

Fifth Trumpet, part 3

Revelation 9:1-6, part 3

By Phillip G. Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2016-08-21

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Text

Revelation 9:1 So the fifth angel trumpeted, and I saw a 'star' that had fallen out of the sky to the earth. And to him was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. 2 So he opened the shaft of the Abyss and smoke went up out of the shaft, like the smoke of a burning furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke from the shaft. 3 And 'locusts' exited from the smoke into the earth. And to them was given a capability just like the scorpions of the earth have capability. 4 And they were told not to harm the grass of the earth, nor any green plant, nor any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And it was designated to them [locusts], not to kill them [men] but, to torment them five months. And their torment is like the torment of a scorpion whenever it strikes a person. 6 And in those days the people will seek death but not find it; they will want to die but death will run away from them.

7 Now the appearance of the 'locusts' was like horses prepared for battle, and something like a golden crown was on their heads, and their faces were like human faces. 8 They had hair like a woman's and their teeth were like a lion's. 9 They had breastplates like breastplates of iron and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. 10 And, they have tails like scorpions and stingers precisely in those tails! They have the capability to hurt the populace five months, 11 having as king over them the angel of the Abyss—his name in Hebrew is Abbadon, while in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

12 The first woe is past, but, two woes are still coming, after these things.¹

Introduction

This is my third sermon on the Fifth Trumpet, and I am spending more time on it for two reasons: First, it is a trumpet which some schools of eschatology take out of order, and in my first sermon I pointed out that there is no need to do so. It fits the order of events in history perfectly since the symbols of the demons were the symbols on the armies that Titus brought up from Egypt. The commission to bring them up was October 31, but it took five months (exactly 150 days) before his armies were able to engage in battle in Israel. And that is exactly what verses 5 and 10 say - these demons behind Titus' armies could torment for five months, but they could not kill.

But the second reason is that the subject of demonology is often neglected in Reformed circles. The Puritans spoke about demons a great deal, and they taught their people how to war against the demonic, but that is not true of the modern Reformed world. So last week I laid the groundwork for a theology of demonology by expanding on each word and phrase in verse 1. Today we are picking up at verse 2.

¹ Translation of the Majority Text by Wilbur M. Pickering - [The Sovereign Creator Has Spoken](#).

I. Hints as to the vast scope of Satan's armies and the "hits" that his armies have taken in history (vv. 2-3 with v. 14, 16)

And verses 2-4 give us hints not only of the vast numbers of demons that exist in Satan's armies, but also of the massive hits that his armies have taken in history. Though sub-point A may be scary, sub-point B is very encouraging.

Let me make a statement that may be a bit unnerving to you. The church worldwide is surrounded by billions (and possibly even hundreds of trillions) of demons who would love nothing better than to do us in. And the reason I come up with the figure of trillions of demons is by simple logical deduction. Let's look at a few Scriptures.

A. Calculating the massive size of Satan's armies

Even though I am not preaching on the Sixth Trumpet, go ahead and look at verse 16. This verse gives the number of demons that were stationed at the Euphrates and had (up to this time) been prevented from traveling outside that region. So that was just the demons in a very restricted locale. In the New King James it says,

Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.

When I get to preaching on that trumpet I will point out how the word "two" is missing in two thirds of all Greek manuscripts and it is missing in all of the Ecclesiastical Text. The vast bulk of God's preserved manuscripts says "one hundred million," and all of the f35 manuscripts say one hundred million. But even one hundred million is an enormous number of demons to be stationed at the Euphrates River.

Elsewhere we discover that there were demonic armies stationed in every country of the world. Daniel 10 speaks of the demonic prince of Persia (vv. 13,20), and from the resistance that he gave to Michael the archangel and his angelic armies, it is obvious that there was a sizable demonic presence in Persia. The same chapter speaks of the demonic prince of Greece (v. 20), who presumably is in charge of his own armies of fallen angels. Isaiah 14 describes the demonic powers over Babylon. Ezekiel 28 describes the demonic ruler over the nation of Tyre. Revelation 6 described various demonic cherubim angels that worked in Rome, each of whom had their own area of jurisdiction. Revelation 13 will describe a demonic prince that had authority over Israel. When I preached on Acts 16 I showed how Paul bound the Python spirit that was over the whole region of Greece and Macedonia. I

will return to that passage in a bit, because the demonic king in verse 11 of our passage is the same demonic god that Paul confronted in Acts 16 - Apollo.

