

Revelation (2020) – 8-9

- We've finished the first six judgments that Jesus brings upon the earth at the outset of the seven-year Tribulation
 - Before we move to the next wave of judgments, let's revisit our timeline for a moment
 - First, we remember that Revelation 6-19 tells the story of the final seven years of Daniel's 70 sevens
 - Also known as the time of Jacob's troubles or Tribulation on earth
 - It's a time of judgment promised for Israel in the Old Covenant, and the book of Revelation explains how it comes to pass
 - Then we moved into a study of the signs of the end of the age including the removal of the Church prior to the Tribulation
 - Those signs include world wars, earthquakes and famines
 - And these signs would progress like labor pains, Jesus said
 - Then over the past two weeks we have moved into the first wave of judgments in the Tribulation itself
 - As Jesus broke a seal on the land deed for Israel and the earth, events unfold on earth
 - The first four seals initiated the unveiling of the Antichrist upon the world stage
 - As he ascends to greater authority and power, he triggers world war leading to widespread death and devastation
 - With the consequence being a fourth of the world population, some 2 billion people, dying
- But there was the suggestion that the land of Israel is being spared from these initial disasters
 - And that seems to be related to the events of Chapter 7 and the breaking of the fifth seal
 - In Chapter 7 we learn that even before the Antichrist embarks on his rise to power, the Lord is at work preparing 144,000 men

- He brings 144,000 Jewish men to faith so they may serve Him in reaching the world with the gospel
- So even as the Lord is bringing wave after wave of judgment on the earth, He is also bringing mercy to millions
- By the end of Chapter 7, John sees the outcome of these men at work: an uncountable number of believers from everywhere on earth
 - They are present in Heaven which not only reveals the great success of the 144,000 but also indicated they were martyred
 - The fifth seal revealed the souls of these believers in Heaven seeking vengeance for their deaths
 - The Antichrist's appetite for waging of war is matched only by his ruthless persecution of believers during this time
 - And so we learned that the Antichrist's rise to power is responsible for both the death of the unbelievers and believers
 - Chapter 7 interrupted the narrative of the book of Revelation, but in reality the events of Chapter 7 coincide with the start of Tribulation
 - And they don't finish until the very end of the seven years
 - In this moment, John is given an overview of the evangelism of Tribulation so he could encourage that future generation
 - Believers in the time of Tribulation may read this chapter and realize that martyrdom is nothing to be afraid of
 - It's the plan of God and vengeance will come eventually
 - I suspect this chapter will be a hallmark chapter for believers during the time of Tribulation
 - A type of Psalm 23 for those enduring the hell of those days
 - An encouragement to know that the trials will end sooner or later, and death is a blessed escape
- Then finally, the sixth seal marks the first time the Lord brings supernatural destruction upon the earth
 - He darkens the sun, makes the moon blood red, brings meteors raining to the earth

- And He shakes the world with earthquakes so massive that every mountain and island is moved out of its place
- For the first time, humanity comes to understand that the world destruction they are facing is coming as a result of an angry God
- Which brings us to the next wave of judgments, called the Trumpet judgments
 - And as I explained last time, the seven trumpets judgments are the seventh seal judgment
 - So as Jesus opens the seventh seal, He sets in motion a cascade of additional judgments
 - So the breaking of the seventh seal means that the rest of the Tribulation judgments will take place inevitably

Rev. 8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Rev. 8:2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

Rev. 8:3 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.

