

**The Revelation to John  
Chapter Nine  
The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets**

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The Fifth Trumpet

**Rev 9:1 “And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.”**

The star has a pronoun attached so the star is a being rather than an actual star. We call people “stars” such as movie stars, music stars, etc so such a connotation is not unusual for us. In the first chapter of Revelation, the stars are identified as the angels of the churches (Rev 1:20) so we certainly should expect this star to be an angel. This being is given the key to the bottomless pit and some people have identified this person with Satan. Some people have even said that this is the time when Satan was cast out of heaven. However in all previous cases the angels involved in these tribulations are working for God. Of course Satan can be permitted by God to do His bidding. Certainly this star is not the fifth angel but the key is given to him so God is still the cause. We just do not have enough information to identify this “star” other than to identify him as an angel under the authority of God.

**Rev 9:2 “And he opened the bottomless pit; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.**

**Rev 9:3 And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.”**

The “star” used the key given him to open the bottomless pit and a huge amount of smoke came from the pit. The smoke was so dense and perverse that it darkened the light from the sun and caused the visibility to be very poor. But out of the smoke came some fierce beings. At first John interpreted them to be locusts but we will see in a few verses that they are very unusual locusts! These beings were given an awesome power such as given to scorpions. The word “power” often means authority and it was given to them so it was not something inherent in them.

**Rev 9:4 “And they were told that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.**

**Rev 9:5 And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.**

**Rev 9:6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; and they will long to die and death flees from them.”**

The activity of these beings was limited in that they could not damage any grass of green thing on the earth and no trees. Real locusts would feast upon what they are told to not damage. However they were told to attack men who were not sealed by God. We are not told who made the command to the beings but God is in control. We may remember that God's people were previously not damaged by real locusts:

*Ex 8:22 "But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of insects will be there, in order that you may know that I, the Lord, am in the midst of the land.*

*Ex 8:23 "And I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall occur." "*

*Ex 8:24 Then the Lord did so. And there came great swarms of insects into the house of Pharaoh and the houses of his servants and the land was laid waste because of the swarms of insects in all the land of Egypt."*

The attacks were to torment and not to kill but the torment was so severe that people wanted to die to escape the torment. A scorpion sting is very painful but only rarely deadly so John made that comparison. The time of the torment was five months. People have given various interpretations of the time period but it is likely that the meaning is just for a relatively short duration. When John states that death flees from them he is stating that God is in complete control and He does not even let the people die at this time.

**Rev 9:7 "And the appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.**

**Rev 9:8 And they had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions.**

**Rev 9:9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle.**

**Rev 9:10 And they have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months."**

I remember reading many years ago that some interpreters said that these could be helicopters but John would not have had the understanding to so identify them. However that interpretation seems very unlikely. We do now see that these are not actual locusts. These are demons whose appearance is terrifying and is part of the torment being heaped on mankind. Remember that the word mankind refers to people who are not God's servants. Remember also that all of God's bondservants had been sealed so that these beings were not allowed to torment them. The power in their tails is just enough to allow them to torment mankind for the five month period of time. These demons indeed are awful in appearance: they were like horses, they have something that appeared like a gold crown on their heads (not a real crown), their faces are like human faces, they had long hair like women of that time, they had fierce teeth like lions, they had breastplates like iron, they had tails like scorpions with stingers, and their wings made very loud noise like many horses rushing to battle. The loud noise would have frozen the men being attacked

so that they were easier to torment initially. There is a hawk called a bull hawk that circles over its prey and then makes a loud noise like a bull as it swoops toward the prey that is frozen by hearing that loud noise from above and not knowing what is happening or where to run. This is unlike modern jet fighters for when you hear the noise the plane is either past you or way ahead of the sound. Any comparison to modern warfare implements is paled by the actual beings seen by John. These are awful demons whose appearance and sound are frightening and their “sting” is very painful.

