

## Revelation 9

### Introduction:

It is necessary to determine whether to interpret this chapter literally or symbolically. The two areas of concern are the descriptions of the locusts (vs 3-10) and horsemen (vs 16-19).

The Book of Revelation is to be interpreted by the literal, futurist method. However, it is stressed that such an interpretation recognizes the use of symbolic language, and is accepted (literally) as such.

The descriptions of chapter 9 are symbolic. This is evident from the use of the following words: “as” (vs 5,7,8,9,17), “like unto” (vs 7, 10, 19), “as it were” (vs 7, 9).

Note: there is a difference between symbolic language and spiritualizing. The Apostle John is giving a literal description in symbolic terms of exactly what he saw.

However, the use of symbols does not give license for any allegorizing or spiritualizing interpretations. When such a method is used, the results are subject to the whim of the interpreter. In A-millennial literature, the plague of locusts has been seen as heretics, Goths, Islam, Jesuits, Protestants, and even Turks depending on your personal prejudices and fancies.

- I. The Sounding of the Fifth Trumpet – vs. 1-6
  - a. The Star Fallen from Heaven – vs. 1  
This is not a literal star (as in Rev 8:10-11), for a personal pronoun is used of the star and personal acts are ascribed to him.  
In prophetic symbolism, a star refers to an angel (Rev 1:20; 12:4; Job 38:7).

This ‘star’ is Satan.

The name ‘Lucifer’ means ‘Day Star’.

Satan will be cast into the earth.

Prophesied by Isaiah – Isaiah 14:12

Predicted by Jesus Christ – Luke 10:18

Prophesied by John – Rev 12:7-9

Satan is currently the “Prince of the Power of the Air”. (Eph 2:2)

He has access to earth – I Pt 5:8; Job 1:7

He has access to heaven – Rev 12:10; Job 1:6

- b. The Bottomless Pit – vs. 1-2  
It is the abode of demons – Luke 8:31 (“the deep” comes from the same word)  
They are imprisoned – The devils begged Jesus not to consign them to this place.  
Some fallen angels are reserved in chains to a place of darkness – Jude 6; II Pt 2:4.  
Satan will be kept in this place during the Millennium – Rev 20:1-3

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The place of this Pit is deep within the heart of the earth.

Indicated by the events of Rev 9:2-3

Said to be 'down' in II Pt 2:4

Implied from the study of Romans 10:7; Eph 4:9

Note: until the resurrection of Christ, it seems that the region of the dead consisted of 2 major sections, Hell and Paradise (Luke 16:22-26). It is possible that the 'great gulf fixed' here is in fact the bottomless pit.

At the first resurrection, the Paradise section was vacated, and believers are now with Christ in glory – II Cor 12:1-4; Eph 4:8; II Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23; Rev 5:8-10.

At the second resurrection, the hell section will be vacated, and the occupants judged and cast into the everlasting lake of fire – Rev 20:11-15.

The Key of the Bottomless Pit is given (by Divine permission) to Satan. (Rev 20:1 – it is again in the possession of an angel.)

The Opening of the Bottomless Pit is by Satan himself – Is 14:15-17.

### c. The Demonic Horde – vs. 3-6

The Occupants of the Bottomless Pit appear as "locusts", which in scripture represent plagues upon the earth – Ex 10:12-20; Joel 1:4-7.

These are not natural locusts because:

They behave oppositely to natural locusts – vs. 4

They have a king – vs 11; cf Prov 30:27

They have a strange description

These are a demonic invasion. This is the only place in Scripture which can accurately be described as "hell on earth."

Their duty on earth is Torment – vs. 4-5

They are commanded not to hurt the vegetation of the earth or those are sealed.

Torment is the experience of hell. – Luke 16:24

Torment is the work of demons. – Mark 5:5, 15

This Torment is likened to the sting of a scorpion, which is one of the most painful stings from any member of the animal kingdom.

The duration of the Demonic Activity is five months. – vs. 5

The Effects of the Hellish, Demonic Activity upon men – vs. 6

See: Jer 8:3; Job 3:20-21

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Other Scriptures indicate such torment associated with demonic possession – a desire to do personal injury, yet never death. – Mark 5:5

### II. The Description of the Demonic Locusts – vs. 7-12

#### a. A Symbolic Description

Descriptions of angelic beings are usually really beyond the grasp of the human mind. (e.g. Ez 1:4-25; 10:1-17; Dan 10:5-6)

They are Horse-like shape – vs. 7

They have Crowns of Gold – vs. 7

They have Faces of men – vs. 7

They have Woman-like hair – vs. 8

They have Teeth of lions – vs. 8

They have Breast-plates of iron – vs. 9

They have Noisy wings – vs. 9

They have Scorpion-like tails – vs. 10

Note: Devils do not have bodies. They desire to possess men, to control their minds and bodies. Here we are given a glimpse of their true, hellish nature.

