

The Fifth Shofar ~ Part 1

Revelation 9:1-6

The End Times

In my last post, we explored **Revelation 8:13** the **Three Woes Announced**. In this post, we will begin exploring **Revelation 9** 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)

There is so much symbolism contained in this passage that I have decided to explore it in bite-size pieces.

First, Yochanan saw a **star fallen out of heaven**. What or who was that? *What the Bible Teaches – Revelation* by James Allen has this to say:

Scripture leaves no doubt about the person symbolized by this star. The sphere from which he has fallen and the action permitted to him rules out any possibility of his being a man. Only one personage fits the picture; he is identified in Scripture as the "fallen" one. Isaiah spoke of this one, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning" (Isa 14:12). Christ spoke of the same one when He said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18). This fallen one, stripped of the high authority that belonged to him at creation (Ezekiel 28:14-15) yet still possessing mighty power, is permitted access to heavenly realms (Job 2:1) until the "war in heaven" (12:7-9) at the midpoint of the tribulation. The issue of that war is that Satan and his angels are expelled from the heavens. It is suggested, that this is the event that lies behind this fallen star being on earth, for it is now that he sets about mustering his forces. By divine permission this banished being is given the key to the abyss and he uses it to release the hordes of his followers who have been locked up there.

Most other interpreters agree with Allen that the **star** is Satan himself, except as explained below in the **Four Views** section. Interestingly, the *Jewish New Testament Commentary* by David Stern has this to say:

*The **star** is not Satan (despite Isaiah 14:12, Lk 10:17), but an angel, who still has **the key** at in Revelation 20:1-2. "**Next, I saw an angel coming down from heaven, who had the key to the Abyss and a great chain in his hand. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan [the Adversary], and chained him up for a thousand years.**"*

Second, Yochanan saw that **he was given the key to the shaft leading down to the Abyss**. What is the **Abyss**?

Stern has this to say about the **Abyss**:

***The Abyss** is not Sh'ol (as at Romans 10:7), but a place where demonic beings are imprisoned (see Revelation 11:7; 17:8; 20:2-3).*

The prison of the satanic powers is called "**the bottomless pit**" which is an excellent translation of the Greek word **abyssos** transliterated into English as **abyss**. The word pit generally depicts a well-shaft (as in Luke 14:5) but here describes the narrow subterranean passage leading to this dread abode. This bottomless pit is mentioned seven times in this book (Revelation 9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3) and clearly conveys the idea of a very dark, deep prison house. Whether it is within hades itself as a special compartment, or distinct from it, Scripture does not reveal. It is, however, reserved for the imprisonment of spiritual and demonic beings.

Doubtless this is the place that answers to the "chains of darkness" (2 Pet 2:4) where spiritual beings are confined, and the place of banishment feared by the demons on earth (Luke 8:31). It is the place from which the beast emerges (Revelation 11:7; 17:8) and will be the prison of Satan himself during the millennial reign of **Yeshua** (Revelation 20:3). The beings locked up here are evil spirits of some kind, and are not to be confused with the spirits of evil men which are in hades awaiting their summons before the great white throne; such can be released only by the One who **holds the keys to Death and Sh'ol** (Revelation 1:18).

Special Comparative Note on Chapter 9:1 ¹

NOTE: As we are taking this passage in bite-sized pieces, some of the views have not taken a position on some of the phrases we will be exploring.

Historicist Approach:

Most **Historicists** see the **star** as Mohammed. (I'll explain this further when we get to verse 3 and the locusts.) Matthew Henry takes a different approach and sees the **star** as Boniface, the third Bishop of Rome.

Preterist Approach:

Preterist interpreters believe the **star** is not a literal star, but some personality such as an angel, minister of religion or a body of religious teachers that spread heresies without specifically identifying anyone.

Futurist Approach:

Most **Futurists** identify the **star** as "*none other than Satan himself.*" They also see the **abyss** as described above.

Idealist Approach:

Idealists seem to waffle between seeing the **star** as the angel in verse 11 or as Satan himself. They also agree with the **Futurists** on the issue of the **abyss**.

I found it interesting that the **Historicists** and the **Preterists** didn't deal with the **abyss**.

In my next post, we will explore **Revelation 9:1-6** the **Fifth Shofar ~ Part 2**.

¹ Material in this section is taken from "*Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated*" by Steve Gregg