But the point I am making right now is that every country has demonic hordes unless those hordes have been bound in the pit. And if one region at the Euphrates had one hundred million demons that could be spared to be poured out upon Israel, how many demons were in other regions? We can't know for sure whether we could multiply one hundred million by the number of countries in existence - probably not. That was probably just one group of demons at the Euphrates (just the demons tied to Vespasian's armies). But just that one verse all by itself would seem to indicate that the number of demons is at least in the billions.

But in verses 2-3 we have the metaphor of a locust plague to describe the demons that have come up out of the pit. It says,

2 So he opened the shaft of the Abyss and smoke went up out of the shaft, like the smoke of a burning furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke from the shaft. 3 And 'locusts' exited from the smoke into the earth...

I won't get into whether there was literal smoke that people could see when these demons were unleashed. There may have been. Some think that a volcanic eruption of ash may have symbolized the dark plague of demonic locusts. But almost all agree that the darkening of the sky was a locust metaphor of how many demons were arising. It is such a massive number of locusts that it darkens the sky.

When I was in fifth grade in Ethiopia, there was a massive locust plague that completely darkened the sky and completely stripped every green thing off the ground and even ruined paint and wood. It was very impressive. I ran out into it for a few seconds because I was curious, but I got so scratched up that I immediately ran back into the house. How many locusts are in such a locust plague? Well, to contrast that massive plague with smaller locust infestations, let me give some figures. Egypt had a tiny locust infestation recently of just 30 million locusts. They weren't worried about it at all. It had almost no impact. So thirty million locusts is not much to worry about. In 2005 there was a locust plague of billions of locusts in Australia. That was a little worse, but not nearly as bad as many of the locust plagues that used to come in the past. Modern chemicals have managed to keep locust down to manageable size. And I did a little bit of research, and I found that to actually darken the sky would require trillions, if not hundreds of trillions of locusts. The book, *The Locust Effect*, describes one such locust infestation in the Midwest that was particularly damaging. It says,

In 1875, trillions of locusts weighing 27 million tons [Let's stop and think about that for a moment - a ton is 2000 lbs, so if you multiply 27 million by 2000 lbs you come to 54,000,000,000 lbs of locust. How many locusts make up a pound? At the very least, this locust plague amounted to multiplied hundreds of trillions of locusts. So let me read that again: "In 1875, trillions of locusts weighing 27 million tons"] swarmed over nearly 200,000 square miles across the American Midwest (an area greater than California) and ate everything - every day consuming the equivalent of what 2.5 million men would eat... The locusts ate fence posts and the paint and siding from houses. They ate the wool off the backs of live sheep and the clothes left outside on clothes lines. When families hurriedly threw blankets over their gardens, the locusts devoured the blankets and then gorged themselves on the plants. Settlers watched their cows and other livestock die without grain or feed to provide them...²

The point is that to use the metaphor of locusts darkening the sky indicates multiplied trillions of demons in one army alone - the army under Apollyon. When you add this army to the army in verse 16 and the armies in other countries, the Puritan belief that there are hundreds of trillions of demons around the world does not seem exaggerated at all.³

Sadly, most modern Reformed Christians act as if demons don't even exist in their day-to-day living. But if you have read much of the Puritan writer, William Gurnall's, book, *The Christian in Complete Armor*, you realize that it is absolutely imperative that we daily battle the world, the flesh, and the devil. How many of you fight the world and the flesh but do not even consider fighting the devil? It is foolish. If you are not resisting the devil, he is likely gaining ground on you. And it would be worthwhile doing an inventory of what ground he has gained in your family, and taking action.

