

From the Rapture to the Second Coming

Revelation 9: “Fifth and Sixth Trumpets”



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Let's Get Started

Interpreting the symbols is one reason why Chapter 9 is considered one of the most difficult chapters in Revelation. Unlike other chapters where many of the symbols are explained, this chapter offers few explanations for the symbols used.

John used symbols to describe events that will take place centuries after he lived. Some of these symbols are unusual, but that should not keep us from trying to understand this chapter's prophecy.

Remember This...

- ✓ The mystery of the seven stars and lampstands is this: *The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches (Revelation 1:20).*

Come Blow That Trumpet, Gabriel

Revelation 9:1 The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.

This is not a literal star. This is not even a star that will fall, but one that has already fallen, **Satan**. Revelation 9:2 refers to this star as a *he*. The prophet Isaiah said, *How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star (Satan), son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth* (Isaiah 14:12). **Satan** will be cast down indeed. He will be given the key to his subterranean home called the **Abyss** (Luke 8:30, 31). The **Abyss** is a place of torment where the worst of his demonic spirits are held and from where the **Antichrist** will come forth.

Some people think Jesus was referring to the **Abyss** when he said, *for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth* (Matthew 12:40).

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Fifth Trumpet Judgment
 - Fifth Trumpet Angel
 - *the fallen star (Satan) holds the key to the Abyss*

What Others are Saying:

David Jeremiah with C.C. Carlson: The "**pit**" that has been the home of the demons is the Greek word for "**abyss**." We have a picture of a vast depth approached by a shaft, whose top is covered. It is a sobering thought to realize that many of the demons of hell are not free to hurt us in this present age. Satan is managing to do a good job of destruction today without his entire war corps to back him up. ²¹

Darkness Over The Earth

Revelation 9:2 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.

Satan will descend and open the **Abyss**. When he does, a thick black smoke will rush out, covering the earth in darkness. The sky will be blackened, and the sun will be obscured.

Locusts Will Come

Revelation 9:3 And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth.

Locusts will come out of the smoke, but not locusts as we know them. They will not be the short-horned grasshoppers that have plagued people around the world. Instead they will be demon-possessed and have horrible features, part-animal and part-human.

These locusts will be like scorpions. They will have stingers to stab and poison their victims. Victims rarely die from the sting of a scorpion, but often turn black and blue and go into convulsions. The pain is unbearable. What could be worse than millions of demon-possessed locusts dive-bombing us like mosquitoes.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Locust
 - *part-animal and part-human*

Related Current Events

- ✓ Many locusts can make a sound by rubbing their ridged hind legs on their front wings. This causes the wings to vibrate, which makes the noise...Plagues of crop-destroying locusts have been known since ancient times. One swarm by the Red Sea was believed to cover an area of 2,000 square miles... Swarms of migrating locusts are sometimes so large they shut out the sunlight. They interfere with railroad trains, airplanes, and make automobile travel dangerous. ^{9:2}

Remember This...

- ✓ Jesus once visited the Gerasenes where he encountered a demon-possessed man living among the tombs. The demons begged Jesus not to cast them into the Abyss, so he cast them into a herd of pigs (Luke 8:26-33) instead. The demons would rather be cast into the pigs than cast into the Abyss.

Demon-Possessed Locusts

Revelation 9:4 They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

As intelligent as these demon-possessed locusts will most likely be, it's ironic that they will still be under God's control. They will only harm those *who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads* (Ephesians 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:21; the 144,000 Jews).

Even though locusts eat plants, God commands these locust not to harm the grass, plants, or trees. We may wonder why, but can only speculate how locusts would not eat their most staple foods. Perhaps it will be because the earth may be in such ecological chaos that any further damage by locusts would destroy it altogether. If the grass, plants, and trees were gone, the earth could no longer produce oxygen, and if there were no oxygen, God's people would not survive during the Millennium.

A Scorpion's Sting

Revelation 9:5 They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

These locusts will not kill but only torture for a period not to exceed five months. They will be the masters of suffering by inflicting pain similar to a scorpion's sting.

