

## THE FIFTH AND SIXTH TRUMPETS (REV 9)

Read Revelation 9:1-21 (NIV)

### **\*\*What Scholars Say\*\***

**REV 9:[1] *The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I (John) saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.***

#### **THE FIFTH TRUMPET (9:1-11)**

**VERSE 1 - REV 9:[1] *The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I (John) saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth.*** "A star" sometimes signifies one in a high position or even a supernatural being. "There shall come a star out of Jacob" (Num 24:17); Angels are called "stars" (Job. 38:7); in Isa 14:12 we have Satan referred to as "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" The ***star that had fallen from the sky to the earth.*** It seems, therefore, that Satan himself is referred to by this symbol. The words **he** in verses 2 and **king** in verse 11, show that this is a person rather than a literal **star**.

***The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.*** Satan or this demonic angel was given a **key to the shaft of the Abyss** or the bottomless pit. The **Abyss** or bottomless pit is a place in the depths of the earth where evil spirits were thought to be imprisoned (Luke 8:31). Satan then is pictured as opening the lid or the door (that can be closed or locked) to this Abyss, so that demons can be released to inflict men and women on the earth.

**VERSES 2–4 *Rev. 9:[2] When he (Satan) 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. [3] And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. [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.***

Here the star (Satan) used his key to allow demons in the Abyss to come out and afflict the earth. Visually this event was represented as a great **smoke**, darkening the **sky** and the **sun**. **Out of the smoke** came creatures called **locusts** with the deadly sting of **scorpions**. While they were harmless to natural vegetation and trees, they stung **people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads**.

**VERSES 5-11 *Rev. 9: [5] They were not given power to kill them (mankind), but only to torture them for five months.*** (five months fits the approximate lifespan of a normal kind of locust) ***And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. [6] During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.***

**REV 9:[7] The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. [8] Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. [9] 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. [10] They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. [11] They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.**

**Rev. 9:7-11.** The description of **the locusts** compared to **horses prepared for battle** is awesome: **human faces...crowns of gold... women's hair...lions' teeth**, iron like **breastplates**, and **wings** that sounded like horse-drawn **chariots rushing into battle**.

Obviously John was describing what he saw but did not interpret each characteristic. The picture is one of Satan's supernatural power and the demon world especially in relation to unbelievers.

The demons had a ruler **over them** whose **Hebrew** name is **Abaddon** and whose **Greek** name is **Apollyon**. Both words mean "destroyer." Though Satan is sometimes portrayed as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14), here Satan and his demons are seen for what they really are, destroyers of people.

As Christ described it, this will be a time of "great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world..." (Matt 24:21).

**REV 9:[12] The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.**

#### **THE SIXTH TRUMPET (Rev. 9:12-21)**

**Rev.9:12.** The fifth trumpet described as **the first woe** is now to be followed by the two final trumpets, also called "**woes**" (compare, Rev.8:13).

**REV 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. [14] It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." [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.**

**Rev. 9:13-15.** At the sounding of the **sixth trumpet** John **heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God**. The **sixth angel** was then instructed to **release the four angels...bound** by the **Euphrates** River. These **four angels** are clearly demons, as holy angels are not bound. The release of these four is timed to a particular **hour and day and month and year**, and they **kill a third** of the world's population.

The fourth seal (Rev 6:7-8) resulted in a fourth of the earth's people being killed. Here a third of the earth is put to death. These two judgments alone would account for the death of half the earth's population. This fact is to be taken literally as it confirms the statement by Daniel (Dan 12:1) and the words of Christ (Matt 24:21) that the world would end in the death of all mankind if it were not stopped by His second coming (Matt 24:22). **Matt. 24:[22] And except those days**

*should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

**Rev. 9: [16] The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.**

**Rev.9:16.** The loosing of the four angels resulted in releasing an army of **200 million...mounted troops**. Even if taken symbolically, this figure clearly represents an overwhelming military force.

Some interpreters say these millions are demons. These mounted troops, those who ride these war horses, are not identified by Scripture. They could be literal soldiers or they could be demonic forces. The fact that John **heard** the **number**, as obviously he could not visually count 200 million men, seems to lend credence to the concept that this number is literal.

**REV 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. [18] A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. [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.**

**Rev. 9:17-19.** The horses and their riders had **breastplates** of **red, dark blue, and yellow**. The lion like **heads of the horses** imply something other than natural horses. Furthermore, John declared, **out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur**. Some have taken this as a picture of modern warfare including the use of armed vehicles such as tanks. In this case of the riders of the horses, the text does not say whether they are human or demonic beings. Whether symbolic or literal, the passage certainly implies terrible destruction and an awesome invading force. The results are twice stated and include the death of **a third of mankind** (vv. 15,18).

Revelation 6:8 began with 25 percent of the world's population being killed. Now, a third of the remaining 75 percent will be killed. So with the completion of this judgment, nearly half the world's population will have perished.

**REV 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 worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood--idols that cannot see or hear or walk. [21] Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.**

**Rev. 9:20-21.** Though the judgment was devastating and obviously from God, it did not bring men to repentance, and they continued to worship **demons** and their representation in **idols** and kept on murdering and participating in the occult (magic arts, pharmakeion, from which is derived "pharmacies"; cf. Gal 5:20; Rev 18:23; 21:8; 22:15), their sexual immorality, and thievery.

The trumpet judgments clearly grew worse and more devastating. In spite of the clear evidence of God's power to judge the world, no evidence was given John that there would be

any change of heart on the part of the great mass of humanity. Though the sixth judgment produced fear, it appears that most, if not all, refused to repent.  
(Testimony of Candy)

### **\*\*Questions\*\***

1. What did John see at the sounding of the fifth trumpet? (9:1)
2. What creatures came out of the Abyss? (9:2-3)
3. What special powers did the creatures from the Abyss have? (9:4-6)
4. What did the creatures from the Abyss look like? (9:7-10)
5. What events transpired when the sixth angel blew his trumpet? (9:13-19)
6. How were the few human survivors affected by these horrible plagues and catastrophes? (9:20-21)
7. Why do you think the survivors in the last days will still refuse to turn to God—especially after seeing the horrible judgment all around them?

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