

Revelation 9

Verses 1-2

A star from heaven which had fallen to the earth – Some identify this fallen star as Satan (Luke 10:18, Job 38:7) however, when Satan is mentioned by alternate names in Revelation he is clearly identified (12:9, 20:2). Most likely, this is a fallen angel.

Key to the bottomless pit – Literally, “the shaft of the abyss”. This is the abode of Satan, demons, and the beast. It is evidently a preliminary prison as their final abode is the lake of fire (19:20, 20:10).

Smoke went up out of the pit – Representing a place of torment by fire.

The sun and the air were darkened – Perhaps similar to a volcanic eruption. Note the use of “like” in this chapter. It is used 12 times and therefore makes exact interpretation difficult. John is describing what he saw as best he could. This explains why there are many varied interpretations of this section.

Verses 3-4

Out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth – Their description in verses 7-11 indicates that these are demonic creatures.

Power was given to them as the scorpions of the earth have power – Their ability to do harm is under the control of God. They can only do what God allows them to do.

Only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads – All unbelievers will be hurt.

Verses 5-6

They were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months – Mankind will not die from this trumpet but they will be tormented. Five months is mentioned again in verse 10. This is the normal lifespan of locusts.

The torment of a scorpion – A scorpion’s sting is not usually fatal but very painful.

Men will seek death and will not find it – Apparently, they will be unable to end their lives or suffering.

Verses 7-10 The Appearance of the Locusts (demons)

-*Like* horses prepared for battle

-*On their heads crowns like* gold

-*Their faces were like* the faces of men

-*They had hair like* the hair of women

-*Their teeth were like* the teeth of lions

-*They had breastplates like* breastplates of iron

-*The sound of their wings were like* the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle

-*They have tails like* scorpions, and stings

Verse 11

They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

Both Abaddon and Apollyon mean “destroyer” or “destruction”. Both names are given signifying that both Jew and Gentile will be the objects of his destruction.

Verse 12 - This verse is transitional and identifies the “woes” with the final three trumpets.

Verse 13 The Sixth Trumpet, the second woe.

A voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God –

This is the altar of incense which is associated with the prayers of the saints. The pronouncement of judgment is related to the prayers of the saints. The one speaking is not named but may be the angel identified with the altar in 8:3.

Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates –

These are fallen angels. Good angels are never seen as bound. Some think the river Euphrates is mentioned denoting the invasion will come from the Orient.

Prepared for the hour and day and month and year – This event happens exactly at God’s appointed time.

So that they might kill a third of mankind – One half of the earth’s population has now been killed (6:8).

Verses 16-19 The Army of the Horsemen.

The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million –

The majority text reads “myriads of myriads” exactly as in 5:11. The critical text reads “a double myriad (20,000) of myriads (10,000) or two million. The result could be either an innumerable number or two hundred million. Some see this as a human army coming from the east. Others see this as another demonic army.

The horses and those who sat on them:

-*The riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth (blue) and of brimstone (sulfur)*

-*The heads of the horses are like* the heads of lions

-*Out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone*

-*A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone*

-*The power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails...*

-*Their tails are like* serpents and have heads

-*With them they do harm*

Some identify this vast army with modern weapons of warfare. Others see this as another demonic army.

Verses 20-21

The rest of mankind... did not repent of the works of their hands...

-*To worship demons, -To worship the idols of gold and silver and of brass and stone and of wood, -Their murders, -Their sorceries (pharmakon – drugs), -Their immorality, -Their thefts.*

By this time in the tribulation most of the people still living will be so Hard of heart that they will not turn to God.