Rev. 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

- Chapter 8 opens with Jesus breaking the seventh seal, which results in a profound effect in Heaven
 - John says there is a period of silence in Heaven for about half an hour
 - That period of silence serves to underscore how awesome and profound the coming judgments will be
 - The breaking of the seventh seal unleashes a series of judgments that we can barely imagine
 - The trumpet and bowl judgments are the culmination of all that the prophets have foretold
 - And they bring an end to every storyline of our age and trigger a new beginning for everyone and everything

- And like childbirth, the beginning of that new age comes through a painful period of trial

Dan. 12:1 “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of **distress** such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

- So all Heaven stays quiet for a time, perhaps for the first time since God created that place for Himself and His court
 - The phrase “about half an hour” is a curious for its vagueness
 - We know God’s word is always precise and every word is intended, so why is John so vague here?
 - Maybe he didn’t have a sun dial on his wrist to track the time more precisely
 - But I think the imprecision is intentional to avoid leading us down the wrong path in our interpretation
 - If John had written “there was silence for 30 minutes,” we would spend our time trying to figure out the significance of 30
 - But that wasn’t the point, so he left it vague so we would focus on the mere fact that what’s coming will be unprecedented
 - Then we see seven angels preparing to bring the next judgments, and the next wave of judgments have a unique style
 - The trumpet judgements are split between impacting the physical earth and the physical bodies of humanity
 - The first three will bring devastation to the earth (or what remains of it) so that life becomes increasingly harsh
 - While the second three make life utterly miserable for each person regardless of what part of earth they inhabit
 - Those final three judgments on the physical body of each person are so terrible they are called the “woe” judgments
 - The word “woe” is the Bible’s word for eternal condemnation, and so these judgments are a preview of eternal judgment
 - We’ll explain this further when we get to those judgments

- Meanwhile, before the judgments begin, God receives the prayers of the saints as pictured by incense before the Throne
 - We can assume these prayers are believers asking for protection, defense, and relief from what they are experiencing
 - And as we'll see when we look at the judgments, particularly the woe judgments, the Lord hears the prayers of His saints
- Finally, these judgments are announced with trumpets, because they serve as the final warnings of the age
 - The first set of judgments, the seal judgments, set the stage for the seven years
 - They didn't appear to come from Heaven, at least not at first
 - And in fact, only the sixth seal judgment tipped God's hand to let the earth's population know He was at work in these things
 - But now that the cat is out of the bag, the world has been put on notice that the end is near
 - And as we approach the midpoint of Tribulation, the Lord is announcing that end by these trumpet judgments
 - Each judgment is like a blast of a warning trumpet reminding the world that time is running out
 - The six trumpet judgments all happen during the first half of Tribulation, which we will see more clearly as we enter into the middle of Tribulation
 - That will leave just one wave of judgments remaining, the bowl judgments
 - They come near the end of the second half of Tribulation and they bring the age to an end
 - So these trumpet judgments represent the last chance for the world to come to faith before the very worst comes
 - We'll study this timeline more thoroughly later

Rev. 8:5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

Rev. 8:6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.

- Before the first trumpet is blown, there is yet more preparation in the form of a series of destructive world disasters
 - The entire series of trumpet judgments are preceded by displays in the heavens and another earthquake
 - We remember from the Olivet Discourse that earthquakes will continue to be the warning sign of the coming judgment
 - They will continue to increase in intensity and duration, and here we see yet another of them
 - And now the trumpets begin to blow and the judgments follow

Rev. 8:7 The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

- At the sounding of the first trumpet, one third of the earth was burned up from a judgment of hail, fire, and blood
- This is clearly a supernatural judgment and it reminds us of the judgments upon Egypt in the Exodus

Ex. 9:23 Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt.

Ex. 9:24 So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

- This similarity between the first trumpet judgment and a plague of the Exodus is more than coincidental
 - Throughout the trumpet judgments we will see a loose parallel between Exodus and Tribulation because one pictures the other
 - And in typical Biblical form, those earlier judgments were a lesser version of the greater fulfillment seen in Tribulation
- In the Exodus account, Israel was in bondage to a foreign nation

