

REVELATION: CHAPTER 9

Rev 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

- **The fifth warning sounded.**

- star- similar to 8:10. Isaiah 14 refers to the king of Babylon. Here the star refers to Satan and his forces (*v. 11*). See also Dan 10. Jesus witnessed Satan's fall in the beginning (*Lk 10:18*) but here (*according to "the depths of Satan"-2:24*) it represents the consequence of his influence on Jerusalem.

Gk.792-ἀστὴρ-astēr-as-tare'

Probably from the base of G4766; a *star* (as **strrown over the sky**), literally or figuratively: - star. (*emp. added*)

- heaven- Gk.3772-sky.

- given- (*from Christ- 1:18*) permitted (*as part of God's plan*) just as God permitted Pharaoh to rule in order that His "name may be proclaimed in all the earth" (*Ex 9:16*); using the opportunity of Pharaoh's hardened heart to execute His plan. Satan was also given limited control over Job (*Job 1:6-2:10*).

- key- access to the shaft of the bottomless pit (*until 20:1*).

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Rev 9:2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

- pit- spiritual underworld, stronghold or abode of Satan (2:24; 11:17; 17:8).

Gk.5421-φρεαρ-phrear-*freh'-ar*

Of uncertain derivation; a *hole* in the ground (dug for obtaining or holding water or other purposes), that is, a *cistern* or *well*; figuratively an **abyss** (as a **prison**): - well, pit. (*Emp. added*)

- opened- Satan here released the forces that were rebellious to God's will.

- smoke of a great furnace- smoke is witness of fire thus condemnation.

- sun... darkened- the source of light (1 Jn 1:7) is obscured (Jn 3:19-21) therefore allowing evil influences to take control of Jerusalem.

- air- Realm of thought/conscience: Eph 2:2; 6:12; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 Tim 4:1-2; Tit 1:15.

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Rev 9:3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

- Smoke obscures light (2 Cor 4:4) the result of which is having seared consciences.

- locusts- (*unlike the plague of Exodus 10: 4-5 which ate everything left by the hail*) lacking any conscience (1 Tim 4:2) these were given a torturous stinging power for the purpose of torment.

- scorpions- Gk.4651-σκορπιος- skorpios- *skor-pee'-os*

Probably from σκέρπω skerpō, an obsolete word, (perhaps strengthened from the base of G4649 and meaning **to pierce**); a “scorpion” (from its **sting**): - scorpion. (*Emp. added*)

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Rev 9:4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

- The focus of this now civil war wasn't to destroy the city (8:7), but was to be directed at those without the seal of God on their foreheads (7:3, 4; 14:1); Jesus's followers had already fled the city by this time (*Mat 24:22*). The utter, final destruction of the city was to be left for the Romans.

Hos 13:9 O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help.

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Rev 9:5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

- given- (*Job 2:6; Jn 19:11*) Once again God is in control. To not be killed would mean their earthly torture would be horrific. Rebel armies of Jews had incited the wrath of the Roman Empire against Jerusalem. “Three strong factions, controlled by three generals, never were able to unite even when the city itself was later on the verge of destruction”. Ray Murray, Jr. - Pg. 14. (*Mat 24:10-14*) This weakened the city from within and made the siege more effective for the Roman army that surrounded her.

- five months- It may be true, as Prof. Stuart suggests (*in loco*), that “the usual time of locusts is from May to September inclusive - five months.” Albert Barnes

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Rev 9:6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

- The conditions inside Jerusalem during The Siege (*Ray Murray Jr. - pgs. 14-15*) would cause those there to think that death would end it, but only repentance would (*which by this time would have been too late- Rev 22:10-11*).

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Rev 9:7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

- horses- military might of the Zealots. (See Jer 51:24-27 concerning Babylon's fall.)