What Others are Saying:

David Hocking: While a scorpion sting is usually not fatal (although children often die from such a sting), it is painful. The venom affects the veins and nervous system. Normally the pain and discomfort last for several days. This plague lasts for five months. ⁹⁻³

Begging To Die

Revelation 9:6 During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

During these five months of the Tribulation Period, people will hurt so much they will want to die. Their nervous systems will become infected, parts of their bodies will swell and hurt, and other parts will fail to function altogether. Some will suffer seizures and convulsions and others will lose consciousness. Many will take medicines that fail to provide relief. Because of this torture, many will try to commit suicide, but God will not let them find death to end their suffering.

What Others are Saying:

J. Vernon McGee: It is not a laughing matter to reject Jesus Christ; it is not a simple thing to ignore him. People say there are so many important things in this life, I am willing to grant that many things take second, third, and fourth place, but the most important thing is your decision concerning Jesus Christ. ⁹⁻⁴

A Grasshopper? No, A Locust

Revelation 9:7–10 The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months.

How would you describe a locust? I'm sure you wouldn't say it has a body shaped like a horse, hair like that of a woman, and two eyes like a man? Of course you wouldn't, but that's what John saw.

The word *like* appears seven times and the word *resembled* appears one time in these verses. Obviously, John is using comparisons and symbolic language to describe what these demon-possessed locusts will look like.

They will have bodies shaped like a horse with a breastplate of iron. Something similar to a crown of gold will adorn their heads, and their faces will resemble that of a human. Their manes will be long like a woman's hair, and their teeth will be small and sharp like a lion's. They will have tails like a scorpion, and their wings will sound like an army of

chariots.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Locust
 - *shaped like a horse with a breastplate of iron*
 - *crown of gold on their heads*
 - *hair of a woman*
 - *teeth small and sharp like a lion*
 - *tails like a scorpion*
 - *wings that sound like an army of chariots*

What Others are Saying:

Oliver B. Greene: In Italy and some other foreign countries locusts are called "little horses" and some of them resemble a horse. ^{9:5}

J. Vernon McGee: Dr. Vincent makes this comment in his *Book on Revelation*: The likeness of a locust to a horse, especially to a horse equipped with armor, is so striking that the insect is named in German *heupferd* (hay-horse), and in Italian *cavaletta* (little horse). ^{9:6}

A Demon Army

Revelation 9:11 They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.

This **unnatural army** (Proverbs 30:27) of locusts will be under the direction of an angelic king. Some say this angelic king will be **Satan**, but it seems more likely he will be one of **Satan's** powerful assistants. **Satan** will not be one of the demons confined in the **Abyss**. He is the **Fallen Star** who opens the pit to let this angelic king and his ungodly army loose.

This must be one of **Satan's** top *henchmen*. His Hebrew name will be **Abaddon**, meaning *destruction*, and his Greek name **Apollyon**, meaning *destroyer*. Since his name is given in both Hebrew and Greek, he will probably be permitted to attack both Jew and Gentile alike. His name is given twice, so it is a double warning of his destructive powers.

What Others are Saying:

J. H. Melton: Most Bible students underestimate the power of the devil. To do so is a grievous error. The misery **Satan** has wrought in God's creation and in mankind should be reason enough to recognize his power and mind. ^{9:7}

One Down and Two to Go

Revelation 9:12 The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.

This verse is further proof that Revelation is sequence-oriented. The trumpet woes will not overlap. They will come in sequence. It is obvious why the angel called them *woes*,

tormented people, losing their minds and begging to die.

The Sixth Trumpet Angel

Revelation 9:13 The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God.

This is the altar of Chapter 8. It is where the angel mixes the incense with the prayers of the Tribulation Saints. The mixture rises to God and kindles his wrath. Then the sixth angel will stand up and sound his trumpet, and a voice will be heard coming from the horns of the altar that will speak for the martyred saints.

Something to Ponder

- ✓ The horns of the golden altar refer to horns like animal horns that were extensions or spires that were placed at the four corners of the altar (Exodus 27:1,2) of burnt offerings. Sometimes sacrificial animals were tied to the horns, and there are even two instances of men grabbing hold of the horns (1 Kings 1:49, 50; 2:28-34) when they thought they were going to be killed. They hoped to receive mercy.

