

The Fifth Shofar ~ Part 2

Revelation 9:1-6

The End Times

In my last post, we began to explore **Revelation 9:1-6** dealing with the **Fifth Shofar**. In this post, we will conclude exploring **Revelation 9:1-6** and the blowing of the **Fifth Shofar**.

"The fifth angel sounded his shofar; and I saw a star that had fallen out of heaven onto the earth, and he was given the key to the shaft leading down to the Abyss. ² He opened the shaft of the Abyss, and there went up smoke from the shaft like the smoke of a huge furnace; the sun was darkened, and the sky too, by the smoke from the shaft. ³ Then out of the smoke onto the earth came locusts, and they were given power like the power scorpions have on earth. ⁴ They were instructed not to harm the grass on the earth, any green plant or any tree, but only the people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ The locusts were not allowed to kill them, only to inflict pain on them for five months; and the pain they caused was like the pain of a scorpion sting. ⁶ In those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them." ~ Revelation 9:1-6 (CJB)

He opened the shaft of the Abyss, and there went up smoke from the shaft like the smoke of a huge furnace; the sun was darkened, and the sky too, by the smoke from the shaft. During the **fourth shofar** judgment, a third part of the sun, the moon, and the stars were darkened. Now there is total darkness upon the face of the earth because of the smoke pouring out of the **abyss**. However, it is not the darkness that should hold our attention, but what comes out of the darkness!

Then out of the smoke onto the earth came locusts, and they were given power like the power scorpions have on earth. ⁴ They were instructed not to harm the grass on the earth, any green plant or any tree, but only the people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ The locusts were not allowed to kill them, only to inflict pain on them for five months; and the pain they caused was like the pain of a scorpion sting. ⁶ In those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them."

The demon locusts are terrifying. We will learn in verses 7-10 that these locusts are shaped like war horses, they have humanlike faces, with women's hair and lions' teeth. Their breastplates are like iron and their crowns like gold. Their wings sound like an army of chariots and horses rushing to war. They have the power to sting like scorpions. They feed, not on vegetation like regular locusts (in fact, they are forbidden to do so), but on terror. The locusts are given strict orders to torment only those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. The locusts are also prohibited from killing people. They can only torment people for five months, like the normal period for locusts (May to September) in Israel.

There are parallels in the prophecies in the book of Joel (see 1:4, 2:4-14), which also predicts a locust plague as part of the events leading to the coming Day of Judgment. A locust plague is also described in Exodus 10:12-20.

It should be noted that these demonic creatures are given credit for being intelligent, as they are given a clear command concerning what they may and may not do. G. E. Jones explains his theory about these locusts: ¹

These are not literal locusts, because locusts do not have scorpion-like stings in their tails. These creatures do not devour the green vegetation; in fact, they are prohibited from doing so. This demonic

¹ A Layman's Commentary on Revelation by Don Jones.

army is given the assignment of tormenting all who have not been protected by the seal of God. The 144,000 men from the tribes of Israel would therefore escape this painful judgment (Rev. 7:1-8). In fact, it is likely that all who have trusted the Lord will be sealed in some special way and protected from torment.

One can only imagine the extent of this torment! The pain will be so excruciating that those afflicted will yearn for death, but will be unable to die and escape their earthly torment. As Yochanan continues to write down what he is seeing, he describes in detail this demonic creature that has been unleashed on the inhabitants of this world.

Special Comparative Note on Chapter 9:2-6 ²

Historicist Approach:

Recall from my last post that most **Historicists** see the *star* as Mohammed. That is based on their interpretation of the *locusts*. Nearly all view the *locusts* as the Saracens (Arab Muslims) and their campaigns against the Eastern Roman Empire from about 612 to 763 CE. The king over them is Mohammed. They also see a parallel when *they were instructed not to harm the grass on the earth, any green plant or any tree* and a passage from the Koran which states: "Destroy no palm trees, nor any fields of corn, cut down no fruit trees." Even advocates of other views who are adamant in their rejection of the **Historicist** system of interpretation have admitted the convincing nature of this identification.

Preterist Approach:

The **Preterist** view continues to be predominately anti-Semitic in this passage.

Futurist Approach:

The **locusts** are demons loosed to torment and "aptly typify or symbolize the spiritual plague of the last days."

Idealist Approach:

Idealists point out that the five months of the **locust's** ravages correspond to the normal life-span of a locust.

In my next post, we will take a break from **Revelation 9** to observe **Shavuot (Pentecost)**. We will then return to **Revelation 9:7-12** on the **Description of the Locusts**.

² Material in this section is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg