

## Detailed Study of Revelation Chapter 9

Revelation Chapter 9 marks a significant turning point in the Book of Revelation, as it introduces the **fifth** and **sixth trumpet judgments**. These judgments bring intense suffering and torment upon the earth, as they involve a demonic invasion and further ecological and cosmic upheaval. The chapter heightens the intensity of God's wrath during the **Tribulation period**, and it serves as a warning of the escalation of judgment as the world moves closer to the return of Christ.

From a **dispensational perspective**, this chapter underscores the reality of God's judgment during the **Tribulation period**. Dispensationalists understand the judgments as literal events that will unfold in the future, during the period of God's wrath upon a rebellious world. The passage also highlights the spiritual blindness and hardened hearts of humanity, which refuses to repent despite the suffering.

### 1. Exegetical Breakdown of Revelation 9:1-12: The Fifth Trumpet – The First Woe

#### Verses 1-2: The Opening of the Abyss

##### Revelation 9:1-2 (ESV):

*"And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft."*

- **Greek Word Study:**
  - **"Star" (Greek: *astēr*)** – The word *astēr* is commonly used in the Bible to refer to a literal star, but in this context, it is symbolic of an angelic being. This angel is depicted as having fallen from heaven to earth, which suggests a **fallen angel** or a **demonic being**, potentially linked to Satan (cf. Isaiah 14:12, Luke 10:18).
  - **"Bottomless Pit" (Greek: *abussos*)** – The term *abussos* refers to a deep, bottomless pit, sometimes translated as "the abyss." In the New Testament, this is a place where demons are confined (Luke 8:31, 2 Peter 2:4), and here it is opened, releasing horrors upon the earth.
- **Theological Insight:**

The **fallen star** represents a **demonic being** who is given authority over the **bottomless pit**. This pit, or abyss, is a place of confinement for **evil spirits** and **demonic forces**. The opening of the pit releases **smoke**, which darkens the sun and the air, symbolizing the spreading influence of evil and corruption. The darkening of the heavens can be seen as a **cosmic judgment**, affecting both physical and spiritual realms.
- **Cultural and Historical Context:**

In ancient Jewish thought, the **abyss** was often considered the place of imprisonment for rebellious angels or demons. The imagery of smoke rising from the abyss would have been familiar to Jewish readers as a symbol of **judgment and destruction** (cf. Genesis 19:28, Isaiah 34:10).

#### Verses 3-6: The Locusts from the Abyss

##### Revelation 9:3-6 (ESV):

*"Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the*

*torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them."*

- **Greek Word Study:**

- **"Locusts" (Greek: *akrides*)** – The Greek word *akrides* refers to locusts, which are known for their **destructive power**. In ancient times, locusts were viewed as agents of judgment and destruction, particularly in the **Old Testament** (Exodus 10:14, Joel 1:4).
- **"Scorpions" (Greek: *skorpios*)** – Scorpions are venomous creatures known for their painful stings. In this context, their sting represents **extreme torment**, highlighting the suffering that people will experience under this judgment.

- **Theological Insight:**

The locusts from the abyss are demonic creatures given authority to torment those who are **not sealed by God**. Their torment is not physical death but excruciating pain, likened to the sting of a scorpion. The fact that these locusts do not harm the earth's vegetation or the earth itself, but only **unsaved people**, highlights that the judgment is **selective** and serves to punish those who have rejected God.

- **Hermeneutical Insight (Dispensational View):**

From a **dispensational perspective**, this event is understood as a literal **demonic invasion** that will occur during the **Tribulation period**. The demonic forces are given specific instructions to torment the unsaved but not to kill them. This suggests that the judgment is designed to inflict suffering in hopes of leading people to repentance, though it is clear from the text that the people will not repent.

## **Verses 7-10: The Appearance of the Locusts**

### **Revelation 9:7-10 (ESV):**

*"In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. They have tails like scorpions, and stings, and in their tails is their power to hurt people for five months."*

- **Greek Word Study:**

- **"Like" (Greek: *homoios*)** – The use of the word *homoios* (meaning "like") indicates that John is describing something he saw in symbolic terms. The creatures may not be literal locusts but are described using the familiar imagery of locusts to convey their destructive nature.

- **Theological Insight:**

The locusts are described as **hybrid creatures** with **human-like faces**, **women's hair**, and **lion-like teeth**, suggesting that they are **demonic** in nature, with a terrifying appearance. The fact that their wings sound like **many chariots rushing into battle** emphasizes their **incredible power** and **fearsome presence**. The **breastplates of iron** suggest their **invulnerability**, highlighting their role as instruments of judgment.