#### b. The King of the Demons – vs. 11

This is none other than Satan, the angel of the pit, a reference to the fallen star of verse 1.

The name of the king is Abaddon (Hebrew) and Apollyon (Greek). Both these words mean, “destroyer”.

#### c. The First Woe – vs. 12

The fifth trumpet is the first woe. Cf Rev 8:13

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### III. The Sounding of the Sixth Trumpet – vs. 13-19

#### a. The Voice from the Altar – vs. 13

A further reminder that, in part, these judgments are in answer to the prayer of the saints. – Rev 6:9-10; 8:3-4

#### b. The Four Bound Angels – vs. 14-15

Since these angels are bound, it would seem they belong to the group of fallen angels.

They are loosed in the River Euphrates – vs. 14

It was in this area that Satan's work on earth began. – Gen 2:10-14; 3:1

It was in this area that the first organized Satanic revolt took place. – Gen 11:1-9

The Euphrates is one of the borders of the promised land. – Gen 15:18

The Book of Revelation predicts an invasion from the East. – Rev 16:12

It may well be the events here in Revelation 9 are part of what will happen.

We know from Daniel 10:13 that back of the course of the nations are angelic 'princes'.

They are loosed according to Divine plan – vs. 15

They are prepared – Jude 6 says they are "reserved in chains...unto the judgment of the great day".

They are loosed for 391 days – vs. 15

They are loosed to slay men – vs. 15

#### c. The Army of 200,000,000 – vs. 16

There are two interpretations as to who or what constitutes this vast army:

##### i. A Supernatural army of hellish demons

This does not violate Scripture (e.g. II Kings 6:13-17; Rev 19:14).

The description of the horses would indicate this to be so. They are called a 'plague' in vs. 20, and their weapons are those of hell – vs. 18.

##### ii. A Satan-inspired invasion of earthly armies

Some interpret this to be an army of men, and the descriptions of the horses as a graphic picture of modern tank warfare.

Usually this army is linked with Rev 16:12, and such an army is possible.

#### d. The Horsemen – vs. 17-19

Breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone – vs. 17

Horses with lion-like heads and serpent-like tails. Both of these are deadly, and the tail itself had 'heads'.

One-third of the world's population will perish in this plague.

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(This second woe, along with the opening of the 4<sup>th</sup> Seal, records the death of ½ of the population of the earth.)

- IV. The Reaction of Mankind to Divine Judgment and Hellish Plagues – vs. 20-21  
One would think that multitudes would turn to God, but instead:
- a. A hardening of their Christ-rejecting hearts – vs. 20  
Like Pharaoh, these people have now had their hearts hardened BY GOD. Rom 9:17-23
  - b. A continuation of their Demonic worship – vs. 20  
The Bible teaches that idolatry is fellowship with devils – I Cor 10:20  
This practice is a feature of the last times. – I Timothy 4:1
  - c. A catalog of morality on earth during the tribulation – vs. 21  
As a direct result of Christ-rejection and giving over to the worship of demons (through idolatry), mankind will also experience:
    - i. Disregard for life of men  
This was the first sinful act after the fall. – Gen 4:8 - cf Ex 20:13; Rev 20:4
    - ii. Disregard for the bodies of men  
The Greek word translated ‘sorcery’ is “pharmakeion” and the practice of sorcery has been defined as “impure practices with evil agencies, and particularly with poisonous drugs. The word specially includes tampering with one’s own or another’s health, by means of drugs, potions, intoxications, and often with magical arts and incantations...” (The Apocalypse. By J.A. Seiss)
    - iii. Disregard for marriages of men  
The term ‘fornication’ refers to the so-called “free sex” syndrome, wherein the sacred institution of marriage is done away with.
    - iv. Disregard for the rights of others  
Theft – the disregard for personal property – will be rampant during the Tribulation.

Note 1: All of these sins are present (and increasing) on the earth today – yet there is restraint. The law has a restraining effect. Upbringing has a restraining effect. The preaching of the Gospel has a restraining effect. Cf. II Thessalonians 2:7

Note 2: All these sins fall into the catalog of the ‘works of the flesh’ – Gal 5:19-21; I Cor 6:9-10.

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Note 3: These conditions remind us of the days of Noah and Lot – prior to divine judgment. Matt 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-30; Gen 6:1-3; 18:20; II Pt 2:5-6; II Pt 3:5-7; Jude 14-15

Note 4: The acts of man described above are associated with the work of Satan and his demons.