

The First Woe

Rev 9:1 NIV 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.

This star that had fallen from the sky cannot be taken literally

- Any star that falls to the earth would destroy the earth
- This star was given a key (so it is some sort of being)

It could be the same angel mentioned in Rev 20

- Rev 20:1-3 NIV And **I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss** and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or **Satan**, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He **threw him into the Abyss**, and locked and sealed it over him, **to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore** until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

The Abyss is a place for demons

- Luk 8:29-31 NIV For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places. 30 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. 31 **And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.**

Destroyer is the angel of the Abyss - he is king over the locusts

- Rev 9:11 NIV 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).

The beast [antichrist] comes out of the Abyss

- Rev 11:3-7 NIV And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 They are "the two olive trees" and the two lampstands, and "they stand before the Lord of the earth." 5 If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. 6 They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. **7 Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them.**
- Rev 17:8 NIV **The beast**, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet **will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction**. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come.

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**.

- **Something to think about** -- this Scripture states the sun and sky were darkened by smoke from the Abyss. It is possible that this is darkened sun and sky are figurative language. Demons who live in the Abyss are invisible to the naked eye...so it is possible that the shaft to the Abyss is invisible to the naked eye as well. And if so, the description of demons as locusts will be something that we will never see with our naked eye. Perhaps the mention of the darkening of the sun here is not related to a physical event either [for example a nuclear explosion] but rather a way to describe the effect of the release of those demons from the Abyss - not something seen but something causing great effect.
- **This darkness is figurative language as well** -- Isa 60:1-2 NIV "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. 2 See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.
- **This darkness is figurative language as well** -- Act 26:18 NIV to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

Locusts

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.

Power like that of a scorpion

- **Beating the people down // ruling them harshly** -- 1Ki 12:11 NIV My [*Rehoboam speaking*] father [*Solomon*] laid on you a **heavy yoke**; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; **I will scourge you with scorpions.**"
- **It is the power of the enemy** -- Luk 10:17-20 NIV The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." 18 He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 **I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy**; nothing will harm you. 20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree -- the opposite of how locusts reacted in Exodus

- Exo 10:13-15 NIV So Moses stretched out his staff over Egypt, and the LORD made an east wind blow across the land all that day and all that night. By morning the wind had brought the locusts; 14 they invaded all Egypt and settled down in every area of the country in great numbers. Never before had there been such a plague of locusts, nor will there ever be again.

15 They covered all the ground until it was black. They devoured all that was left after the hail--everything growing in the fields and the fruit on the trees. **Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt.**

There is a limit is placed on the harm they can do

- Not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree
- Not to harm those with the seal of God on their foreheads
- Not allowed to kill man (vs5)
- Five months (vs 5)

Only to harm those without the seal of God - remember this sealing took place in chapter 7

- Rev 7:2-3 NIV Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: 3 **"Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."**

The effect on man

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.

- **Harm** (vs 4) **Torment** (vs 10) STRONG'S - to be unjust, that is, (actively) do wrong (morally, socially or physically): - hurt, injure, be an offender, be unjust, (do, suffer, take) wrong.
- **Torture / Agony (same GK word)** - to torture: - pain, toil, torment, toss, vex
- **People will seek death - but will not find it**

Description of the Locusts

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.

The use of the word "like" shows again a reason these are more descriptive rather than literal language

Like crowns of gold - demons have no true authority

- Mat 28:18 NIV Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Resembled human faces - deception

- 2Co 11:3 NIV But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Like women's hair - seductive??

Like lion's teeth

- 1Pe 5:8 NIV Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Tails like scorpions - power to tread on scorpions

- Luk 10:18-20 NIV He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 **I have given you authority** to trample on **snakes** and **scorpions** and to overcome all the **power of the enemy**; ***nothing will harm you***. 20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Vs 11 - The had as a king over them -- In scripture, locusts are said to have NO king -- another indication these are not literal locusts -- Pro 30:27 NIV locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks;

When locusts are spoken of in the bible - they are typically announcing a judgement from the LORD (exception - John the baptist ate locusts) - Here are a few examples.

- Jdg 7:12 NIV The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, **thick as locusts**. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.
- Jer 51:14 NIV The LORD Almighty has sworn by himself: I will surely fill you with **troops**, as with a **swarm of locusts**, and they will shout in triumph over you.
- Jer 51:27 NIV "Lift up a banner in the land! Blow the trumpet among the nations! Prepare the nations for battle against her; summon against her these kingdoms: Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz. Appoint a commander against her; **send up horses like a swarm of locusts**.

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. 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.

Vs 7-12 sound like a release of demonic spirits -- whereas Vs 13-19 sounds like it could be a military event

- These kill a third of mankind whereas the locusts only torment them
- There is a number of troops mentioned (200,000,000)
 - The largest army in the world is China 2,183,000¹ (article updated Oct 5, 2017)

Yet there are some descriptions that have demonic overtones similar to the locusts

- Vs 17 The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions
- Vs 19 Their tails were like snakes

God's purpose is to move man toward repentance

20 The 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.

They did not repent of the work of their hands

- **Worshiping demons and idols that cannot see or hear or walk**
- **Murder** -- (to slay); murder: - murder, + be slain with, slaughter.
- **Magic arts** -- (STRONG's - medication ("pharmacy"), that is, (by extension) magic (literal or figurative): - sorcery, witchcraft.
- **Sexual immorality** -- harlotry (including adultery and incest); figuratively idolatry: - fornication.
- **Theft** -- stealing (properly the thing stolen, but used of the act): - theft

To repent - a change of mind that affects the life

- Mat 21:28-31 NIV "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 29 "'I will not,' he answered, but later **he changed his mind [this is the GK word for repent]** and went. 30 "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go. 31 **"Which of the two did what his father wanted?"** "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.

Similar judgements have been executed by the LORD all in an attempt to move men to repent

- Amo 4:6-13 NIV "I gave you empty stomachs in every city and lack of bread in every town, **yet you have not returned to me,**" declares the LORD. 7 "I also withheld rain from you when the harvest was still three months away. I sent rain on one town, but withheld it from another. One field had rain; another had none and dried up. 8 People staggered from town to town for

¹ <http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/29-largest-armies-in-the-world.html>

water but did not get enough to drink, **yet you have not returned to me,**" declares the LORD. 9 "Many times I struck your gardens and vineyards, destroying them with blight and mildew. **Locusts** devoured your fig and olive trees, **yet you have not returned to me,**" declares the LORD. 10 "I sent plagues among you as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with the sword, along with your captured horses. I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camps, **yet you have not returned to me,**" declares the LORD. 11 "I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire, **yet you have not returned to me,**" declares the LORD. 12 "Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, Israel, prepare to meet your God." 13 He who forms the mountains, who creates the wind, and who reveals his thoughts to mankind, who turns dawn to darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth-- the LORD God Almighty is his name.

May we be moved to live holy and godly lived

- 2Pe 3:8-11 NIV But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, **not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.** 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. 11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, **what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives**