

Revelation 9

I. Revelation 9:1–2

The Fifth Trumpet Begins: The Fallen Star and the Opening of the Abyss

A. The symbolism of the “star fallen from heaven,” the “key,” and the “shaft of the Abyss”

1. John sees a “star” that had fallen to earth, and the star is given a key to open the Abyss. In Revelation, “stars” can symbolize more than astronomy. They can represent _____ or _____, especially when a star is described as acting like a person. The key signals delegated authority. The star does not _____ the key; it is _____.
2. The Abyss (often translated “bottomless pit”) functions in Jewish apocalyptic imagination as a place of confinement for _____ spiritual powers. Opening it unleashes smoke that darkens sun and air, a picture of oppressive spiritual darkness and widespread _____ or _____.

B. Interpretation Option 1: The fallen star is a fallen angel or _____ figure (common in many readings)

1. The star is interpreted as a personal, evil spiritual being, either Satan himself or a high-ranking demonic agent. The “fallen” language suggests a connection to _____. The key is then the permission granted for a limited release of _____ forces.
2. Strength: Fits the personal action in the text and coheres with Revelation’s broader portrayal of hostile spiritual powers.
3. Limitation: Revelation does not explicitly name the star “_____” here, so interpreters should avoid over-certainty.

C. Interpretation Option 2: The fallen star is a _____ angel assigned to open the Abyss (minority view)

1. Some interpret the star as an _____ angel who carries out God’s judgment by opening the Abyss, emphasizing that the key is given and that all judgment proceeds under divine sovereignty.

2. Strength: Preserves the emphasis on divine permission and avoids equating “falling” with moral _____ automatically.
3. Limitation: The imagery of falling plus the _____ results makes this harder to sustain for many readers.

D. Interpretation Option 3: The fallen star represents a _____, _____, or _____ that triggers spiritual darkness (preterist and historicist applications)

1. Some preterist and historicist’s approaches treat the “star” as symbolic of a _____ or _____ whose rise or fall results in widespread corruption and torment.
2. Historicist traditions often map this to major religious or political movements across time, treating the star as a historical _____ rather than a literal being.
3. Strength: Fits a common prophetic pattern where stars can symbolize rulers or authorities.
4. Limitation: Specific identifications _____ widely and can become speculative.

E. Most balanced conclusion:

The fallen star functions as an authorized agent, likely personal in the vision, who opens a realm of confined judgment. Whether one reads the star as a _____ being, a commissioned _____, or a symbolic _____, the text’s emphasis is that the release is permitted, limited, and serves a judicial purpose.

II. Revelation 9:3–6

The Locust Torment: Limited Harm, Targeted Judgment, and Five Months

A. The symbolism of locusts that do not eat vegetation and scorpion-like torment

1. These “locusts” behave unlike _____ locusts. They are explicitly told not to harm _____ or _____, but to harm _____ who do not have God’s seal on their foreheads. That reversal signals that the locusts are symbolic or supernatural, not ordinary insects.
2. Scorpion imagery communicates intense _____ and sustained _____ rather than immediate death. The judgment is torment,

not annihilation, and it is restricted to a defined time period of “_____ months.”

B. The significance of the seal of God as protection

1. The locusts are forbidden to harm those with God’s seal. This links back to Revelation 7 and reinforces that God’s people are _____ as belonging to Him in a contested world.

C. Interpretation Option 1: Demonic torment as spiritual and psychological affliction (idealist and many eclectic readings)

1. The locusts are read as demonic forces unleashed to torment the unsealed, portraying spiritual _____, _____, and _____ that follows idolatry. Koester highlights that these locusts invert nature and represent a consortium of terror from “the world below,” led by Abaddon/Apollyon.
2. Strength: Fits the Abyss origin, the unnatural behavior, and the explicit spiritual leadership language.
3. Limitation: Requires explaining how the torment manifests in lived experience without turning the image into mere abstraction.

D. Interpretation Option 2: Human armies portrayed with demonic imagery (preterist and some historicist approaches)

1. Some readings interpret the locusts as symbolic of _____ forces, such as Parthian threats in the East (noted because of cavalry associations in the region) or other military terrors, described with apocalyptic imagery to reveal the _____ dimension behind war.
2. Historicist readings often connect the locusts with historical armies or movements (frequently the rise of Islam in older Protestant schemes), reading “five months” as symbolic time. A detailed study of how these identifications developed exists in _____ and historicist scholarship.
3. Strength: Connects locust imagery to prophetic tradition where locusts can symbolize invading armies (for example, Joel imagery).
4. Limitation: Revelation’s locusts are explicitly from the Abyss and target humans rather than crops, which pushes many interpreters toward a _____ reading rather than a purely military one.