In verse 4 we will see that these demons could not touch the believers who were sealed in their foreheads by God. It says, "And they were told not to harm the grass of the earth [so it's obviously not a literal locust plague], nor any green plant, nor any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads." Who had the seal of God on their foreheads in the book of Revelation? Not every professing believer. God only sealed those who were devoted to His cause; who hated sin; who clung to His righteousness. The same was true of those who were sealed in Ezekiel 9. Verse 4 of Ezekiel 9 has God giving this command to the angel in that chapter:

the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

2 Gary A. Haugen and Victor Boutros, [The Locust Effect: Why the End of Poverty Requires the End of Violence](#), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 97.

3 see chapters 11 and 12 of Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, [A Puritan Theology: Doctrine For Life](#), (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012)

The only ones sealed were the ones who hated the iniquity in their land and who loved God's righteousness. This is what 1 John 5:18 says, We know that whoever is born of God does not keep on sinning; but he who has been born of God guards himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. And we are going to be spending some Sundays examining this chapter's demonology so that we know how to guard ourselves so that Satan cannot touch us. If we are not guarding ourselves; if we are not fighting his strategies, we are in trouble. Satan has plenty of demons to spare to harass Christians and try to make the church of Jesus Christ ineffective. Week by week I personally need to be restored by the Lord's Table because I feel the weight of demonic opposition. And many people are oblivious to it. And yet those demons can tempt us, they can move our hearts just like they moved David's heart to number Israel in 1 Chronicles 21, they can turn couples against each other, they can move people to gossip, they can cause bitterness between members for no good reason. Many conflicts occur within families because families are not recognizing the right enemy - the demonic. They are not going to prayer and resisting Satan. But demons can be involved in even a little thing like keeping you from listening to a sermon. In Matthew 13 Jesus said that these demons can snatch the seed of the Word out of our hearts almost as soon as the Word is planted by the preacher. Those demons do not want the Word of God to take root, so they will worm their ways into our minds to make them wander, or be lazy, be critical, or be uncaring. Demons don't care if you are academic and rigorous in your thinking on some subjects, but they don't want you to be academic and rigorous in your thinking in church - so they will resist you. Matthew 13 indicates that they will do everything they can to make your knowledge of Christianity superficial - then you won't be a threat. There is a reason why Paul admonishes us in Ephesians 6 to continually put on the whole armor of God and continually resist Satan. Any Christian worth his salt is daily battling with demons. The armies of demons are real, are numerous, and are powerful. To ignore them is foolishness on a high order.

In any case, most of my commentaries take this metaphor of a locust plague as a picture of billions of demons at a minimum and perhaps hundreds of trillions of demons. We don't know the exact numbers. We just know that there are plenty. Now keep in mind that there are twice as many good angels as there are fallen angels, so that is encouraging.

B. The hint that Satan's armies repeatedly take "hits" in history ("he opened the bottomless pit" with "Apollyon" in v. 11 and Acts 16; Rev. 20)

But let me give you more encouraging news - at some point in history these demons had been bound in the pit. That means that they can be bound in history. Let me repeat that - they can be bound in history. And we ought to study what it takes to bind Satan's army. What did it take to bind certain demons at the Euphrates so that they cannot infest other territories and what does it take to bind others in the pit? Verse 2 says, "So he opened the shaft of the Abyss..." So there is an unlocking of this prison going on. Verse 3, "And 'locusts' exited from the smoke into the earth." We will be seeing a similar future binding of Satan in Revelation some time future to us but before the 1000 years and a similar unleashing of Satan and his demons out of the pit at the end of history - at the end of the 1000 years. There will be so many enemies unleashed from the Abyss that it will be like the sand on the seashore.

I have recently been convinced by Francis Nigel Lee, B.B. Warfield and many others that there will be no final apostasy at the end of history. I used to scoff at that position. That was a big hurdle for me to get over. Perhaps in our discussions I can give you more details. But Francis Nigel Lee points out that the tares and all enemies in hell will be resurrected after the thousand years, and these countless citizens of hell (both resurrected humans and newly released demons) will gather to make one last attempt to attack God's people. But before they can achieve anything, the saints will also be resurrected and will join in judging those nations - including the now extinct nations of Gog and Magog - they will be there. There are Scriptures that indicate that 100% of Gog and Magog are in hell right now. When we get to Revelation 20 we will look at the very interesting language of the Greek, which indicates that these enemies come out of the earth - out of Hades. It's not talking about a mass apostasy of living people but Satan deceiving people who have just been newly resurrected into thinking that they can have a successful rebellion.