- crowns- Gk.4375-στέφανος-stephanos-stef'-an-os ...of (temporary) victory over the Roman army in 66 AD. "The Roman garrison at the Fortress of Antonia was captured and the Roman soldiers were executed. As soon as the Romans were expelled, the entire city broke out in civil war." (*Murray- pg. 14*)

- faces of men- Gk.444-ἄνθρωπος-anthrōpos-anth'-ro-pos From G435 and ὤψ ὄψς (the countenance; from G3700); manfaced, that is, a human being: - certain, man. (*Joel 1:1-6; 2:1-4*)

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

- hair as the hair of women- According to Josephus, concerning these Zealots: "they decked their hair, and put on women's garments ...and had paints under their eyes, and imitated not only the ornaments, but also the lusts of women, and were guilty of such intolerable uncleanness, that they invented unlawful pleasures of

that sort". These Jews thumbed their noses at the Law given to Moses concerning them. (*Deu 22:5*)

- as the teeth of lions- devouring.

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Rev 9:9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

- breastplates of iron- the Zealots having expelled the Romans from the city, not only employed their abandoned weaponry but donned their protective gear as well (*v. 17*).

- sound of their wings- The noise of battle within the city was ongoing as the lust for control by the competing Jewish factions continued.

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Rev 9:10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months.

- tails like unto scorpions- to inflict torment, (*again, not the final judgment*) and stings- "The stings, no doubt, identify their weapons, the darts, arrows and stones, which they threw by machines... The Jews came into possession of several hundred of these machines in 66 AD when Cestius retreated from Jerusalem... The seditious Jews, who were at war against each other, used these weapons on each other and then upon the Romans when Jerusalem was besieged." Ogden- pg. 236

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Rev 9:11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

- king- Gk.935- a sovereign, angel (*Gk.32- messenger*) of the bottomless pit (*Gk.12- Abyss*)

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- Abaddon- Gk.3-Ἀβδδών-Abaddōn-*ab-ad-dohn'*

Of Hebrew origin [H11]; a **destroying angel**: - Abaddon. (*Emp. added*)

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- Apollyon- Gk.623-Ἀπολλύων-Apolluōn-*ap-ol-loo'-ohn*

Active participle of G622; a **destroyer** (that is, **Satan**): - Apollyon. (*Emp. added*)

Exo 12:23 For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will **not allow** the **destroyer** to enter your houses to strike you. (*Emp. added*) (ESV)

To “not allow” shows God to be in control. Just as He was when Satan desired to test Job (*Job 1:11-12; 2:5-6*) or when Pilate told Jesus that he had “power to crucify” Him (*Jn 19:10*).

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- The dragon (*Satan-12:9*) gave Jerusalem her power, throne and authority, thus in verse 1 above (*via the key given to him*) used that authority to turn the Jews on each other. Satan has no ally that he wouldn’t turn on.

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Rev 9:12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

- With the first **woe** past, the next begins immediately. (*Emp. added*) Now that Jerusalem has been substantially weakened by civil war, the next event sealed their fate.

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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,

- **The sixth warning sounded.**

(8:3-5) Read Exo 30:1-10.

- This is the altar of burnt incense. The voice coming **from** the altar (8:3-5; 16:7) is in answer to the prayers of the persecuted O.T. saints (6:9). These were not prayers of vengeance in retaliation to the persecution (6:10), but were for vindication because of the verdict passed by their “own people” as done to Paul (2 Cor 11:26).

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Rev 9:14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

- The voice from the altar instructs the sixth angel with the sixth warning (*trumpet*) to let loose the four angels (7:1-3; *restrained by God for the following purpose*). The Euphrates River stood for military might (Ps 124:1-5): Isa 8:7-8. Here, Titus as the new general of the Roman army marched against Jerusalem to finish what Vespasian, his father now Emperor (69-79 AD), started.

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- The military might of Rome is “dried up” in 16:12. There it is against “the church of the living God” (1 Tim 3:15) but here it is being used against Jerusalem (Mat 23:37-38).

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Rev 9:15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

- four- universality. The angels’ jurisdiction is universal.

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- prepared- made ready for His purpose are here loosed (70 AD): Gal 4:4; 2 Pet 3:8-9.

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- third- partial (*not all were killed by the Roman army since many were sold into slavery*).

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Rev 9:16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

- John heard (Gk.191- *understood*) the number- 200 million (*unlike the angels of 5:11 which could not be counted- Heb. 12:22*). It was as if the whole world was against Jerusalem but shows the staggering control that God has at His disposal. (*As hyperbole it shows the enormity of the army.*) **Lk 21:20**

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Rev 9:17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

- horses- Roman military.