E. Interpretation Option 3: Futurist readings ranging from demonic beings to future military technology

1. Many futurists read the locusts as literal demonic entities released in a _____ tribulation. Others propose futuristic military technology. A common scholarly caution is that the text itself points away from simplistic modern-tech identifications; the locusts are presented as an ultimate demonic _____, not _____.
2. Strength: Takes seriously the supernatural origin and the end-time intensity of the “woe.”
3. Limitation: Technology identifications tend to be speculative and quickly _____ themselves, while the chapter’s symbols are designed to function across contexts.

F. Most balanced conclusion:

1. The locust plague depicts a divinely limited torment that falls on the unsealed, whether understood as demonic _____, _____ mediated through human forces, or a final tribulation _____. The five-month limit emphasizes restraint and warning rather than total destruction.

III. Revelation 9:7–10

The Locust Description: Hybrid War Imagery and Apocalyptic Terror

A. The symbolism of the locusts’ appearance

1. The locusts are described with a composite of _____ and monstrous traits: crowns like _____, faces like _____, hair like women’s hair, teeth like _____, breastplates like _____, wings sounding like chariots rushing to battle, tails like scorpions.
2. _____ creatures are a standard apocalyptic device. They communicate that the threat is more than _____. The imagery fuses seduction and terror, intelligence and brutality, invulnerability and pain.

B. Interpretation Option 1: Apocalyptic portrayal of demonic forces that mimic imperial power (idealist emphasis)

1. The locusts embody a kind of counterfeit dominion. They look _____, armored, and organized, yet their authority is limited and their mission is torment. The hybrid features communicate spiritual chaos and _____ of creation’s order. Koester notes the deliberate

contrast with natural locusts: these have a leader and torture people rather than devour plants.

2. Strength: Explains why the locusts are described as unnatural composites and why their power is like scorpions.
3. Limitation: Requires clear _____ so the symbols are not flattened into vague generalities.

C. Interpretation Option 2: Symbolic depiction of terrifying warfare and psychological terror (preterist and historicist applications)

1. The warlike features (armor, chariots sound, crowns) can be read as a way of portraying the terror of _____ and _____, especially for communities living under imperial pressure.
2. Historicist systems often map details to specific military movements and weaponry in a given _____.
3. Strength: Takes the militarized texture seriously and connects with prophetic use of locusts as army imagery.
4. Limitation: Detail-by-detail matching tends to become forced, and Revelation's hybrids are designed to be _____ rather than mechanically descriptive.

D. Most balanced conclusion:

1. The locust description functions as apocalyptic war-terror imagery. It communicates an intelligent, organized, painful judgment that feels _____, while the text continues to stress limits set by God.

IV. Revelation 9:11–12

The King of the Locusts: Abaddon/Apollyon and the First Woe

A. The symbolism of having a king and the meaning of Abaddon/Apollyon

1. Proverbs notes that natural locusts have no _____, but these locusts do, which signals an unnatural, organized, and intentionally _____ plague.
2. The king is “the angel of the Abyss,” named Abaddon (Hebrew) and Apollyon (Greek), both meaning “Destroyer.”

B. Interpretation Option 1: Abaddon/Apollyon is a high-ranking demonic ruler, not Satan himself (common scholarly judgment)

1. Abaddon in the Old Testament can be associated with destruction or the realm of _____, and Revelation presents the name as a personal destroyer who rules the Abyss-locusts.
2. Some interpreters argue Satan is distinct in Revelation's narrative and should not be automatically equated with Abaddon.
3. Strength: Preserves distinctions Revelation later makes between Satan, the _____, and other destructive _____.
4. Limitation: Some readers find it difficult to keep multiple hostile figures distinct.

C. Interpretation Option 2: Abaddon/Apollyon as a symbolic name for Satan's destructive role (minority view)

1. This approach treats the title "_____" as fitting Satan's character, so the king is read as Satan in function, even if not explicitly named.
2. Strength: Highlights the _____ of evil's destructive agency.
3. Limitation: Risks collapsing Revelation's carefully differentiated cast of antagonists.

D. Most balanced conclusion:

1. Abaddon/Apollyon is best treated as the named ruler of the Abyss-plague, a destroyer figure who embodies organized demonic judgment, whether or not one equates him directly with Satan. The "first woe" label reinforces that this is _____ judgment, not merely another disaster.