But I don't want to deal with that controversy this morning. The main point that I want to make is that on almost every interpretation of Revelation there are demons who get bound more than once in history and who get released more than once in history. That is the key point. I believe that there can be multiple bindings of demons as the Gospel goes forth and multiple releasings of demons from the pit as nations apostatize. The final binding of all demons is still future to us and the final releasing of all demons and all

the human enemies of God (what several passages speak of as "the nations" in hell)⁴ is also future to us.

So what is this binding and loosing? We will get into it in much more detail in chapter 20, but we have hints of it in this chapter. Verse 11 calls the demon king who came up out of the pit, "Apollyon." In my first sermon on this trumpet we saw that this is simply the Greek spelling of the Latin name, Apollo. Now, for first century readers who were familiar with the book of Acts, this would have immediately caught their eye because the apostle Paul dealt with Apollo in Acts 16. He cast Apollo out of a person who had influence all over the region and engaged in high-level confrontation of territorial spirits. So Apollo certainly was not in the pit in that chapter. He was out; he had control of Greece and Macedonia. F. F. Bruce, William Hendriksen, and other authors point out that the Greek is crystal clear that the slave girl who made their masters so much money was possessed by the demon-spirit Python, which was another name for Apollo. I pointed out in that sermon that Apollo was a demon who had the whole of Greece and Macedonia in a stronghold-grip. Well, as a direct result of Paul's head-on conflict with Apollo, that whole region was opened to the Gospel in a powerful way. And Apollo and his demons were either consigned to the pit in that year or in the church's subsequent ministry. But the binding had to have taken place somewhere between Acts 16 and this chapter.

Of course, we saw that that wasn't the first high-level confrontation of the demonic kingdom in the book of Acts. In that sermon I pointed out that Peter's confrontation of the sorcerer, Simon Magus, in Acts 8, was a head-on confrontation of the demon that controlled the whole region of Samaria. The second high-level confrontation was in Acts 13, where Paul won a spiritual battle against the sorcerer Elymas. That confrontation freed the civil magistrate, Sergius Paulus, from his bondage to the demonic and (again) opened that whole new region to the Gospel. The third example was the confrontation of Apollo in Acts 16, opening up Greece and Macedonia. And the fourth example was in chapter 19, where Paul dealt with a lower-level demon over the city of Ephesus. And I did give cautions when I preached on that topic in Acts because there is some unbalanced stuff happening in demonology. But it is still an important topic. We cannot neglect the topic simply because hyper-Charismatics sometimes go overboard. They are on to something.

Well, if Apollo was bound in AD 50 or sometime thereafter, that means that

⁴ See for example Psalm 9:15,17; Isaiah 14:9; Ezek. 31:16-17; 32:18ff; etc.

he has been in the prison section of the Abyss for upwards of 16 years. And there were other demons that Christ and the apostles had consigned to the pit. It was a necessary part of spiritual warfare to enable break-throughs in new regions. And when pioneer missionaries have failed to do this they have often struggled for decades without any success. So the period of history between AD 30 and AD 70 becomes a paradigm for the church for how to take over the world all over again. But what do a lot of Reformed people do? They say that anything related to miracles and casting out of demons is a first-century phenomenon utterly unrelated to us today. They don't treat it as a paradigm. That is a radical form of cessationism and it makes the church powerless.

In any case, when I say that AD 30-70 gives us a paradigm for how to take over the world "all over again" let me remind you of the extent to which the church had already taken over the world prior to the Great Tribulation. In a previous sermon I showed how hundreds of millions had come to Christ in every part of the planet as a result of the early church's aggressive spiritual warfare and evangelism. And of course, the Great Tribulation of AD 62-68 saw most of those Christians killed. There were far more killed in that six year period than in any period since then. It was staggering. The church was almost wiped out. So in one sense the church had to start all over again. And we will see in a later chapter that the 144,000 who were sealed in their foreheads and who were virgins dedicated to God were a key part in this initial re-advancement of the church after AD 70.

