**Leftovers from Chapter 8:**

*V. 1 -* ***fifth angel sounded his trumpet*** *– this and the following “trumpet events” are of a different character than the first 4; #5 originates in Hell itself; in #6 for the first time people are the target of the event, not merely collateral damage; ”trumpet” =>more like a vuvuzela than a musical instrument*

***star that had fallen . . . was given the key to . . . the Abyss.*** *The star here is Satan; in 20:1 an angel has this key and locks Satan back into the Abyss for 1000 years.*

***Abyss*** *- John’s word for “Hell,” the place of eternal torment for the damned.*

*v. 2 -* ***like the smoke from a gigantic furnace –*** *not like the smoke from incense, but from the forges of Hell itself.*

*v. 3 –* ***locusts*** *– See Exodus 10:1-20; Joel 1 & 2 (especially Joel 2:28-32; compare to Revelation 9:20-21)*

*v.4 –* ***only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads*** *– Cf. Exodus 8:20-23, Exodus 12:12-13*

*v.5 –* ***not allowed to kill*** *– though from Hell, they are controlled/limited by God*

***five months*** *(here and v.10) – a limited and specific period of time – this won’t last forever. The point is that though fearsome, like all locust plagues, it will come to an end.*

v.7ff: - **“1/3”** is not a statistically accurate number; it’s meant to be the equivalent of “big portions of [the earth].”

The **“trumpet events”** may be seen as weather related (1st trumpet), natural catastrophes (2nd trumpet), ecological disasters (3rd trumpet), astronomical disasters (4th trumpet). All are intended to be signs directing people to repentance.

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**9**The **fifth angel sounded his trumpet**, and I saw **a star that had fallen** from the sky to the earth. The **star was given the key** to the shaft of the **Abyss**. **2**When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it **like the smoke from a gigantic furnace**. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. **3**And out of the smoke **locusts**came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. **4**They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but **only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads**. **5**They were **not allowed to kill** them but only to torture them for **five months**. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. **6**During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

*v.7-11 –* ***locusts looked like*** *- this description is PARENTHETICAL – to spend too much time on this and to try to identify these locusts as “alien spacecraft” or “attack helicopters” digresses from the point of the chapter => to get people to repent.*

*Compare these beasts from Hell with the beasts of Chapter 13 and the Four Living Creatures of Chapter 4. The Creatures, though awesome, strike us as being created by the Creator of all things in heaven and earth. The locusts here and the beasts in Chapter 13, though fearsome, at closer look strike us as having been assembled in Gomez Addams’ dungeon by parts of Pugsley and Wednesday’s cast-off dog toys.*

*v. 8&10 -* ***teeth were like lions’ teeth ... tails with stingers*** *– like the horses in v. 18, they can tear people as they approach and sting people when they pass.*

*v. 11 -* ***angel of the Abyss*** *– the devil himself (now you know his names)*

*v. 12 -* ***first woe*** *– of the three in Ch. 8:13: Greek* **Οὐαὶ οὐαὶ οὐαὶ** *; Hebrew* **אוי אוי אוי**

**7**The **locusts looked like** horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. **8**Their hair was like women’s hair, and their **teeth were like lions’ teeth**. **9**They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. **10**They had **tails with stingers**, like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. **11**They had as king over them the **angel of the Abyss**, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).

**12**The **first woe** is past; two other woes are yet to come.

**13**The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard **a voice** coming from **the four horns of the golden altar** that is before God. **14**It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release **the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates**.” **15**And the four angels who had been **kept ready** **for this very hour and day and month and year** were released **to kill a third of mankind**. **16**The number of **the mounted troops** was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number.

*v. 13 -* ***a voice –*** *not sure whose voice this is, just “a voice”*

***the four horns of the golden altar*** *– both the main altar and the altar of incense in the Temple of Jerusalem had vertical projections at the corners called “horns”*

*v.14 -* ***the four angels who are bound –*** *probably not the same angels from Ch. 7:1; if not, these seem to have been stationed* ***at the great river Euphrates*** *awaiting the command to release the invading armies.*

*v.15 -* ***kept ready* *for this very hour and day and month and year*** *–they are under God’s command;* ***this*** *because they will be continuously active until the Lord’s return.*

***to kill a third of mankind*** *– again, not a statistical number but more like “a really huge number of people”; the purpose of this plague seems to be to kill people intentionally, not as collateral damage*

*v.16 -* ***the mounted troops*** *– historically, the most fearsome invading armies came from the east across the Euphrates (the Parthians, the Scythians, the Persians) with their cavalry and chariots*

*v. 17 -* ***looked like this*** *– again (v.7), this description is parenthetical. We should not waste so much time chasing down these descriptions that we forget the purpose of this chapter – repentance!*

**17**The horses and riders I saw in my vision **looked like this**: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. **18**A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. **19**The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

*v.20 -* ***The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent*** *– the point of these two chapters and all these plagues / signs is the same as the plagues of Egypt – to prompt repentance.*

*v.21 -* ***magic arts*** *– this Greek word* **φαρμάκων** *includes “black”magic, witchcraft, sorcery, spells, occult practices of every kind, and the use of potions or drugs (including drug abuse?)*

**20The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent** of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. **21**Nor did they repent of their murders, their **magic arts**, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Some things to think about

1. Notice the list of sins people did not stop repenting. What’s included? What’s not included? Why do you think the things that are included, are included? What’s important about these sins, that they needed inclusion rather than others?
2. David DeSilva (UnHoly Allegiances, page 93) points out that these sins are *exactly* the sins that the Christians’ neighbors in Pergamum regularly participated in. What does this say about our life in our secular society?
3. How is a person who doesn’t read English supposed to know that a STOP sign says STOP? How are people who only have a natural knowledge of God supposed to know that the signs in these two chapters say REPENT?
4. Put yourself in God’s shoes: after all the work He direct and commands in these two chapters (8 & 9), how do you suppose He feels having to write verses 20 and 21 of Chapter 9?