- And in these last days Israel will be in bondage to the enemy and to sin
- In the Exodus, the Lord brought Israel out of earthly bondage through a series of supernatural judgments
- And in the Tribulation, He will deliver Israel from spiritual bondage through a series of even greater judgments
- In the Exodus, Israel's freedom was made possible by the Law, as personalized by Moses leading the people into the wilderness
 - And in the Tribulation, the people will first return to the Law to worship in the temple, which will prepare them to receive Messiah
 - And in the Exodus, the people eventually found their way to the Promised Land led by Joshua (Yeshuah)
 - And at the end of the Tribulation, the people of Israel will eventually enter the Kingdom led by Yeshua, their Messiah
- So moving to the first judgment, John tells us that a third of the earth is burned up, but what does a "third" mean?
 - Should we suppose it is one contiguous area of the globe leaving the other two-thirds along, or is that third distributed evenly around?
 - As we go further into the judgments of Revelation, the answer becomes apparent
 - This is one contiguous section of the earth, one third of the face of the earth is burned and has become uninhabitable
 - This is the first in a series of judgments that whittle the earth away until only a small section remains
 - The reason for that becomes clearer as we move ahead in these judgments and into the events of Chapters 17 and 18
 - For example, the next Trumpet judgment continues that pattern

[Rev. 8:8](#) The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood,
[Rev. 8:9](#) and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

- John describes seeing something like a great mountain burning with fire falling into the sea
- We can't know what this "great mountain" will be and some have speculated that it's a huge meteor falling
- Or perhaps it's the fallout from a giant sea volcano
- But it's fair to assume that if it had been a volcano or meteor, then John would have recognized one of those things
 - But by the way John describes it, we should assume it's something altogether different and unnatural
 - John says the effect of the mountain hitting the sea is water turns to blood
 - But volcanos and meteors don't turn water into blood, obviously
- This is another judgment that reminds us of the Exodus account, except that the magnitude is far greater than just the Nile turning to blood
 - And we know that John is speaking literally about the blood because the effect is similar to what happened to the Nile
 - You'll remember that when the Nile turned to blood, it killed the fish which is what we would expect to see happen
 - And likewise, John says the ocean turning to blood results in all marine life in the ocean dying
- And the ships on that body of water were also lost
 - That detail really emphasizes the literal nature of this judgment because it's true to life
 - The specific gravity of blood is higher than water, and as a result it produces greater buoyancy
 - A ship floating on the sea would suddenly rise up higher when that water turned to blood
 - Riding so high would make the ship unstable and easily capsized
 - Plus, the ship's systems would be fouled by the intake of blood into vents and cooling systems

- Notice again John says this judgment impacted one third of the seas covering the earth
 - And once more, we conclude that the region impacted corresponds to a single continuous section of the ocean
 - It's literally impossible for just a third of a body of water to become blood, since it would quickly disperse
 - So the only practical way this could happen is if one body of water equal to a third of the world's water turned to blood
 - That reaffirms the interpretation I made earlier that the Lord is diminishing the usable area of the globe in stages to make a point
 - Over the course of the judgments of Tribulation, the Lord narrows the world's focus down to the region of the Middle East
 - The events of Tribulation will culminate in a battle that takes place in the territory between Jerusalem and Babylon
 - It will be a battle between west vs. east, good vs. evil, Jesus against Satan
- So in preparation for that climactic war, the Lord sets about to eliminate all life on the rest of the planet step-by-step
 - By the time the battle begins, the Lord will have eliminated the rest of the globe
 - There will be no one else and no where else that matters, so all attention is focused on the climactic war to end the Tribulation
 - First, the Lord burns up a third of the land, then turns a third of the oceans to blood and all creatures on land and sea die
 - We know Israel and Babylon remain intact and occupied at the very end of Tribulation
 - So we must assume the Lord begins the destruction on the opposite side of the planet and proceeds around from there
 - The judgments progressively consume more land and ocean until only the Middle East remains
 - Interestingly, the land mass directly opposite Israel is North and South America, and the ocean opposite Israel is the Pacific Ocean

- and not coincidentally, North and South America represent exactly 30% of the earth's land mass
- And the Pacific Ocean is exactly 30% of the world's oceans
- So it's reasonable to assume that the first and second trumpet judgments bring an end to these regions on the earth
- So don't put too much effort into saving the planet...it's not savable

- Now to the third trumpet judgment...

