

**Revelation 9: 5-12; "The Sounding of the 5th Trumpet (Part 3), Sermon # 73 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 23rd, 2007, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

For the last two Sundays we have been examining the warning being announced by the fifth angel of things which would come upon the visible Church of Jesus Christ in this second time period of the Roman Empire's opposition to Christ's kingdom. It was the time period from 323 to 756 A.D. when Church and State were combined. What happened during that time period was that "a star fell from heaven to the earth." I explained to you that in prophetic language in the Bible, this "star" represents a minister of the gospel, an elder in the church falling from his high position and calling of preaching Christ and lifting Christ up before the eyes of men; to becoming a man who represented himself as taking Christ's place of position and authority over the Church as Head, to himself. This was the time of bishops and councils, of Patriarchs and Metropolitan bishops all trying together to formulate the first creeds in regard to the Person of Christ. The true Christian bishops faced many difficulties during these years and although the orthodox doctrine of Christ as being two natures, but one person was established in the council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., yet the issue of who would have the final say in these doctrinal matters of great significance, itself became a problem. The Bishop of Rome came to be seen by the other bishops in the Western section of the Roman Empire as having greater authority than all the other bishops. This developed slowly and gradually over time and eventually resulted in the Pope taking greater and greater power to himself and the churches permitting him to do so. In doing so, then many doctrines of the faith, which had been given to him in the Scriptures, came to be changed and twisted to suit his own purposes. Many Popes over many generations have changed and added many things to the pure Word of God, the Scriptures. When this happened; a false church with false authorities began to be built. We looked at this in the last sermon. The appointment of Abbots and friars to preach in the place of pastors. With the formation of monasteries the Abbots and friars were being given priest's orders. But they did not know the Scriptures well. A false view of the sacraments was developed by these false authorities in the visible church in the introduction of the Mass. These false authorities are the "locusts" which emerged from the bottomless pit which was opened by this star which fell from heaven. This Great Apostasy from the truth and authority of the Word of God and from Jesus Christ Himself as our Living Risen Head, began then; and it continues to this day to plague the visible Church with woes in both doctrine and practice.

The great problem of these Popes being in authority over the visible Church is that the glory which belongs to Jesus Christ does not go to Christ, but it goes to a

man in high spiritual authority. And the Word of God is not held fast or held forth, but it is twisted in such a way that people are not saved from their sins by coming to church and hearing the gospel preached, because the gospel is not being preached. This is the star which fell from heaven to the earth. When you think of the "star" of our faith, your mind should turn to such passages as Numbers 24: 17, which says, "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult." And Edom shall be a possession; Seir also his enemies, shall be a possession, while Israel does valiantly." "Out of Jacob One shall have dominion and destroy the remains of the city." As we study what came out of the smoke of the bottomless pit, let us remember that our Lord Jesus shall have the dominion over all that is false in His Church. We want Israel to do valiantly in our generation. This afternoon we will look at the torment of these locusts, the shape and description of these locusts, and the king over these locusts. Let us look and be warned. Let us look and be comforted, if we believe in Jesus Christ as the only true and legitimate Head over His Church.

**1st - Let's look at the torment which these locusts bring.** (Verses 3-6)

Verse 4 says that these locusts "were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads." "And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months." "Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man." "In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them." Very simply, what is being talked about here is the torment that is produced in the souls of those who do not know Christ who have been deceived by this false system of doctrine and practice in the Church of Rome. It is a "torment to think that you have come to know God through the sacraments and yet to have no assurance of your salvation. This is the state of those who have been stung by these locusts. A true Christian will not be eternally harmed by this false system of authority and practice. He has been sealed by God. But a person who does not know the Lord and wants to think that he can be religious and find God, may be brought into a state of spiritual bondage and paralysis if he or she attends a church like this. Many people that I have spoken with, who are in the Roman Catholic Church, are often very reluctant to even consider leaving that false system even though they may know that there are many errors and many things wrong in it. They stay because their parents and their grandparents were in it. They stay because they like a visible religion. They like all the religious elements in the worship and the priests who wear the robes, the pageantry and the show of taking the host thinking that one is receiving the literal body of Christ. They like being part of a big world-wide Church with a visible earthly head; someone that they can see is a very religious man who is concerned for them.

There are usually things that bother them, though, about the system that they are in. They are disturbed by the confessional, the awful reality of having to confess their inmost secret sins and thoughts to a priest. It is indeed a locust preying on the soul, tormenting the soul with doubt and fear in relation to guilt. A person if they are sincere, if they are thinking about spiritual realities will be brought to the place where they will say, "Will I ever be forgiven?" "Can I feel clean once again?" "Why don't I feel clean when I confess my sins to a priest?" "Why do I feel exposed?" "Why should this man have this kind of knowledge of my heart?" "Why is it that sometimes I think that I would be better off if I was dead?" "I'm doing penance, I feel contrition, but I don't have the power to overcome my sins." "If only I could come to know what it means to be free of my sins." "I do not feel free, no matter how many rituals and ceremonies that I go through." The torment lasts five months it says twice in our text. They are given authority to do this, to hurt men, for five months. Now this can only be interpreted in two ways in my opinion. Either the five months may be taken for the lifespan of the locust, which is five months in a year, or it could possibly be taken according to the prophetic principle of a year for a day. If it does mean a year for a day here, 5 months composed of 30 days in a month; the calculation would work out to 150 years. It could possibly mean that the torment caused by these locusts would last for the whole rest of the time in this second time period of the Christian Roman Empire. This would be from 606 to 756 A.D. It is a more plausible interpretation that you might think at first glance. 606 A.D. is a very significant date in the development of the Papacy. It does fit the historic context of these verses. It was the date when the title Universal Bishop was established by the political decree of an evil Emperor named Phocas who conferred it upon Boniface III. The year 756 is the year that the Papacy received Civil power in receiving the grants of land conferred upon it by Pepin the King of France. This was the date when the Papal power became more than a spiritual power; it became a temporal power with a geographic state. This could well be the meaning of the 5 months torment; its source is the rise and establishment of the Papacy. But I am inclined to think, that in the context of what we are looking at, that it is better interpreted as the length of months which locusts live; and as long as they live, they will torment. The life span of a locust is 5 months. As long as there is a Papal system with Popes sending priests out with false doctrines from the Word, and false practices in the religious worship, and the 7 sacraments necessary to salvation, there can really be no spiritual rest for the people "stung" by this system. It is torment to the consciences of men, it is torment to those who have to practice penance and believe that salvation is only found by the addition of their religious works and good intentions.

