

Revelation 9: 1-12; "The 5th Trumpet Sounded" (Part 1), Sermon # 71
in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered
by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 9th, 2007,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.

This sounding of the 5th trumpet has many more verses contained in it than do the first four trumpets, and there is a reason for this. The announcement of this particular opposition of Satan requires a greater description than the others so that God's persecuted people would be able to see spiritually what the root of the problem was, that was preventing the advancement of Christ's kingdom from the about the year 600 on to the present day in the Church. It is based upon a star fallen from heaven to the earth. There are many expositors who believe that this 5th trumpet is the announcement of the problem that would come to the visible Church from the false prophet Mohammed and the religion that he developed; Islam. And it is certainly true that Mohammedanism is that which proceeded from the bottomless pit as a judgment upon a Christianity which had gone far astray in doctrine. I believe that the rise of Mohammedanism is an integral part of Satan's strategy to oppose the kingdom of Christ's advance among the nations. Mohammedanism, from its inception, is a part of the Antichristian powers, specifically related to the Eastern part of the former Roman Empire. But as history has proven, this false religion of Islam has continued and has spread to affect perhaps one sixth to one third of the human race. And so, after reading and thinking about the problem of what specifically these verses refer to in the 5th trumpet, I have come to the conclusion that the rise of the Papal Antichrist in the West and the rise of Mohammedanism in the East must be taken together. The 5th and 6th Trumpets have application to both. The prophecies that are coming after the 6th Trumpet will have their focus primarily upon Western part of the former Roman Empire, it being divided into the 10 kingdoms of the beast which we will discuss at a later time. James Durham does a very able job of proving that these verses 1-12 refer to the corruption of the teaching and the government in the visible Church, the rise of a false Church and a false hierarchy to rule over the Church of Jesus Christ. And Alexander McLeod, among others, does a good job of showing that they apply to Mohammedanism and its rise to conquest in the East and its attempts to conquer in the West. I believe that the two strategies are linked together as two parts of one strategy by Satan, and therefore as we study these trumpets, neither should be disqualified in our minds. They arose together in the same time period of the year 600 A.D. and we shall see that they will ultimately will fall together at the same general time, at the end of the 1260 days prophecy. I will

try to give you an overview of the beginnings of both and tie it all together with our text.

It is how these things affected the cause of Christ then, and how they affect it now, that is I believe, the primary intent for the giving of this prophecy. It was because of the awful development of pride among the clergy and the desire for earthly glory and riches, that the visible Church was brought into a spiritual Babylonian captivity which brought the advance of truth almost to a standstill for a thousand years. It brought judgments upon the visible Church which in turn affected the eternal well-being of many people in many nations in a devastating way. At the Reformation, the light began to shine once again, and truth once again began to dawn upon the nations in a way that would dispel the darkness. What was the cause of this darkness and this Babylonian captivity of the Church? It came because "a star had fallen from heaven to earth." So what I want to do this afternoon is to give you an introduction to this Trumpet's announcement by asking two questions of verses 1 and 2. First; "Who is the star referred to in verse 1 of Chapter 9 and what was given to him?" And 2nd- "What happened to the sun and the air when he opened the bottomless pit?"

1st- Who is the star referred to in verse 1 of Chapter 9?

In our past studies, we have seen that a star is a word picture for a minister of the gospel and the Word of God. This is the great reason that this "star" mentioned here cannot be Mohammed. He cannot be reckoned to be a minister of the visible Church of Jesus Christ. He was a false prophet, establishing a false religion, but never was he ever considered as a minister in the visible Church of Jesus Christ. However, he was indeed influenced by the heretical monk named Sergius. Alexander McLeod believes that this Sergius is the star fallen from heaven. Listen to what he says. "Sergius, called, by the Arabian writers, the monk Bahira, was a minister of the Christian church, who had fallen into error and immorality of the deepest die." "He had belonged to that class of people, who in those days of dissention were called Nestorians, from the celebrated bishop Nestorius, of Constantinople." (The Nestorians were in error in trying to explain the union of the two natures of Jesus Christ. They asserted that there were two persons united under one essence.) "To this sect of Christians, spread over Persia and Arabia before the time of Mohammed, Sergius, the intimate associate of Mohammed, and the principal contriver of the system which bear that impostor's name, belonged." When he was excommunicated from the church and expelled from the monastery, he fled to Mecca. "He was a man of genius and literature, suited to the purposes of Mohammed, and now reduced in the necessity of laboring for his bread, he entered readily into the views of Mohammed." "Both were unrestrained by moral principle; the one was needy; and the other a splendid merchant, of uncommon address and boundless

ambition." "This will account for the connection that they formed." "Theophanes, Zonaras, Cedrenus, Anastasius, the author of the *Historia Miscella*, Friar Richard, and several other historians speak of this fallen Monk, both under his proper name, and that of Bahira, which he assumed in Arabia as the agent in composing the Koran." "He was the Gabriel of Mohammed." "When Sergius had finished his task, he was put to death by his base patron, for fear he should afterwards betray the imposture." So; it is the opinion of many scholars that this Sergius is the one who wrote the Koran. He is the star who is fallen from heaven. And we can certainly say that in terms of the damage which he has done through the Koran, to perhaps as much as a third of mankind, he could justly be labeled with this title. We will look more at this under the 6th Trumpet.