But when you study the early church fathers like Athanasius and others, you see that they used the same spiritual principles of warfare that the pre-AD-70-church had used. They obeyed Christ by first binding the strongman of a region and then plundering his house. You can't plunder the house (that's evangelism and discipleship) without first binding the demonic strongman. It was doing that that had made the church able to convert people from every part of the globe by AD 66.

Now, if you didn't hear that particular sermon, you might be skeptical that the Gospel really had advanced that far, so let me remind you of just a handful of the Scriptures that we looked at. Colossians 1:6 says that by the time he wrote Colossians the Gospel had gone to the whole world and was bringing forth fruit. This is why Colossians 1:23 says that the Gospel had already been "preached to every creature under heaven." You may shake your head and say that this is impossible, but that is disbelieving Paul. Paul claimed that every sentient creature under heaven had the Gospel preached to them. Romans 1:8 says that the faith is spoken of throughout the whole

world, and Romans 10:18 says that it had "gone out to all the earth" and "to the ends of the world." Romans 16:26 says that the Gospel had been obeyed in every part of the world and in all nations. That means that it was successful in every part of the world.

How were they able to have such success? Part of the answer is that they engaged in the kind of spiritual warfare that is recorded for us in the book of Revelation. This book is a spiritual war manual. And I believe that their spiritual warfare against these demonic hordes stands as a model for us today. We are either pushing Satan's kingdom back behind its gates of Hades (that these demons had been locked behind) or those gates of Hades are being opened and demons are marching against us, but there is no in between. The church is having very little success in America because we are not taking seriously this third prong of our battle-front - the demonic. It's obvious that in the past few decades hordes of demons have been unleashed upon America.

But back to the encouraging news - what are the "hits" that Satan took? I believe Acts 16 would be one of them. Somehow the church managed to bind Apollo and his massive army to the pit sometime before October 31 of AD 66. That is encouraging. It shows that it is possible. Zechariah 13 prophesies that the whole world will eventually be cleansed of all demons. It should be a part of our strategy.

But why does God unleash these demons on that date? Why, when the church has made such success in binding demons to the pit, would Jesus unleash them? Why doesn't He just leave them in hell? There are two reasons. In the last sermon I dealt with the first reason - that demons are unleashed as a judgment on a nation that refuses to submit to God's law. God does not allow backslidden nations to continue to enjoy the fruits of previous Christian generations forever. No; there is a cost to apostasy. There comes a time when that nation gives Satan legal ground for the demonic to be at work. And we saw that this was also a period of great apostasy in the church as well. And any time there is apostasy, the demonic gains ground. And I will address that in the next main point.

But the second reason God allows the presence of demons is given in chapter 12. It gives Christians the opportunity to learn spiritual warfare and it tests the church to divide between the chaff and the wheat. The demonic is increasing in America, but rather than crying about it, we have the opportunity to learn spiritual warfare. And I think Judges 3:1-4 perfectly describes this second reason. It says this:

Judg. 3:1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan 2 (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), 3 namely, five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. 4 And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

So he gives two reasons for leaving enemies in the land - to train believers in war and to divide between the men and the boys when it comes to spiritual warfare. It separates between those who live by God's Word and those who live by the wisdom of the world.

II. Legal ground gained by Satan (vv. 1-3 with "to them was given power")

But I do want to end with that first reason. It is implied in verse 3 when it says, "And to them was given a capability just like the scorpions of the earth have capability." That word "capability" is mistranslated by Pickering. It is the Greek word ἐξουσία, and the dictionary gives seven definitions for that word, none of which means capability, and every one of which deals with a legal framework. He translated it that way no doubt because he didn't see how the standard definitions would fit a literal locust. But the dictionary says it can mean, 1) the legal right to choose, control, or dispose of property, 2) the ability to control or govern (Acts 5:4); or the jurisdiction to control or govern (cf. Luke 23:7) 3) authority, 4) official power exercised by a legal office, 5) ruling authority, 6) the sphere in which authority is exercised, 7) the means of exercising authority.