The Great River

Revelation 9:14 It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

The Euphrates River (Genesis 2:14) first appears in Genesis. It was close to the Garden of Eden where Adam sinned and Cain slew Abel (Genesis 4:8). It is where the flood began, where the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) stood, where Babylon was built, and where world government and world religion began. It has long been associated with astrology, idolatry, demon worship, witchcraft, and other sordid sins. It is also widely recognized as the boundary between East and West.

Who are these four angels? The fact that they are bound indicates that they are four more fallen angels. Why they fell and are bound we are not told, but they appear to be powerful cohorts of Satan who may have had a part in the many sins committed along the Euphrates. In any case, the voice coming from the golden altar will tell the sixth angel to release these four angels.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Sixth Trumpet Judgment
 - Sixth Trumpet Angel
 - *four fallen angels*
 - from the Euphrates River
 - powerful cohorts of Satan

Four Fallen Angels

Revelation 9:15 And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day

and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind.

These four fallen angels will be restrained and kept ready for the precise month, day, and year of God's choosing. God's precise timing for the seven year Tribulation Period is laid out to the exact hour, minute, and second. When these four angels are released, the earth will lose one-third of its population. Since we have not witnessed such speedy and cataclysmic loss of life, it is safe to say Revelation has not yet been fully fulfilled.

What Others are Saying:

David Jeremiah with C.C. Carlson: Not since Noah has such a substantial proportion of the earth's population come under God's righteous judgment. ^{9:8}

Remember This...

- ✓ A few hundred million will leave in the Rapture.
- ✓ One-fourth of those who remain on earth (more than one billion people) will die when the fourth seal (the horseman called Death) is opened (Revelation 6:8).
- ✓ Others (number unknown) will die from war, natural disasters, and poisoned water.
- ✓ Then one-third of the remainder will die when these four angels are released (Revelation 9:15).
- ✓ This is why Jesus said, *If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive* (Matthew 24:22).

An Army of 200 Million

Revelation 9:16 The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.

This army of mounted troops must be a future army since it numbers more than the entire population of the earth in John's day. It is significant to note that today only one nation has the capability of fielding a 200 million man army, China.

The leaders of this army will be seduced by the four angels that will be released from the Euphrates River. God will allow these evil angels to convince the army's leaders to go on the rampage and kill a third of mankind. However, without God's permission, these angels would still be bound at the great river.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Jack Van Impe: China is a huge country, with a population of some 1.2 billion. However, the magnitude of this nation is also a two-edged sword for its leaders: the masses must be fed, clothed, and put to work. On the other hand, the sheer numbers of men, women, and children also make the country a loose cannon that could aim virtually any of its desires at anyone, anywhere, at any time. Chairman Mao once said that China could easily lose half its population and still win its battles with the enemy. ^{9:2}
- ✓ Hal Lindsey: I believe these 200 million troops are Red Chinese soldiers accompanied by other Eastern allies. It's possible that the industrial might of Japan will be united

with Red China. For the first time in history there will be a full invasion of the West by the Orient. [9-10](#)

- ✓ J. Vernon McGee: China, India, and Japan could easily put that many in the field tomorrow. [9-11](#)

Related Current Events

- ✓ The Associated Press carried an article by John H. Hightower on April 28, 1964 saying Red Chinese leaders estimate they have "200 million armed and organized militiamen." [9-12](#)

Like Fire-Breathing Dragons

Revelation 9:17 The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur.

This great force will have 200 million mounted troops. These troops and their horses (possibly machines) will have breastplates that will be fiery red, dark blue, and sulfur yellow. The heads of these horses will resemble the heads of lions, and out of their mouths will come fire, smoke, and sulfur (possibly explosions, projectiles, or missiles).

It is interesting to note that China's flag is red and yellow; that many of China's army wear dark blue uniforms; that China is commonly called *the yellow peril*; and that fire-breathing dragons with large heads are a favorite Chinese symbol.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Riders and Horses
 - *breastplates of fiery red, dark blue, and yellow sulfur*
- ✓ Horses
 - *heads resembling the heads of lions*
 - *out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur*

What Others are Saying:

Hal Lindsey: I believe he (John) is describing main battle tanks... rocket launchers... and a tremendous, horrible invasion. [9-13](#)

Warning!