**Rev 9:11 “They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.”**

This is not a mindless mass of horrible beings but a group that has a commander. This leader is the angel of the abyss and this could mean an angel from the abyss or the angel who opened the abyss. Abaddon is a transliteration of the Hebrew word that means destruction and Apollyon means destroyer. Some have identified this angel as Satan but his abode is in heaven until he is later cast into the abyss. Some have also identified this angel as a servant of Christ. The language seems to indicate that this angel is actually from the abyss and so is probably either Satan or a high-ranking servant of Satan, but nevertheless under the authority of God.

**Rev 9:12 “The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.”**

This was a horrible event but now John is told that two woes are coming. This is an awful scene for John to witness and he must have been terrified to be told that more was coming! Nobody had been killed during this event but many people had been wounded in some terrible ways and many people had wished to die rather than face these awful beings that attacked them.

### The Sixth Trumpet

**Rev 9:13 “And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,**

**Rev 9:14 one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”**

**Rev 9:15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they might kill a third of mankind.”**

The wrath of God is now pouring forth to kill one third of the people who are not His bondservants. God always warns mankind but a day will come when His patience and mercy are no longer offered even as His endurance of evil stopped previously:

*Jer 44:22 “So the Lord was no longer able to endure it, because of the evil of your deeds, because of the abominations which you have committed; thus your land has become a ruin, an object of horror and a curse, without an inhabitant, as it is this day.”*

In this instance He is not killing a majority of the people but a huge number of people will be killed. The remaining people will not repent without the direct intervention of God into their hearts. The owner of the voice is not identified but we could surmise that Jesus is the One giving the order. The voice comes from the altar before God so we know that the order has the authority of God. The order could also be resulting from the pleas of the martyred people for justice as we saw earlier.

The four angels were bound and “good” angels are never referred to as bound so these are probably demonic angels. When we are told that they had been prepared for the precise time of their release we know that God has this time planned from before the foundation of the world. The Euphrates is the western boundary of the promised land so that could mean that these demons were kept outside of the promised land until this precise time so that they were not allowed to kill in this manner before now.

**Rev 9:16 “And the number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.”**

I remember many years ago some interpreters telling us that it was remarkable that China had an army of 200,000,000 and people being awed that perhaps now the end was coming. Well, many years have passed and we are still here. The Greek actually literally interprets as two myriads of myriads. When one multiplies 10,000 times 10,000 times 2 the answer is 200,000,000 as most Bibles quote. When the word myriad is used as an exact number it means 10,000 but often it just indicates a huge number. These are God’s servants sent out to pour forth more of His wrath on mankind.

**Rev 9:17 “And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone.”**

**Rev 9:18 “A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths.**

**Rev 9:19 For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads; and with them they do harm.”**

What fierce foes God sent to mankind! Fire, smoke and brimstone are often connected with the place called Hell and that is where these people who were killed were going. One-fourth of mankind was killed in the fourth trumpet event and one-third was killed now. That death toll is over one-half of mankind not counting deaths from other seal and trumpet judgments. So now more than a billion people have been killed! The people were killed by incineration, smoke inhalation, and the gas given off by the heated brimstone. What an awful mass of corpses to stench up the world! He also tells us that their power was in the horses’ mouths and tails. Certainly this total description of the attackers means that the assault is by a supernatural forces and not some country’s army.

**Rev 9:20 “And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of**

**gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk;  
Rev 9:21 and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.”**

This sounds horrible but it is of no surprise. They were spared being killed so the present threat is gone and they remain entrenched in their anti-God state. We know from the story about Lazarus that even a visit from someone raised from the dead to testify to a non-believer will not be met with conversion for the hard-hearted people:

*Luke 16:30 “But he said, 'No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'”*

*Luke 16:31 “But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'”*

Sin was still rampant on earth in the form of: worshiping gods and demons, violent crimes like murder, use of drugs, sexual sins, and thefts. Jude prophesied that God will judge such insanity:

*Jude14 “And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones,*

*Jude15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’”*

Judgment indeed will come! We just saw the movie “Expelled, No Intelligence Allowed” and heard the academic elite say some awful things about God. One day they will be judged also.

We will not hear about the seventh trumpet until Rev 11:15-19.