V. Revelation 9:13–19

The Sixth Trumpet: The Four Angels at the Euphrates and the Cavalry of Death

A. The symbolism of the voice from the golden altar and the four horns

1. A voice comes from the four horns of the golden altar before God. This ties the sixth trumpet to the _____-and-_____ imagery of chapter 8. Judgment proceeds from the worship space, emphasizing moral and judicial _____ rather than chaos.

B. The symbolism of the Euphrates as _____, threat-line, and _____ imagery

1. The Euphrates functioned as a major boundary marker in the ancient world, especially for the Roman Empire's eastern frontier. It could

symbolize the edge of _____ control and the looming threat from beyond.

C. The release of the four angels and the precise timing statement

1. Four angels are “bound” at the Euphrates and released at a divinely appointed “hour and day and month and year.” The binding suggests _____ and _____ until a set moment, and the precise time phrasing emphasizes that judgment is _____, not _____.

D. Interpretation Option 1: Demonic powers released for end-time slaughter (futurist emphasis)

1. The four bound angels are read as evil spiritual beings released to lead a massive judgment that kills a _____ of humanity.
2. The cavalry is often read as demonic or supernatural given the grotesque description and the _____.
3. Strength: Fits the binding language and the intensification from _____ to _____.
4. Limitation: Requires explaining how to read “two myriads of myriads” (200 million) and the imagery of _____ in a modern context.

E. Interpretation Option 2: Symbolic portrayal of invading forces from the East, framed through apocalyptic language (preterist emphasis)

1. The Euphrates can evoke first-century fears of eastern enemies (often associated with Parthia in the Roman imagination). The vision then uses apocalyptic imagery to portray _____-terror and divine judgment.
2. Some academic discussions connect Euphrates imagery in Revelation to _____ fears and legends about eastern threats.
3. Strength: Preserves first-century resonance and explains why Euphrates functions as a meaningful boundary symbol.
4. Limitation: The cavalry’s monstrous features and the binding of angels still push many interpreters toward a stronger supernatural dimension than a strictly _____ invasion.

F. Interpretation Option 3: Historicist identifications with successive empires and wars (classic historicist approach)

1. Historicist readings often map the sixth trumpet to later historical developments, frequently associating it with Ottoman Turkish expansion,

reading the time statement _____. This approach is documented and analyzed in historicist scholarship on Revelation 9.

2. Strength: Provides a coherent historical scheme within the historicist framework and attempts to connect _____ to major world events.
3. Limitation: Highly dependent on the chosen timeline model and vulnerable to competing identifications.

G. The 200 million horsemen and the fire, smoke, and sulfur

1. The number is enormous and may function as a rhetorical way of depicting an _____ host rather than a _____ census.
2. Fire, smoke, and sulfur evoke hellish judgment imagery and total terror, whether one reads the cavalry as demonic, symbolic of warfare, or literal.

H. Most balanced conclusion:

The sixth trumpet portrays a divinely timed release of restrained judgment that brings mass death. Whether read as _____ assault, _____ invasion, or historically mapped _____ conflict, the text emphasizes God's control over timing and scope, including the "one third" limitation.

VI. Revelation 9:20–21

The Refusal to Repent: Idolatry, Demonic Worship, and the Catalogue of Sins

A. The purpose of the trumpets as warning and the tragedy of hardened rebellion

1. The chapter ends by stating that those who survived did not repent. This clarifies the trumpet cycle's function. These judgments are not simply _____; they are warnings meant to expose _____ and summon a change of allegiance.

B. The catalogue of sins and its cultural meaning

1. Worship of demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood: Revelation frames idolatry as demonic-backed _____ worship and points to the absurdity of worshiping what cannot see, hear, or walk.
2. Murders, sorceries, sexual immorality, and thefts: the list names _____ violence, _____ deception (often linked

to pharmakeia, practices associated with magic or occult manipulation),
_____ disorder, and _____ injustice.

C. Interpretation variations: what “repentance” means here

D. Option 1: Repentance as _____ from idol worship to worship of God and the Lamb (primary sense)

E. Option 2: Repentance as _____ transformation where violence, exploitation, and moral corruption are rejected

F. Option 3: Repentance as recognition that judgment is from God and submission to His rule, not merely fear of _____

G. Most balanced conclusion:

Revelation 9 ends with a severe pastoral warning: even overwhelming judgments do not automatically produce _____. The deepest issue is _____ and _____. Without a change of worship, the human heart often _____ to disaster without submitting to God.