- ✓ **No matter how much you learn about Revelation, never think you know it all. John's use of the words *like* and *resembled* indicate he is using symbols to describe the future, so how can anyone claim to know for certain when and how things will come to pass?**

Where Is The Antichrist?

Revelation 9:18 A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and

sulfur that came out of their mouths.

He promised world peace? But in reality, without the Prince of Peace, there will be no peace. This army of 200 million will do what the demon-possessed locusts couldn't do, kill, until a third of mankind is gone.

What Others are Saying:

Hal Lindsey: John describes the means by which one-third of mankind will be annihilated as *fire, smoke, and brimstone* (kjv). All of these things are a part of a thermonuclear war; smoke represents the immense clouds of radioactive fallout and debris, while brimstone is simply melted earth and building materials. [9-14](#)

J. Vernon McGee: This terrible decimation of the earth's population seemed incongruous with all of history until the atomic bomb fell upon Hiroshima. Since then men have been using more frightening language than that of Revelation. They now talk of the total decimation of earth's inhabitants. [9-15](#)

What Are They?

Revelation 9:19 The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

What these will be is anyone's guess. Some believe they are horses as we know them. Others think they are demon monstrosities, and still others think they are tanks, helicopters, or some type of future weapon. We can only speculate on what they really are, but one thing is for sure, they will be deadly.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Horses Tails
 - *like snakes with heads*
 - *inflict injury*

What Others are Saying:

Ed Hindson: The Apostle John had been transported, in the Spirit, down through the canyon of time and the halls of human history to witness an event so distant in the future that it was difficult for him to describe what he saw. [9-16](#)

Warning!

- ✓ **These things are of the future. They may already exist, but they are unlike anything we would recognize today.**

The First Two Sins

Revelation 9:20 The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshipping demons, and idols of gold,

silver, bronze, stone, and wood, idols that cannot see or hear or walk.

Those remaining on earth at this time will persist in their sins, refusing to repent, and continuing to reject Jesus. Two of the six sins that will be prominent during the Tribulation Period are demon worship (**Satanism**) and idolatry. The **Satanic Bible** will be widely read, and the **Church of Satan** will fill its pews. Goddess worship and witchcraft will be the rage of the politically correct. Statues and images of the **Antichrist** will be common, and multitudes will bow before them. These nations will soon learn what happens to those who forget God (Psalm 9:17).

What Others are Saying:

Hal Lindsey: Ten years ago I couldn't imagine how people with today's education and enlightenment could do such a thing. But in the last few years we've seen the greatest turning to witchcraft, Satan worship, and occultism since the days of ancient Rome. [9-17](#)

John Hagee: Hillary Clinton has brought witchcraft into the White House, lending her name and influence to medium and so-called "psychic spiritualist" Jean Houston.

Hillary and Jean have met together on numerous occasions in numerous places including several meetings in the private quarters of the White House. Houston claims to have a mystical link with the ancient Greek goddess Athena. The remarkable relationship between Jean and Hillary received national publicity when the news leaked that Jean Houston was leading Hillary into "**imaginary conversations**" with the dead (Deuteronomy 18:10-11), while the President of the United States sat by looking on approvingly. [9-18](#)

Jack Van Impe: There is widespread—even rampant—interest in and acceptance of Eastern religions, extrasensory perception, astrology, witchcraft, and false prophets. [9-19](#)

Related Current Events

- ✓ According to the January 23, 1995 edition of Time, in order to revive and improve his political image after the November 1994 election, President Clinton is evidently consulting with several New Age gurus. The New Age religion encompasses many things including: that God is us, situation ethics, holistic health, Jesus Christ is just one of many messiahs, animism and nature worship, and reincarnation... [9-20](#)
- ✓ According to Signs of Our Times a federal judge has ruled that a convicted kidnapper can perform satanic rituals in his prison cell. The prisoner, Robert James Howard, is serving a ten-year sentence in a federal prison for auto theft and abduction. The judge, U.S. District Judge Edward Nottingham who declared the federal prison rule that bars devil worship to be unconstitutional, wrote in his recent decision, "We ought to give the devil his due." [9-21](#)

Revelation 9:21 Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality, or their thefts.

