

## Revelation 9 - The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets

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COURSE COMMENTARY



### 9:1 - the sixth trumpet

- **a star fallen from heaven**

In some passages, angelic beings are referred to as "stars" ([Job 38:7](#); [Isa. 14:13](#)). "Fallen" is *peptoko'ta*, perfect tense *having already fallen*. Some believe this is the star named Wormwood which fell at the third trumpet judgment ([Rev. 8:10](#)). The final fall of Satan from heaven occurs in [Revelation 12:9-10](#).

- **the bottomless pit**

"Bottomless pit" is better translated *the shaft of the abyss*. The **shaft** is a long and narrow opening which leads to the **abyss**. The shaft is normally sealed. The inhabitants of the abyss are fallen angels ([Luke 8:30-31](#)). They are held there due to their participation in a particularly grievous sin ([Gen. 6:4](#); [2Pe. 2:4-6](#); [Jude 6](#)).

### 9:2 - the pit is opened

- **he opened the bottomless pit**

The contents of the pit are *unimaginably* evil and *greatly* frustrated. The fallen angels therein surpass anything we can imagine--hence the fantastic description in the verses to come.

- **smoke arose... like the smoke of a great furnace**

One of the "pillars of smoke" described by Joel on the Day of the Lord ([Joel 2:30](#)). Hot due to subterranean activity below the earth's crust ([Luke 16:24](#)).

### 9:3 - locusts come upon the earth

- **locusts came upon the earth**

Another parallel with the plagues of Egypt ([Ex. 10:12-14](#)). This is the "army of the Lord" which Joel saw ([Joel 2:10-11](#)).

- **given power as the scorpions of the earth have power**

As the scorpions of the earth. These are not natural scorpions!

- 1) They are *locusts*.
- 2) They are *of the abyss*, not the earth.

### 9:4 - to harm men

- **commanded not to harm natural systems, but men**

The exact reverse of natural locusts.

- **only those men who are not sealed**

This is why the 144,000 were sealed in a previous chapter ([Rev. 7:4](#)). See the previous lesson

on Revelation 7.

## 9:5 - authority to torment

- **not given authority to kill**  
Authority is *given* from elsewhere -- by God. He is providing additional opportunity for repentance (or to demonstrate lack thereof).
- **like the torment of a scorpion**  
Both the pain of the initial sting and probably from an injected poison.

## 9:6 - men will seek death

- **men will seek death**  
Due to intense fear and pain men will wish they were dead. "They will desire" *epithy'mesouosin* (lust after) death. But they will *ou me'* (emphatically not!) find it.
- **death will flee from them**  
They will continually seek to die and death will continually flee. Death may be prevented by the control demons have over men by way of possession ([Mark 9:20-22](#); [Luke 8:27-29](#)).

## 9:7 - like horses

- **shape of the locusts was like...**  
What John is shown exceeds anything he has seen before so he must resort to extensive simile to give the closest approximation to that which is familiar. The description is *as close as he is able to relate*, there is no indication it is intended to be interpreted symbolically. See the lesson where we discussed the [Interpretation of Symbols](#).
- **like the appearance of horses**  
Joel used the same simile ([Joel 2:4-5](#)). The heads of horses and locusts are similar. The words for *locust* in German and Italian mean "hay-horse" and "little horse," respectively.

## 9:8 - hair and teeth

- **hair like a woman's hair**  
Elsewhere, locusts are said to be "bristling" ([Jer. 51:27](#)). Some suggest a reference to their antennae, but here more likely the actual hair of the demonic form.
- **teeth like lion's teeth**  
Joel used the same simile ([Joel 1:6-7](#)). They do not harm with their mouths--this refers to the *rapaciousness* of their destruction, in a similar way that natural locusts *devour* every green thing in their path.

## 9:9 - breastplates and wings

- **breastplates of iron**  
Refers either to actual breastplates, or to the chest region. The Greek word is *tho'rakas* from which we derive the term "thorax," used to describe that portion of the body of an insect.
- **sound of wings like chariots**  
Joel heard the same multitude ([Joel 2:5](#)).

## 9:10 - tails like scorpions

- **stings in their tails**  
"Stings" is *ke'ntra* which is also used of a pointed stick ([Acts 9:5](#); [Acts 26:14](#)) and figuratively to describe the power of death to hurt ([1Cor. 15:55](#)).

## 9:11 - Abaddon, Apollyon

- **they had a king**  
Natural locusts have no king ([Pr. 30:27](#)). This is a *demonic* horde. Their uniform advance was also noted by Joel ([Joel 2:7-8](#)).
- **Abaddon, Apollyon**  
Meaning, *destruction* and *destroyer*. Abaddon is from the Hebrew root *abd* meaning "to perish or be destroyed." Apollyon is the Greek form.

## 9:12 - one woe is past

- **one woe is past**  
The judgment of the fifth trumpet is past, the first of the three woes mentioned in [Revelation 8:13](#).
- **behold, still two more woes are coming**  
As horrible as the first woe was, it did not result in death. The second woe (the sixth trumpet) will result in the death of one-third of mankind ([Rev. 9:13-19](#)), whereas the third woe (the seventh trumpet) includes all seven bowls of God's wrath ([Rev. 11:15](#); [15:7](#); [16:2-4](#), [8](#), [10](#), [12](#), [17](#)).

