for which God was so severely punishing them, which were,

**(1.)** Their idolatry; they would not cast away their images, though they could do them no good, *could not see, nor hear, nor walk.*

**(2.)** Their murders (v. 21), which they had committed upon the saints and servants of Christ. Popery is a bloody religion, and seems resolved to continue such.

**(3.)** Their sorceries; they have their charms, and magic arts, and rites in exorcism and other things.

**(4.)** Their fornication; they allow both spiritual and carnal impurity, and promote it in themselves and others.

**(5.)** Their thefts; they have by unjust means heaped together a vast deal of wealth, to the injury and impoverishing of families, cities, princes, and nations. These are the flagrant crimes of antichrist and his agents; and, though God has revealed his wrath from heaven against them, they are obstinate, hardened, and impenitent, and judicially so, for they must be destroyed.

**III.** From this sixth trumpet we learn,

**1.** God can make one enemy of the church to be a scourge and plague to another.

**2.** He who is the Lord of hosts has vast armies at his command, to serve his own purposes.

**3.** The most formidable powers have limits set them, which they cannot transgress.

**4.** When God's judgments are in the earth, he expects the inhabitants thereof should repent of sin, and learn righteousness.

**5.** Impenitency under divine judgments is an iniquity that will be the ruin of sinners; for where God judges he will overcome.