

For many people, **Revelation 9** doesn't stir curiosity; it stirs anxiety. Some wonder, "Why would a loving God allow this?" Others quietly fear, "What if I don't understand enough... or believe enough?"

This passage was not written to frighten believers or drive seekers away – restraining evil

Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit Revelation 9:1 NKJV

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 Revelation 9:2 NKJV

Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power Revelation 9:3 NKJV

There are 1400 species of scorpions, but only 25 of them have venom that is toxic to man

Scorpion venom is a mixture of compounds like neurotoxins and enzyme inhibitors and it works to kill or paralyze the prey

Here is a general, biological description

Immediate, Intense Pain - **Seconds–Minutes**. People often describe it as fire under the skin

The pain is designed to overwhelm the nervous system, not destroy tissue

Most scorpion **stings do not kill adults**, but they can: linger for days, return in waves, pain relief, the **victim wants the pain to stop, but it doesn't**

The misery becomes mental as well as physical; prolonged pain without death

They were told not to harm the grass or plants or trees, but only the people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. Revelation 9:4 NKJV

They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only **those men who do not have the seal of God** on their foreheads

The humans on earth will be affected by these locust creatures, but the **144,000** will be protected who have the seal of God on their foreheads Revelation 7:3–4 NKJV

They were told not to kill them but to torture them for five months with pain like the pain of a scorpion sting. Revelation 9:5 NKJV

They are not given authority to kill them, but to **torment them for five months**

The normal lifespan of an insect locust is about five months, May to September

This might mean that these locust creatures will be around for five months, or it could mean that the pain caused by the locusts will last for five months

In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them Revelation 9:6 NKJV

Verse 6 reveals a very hard or difficult truth: **existence without God is unbearable**

“death will flee from them”

This could be talking about people wanting to die who have been stung by these locust creatures

Biblically speaking, people desire death when **the weight of sin, guilt, and separation from God becomes unbearable.**

Scripture shows that unconfessed sin produces shame, fear, and hopelessness that distort perspective and drain life of meaning

Job cried out under crushing despair and loss, longing for death when suffering overwhelmed his sense of purpose Job 3:11 NKJV

David acknowledged that hidden sin dried up his strength and joy, pressing his soul toward despair Psalm 32:3–4 NKJV

Jonah asked to die when shame, anger, and spiritual blindness overtook him Jonah 4:3 NKJV

In Revelation, people seek death when judgment exposes sin fully and removes escape Revelation 9:6 NKJV

People want to die when sin is exposed, and grace is resisted, when guilt is felt, but repentance is refused, and when life without God becomes more painful than the thought of death

The Bible’s answer is not escape through death, but hope through repentance, forgiveness, and restored fellowship with God

The appearance and actions of these locusts are disturbing, but notice how restricted they are

- They cannot touch creation
- They cannot touch God’s sealed people (144000)
- They cannot kill
- They are limited to five months

This is not chaos. This is a **measured judgment**

God’s judgment is never reckless. His discipline has His boundaries – **Why?**

God limits judgment, suffering is not evidence of abandonment, it is evidence of mercy

The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. Revelation 9:7 NKJV

**shape** – homoioima – (homo-eee-knee-ama) a figure, image, likeness, representation

As John describes these creatures, the best he can do is tell us what they are “**like**”

Remember, this is a 1st century man describing things from the 21st century

**horses prepared for battle**

Through the ages, horses have been used in time of war

John may be thinking more along the lines of the Egyptians horses with ancient battle chariots

**crowns of something like gold**

John is careful to say that these “**crowns**” on their heads weren’t exactly gold, but “**something like**” gold

**faces were like the faces of men**

The faces are only “**like**” men’s faces. Perhaps eyes, nose, mouth?

John goes out of his way to say what they are like

- like horses prepared for battle
- like crowns of gold
- like human faces
- like lion’s teeth
- like iron breastplates
- tails like scorpions

If these were literal insects, none of that detail would be necessary

**Why it matters:** John is saying that this is a **supernatural, intelligent, and intentional judgment**; it is **not a natural disaster**

The imagery of these creatures communicates psychological terror, not just pain

Every feature is designed to communicate something

- **Horses for battle** - unstoppable force
- **Crowns** - delegated authority
- **Human faces** - intelligence and awareness
- **Lion's teeth** - ferocity
- **Iron breastplates** - invulnerability
- **Scorpion tails** - torment without death

This is not random suffering; it is **inescapable, conscious torment**

**They had hair like women's hair and teeth like the teeth of a lion. Revelation 9:8 NKJV**

In Scripture, **hair like women** often conveys attractiveness, allure, or appeal, while a lion's teeth represent ferocity, destruction, and power

As John writes, he is showing us a **disturbing paradox**: something that looks inviting on the surface but is devastating beneath the surface

**Theologically speaking, Revelation 9:8** exposes one of Satan's oldest strategies: deception through attraction

Evil rarely announces itself honestly. It often looks relatable, appealing, even human, until its true nature is revealed

The teeth matter. No matter how appealing the appearance, the end result is always destruction

**Verse 8** invites sober self-examination. Something that appears attractive at first glance, but brings ruin once embraced. What promises beauty on the surface delivers devastation beneath it

In life, don't judge a path by how appealing it feels in the moment, measure it by where it leads

God reveals this imagery not to frighten us, but to protect us

**They wore armor made of iron, and their wings roared like an army of chariots rushing into battle. Revelation 9:9 NKJV**

John highlights two features: **protection and sound**

**First**, the iron breastplates. In Scripture, iron symbolizes strength, hardness, and invulnerability

This imagery tells us these **locusts cannot be easily resisted or even stopped**. No human strength, wisdom, or resistance is ineffective against them

**Second**, the sound of their wings is not quiet, not subtle, but thunderous like chariots charging into battle

Before the torment arrives, it is heard. Fear precedes pain. The noise announces inevitability

Together, these images communicate unstoppable advance. This is not random violence

These verses strip away the illusion that humanity can does not have to be saved or manage sin without consequence

Yet even here, limits remain, our Father sets boundaries

They had tails that stung like scorpions, and for five months they had the power to torment people. Revelation 9:10 NKJV

Their king is the angel from the bottomless pit; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon—the Destroyer. Revelation 9:11 NKJV

John deliberately gives **both languages** because Revelation was written to a **global church**, Jew and Gentile alike

satan is defined by what he does, not who he is

Abaddon and Apollyon are not merely names for satan, they are divine commentary, his end is certain Revelation 20:10

The Bible doesn't waste time debating satan, it defines him. He is the destroyer, and that's all he has ever been

The first terror is past, but look, two more terrors are coming! Revelation 9:12 NKJV