

## **Revelation 9 – The Tipping Point?**

The first four trumpets, like the first four seals, are conveyed in rather quick fashion. The trumpets are more clear and consequential and follow the basic purpose and paradigm of the Exodus plagues in the Old Testament. The warning grows shriller and deeper as the final three trumpets are prefaced and presented with three woes! God is trying to wake up sinful humanity as they sink beyond the inhumane treatment of others (chs.6-7) to what looks and sounds like very “hellish” actions and consequences.

### **Warm Up Question(s)** – Choose one

- When have you had to actively warn people of danger? How did you do it and how they respond?
- What is one of the most excruciating pains you’ve ever experienced? What happened?

### **Discovering the Word**

- 1) **Read Revelation 9:1-12.** What happens when the fifth trumpet sounds? Who are the main characters in this drama?
- 2) How does John convey the deepening intensity of the trumpet/woe/plague? What would you do to warn people of danger when they’ve been ignoring the warning signs & sounds?
- 3) How are the appearance and activities of the locusts here different from the insect locust? What is the extent of their power? Upon whom? Why?
- 4) Some interpreters have suggested this trumpet represents “opening the bottomless pit of human nature”, others suggest it represents “opening the power of the demonic realm”. What do you think the “Abyss” represents and why (cf. Lk. 8<sup>31</sup>; Rev. 20<sup>1</sup>)?<sup>1</sup>
- 5) What modern-day realities does the imagery of this trumpet/woe/plague bring to mind for you?
- 6) **Read Revelation 9:13-21.** What events are inaugurated by the sixth trumpet? What triggers it (v.13; cf. 8<sup>3-4</sup>; 6<sup>10</sup>)?<sup>2</sup> What is God’s role in the action?
- 7) What is the scope of the second woe? In what ways does it differ from the first?
- 8) Who are destroyed by the massive army? Why? Does this army achieve it’s purpose?
- 9) Can you imagine a plague/disaster/event that might cause humankind to repent and return to God? What has caused you to repent and to what extent?

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<sup>1</sup> If this trumpet/woe exposes and unleashes not only evil forces latent in us, but other forces, demonic forces then Revelation is saying is this: *“whenever people go beyond their own humanity in committing their crimes, whenever they become so debased that they let themselves be possessed by a force of evil greater than human nature itself could conjure up, then human sin becomes inhuman, men are the offspring of beasts, and judgment lashes the soul with its most unspeakable terrors.”* (J.P. Love quoted by Leon Morris, Revelation, pp. 123-134)

<sup>2</sup> While it is possible that God’s people are praying for God’s destruction of their oppressors, it is also possible that the focus of their prayers is for God’s justice (i.e. exercise your role as “the Judge of all the earth”—Gen. 18:25)? Look for signs of the kind of right judgment Abraham asked for in his day (Genesis 18:20-33), also being applied in John’s day.