Rev. 8:10 The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters.

Rev. 8:11 The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

- The third trumpet blows and with it comes the third and final judgment against the face of the earth
 - John says a great, burning "star" falls from heaven into the fresh waters on earth turning them bitter
 - This star has a name "Wormwood", which has no other meaning in Greek so by the context we suppose it means bitter
 - And in trying to interpret the type of star here, we have to work through some possibilities
 - First, it can't be a literal star, since a burning sun can't fall upon the Earth and certainly wouldn't only impact the fresh waters
 - The Earth would be totally consumed by any sun coming into contact with the Earth
 - As we saw in the sixth seal judgment in Chapter 6, this star could be a meteor, since it falls from heaven and is burning
 - But a meteor wouldn't simply turn waters bitter, nor would it be able to impact a third of the fresh water around the planet
 - Thirdly, this star has a name, which is not typical in Scripture when describing inanimate objects like meteors

- When a symbol is named in Scripture, it usually indicates a personage
- Which brings us to the final type of “star” in Scripture: a symbolic representation for an angel
- But in Scripture, angels can have two kinds of names
 - Angels can have names that glorify God, like Gabriel (*man of God*) and Michael (*who is like God?*)
 - Or angels can have names that suggest corruption and a fallen nature, like Wormwood or Abaddon (later in Revelation)
- So this is likely a fallen angel (demon) sent by God to do His bidding and this demon’s effect is to poison a third of the fresh waters of the earth
 - God can use demonic agents for His purposes from time to time
 - And His use of a demon here to bring judgment to the earth is the first in a pattern involving the trumpet judgments
 - Angels and demons will feature more and more prominently in the execution of the judgments that follow

Rev. 8:12 The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.

- The theme of “thirds” continues with a third of the sun, moon and stars being targeted in this judgment...but this can be a little confusing at first
 - What does it mean that a third of the sun and moon and stars are darkened?
 - Does it mean that a third of these bodies are taken away, or that each body is reduced in light output by a third?
 - John’s description seems to indicate a third interpretation
 - John says each body shines for one third less time, so the lights are out one third of the time they would normally shine
 - He says the day would not shine for one third of it, and the night would not shine for one third of it

- Cumulatively, that means the earth is receiving one third less energy from the sun and the stars
- This makes some sense, since the moon reflects the light of the sun
 - So while the sun turns off for one third of the day, it also turns off during one third of the day on the opposite side of the planet
 - That would result in the moon being off at the same time
 - So one third of the night and one third of the day would represent one third of a twenty four hour day
 - And likewise the stars ceasing to shine for a third of the night probably timed to coincide with the moon and sun
- The effect is a total blackout of all the universe for a third of each 24-hour period
 - Besides the obvious fear factor, this change would lead to a dramatic drop in temperatures on earth
 - It would be a nuclear winter scenario
 - Crops would fail, water sources would freeze, livestock would die
 - The world has already seen a fourth of the population dead from war, pestilence, and starvation
 - And then some unknown number of additional lives were lost when the North and South American continents were destroyed
 - And then more died when a third of the seas and the fresh water failed
 - And now the heavens bring less heat and light to the earth resulting in even more loss of life
 - And those who do survive find life harder and harder, and in total the effect is like a mini Hell on earth
 - The point is that as earth becomes increasingly inhospitable for human life, the world's population should think about what comes next
 - Meanwhile, the Antichrist continues conquering even as the world he desired becomes increasingly undesirable

- And the 144,000 continue to bring the Gospel to a lost and evermore dying world ready to escape the judgments
- Finally, the trumpet judgments are suspended for a brief time to allow for another warning to the earth

Rev. 8:13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”