- breastplates of fire- (v. 9) Gk.4447-πύρινος- purinos- *poo'-ree-nos*

From G4443; *fiery*, that is, (by implication) **flaming**: - of fire. (*Emp. added*)

- jacinth- Gk.5191-ὑακινθίνος- huakinthinos- *hoo-ak-in'-thee-nos*

From G5192; “hyacinthine” or “jacinthine”, that is, **deep blue**: - jacinth. (*Emp. added*)

- brimstone- Gk.2306-θειώδης- theiōdēs- *thi-o'-dace*

From G2303 and G1491; **sulphur like**, that is, **sulphurous**: - brimstone. (*Emp. added*)

Used here for judgment (*Jesus foretold this against Jerusalem in Mat 24:30; 26:64; Lk 17:29-30*) it is the same source of the armor the Zealots used in 9:9.

- heads of lions– “The front part of the Roman army was used to tear down the gates and walls of the cities and lead the way for full destruction”. Arthur Ogden- pg. 241 (*Jer 2:30; 4:7; Joel 1:6; 1 Pet 5:8; Rev 13:2*).

- fire- Gk.4442-πῦρ- pur- *poor*

A primary word; “fire” (literally or figuratively, specifically **lightning**): - fiery, fire. (*Emp. added*)

- smoke- Gk.2586-καπνός- kapnos- *kap-nos'*

Of uncertain affinity; **smoke**: - smoke. (*Emp. added*)

- brimstone- Gk.2308-θέλησις-thelēsis-*thel'-ay-sis*

From G2309; **determination** (properly the act), that is, *option*: - will. (*Emp. added*)

- out of their mouths- Divine judgment (*via the Roman war engines*) as was pronounced on Sodom (*Gen 19:24*). They were catapults which threw lighted balls and arrows.

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Rev 9:18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

- Only those in Jerusalem (*Matt 24:15-16; Lk 21:20-21*) would be killed from these plagues thus representing only a third. One would think this would have served as a lesson for others to see and repent (3:9).

fire (20:9), smoke (9:2), sulfur (20:10)

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Rev 9:19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

- mouth- i.e., the frontal assault of the Roman Army.

- tails- As the rear guard of the army they... “symbolize the Roman engines of war used to throw arrows, darts and stones”. Arthur Ogden- pg. 241 (6:2)

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Rev 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

- Those who witnessed the destruction, that were left, still did not repent. Even among the Zealots, the civil war continued as the Romans advanced. Their worship of demons and idols (*Eph 5:5; Col 3:5*) shows their relationship to God (*Mat 25:40*). (*compare Deu 32:17; Jer 10:5*)

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Rev 9:21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

- murders, sorceries, fornication and thefts shows their relationship to their fellow Jews within the city as they ransacked, raped and pillaged the homes of those they could not control.

Like in the 10 Commandments (*Ex 20:1-17*) the first four were in relation to God and the last six to man. The whole point of the above-mentioned warnings of judgment was to produce repentance by these fallen Jews. It did not. Ignorance of God’s law is no excuse to

break it. (*Jas 2:10*) Gentiles living during the Old Covenant were subject to God's moral laws...

Rom 2:14 For when Gentiles, who do not have the Law, by nature do what the Law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the Law. 15 They show that the work of the Law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them...

...but all are subject to the New Covenant...

Rom 2:16 on that day when, according to my Gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (*ESV*)

Worksheet
Revelation: Chapter 9

1. What did John witness when the “fifth angel blew his trumpet”? (*v. 1*)
2. Explain how the “star” here is different from the one in 8:10 and what it was given. (*v. 1*)
3. What is “the bottomless pit” and what happened when it was “opened”? (*v. 2*)
4. Explain what the “locusts” represent, what their “torment” was, why it was only to last “for five months” and who were not affected. (*v. 3*)
5. Describe what the “appearance” of the “locusts” represented. (*v. 7*)
6. What is the name of their “king”? (*v. 11*)
7. At the sounding of the “trumpet” by “the sixth angel” what is the “voice” replying to? (*v. 13*)
8. Describe the “mounted troops” and how they made war with “a third of mankind”. (*vs. 16-18*)
9. What were “the rest of mankind” supposed to do “who were not killed by these plagues”? (*v. 20*)