You will notice that all of those definitions deal with the legal sphere or authority. So literally this should be translated, "And to them was given authority just as the scorpions of the earth have authority." Pickering would no doubt respond that literal scorpions don't have authority. They don't meet any of the legal definitions. They don't have the legal right to control or dispose of property since scorpions don't own property. They don't have the ability to govern since scorpions don't have a king and don't control or govern territory. They don't have authority. They don't hold official office. They aren't ruling authorities. They don't have a sphere in which that authority is exercised. And they don't have the means of exercising authority. A literal locust simply doesn't fit any of the standard definitions for ἐξουσία.

But I think the answer is not to change the definition of the word. Let's translate it literally as "power" or "authority" or "legal ground" and instead

of applying it to literal scorpions, let's take that phrase to be referring to demonic scorpions that God had allowed to continue on earth as contrasted with the scorpions of the Abyss. The scorpions of the Abyss were those whose authority has been taken away. The scorpions of the earth are those demons who have not had their authority taken away because they still remained on the earth. So you have two kinds of demons: those of the Abyss and those of the earth. Do demons have authority given to them by God and authority taken away from them by God? They do.

In Luke 4:6 Satan claimed that he had authority over the nations and was willing to give that authority to Jesus if Jesus would worship him. Jesus responded by worshiping God alone, from whom alone anyone could have authority. Now, some claim that Satan's claim to have authority was a false claim. But was it? No. Acts 26:18 says that every time a person is converted, he is turned from darkness to light and from the authority (ἐξουσία) of Satan to God. It clearly states that we are rescued from Satan's authority. Well, that must mean that he has some authority. 1 Peter 3:22 speaks of demonic authorities and powers being subjected to Jesus. Jesus didn't have much of a victory over authorities if they didn't have authority. Ephesians 2:2 speaks of Satan being the prince of the ἐξουσία of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. Ephesians 6:12 says,

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers (that's the word ἐξουσία or authorities), against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

There is a whole kingdom of darkness with various levels of jurisdiction and authority. And in a future sermon we are going to be looking at how that kingdom is structured. Colossians 1:13 says that we have been delivered from the ἐξουσία of darkness, but that implies that unbelievers are still under Satan's ἐξουσία. Colossians 2:15 says that Jesus disarmed principalities and ἐξουσίας, triumphing over them in his resurrection. Yet we see those ἐξουσίας who have been legally defeated still exercising some authority. We already saw in Revelation 6:8 that the two demons, Thanatos and Hades, were given back some authority by Christ to kill with the sword, with hunger, with death, and with the beasts of the earth. It's obvious that earlier Jesus had not allowed those two demon rulers to have that authority, but now he gives it back to them. Why? In Revelation 13:2 it says that Satan gave the Beast power, a throne, and great authority. It doesn't say that he thought he had authority. God says that he had it, and Satan gave it. That implies that Satan still has jurisdictional authority. And I could go on with other Scriptures.

So simple logic indicates that when Apollo and his minions were confined to

the pit they lost ἐξουσία - however you want to translate that. When they were released from the pit they were once again granted limited authority like other scorpions that were still on the earth had. And we saw that demons on the earth were called scorpions in Scripture. In Ezekiel 2:6 God tells Ezekiel that he was surrounded by scorpions, but not to be dismayed by their words or looks. In Luke 10:19 Jesus said,

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

So here is the bottom line. These demonic scorpion-locusts were 100% deprived of their authority in the pit some time after AD 50. When they were released they were given limited power - authority to torment men without a seal for five months, but not to kill. God is still the Sovereign, right? He alone has ultimate authority over all things. But he gives authority to demons to do things, if certain conditions are met. There is a legal framework within which Satan and his demons have to operate. The killing would start after five months, so authority is expanded at that time - and we will get to that in another sermon. But it is expanded because of lack of repentance. Look at the comments in verses 20-21 of this chapter.

20 Yet the rest of the people, those who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as to stop worshiping the demons, even the idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; 21 and they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their fornication or their thefts.

Repentance and cleansing in the blood of Christ is the key to relief from the demonic. But the inverse is also true. Rome's lack of repentance gave demons continuing authority and increasing authority to infect them and influence them.