- An eagle flies in mid-heaven, John says, and the term mid-heaven requires a moment of explanation
 - The Jewish people did not have distinct Hebrew words for these different places
 - The sky, outer space and the throne room of God were called by the same Hebrew word: *shamayim* meaning “heavens”
- So to distinguish between these three “heavens” the Jews numbered them counting from the earth and moving upward
 - The first heaven is the place where birds fly
 - The second or mid-heaven is the place of the planets and stars
 - And the third heaven is the place God dwells
- In this case, John says there was an eagle flying in the mid-heaven, which refers to outer space, outside our atmosphere
 - Obviously, we know that literal eagles cannot live in outer space
 - Furthermore this “eagle” speaks in a loud voice to announce to the whole world that more judgments are coming
 - So the term eagle refers to an angel, and John calls it an eagle probably because it moves back and forth, circling its warning
- The “eagle’s” warning declares that three final trumpets are coming and they will be woe, woe, woe to the earth
 - As I mentioned earlier, these judgments will be directed at the physical bodies of people instead of against the physical earth itself
 - And as the term “woe” suggests, it will be a most terrible period

- It will be so bad that not even death is an escape for those suffering
- The structure of these woe judgments is another of the “Russian nesting dolls” example I gave earlier
 - Just as the seventh seal judgment is all the trumpet judgments, so it goes here again
 - The seventh trumpet judgment is the seven bowl judgments
- So the 5th, 6th and 7th Trumpet judgments are the woe judgments
 - The first two are the last two Trumpet judgments
 - And the third woe judgments are all the bowl judgments poured out
- The third woe judgments, which are the bowl judgments, are like a greatest hits compilation of all the prior judgments
 - More water turning to blood, more attacks on the bodies of people, more disturbances of the sun, etc.
 - Those judgments will end the age
- But for now, let’s look at the first woe judgment

Rev. 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.

Rev. 9:2 He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

Rev. 9:3 Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Rev. 9:4 They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

Rev. 9:5 And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

Rev. 9:6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

- This woe judgment begins as the first four did with a trumpet sounding and so a fifth warning now unfolds and a star falls to earth

- The context here makes it easy to see that the star here is another fallen angel, not a meteor or burning sun
 - Later in v.1 John describes this fallen star as “him”
 - And the actions of this “star” makes clear it is a person, not an object
- So once again, the term star refers to an angel, and an angel that falls to the earth is a picture of a demon; a sinful, fallen angel
 - Later in v.11 we get the name of this demon, Abaddon or Apollyon
 - Apollyon means destroyer in Greek, which is why John gives us that clarification so we can know what Abaddon means (in the Hebrew)
- So as I mentioned earlier, a negative name like this would confirm this is a fallen angel or demon called to serve God’s purposes
 - The demon is given the key to the bottomless pit, John says, and that means he has permission to set those in the pit free
 - The pit is described as bottomless and it’s accessed through the earth, since that’s where this angel lands
 - The Greek word for bottomless, *abussos*, literally means abyss
- All these terms refer to the same place below the earth, a place that the Bible says is a prison for disobedient spirits
 - The most common term in the Old Testament for this place is Sheol or the pit

Job 33:28 ‘He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit,
And my life shall see the light.’

- According to Luke 16, Sheol is really two places, one for the souls of unbelievers and one for the souls of OT saints
 - Before Jesus, God held everyone who died here: saints in comfort and unbelievers in torment
 - After the Lord’s resurrection, the souls of believers were removed and accompanied Jesus into Heaven

- But the souls of unbelievers remained and are still there today, in the place called Hades or otherwise known as the pit
- But the New Testament also tells us that in this place is a special corner or prison where the souls of disobedient angels are held
 - Demons who are particularly evil are cast into this place to be confined for a time

[2Pet. 2:4](#) For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

[2Pet. 2:5](#) and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

[Luke 8:30](#) And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him.