Four more sins of the Tribulation Period are murder, magic arts, sexual immorality, and theft. It is apparent that unbelievers will be determined to trample on the laws of God and refuse to repent.

Depraved men and women will kill God's children without fear of punishment. Drug abuse, astrology, fortune telling, signs and omens, and theft will be worldwide. The world will move from an over-tolerance of perversion and sexual immorality to a blatant promotion of these sins.

What Others are Saying:

John Hagee: Instead of seeking God's wisdom, the "New Age" religions search for spiritual answers from alien beings, fortune tellers, and demons. Environmental pagans are now worshipping Mother Earth. Increasingly they call on Gaia, the ancient earth goddess who is only a recycled version of **Baal** (Hosea 9:10), the pagan god of Biblical history. [9-22](#)

Grant R. Jeffrey: Modern criminologists, sociologists, and liberal politicians claim that the crime wave is caused by society, poverty, and poor career opportunities. This premise underlies the appalling short prison sentences handed out to violent criminals. Rather than demanding that individuals take responsibility for their choices and actions, criminal behavior is blamed on social problems. [9-23](#)

Jack Van Impe: Moral chaos in America is tearing apart the fabric of our society—with no end in sight. Drug addiction, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse are becoming enemies in America, and throughout the world, West and East. Crime, riots, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, mental illness, illegitimacy, and other social problems are also on the rampage. [9-24](#)

Related Current Events

- ✓ The National Center for Policy Analysis reports that crime in the United States has increased 300 percent in 30 years, making our nation the most violent one in history. In 1992, 24 million Americans were victims of crime. There is now a rape every five minutes, a robbery every 46 seconds, and a murder every 21 minutes.
- ✓ Gang violence (a prelude to anarchy) is increasing, as well as domestic violence (a prelude to moral degeneration). But what about justice? Punishment for major crimes meted out by our courts is as follows:
 - Rape—average jail time, 60 days
 - Armed robbery—average jail time, 23 days
 - Arson—average jail time, 6 days and 17 hours
 - Car theft—average jail time, one day and 12 hours
 - Murder—average jail time, 20 months [9-25](#)

The Greatest Mass Killings in History:

China (Mao's Cultural Revolution, 1966–76)	20 million
U.S.S.R. (Stalin's reign of terror, 1933–45)	20 million
Europe (the Holocaust, 1933–45)	11 million
Pakistan (reprisals against Bengalis, 9 months in 1971)	3 million
Cambodia (the Khmer Rouge killing fields, 1975–79)	1.6 million
Rwanda (Tutsis, 3 months in 1994)	1 million
Indonesia (killings of Communists and Chinese, 1965–66)	500,000
Bosnia (ethnic cleansing, 1992–94)	200,000 ⁹⁻²⁶

- ✓ As FBI Director Louis J. Freeh puts it: "the ominous increase in juvenile crime coupled with population trends portend future crime and violence at nearly unprecedented levels." ⁹⁻²⁷

Study Questions

- ✓ For what purpose would God allow an invasion of demon-possessed locusts?
- ✓ What will be the human characteristics of the demon-possessed locusts?
- ✓ What is the meaning and the significance of the locust king's Hebrew and Greek names?
- ✓ Who asked for the release of the four angels at the river Euphrates?
- ✓ What are some of the Tribulation Period sins?

[Go to Answers](#)

Chapter Wrap-up

- ✓ When the fifth trumpet is sounded **Satan** will be given the key to the **Abyss**. The sun and sky will be darkened from the smoke pouring out of the **Abyss**. ([Revelation 9:1, 2](#))
- ✓ Demon-possessed locusts will come out of the **Abyss** to torment mankind for five months. The pain from the locusts will be so bad that men will seek death, but God will not let them find it. ([Revelation 9:3–6](#))
- ✓ After the sixth trumpet is sounded the four angels that have been bound at the Euphrates will be released to kill a third of mankind. ([Revelation 9:13–15](#))
- ✓ An army of 200 million mounted troops will kill a third mankind through the three plagues of fire, smoke, and sulfur that will come out of their horses' mouths. ([Revelation 9:16–19](#))
- ✓ Those who are not killed by these plagues will still refuse to repent of their sins. Instead, they will cling to their idols and demon worship. ([Revelation 9:20, 21](#))