But as we are, I believe, dealing primarily with the threats to the true Church's strength and stability, let us now consider what I believe is truly meant by this star fallen from heaven to earth. A star fallen from heaven is, I believe, and I have stated this before; a minister who has fallen within the visible church of Jesus Christ. That is, he is fallen from being a true minister of the gospel and God's Word and he is still allowed to stay within the visible church. It is seen as desirable that he stays. He is not excommunicated as Sergius was. He is fallen from this high calling of a man who is a "steward of the mysteries of God", to being a man who is ambitious of earthly power and riches; one who wants others to see him as being great, and one who considers himself to be great in the kingdom of God. This star, spoken of in these verses, does not represent an individual minister, an individual person in one generation only, but it represents an individual man, a minister who holds a high office that he should not hold within the Christian Church. And this office continues over many generations, as we shall see as we go through the exposition of the Trumpets and the Vials. We saw under the third Trumpet that "a great star fell from heaven," and I interpreted this to you as referring to one man, Pelagius, in regard to his fall from the gospel ministry into propagating of many errors and heresies in the Church of his day. His errors as we saw, are still affecting the Church in our day. But now we have in these verses, something that is even worse, and that is, that to this minister is given the "key to the bottomless pit." What we are looking at, I believe, is the beginnings and the rise of the Papal system within the visible church. We are looking at what is called the "Great Apostasy" of the Church; a wholesale defection away from the foundational truths of the Word of God which is spearheaded by this "star" who has the key to the bottomless pit. Satan's strategy was to convince men that the Church must have one minister to rule over the visible church, and in the place of Jesus Christ to make the major decisions that would govern the Church's doctrine and practice. If he had

earthly and worldly concerns more upon his mind than the real concerns for the salvation of men's souls through the finished work of Jesus Christ, he would be enabled to bring many errors and heresies into the Church and to keep them there because of his great authority. This was something that did not happen all at once in the visible Church, but it was something that developed over hundreds of years period of time. It is still affecting the visible Church of Jesus Christ today. It is the reason for the Reformation and the present day division between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Because of false doctrine and questionable practices that were trying to creep into the Church of that day through men who were willing to compromise the truth, the many errors that the Church was having to deal with; questions were often related to the bishop of the Church of Rome. He came to be seen over time as the preeminent bishop to decide all great matters related to doctrine and the government of the church. He was given this authority gradually and then as time went on, he took more to himself to be the final judge of all questions and controversies related to the truth of the gospel and the truth of the practice of the Church. But as we shall see, this was his being given "the key to the bottomless pit."

So then, 2ndly- Let us ask the question, "What happened to the Sun and the Air when he opened the bottomless pit?"

Verse 2 says, "And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace." "So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit." We saw under the 4th Trumpet that the Sun referred in the primary sense to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ who is the light of the world. In the darkening of a third of the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars, we saw that these picture words referred to the darkening of the visible Church's ability to show forth the truth and glory of Jesus Christ. A third of the day and a third of the night did not shine. The Church's ability to rule and govern God's people in righteousness was not following the humble servant mentality which was shown forth so well in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles. Christ, in the gospel, Christ in His Word, were not being seen by many people in the churches. It says here, "smoke arose out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace." Things related to the Church's seeing clearly the truth of Christ's Headship, His glory, His salvation by grace through faith, and the way to find eternal life, were now being clouded with the smoke of false doctrine, and a Pope and bishops and priests who would not rule Christ's Church in righteousness. Ceremonies, and traditions, and superstitions, had taken the place of gospel preaching and the exposition of God's Word. The darkness was spreading and whole Sun and also the Air were darkened. Now there was now a greater corruption of the Church and the doctrine that the

Church was teaching, and the way that she ruled over the sheep of the Lord's pasture. More than ever before in the history of the Church this was true.

Now what we can conclude by way of application in terms of what we have studied today? We need to understand how awful a thing it is when a minister, who is a star to give the light of Christ to people, comes forth not to shine His Master's light; but with his own supposed light he clouds the spiritual Air with the smoke of the bottomless pit. It is a terrible thing to the advancement of truth, and the purity of doctrine, and it is destructive to the lives and souls of people when a minister falls to preaching doctrines of demons and is deceived into teaching what is false. 1 Timothy 4: 1 -3. Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth." We will be discussing in detail in the future the errors and heresies of the Church of Rome and how all these great errors came in through "the star that fell from heaven". How did all this come about? It came about because men were filled with pride and they wanted power over other people in order to satisfy their own lusts and pleasures. They wanted to be popular and they wanted to be famous. But they did not care a whit for the souls and bodies of real people who they had been entrusted to shepherd on Jesus' behalf. Jesus said in Matthew 23, in his pronouncing of woes upon the Pharisees, "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." "But all their works thy do to be seen by men." "They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments." "They love the best places at the feasts, the best seats in the synagogue, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'" "But you, do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren." "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven." "And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ." "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant." "And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." It was because these truths and many others were not heeded, that "a star fell from heaven to the earth" and the effects of that fall became a false head over a false church which continues down to this very day.

But let us not let the awful effects of this fall paralyze our faith or our efforts to spread the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us learn to overcome evil with good. Let us pray for and talk with the Roman Catholics who come our way, about the truth of what the Bible clearly teaches. Christ is the only Head of the

Church and not a Pope. Christ alone can save the soul and not ceremonies or ordinances. Let us show, by a faithful adherence to the truth of what the Bible teaches that our Jesus was not like a Pope; He never was. "He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant..." Let us show by the strength of Christ's grace working in our hearts, that we can be faithful, humble, joyful, and loving Christians; people who will not compromise with error and heresy, but those who desire to win those who are presently entrapped by this system and enslaved to it. May the light and grace and glory of Christ be seen in us so that the spiritual Air in our day might clear and the Sun of Righteousness shine in all His strength.