[Luke 8:31](#) They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

- The abyss or the pit not only holds the souls of departed unbelievers but also the spirits of rebellious angels
- Not all demons live in the abyss...most still roam free, but some were so terrible that God confined them to limit their rampage
- Now has come time for the Lord to permit these worst of the worst fallen demons to escape from their temporary confinement
 - This chief demon is given permission to let them loose, and it would seem that the Destroyer may be none other than Satan himself
 - He is the master of the demons, according to Matthew 25
 - And the fact that this fallen angel is called the destroyer adds weight to that interpretation
 - God gives this demon, whoever he is, a key to open the pit so that the demons inside can be set loose like rabid dogs
 - They come out of the pit raging, having been confined there for thousands of years
 - They are undoubtedly eager to wreck havoc on the earth

- As the pit is opened, the smoke of this place rises to block the sunlight, John says
 - This confirms the Bible’s constant testimony that Hell and the abyss are directly below our feet in the center of the earth
 - Could the lava that erupts from the earth from time to time be connected to the activities of Hell in some way?
- Before we laugh at this suggestion, remember that scientists have no understanding of what lies below the earth’s surface
 - We haven’t explored more than a few miles below the earth’s surface
 - According to the Bible, the abyss or pit (or call it Hell) is a physical place of burning in the earth
 - It’s unimaginably hot and utterly dark, and now that darkness spills out
- Once the pit is opened, John describes what he sees coming out of this place
 - He says he sees “locusts” descend upon the earth that have power like that of a scorpion given to them
 - Presumably, the giver of that power is God, since their escape was orchestrated by God as part of this judgment upon men
 - And their power comes with specific instructions and limitations
 - They cannot hurt the vegetation of the earth but only certain men
 - This is the opposite of normal locusts, since a true locust insect only harms vegetation
 - They cannot take the life of anyone, only torment them for a time
 - And there are a group of men that cannot be hurt by this judgment at all
 - Scripture says God will not appoint His children to wrath and He distinguishes between the godly and ungodly in His judgments

2Pet. 2:9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

- So the men who have the seal of God are excluded from their attack, obviously referring to the 144,000 from Chapter 7
- And it must also apply to those who come to faith as a result of the 144,000
- They will not suffer this judgment, but since this is the first time we've seen an exception, we need to apply it carefully
 - This exception applies specifically to the attacks on the physical body of a person
 - So it's logical to assume that the prior judgments against the physical earth did impact everyone including believers
 - But now that the judgments are specifically targeting people in particularly terrible ways, the Lord is making distinctions
- The Lord has done this in the past when judging the world supernaturally
 - We know He saved Noah and his family before the flood and He saved Lot and his family before the brimstone in Sodom
 - And in the case of Israel, the Lord preserved the godly within
- John describes the torment these demons will inflict, and it's so terrible it's hard to comprehend
 - Unlike prior judgments, these demons are not permitted to harm the earth at all, because now the target will be the body of every person
 - The demons will inflict painful stings for a total of five months
 - John says the torment will be like that of a scorpion sting, and scorpion stings are notoriously painful though rarely lethal
 - Some of the toxins in scorpion venom are so toxic they are used for chemotherapy to kill cancer cells
 - The discomfort of this torment is magnified many times by its duration
 - The stinging lasts for five months, and it's not clear if a single sting lasts for that time or if the stinging is repeated endlessly
 - Imagine living for five months with scorpions continuously crawling under your clothing stinging you

- It's impossible to imagine the physical and psychological effects of enduring 5 months of such attacks
 - We know it lasts five months, but I suspect those who suffer this penalty will not know how long it lasts while they endure it
 - They would have to read and believe Scripture to know the length and so for them it may seem to be endless
- As we contemplate such a fate of endless stinging, we can see how it might lead a person to contemplate suicide
 - An otherwise sane person will be willing to end their own life rather than face another day of the pain
 - And the Lord anticipated this desire, so the judgment has a particularly horrible twist
 - The option to die by any means is removed by God during these five months
 - John says in v.6 men will eventually seek to end their lives rather than suffer through this judgment but God will supernaturally prevent it
 - It's intriguing to consider how God might accomplish this
 - Will he make people immortal? Like Superman?
 - What if a person throws themselves in a fire or blows themselves up with a bomb? How would they survive?
 - My theory is they are incapacitated to a degree that they simply cannot carry out such plans
 - They are simply writhing in pain all day all the time without relief and without the strength to do anything to harm themselves
 - John says that they will long to die, and the literal Greek word for long means to crave or desire
 - How much suffering does a person face before they crave death?
- We will come back to considering that questions, but first John describes these creatures

Rev. 9:7 The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.

