

Lesson 13
Suggested Answers
Revelation 9
Hell on Earth

Memory verse: "While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape." (1 Thessalonians 5: 3 NIV)

The late Dr. Wilbur M. Smith, who made the book of Revelation his special study, once wrote: "It is probable that, apart from the exact identification of Babylon in Revelation 17 and 18, the meaning of the two judgments in this chapter represents the most difficult major problem in the Revelation" (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, 1509). Revelation 9 describes two frightening armies that are liberated at just the right time and permitted to judge mankind.

As we come in to chapter 9 we find ourselves arriving in a period of time yet to come, a future time called The Great Tribulation. More particularly we are not only in The Great Tribulation, a three and a half period of God's judgment, but we are seeing the very events that take place in the last part of The Great Tribulation known as the day of the Lord...the day when the Lord comes in final fury, destroying the ungodly and the work of Satan and his demons and setting up the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ where He will reign on the earth for a thousand years. That is followed by the new heavens and the new earth which is the eternal state.

We are then in the Great Tribulation, in the day of the Lord. And more particularly, we are going to be looking at what is the fifth trumpet judgment. You remember there are seven seals which unfold the seven-year period. Within that seventh seal there are seven trumpet judgments that come at the end of the Tribulation period. And then within that final seventh trumpet, there will be seven more judgments called the seven bowl judgments, we'll look at them later.

Now as we have gone through this period known as the Tribulation which lasts for seven years, it has been described to us in these seven seals, actually there is one scroll sealed seven times and each time a seal is opened, another judgment event hits. When we hit the sixth seal, back in chapter 6, we entered into the day of the Lord. Then we came to the seventh seal in chapter 8 and in it are the seven trumpets and in the final trumpet, the seven bowls.

Last time we looked at the first four trumpets in chapter 8 verses 6 to 13, we covered the first four judgments of the trumpets. And you'll remember that the first trumpet was judgment on the land. The second trumpet was judgment on the sea. The third trumpet was judgment on the fresh waters. And the fourth trumpet was judgment on the heavenly bodies, as verse 12 says, "The third of the sun, the third of the moon, the third of the stars were smitten and a third of them might be darkened, the day might not shine for a third of it and night in the same way."

As we come to the end of this great period of judgment then, the judgments are devastating, terrible. The judgment on the land was fierce and destroyed a third of the trees and shrubs and all of the green grass. The judgment on the sea was some great continent sized body catapulting out of space to hit the waters and devastated the sea, killing a third of what was in it and destroying a third of the ships. Then the judgment on the fresh water was a judgment that resulted in death because men can't live without fresh water. And then more collapsing sky.

As frightening as those were, as terrorizing as they were, they're only in a sense preliminary to the fearsome judgment that comes in the fifth trumpet. For millennia the heavens had declared the glory of God and has shown forth His handiwork. And now the heavens are declaring His wrath. When you come to the end of those first four trumpets, heaven is unfolding,

unravelling. As you come in to chapter 9, the focus changes from heaven to hell. Whatever heaven could do to devastate the earth is nothing like what hell can do.

Things to learn: 1) The release of evil forces on earth. 2) Satanic terror on earth. 3) The unrepentant masses.

Discussion questions:

1) How terrible will it be when the fifth trumpet is sounded? (verse 1 to 12).

Q2. What will life on earth be like when the sixth trumpet is sounded (vs 13 – 21)?

Q3 According to many prophetic scholars, the sixth trumpet is the latter part of the seven year tribulation as the seven seal is opened too. It is almost the end. Why do you think the majority of people will not turn to Jesus Christ for salvation even at this time?