What is true on a national level is also true on an individual level. Why were the trillions of demons that converged on Israel not able to touch the the 144,000? Chapter 14 gives us the answers. They were redeemed (v. 4). They know God intimately (v. 3). They guard their mouths (v. 5). They lead a blameless life (v. 5 MT). They are sold out to the Lamb (v. 4). They are sexually pure (v. 4). In other words, they have not given legal ground to the demonic to influence them. The wicked one could not touch them. Satan had no legal ground to afflict them. Those 144,000 refused to give Satan even a tiny bit of ἐξουσία because they were daily submitted to God.

There are things that do give legal ground for Satan to keep working in even a believer's life. One of those things is failure to confess and repent of sin. Verses 20-21 are so clear on that. Idolatry in the book of Hosea led to demons of harlotry moving Israelites to actual harlotry (Hos. 4:11,13;5:4; etc.). But it started with idolatry. Failure to humble ourselves before God and

man concerning our sins makes us powerless before the attacks of demons. This is why James calls us to confess our sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. If we have humbled ourselves, God exalts us; if we confess our sins to one another and are cleansed in the blood of Christ, James says that we can resist the devil and he will be forced to flee.

Ephesians 4:26-27 says that when we let the sun go down on our wrath (in other words, when we are not quick to repent of ungodly anger) it gives a foothold or opportunity for the devil to be at work in our families. Why? Because we have given him legal ground, and God gives Satan authority to attack us. And actually, that passage says that anything that grieves the Spirit of God deprives us of the Spirit's authority over demons. And that makes total sense. Jesus cast out demons by the authority (the ἐξουσία) of the Spirit, and if the Spirit is grieved with our behavior, we are dead in the water; we will not have success. Why? Because by grieving the Holy Spirit we have lost the Spirit's authority. Luke 10:19 says,

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

But He can take away that authority if we are not guarding our hearts and lives. He can grant that legal authority or legal ground to Satan. So we must take into consideration the whole legal framework within which demons work.

Conclusion

And that is how I want to end my sermon this morning. If you want a summary paradigm of how to live victorious over the demonic, take 1 John 5:18-21 seriously. Those are the last four verses of the book of 1 John, and they show that if you have certain conditions in place, the wicked one cannot touch you. That's what we want - we want to be impervious to his attacks just like the 144,000 were in verse 4. In 1 John 5:19 it says that the "whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one," but that doesn't need to be true of you. It did become true one day of David. 1 Chronicles 21:1 says that Satan moved David to number Israel. David came under the sway of wicked one.

But the last four verses of John give us a paradigm for being like the 144,000. And 1 John summarizes it under three conditions. The first condition is breaking off all idolatry from your life (v. 21). He was writing to Jewish Christians who probably didn't think that they were guilty of idolatry. Certainly they didn't have idols of gold and silver and wood. But we can

have mental idols, social idols, political idols, ecclesiastical idols. Calvin said that our hearts are idol factories. So if John could make as one of the conditions of maintaining our authority over demons, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," then we too need to take idolatry seriously. It's not just the literal idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood that verse 20 speaks about. Idolatry is anything that captivates you and keeps you from being sold out to Christ. Entertainment can be an idol. Your car can be an idol. Your family can be an idol. Anything that captivates you in a way that keeps you from being sold out to Christ is likely an idol.

The second condition that John insists upon is that we must break off all habits of sin. Verse 18 says, "We know that whoever is born of God does not keep on sinning [there is the habitual pattern]; but he who has been born of God guards himself, and the wicked one does not touch him." It doesn't mean you will be sinless, but it means that you won't be lackadaisical about sin. You will be guarding your heart and will be quick to repent of sin and to put it under the blood of Christ. You refuse to allow it to become a habit.

The third condition needed if we are to maintain authority over demons is to develop a deep and personal walk with God every day. Verse 20 says, "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." He is the only source of authority that you can have over the enemy, so it is imperative that you walk in the Spirit.

God will sometimes allow demons to have access to our lives to test whether we will keep these three conditions. As verse 3 says, "And to them was given authority." Not one whit of authority will be granted to demons if we walk in the Spirit and do not indulge the lusts of the flesh.

May God give each of you an increasing understanding of the enemy and an increasing faith that greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. God bless you. Amen.