[Rev. 9:8](#) They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions.

[Rev. 9:9](#) They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle.

[Rev. 9:10](#) They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.

[Rev. 9:11](#) They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

- He's been calling them scorpions, but we already knew these were not true scorpions
 - First, they originated from the place of demons and dead souls
 - No matter how much you dislike scorpions, I can assure you that the pit is not the source for scorpions
 - However I do suspect that the pit is the source for poodles...
 - Secondly, they have stings that are nothing like ordinary scorpions
 - So there is obviously something supernatural about these scorpions
 - And when we consider John's description of them, it becomes apparent they are nothing like scorpions as we know them
 - These creatures look nothing like any locust we've ever seen
 - John says they look like horses prepared for battle, with heads like men, hair like women and teeth like lion
 - They wear crowns (*stephanos*) indicating they have authority in the demonic realm
 - They have wings that make a great noise and they have tails like scorpions with the power to hurt men
 - This part explains clearly why John used the word scorpion to describe the creatures
 - Their tails are their most prominent feature and resemble scorpions

- But overall, this description confirms that we're looking at something other-worldly
- Some have tried to explain this in natural terms, as a helicopter or some other modern implement of war
 - Such speculation is not proper interpretation nor does it fit the context
 - Apache helicopters do not come out of the pit nor do they result in a 5-month long sting
 - And considering the amount of damage done to the earth by this point, it's inconceivable that any mechanical equipment is still functioning
 - We need to see the world as in ruins, technology is gone, no electricity, no running water, people reduced to vagabonds and refugees
 - And in the midst of that suffering, these demons inflict an even greater suffering
 - John is describing a demon horde released from the pit and their appearance is something terrible, like scorpions
 - Knowing they are demons answers another dilemma...
 - How could these scorpions manage to reach every last person on earth (at least those who aren't sealed?)
 - For example, why couldn't someone hide successfully from the invasion?
 - The answer is because these spirits are supernaturally capable of moving anywhere unconstrained by walls or other barriers
 - And they have knowledge and abilities beyond flesh and blood and are empowered to accomplish this mission by God
 - So they find everyone and torment everyone
 - We might also wonder if people can actually see these beings or are they invisible?
 - My guess is they are visible to everyone, so that the source of the woe judgment is apparent
- Finally, we have to ask the fundamental question of this judgment: why does God bring such a punishment upon men? What good purpose does it serve?

- We might even be tempted to think it was cruel, especially that these people are forced to endure this torment without the ability to escape it
 - Well, if this is cruel, what would we consider to be mercy?
 - Should God let them die? And if they did die, what comes next for them?
 - They would move from a temporary state of torment into a permanent state of torment
- So in that sense, presenting them from dying under these circumstances is actually a form of grace to them
 - In fact, this five month period is the first and only time in all human history since the Garden when death is impossible
 - For the first time since the beginning of humanity, there is not a single new resident of Hell for five months
- God is mercifully preventing death for everyone so that He might give the ungodly a taste of what comes after death

[Luke 12:4](#) “I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do.

[Luke 12:5](#) “But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

- Consider the nature of this judgment:
 - People being kept alive in unending torment, administered at the hands of demons
 - Does this description sound familiar?
- It’s a great approximation of Hell...on earth
 - How many times have we wondered what the world would do if given a foretaste of the judgment of Hell?
 - Here’s our chance to find out
- And even the number of months is proof that this is a sign of God’s grace for the unbeliever

- Because the number five is the number of grace in Scripture
- But after five months the first woe judgment comes to an end but two more remain

 [Rev. 9:12](#) The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.