## 9:13 - the sixth trumpet

- **the sixth angel sounded**  
Each judgment increases in severity. Perhaps a few repent, but most harden their hearts.
- **a voice from the four horns of the golden altar**  
The altar upon which the prayers of the saints were offered prior to the trumpet judgments ([Rev. 8:3-4](#)). The next woe is in response to the previous petitions of the saints! Especially those of the martyrs ([Rev. 6:10](#)). The horns of the altar symbolized mercy since they provided sanctuary ([1K. 1:50-51](#); [1K. 2:20](#)), but now the place of mercy becomes the place of judgment!

## 9:14 - four bound angels

- **release the four angels who are bound**  
Four especially malevolent angels who probably were involved in the same sin discussed earlier ([Gen. 6:4](#)). Perhaps they serve as commanders of the army we see next. These are the "ones having been bound" (perfect tense). They were bound in the past and remain bound to this moment waiting their moment of opportunity.
- **at the great river Euphrates**  
The kings from the east cross the dried up Euphrates *later* at the sixth bowl judgment. Therefore, *the army here is not related to those kings*. The mention of the Euphrates here and in [Revelation 16:12](#) is an indication that Babylon in Revelation, as elsewhere in Scripture, is the literal, historical city. Near the Euphrates is where the first lie was told, the first murder committed, the

tower of Babel was erected in rebellion to God, it was the location of the 70-year captivity, and will be crossed by armies *drawn* to their slaughter ([Rev. 16:12](#)).

## 9:15 - one-third killed

- [prepared for the day and month and year](#)  
Describes a specific *time* only known to God.
- [one-third of mankind killed](#)  
In the judgments of the fourth seal, [one-fourth](#) of the population perished. In this judgment, an additional [one-third](#) will perish. By the end of this judgment, *at least* half the population has been killed. This would amount to more than [3 billion](#) if the first seal were to be opened today (December 2003). (This number would be reduced somewhat by those taken in the Rapture prior to the Tribulation.)

## 9:16 - number of the army

- [two hundred million](#)  
*Dismyria'des myria'don*, literally "two myriads of myriads," a countless number ([Joel 2:2](#)). This is not a *human army*:  
  - 1) They are led by four fallen angels.
  - 2) Their description is too fantastic to apply to a human army.
  - 3) They are innumerable.
  - 4) This event cannot be connected to the sixth bowl ([Rev. 16:12](#)) or the invasion of Gog ([Eze. 38-39](#)).

## 9:17-18 - horses like lions

- [I saw the horses... those who sat on them](#)  
Both horses and riders, but the emphasis in the upcoming description is on the destructive power of the horses themselves. Joel saw this same horde ([Joel 2:4-5](#)).
- [out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone](#)  
A similar capability to the two witnesses ([Rev. 11:5](#)). Fire and brimstone are the result of God's overwhelming judgment ([Gen. 19:24](#); [Deu. 29:23](#); [Eze. 38:22](#); [Luke 17:29](#); [Rev. 20:10](#)). Joel saw this aspect of their destruction power, figurative of natural locusts, but literal in the case of this demonic horde ([Joel 2:3](#)).

## 9:19 - mouths and tails

- [power is in their mouth and in their tails](#)  
The mouths and tails of the *horses*. It is impossible to approach these demonic horses from either the front or the rear. Both ends are deadly..

## 9:20 - no repentance

- [did not repent](#)  
Like Pharaoh in the Egyptian plagues ([Ex. 7:13, 23](#); [8:15](#), etc.), the earth dwellers continue to harden their hearts.
- [the works of their hands](#)  
Men's hands work for *man's will* rather than God. Apart from God, men are [creative perverts](#),

dangerous geniuses ([Gen. 11:6](#)).

- **worship demons**

They will explicitly worship a demonic idol which appears to be brought to life ([Rev. 13:4-8](#)). Scripture reveals that to worship or sacrifice to an idol is to worship or sacrifice to demons ([Lev. 17:7](#); [Deu. 32:17](#)). Where is human sacrifice in our own "modern culture"? It goes by other politically correct terms: abortion, euthanasia, genetic research.

## 9:21 - murder, fornication, and sorcery

- **murder**

Along with a general deterioration of culture and controls, there will be widespread "purging" of those who refuse to worship the beast ([Rev. 13:15](#)).

- **sorceries**

*Pharma'kon* from which we get *pharmacy*. The employment of drugs, especially for cultic purposes. Sorcery and all similar activities are outlawed by God ([Ex. 22:18](#); [Lev. 19:31](#); [Deu. 18:10-11](#); [Rev. 21:8](#); [22:15](#)). From God's perspective, there is no such thing as *white* ("good") magic!

- **sexual immorality**

*Pornei'as* from which we derive *pornography*. Used of all manner of unlawful sexual activity. Also of *spiritual adultery*, that is *idolatry*.

For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).