- **Cultural and Historical Context:**

Locusts were common in the ancient world and were often seen as a **divine plague** (Joel 1:4). By using the image of locusts, John is connecting this judgment to a long-standing biblical tradition of judgment through **natural disasters**. However, the hybrid nature of these locusts also indicates a **supernatural aspect** of the judgment.

## **Verses 11-12: The King of the Locusts**

### Revelation 9:11-12 (ESV):

*"They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon. The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come."*

- **Greek Word Study:**
    - **"Abaddon" (Hebrew)** – *Abaddon* means “destruction” or “place of destruction.” It is a term associated with **ruin and death**.
    - **"Apollyon" (Greek)** – *Apollyon* means “the destroyer.” This is the name of the king of the locusts, who is likely a **demonic** entity, possibly representing Satan or a high-ranking demon under his authority.
  - **Theological Insight:**

The locusts are under the authority of **Apollyon/Abaddon**, a **demonic king** who personifies destruction. This figure is associated with the **bottomless pit**, the realm of evil. The mention of **two more woes** emphasizes that the judgments are escalating, and the severity of the **divine wrath** is increasing.
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## 2. Exegetical Breakdown of Revelation 9:13-21: The Sixth Trumpet – The Second Woe

### Verses 13-15: The Release of the Four Angels

#### Revelation 9:13-15 (ESV):

*"Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.' So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind."*

- **Greek Word Study:**
  - **"Euphrates" (Greek: *Euphratēs*)** – The **Euphrates River** was a significant boundary in the ancient Near East, often associated with **the eastern frontier** of Israel. In biblical history, the Euphrates was a place of **judgment** (cf. Jeremiah 46:10, Revelation 16:12).
- **Theological Insight:**

The **four angels** are released from their confinement to bring about a devastating judgment on the world, specifically killing a third of humanity. Their release marks a **precise fulfillment** of God's plan, with the timing being carefully orchestrated (“prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year”).

### Verses 16-19: The Army of Horsemen

#### Revelation 9:16-19 (ESV):

*"The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. And this is how I saw the horses in my vision: and those who rode them wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lion's heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths."*

- **Greek Word Study:**

- **"Breastplates" (Greek: *thorax*)** – The term *thorax* refers to armor protecting the chest. These breastplates symbolize the **protection** of the demonic horsemen, indicating their **strength** and **invulnerability**.
  - **Theological Insight:**  
The **horsemen** are described in terrifying terms, with **lion-like heads** and weapons that bring death and destruction through **fire, smoke, and sulfur**. These descriptions suggest that the judgment is both **supernatural** and **devastating**.
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## Verses 20-21: The People's Unrepentance

### Revelation 9:20-21 (ESV):

*"The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk; nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts."*

- **Greek Word Study:**
    - **"Repent" (Greek: *metanoeō*)** – The word *metanoeō* means to **change one's mind** or **turn away** from sin. It is used here to emphasize the **stubborn refusal** of humanity to turn to God, even in the face of extreme judgment.
  - **Theological Insight:**  
Despite the overwhelming and horrific judgments, the survivors **refuse to repent**. This shows the **hardness of human hearts** and the **spiritual blindness** that characterizes the rebellious world. Their refusal to turn from their sin further demonstrates their guilt before God.
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## 3. Questions for Application for Today's Christian Audience

1. **How do we view divine judgment?**  
The severity of God's judgment in Revelation 9 is staggering. How can we maintain a balance between God's love and His **holiness** and **justice**? How should this affect the way we approach sin in our lives?
  2. **How do we respond to the demonic and spiritual warfare?**  
The release of demonic forces in this chapter demonstrates the reality of **spiritual warfare**. How can Christians today be more aware of the **spiritual battle** and be prepared to stand firm in faith?
  3. **How do we respond to God's patience and mercy?**  
The refusal of people to repent even after suffering extreme judgment is a sobering reminder of the **hardness of the human heart**. How can we as Christians respond to God's patience and mercy with **humility** and **repentance** in our own lives?
  4. **What role does evangelism play in our understanding of these judgments?**  
As we read about the **unrepentant people** who are judged, what does it teach us about the **urgency of evangelism** and the need to share the gospel with a lost and dying world? How can we be more faithful in reaching others with the good news of Christ?
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## Conclusion

Revelation Chapter 9 describes the **horrific consequences** of sin and rebellion against God during the **Tribulation period**. It underscores the reality of divine judgment, the influence of demonic powers, and humanity's refusal to repent. For Christians today, this chapter calls us to take seriously God's holiness and justice, the reality of spiritual warfare, and the urgency of repentance and evangelism in a world that is heading toward judgment.