

Intro

The story of Patti Height.

Discover

I. We live within the age of the open Abyss (1-2)

- A. Here we meet another angel who has been sent to earth, but this one brings with it the keys to Hell itself.
 - 1. We don't really know who this angel is, only that the keys to the Abyss are given to him.
 - a) He uses the keys which Christ has clearly given to him to unlock Hell in order to unleash this next judgment upon the world.
- B. The Abyss is a term which was often used in the ancient world to describe the lowest level of Hell within which the demons are imprisoned.
 - 1. The demons were understood in ancient times to be the disembodied Spirits of what Scripture calls Nephilim or Raphiem. The Greeks referred to them as demigods.
 - a) Scripture describes these beings as a sort of unholy human-angel hybrid and it is likely that these are the beings Peter describes in 1 Peter 3:18-20, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, [19] by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, [20] who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water."
 - b) Jesus likely preached to them before rising again to let them know that they had been finally defeated and that their days were numbered.
 - 2. The fact that Hell could only be opened at Jesus' command reveals to us that the cohorts of Hell are bound to God's will.
 - a) Neither fallen angels nor demons can neither act in our world nor escape their prison except by the sovereign word of God.
 - b) This should grant confidence to the believer that our God has ultimate mastery over the demonic tormentors. If He has our good

in mind as He has said, these demontors will not have any ultimate power over us.

- C. The open Abyss allows smoke to rise which blocks some of the natural light which God has put into our world.
 - 1. This image reminds us that for a season, Satan has been allowed to deceive many and to hide Christ's light from them. We have to be careful not to allow Satan's work to eclipse God's light from us.

II. We live in an age of demonic oppression (3-10)

- A. Out of the smoke arises devouring locusts.
 - 1. These locusts are demons. Their torment of the sons of Adam is a present reality which is also a harbinger of the coming final divine judgment.
 - 2. This plague is set up as a warning to the world for what is to come to all who refuse to be washed in the blood of the Lamb.
 - a) Just as they will be begging to die when this plague comes, those trapped in hell will beg to die but there will be no end in sight.
- B. They are like scorpions
 - 1. Scorpions sting and harass many people. Demons carry the sting of a fate worse than death.
 - a) The poison in the scorpion's sting can kill, but the poison in the demonic sting can eternally kill.
 - b) Their sting is false teaching, dead religion, and anything they can do to keep people from placing their faith in Christ.
- C. These locusts are a plague, but are not like typical locusts. Rather than devouring the land, they devour the people living in the land.
 - 1. They are sent to torment only the sons of this world, not Christians. More on that in a bit.
 - 2. They are only given five months, meaning they have a limited life span.
 - a) Locusts in the wild live for about 5 months. I think Jesus is telling us that by His grace there is a limit to the time He will allow these creatures to terrorize the world. Once their season is over they will be done away with for good.
 - b) Also, they aren't allowed to kill people directly. They can make it so bad that they will want to die, but they can't kill them.
 - (1) Even in the torment God has allowed, He has not allowed it to be as bad as it could or maybe even should be.
 - c) We may face trials and sufferings in this world which bears in it the rot of sin, but these momentarily trials pale in comparison to what will come when God removes the dam which holds the full effects of our sin from washing over the earth.
 - 3. Interestingly, one of the symbols commonly used for Apollo in the ancient world was a locust. Apollo is a devourer of man and beast.

III. Apollyon's days are numbered (11)

- A. Abaddon is probably the embodiment of rebellious human authority such as Nero, Domitian, and other human leaders who are likened to the Greek god of destruction, Apollo.
 - 1. He is probably a fallen angel (Satan or another serving alongside Satan) who is essentially the commander of the army of demons which are being unleashed upon the world and is fanning the flame of human rebellion all over the world.
 - a) While very powerful, he's nothing compared with Christ and when his five months is up he will be stripped of his rank, weighed, measured, and found wanting for good.
 - 2. An interesting detail I want to point out that has relevance for today is that the Muslim god, Allah, was the Persian version of Apollo who was elevated to his position as the lone god in the pantheon by Muhammad. Allah may actually be Satan himself building a counterfeit religion to draw people away from the true God.
 - a) Apollo always seeks to subvert the rule of God on the earth. He is darkness which masquerades as light, just as Islam is a false religion masquerading as truth.
 - b) False religions, aliens, cryptids, scientism, humanism... I think many of these are demonic deceptions designed to keep people in darkness and fear rather than finding freedom in God. Demons will do whatever they can to distract people, showing up in whatever form a particular culture or person may expect or be open to.

IV. The church is being spared from this devouring horde of demons (4)

- A. A Christian may suffer many difficulties in this world. We may face the wrath of our fellow man because of our faith in God, but we will never face the wrath of God. Christ has already absorbed God's wrath in our place.
- B. Scripture is clear that all who are sealed by the Holy Spirit will be spared from this plague. This isn't to say that demons can have no effect on the Christian, but that they cannot crush us like they can the world around us.
 - 1. II Corinthians 1:21-22, "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."
 - a) We know that we belong to Him because we have the Holy Spirit set upon us as a seal.
 - b) But for the holy ones of God, we will be spared from the worst of these effects. We should be encouraged that these plagues and tremors and only signs of our ultimate victory with Christ over this world. He will not allow the sting of death to touch His anointed ones. We are sealed in Him and are under His protection. This

doesn't mean we won't be affected or afflicted for a moment, but that our affliction will end in glory rather than pain and suffering.

- c) I Corinthians 15:50-58, 'Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. [51] Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— [52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. [54] So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." [55] "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" [56] The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. [57] But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. [58] Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."
- C. You and I need not fear the demonic horde, but the fact that this is real should lead us to a sense of urgency to get the gospel to the world around us.
1. It's no wonder people are deceived. Satan is working overtime to blind people from Christ's light. They are in despair. Their lives seem meaningless without God and so they will do almost anything to find some sense of meaning and purpose.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 1:18, "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."
 - b) People who are dead in Adam cannot see what we see. They need the Spirit to open their eyes like He did for us. We must pray and compel them to open their eyes. It's the only way.
 2. Don't we want to see our friends delivered from their torment? Don't we want to see them set free from Satan's rule before it's too late? It's now or never. We don't know how many of the 5 months remain.

Nurture

Who is God? He is Lord of everything, Heaven, Earth, and Hell.

What has God done? He has opened up the Abyss, unleashing judgment upon this world which is in active rebellion against Him.

Who are we? We are His sealed who have been saved out of this wicked world and spared from the demonic torment this world is under.

What are we being called to do? We are called to persevere in Christ, trusting that we will never taste the sting of death and setting as many captives free from Satan as we can.

Act

Luke 10:17-20, "Now the seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name!" And He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to walk on snakes and scorpions, and authority over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

Wherever the church is active and strong, Satan falls and his power is diminished. We are seeing a rise in demonic oppression around us today partially because where the church was once strong here, we have weakened. We cannot allow this to continue.

Satan cannot win against us. The gates of Hell cannot prevail against the Church. I believe the Lord wants us to reclaim our lead over the enemy and we will do this by dedicating ourselves to corporate prayer, to Scripture, to intercessory prayer over our friends and neighbors, and by getting back to being a people who are about the business of sharing the gospel of the Kingdom.

We cannot allow the devil to win by making us lazy or afraid. We must rise to this occasion which we are in. The power to transform America by regaining ground we have given up is within us. Christ has given us power to trample these scorpion locust creatures, and we must not neglect this power which is ours.