**But 2ndly- Let's look at the shape and description of these Locusts.**

(Verses 7 -9)

"The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle." "On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces like the faces of men." As we take our journey through the Book of Revelation, we are taking a journey through certain very important overviews of the history of the Church of Jesus Christ, and they are given to us in visionary form. When a prophet in the Old Testament was given a vision, very often there were spiritual pictures portrayed to his mind by God which conveyed the spiritual state of the people of Israel themselves. When the prophet declared his message and when this state of the people had been addressed by God, through him; a response that they would heed the Word delivered, was expected. If the people did not heed the word of the prophet, they would suffer some political calamity or judgment which would come upon their nation. To show you this, I would like you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Joel, Chapter 1. In Joel we find warnings of the literal physical and political judgments coming upon the nation of Israel for their unfaithfulness to God. The first judgment mentioned in this book is a judgment of locusts coming upon their land, really and literally. Verse 2 says, "Hear this you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land!" ""Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?" "Tell you children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation." "What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten." Here we see the various kinds of locusts are mentioned as taking part in this judgment. What one does not get, of the crops of the land of Israel, another kind will find and consume. There are here in the book of Joel, some real parallels to what we are studying in the Book of Revelation. What is being referred to as a literal physical judgment, there at that time, in the nation of Israel, may also be referring to the New Testament times and the spiritual calamities which have come upon us in the form of these spiritual locusts.

This is a legitimate rule of Biblical interpretation; the law of double reference. Things that apply literally and physically to the nation of Israel in a prophetic sense in the Old Testament, which are based upon the relationship between God and Israel, have also a reference really and spiritually in the New Testament to the relationship between God and the Church of Jesus Christ, the Israel of God. The physical calamities and judgments prophesied in the Old Testament are the spiritual calamities of the New. The spiritual blessings of the Old become greater and more apparent in the New because of Jesus Christ's finished work. So Old Testament prophecies, and how they might be fulfilled in the New, need to be carefully studied so that their application to the New can be grasped and understood in our day. The descriptions that we find in Joel are very much like the descriptions which we find here in Revelation 9. Verse 6 of Chapter 1 says, "For a nation has come up against My land, strong, and without number; His teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he has the fangs of a fierce lion." "He has laid waste My

vine, and ruined My fig tree; he has stripped bare and thrown it away; its branches are made white." In both passages the locusts are described as having lions teeth to devour the fruitfulness of the vine of Israel. We should take notice. We should be warned. This false Papal system of Roman Catholicism has indeed been this way to the Church of Jesus Christ. Let us not unlearn or forget the hard won truths of the Reformation and say that it does not matter. It does matter in regard to men's souls. In verse 7 of Revelation 9 it says that the shape of these locusts is like horses prepared for battle. And in verse 9 it says that they had "breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle." If you look over to Joel 2, verse 1 it says, "Blow 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 is coming, for it is at hand: a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains." "A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never; nor will there ever be any such after, even for many successive generations." "A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; the land is like the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them." "Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run." "With a noise like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array." In Revelation the locusts have "men's faces" and they are set in battle array, and their sound was like the sound of many chariots with many horses, running into battle. The picture in Joel is same as in Revelation. The reference in the Old Testament passage is to all of the forces of Nebuchadnezzar, the forces of Assyria, Chaldea, and Babylon coming against Israel in their successive stages and attacks. In the New it is the New Testament Babylon being drawn up in martial array, in her various orders of false authorities, making an attack upon the church. And it will be an attack which would go on for successive generations, even until today. What began in the year 606 A.D. with Popes and Bishops and Priests continues to hold the Church of Jesus Christ in a Babylonian captivity as Luther used to put it. The reason for it ought to be apparent. It is our third point; a very brief one.

**3rdly- Let's mention the king over these locusts.** (Verse 11)

"They had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon." The name means "destroyer". The angel of the bottomless pit is none other than Satan. He goes by these two names mentioned. It is his schemes that we would see exposed and destroyed, not men's souls. We would not have men's souls tormented by this false system which calls itself the true Church and has a Pope and priests ruling over it who eat up all that good of the Word of God and twist and destroy it. It truly is a spiritual plague of immense proportions in our day. Let us determine to preach nothing but the free grace of Jesus Christ. Let us see that this plague

cannot harm the grass of the earth, the common and ordinary Christian who will compare his Bible with their teachings. Let us see that this plague cannot harm any tree, those who are the "planting of the Lord." Jesus said, "Every plant which is not planted by my heavenly Father shall be rooted up." (Matthew 15: 13) But when the Lord Jesus comes to the heart of the one who sees that they are a sinner and would have grace to be saved on God's terms, there is no torment. Listen to Isaiah 61: 1-3. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."