

Revelation 9

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

The Fifth Trumpet—the Bottomless Pit

9:1 Then 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.

I. Context

- A. The church is given the authority to warn the earth and call people to God.
 - 1. First warning - the world is temporary
 - 2. Second warning - the seas are temporary
 - 3. Third warning - drinking water is temporary
 - 4. Fourth warning - the heavens are temporary
- B. After these warnings, an eagle flying across the sky announces the next three warnings are different
 - 1. The first four are warnings that the church has always given.
 - 2. The next three warnings are things to come.
- C. The fifth warning opens the abyss
 - 1. A star from Heaven fell
 - a) Some believe this to be Jesus (the morning star), some believe it is Satan (the fallen angel) - but most likely this is a continuation of the effects of prayers of the saints that were lifted to Heaven and then thrown down on earth (Rev. 8) - showing the effectiveness of our prayers when they are combined with Jesus.
 - 2. A key was given to the star
 - a) The key denotes permission to open the lock.
 - b) This is a symbolic way of saying that God is allowing the following things to occur. This does not mean that there is a physical person or a lock to be opened.
 - 3. The bottomless pit or Abyss
 - a) This is the place that Jesus mentioned in His parable of Lazarus (John 11) and where the Demons begged Jesus not to cast them (Luke 8).
 - (1) In the Jewish view of death (Sheol), there is a waiting place (not purgatory) in which the good people wait with Abraham (the bosom of Abraham) and the bad people wait for judgement in darkness and pain (Hades). Between the two is a hole in which the fallen angels await their judgement.

II. Notes

- A. Isaiah 14:12 - *How you have fallen from heaven, O Morning Star, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the ground, O destroyer of nations.*
- B. Luke 8:31 - *And the demons kept begging Jesus not to order them to go into the Abyss.*
- C. Christ described Satan as lightning falling from heaven. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- D. the demons besought our Lord not to send them into the abyss, or deep. It is the word which describes the abode of the evil spirits. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- E. a key to open the bottomless pit, seems naturally to mean the permission of the Divine Providence for those evil and calamitous events - *Benson Commentary*

9:2 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.

I. Context

- A. The fifth warning from the churches start with God allowing the fallen angels that have been locked in the Abyss to be released onto the earth.
- B. The opening of the abyss allows for the fallen angels (demons) to cloud the light (God's word) in the world.
 - 1. The world will not see God as clearly as before because their eyes will be clouded by Satan and his forces.
 - a) 2 Corinthians 4:3 - *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,*
 - b) 2 Corinthians 3:16 - *but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*

II. Notes

- A. Genesis 19:28 - *He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of the plain, and he saw the smoke rising from the land like smoke from a furnace.*
- B. Exodus 19:18 - *Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke, because the LORD had descended on it in fire. And smoke rose like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently*
- C. Joel 2:2 - *a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like the dawn overspreading the mountains a great and strong people appears, such as never was of old, nor will ever be in ages to come.*
- D. Joel 2:10 - *Before them the earth quakes; the heavens tremble. The sun and moon grow dark, and the stars lose their brightness.*
- E. The first result of the opening of the pit is the diffusion of such a dense smoke that light and atmosphere are darkened. In the previous vision there was an obscuration of light arising from the smiting of the luminaries; in this the obscuration arises from causes external to the luminaries. In that the light-giving power was enfeebled; in this the light is not enfeebled, but hindered. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*

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

I. Context

- A. The churches warn that the Gospel will be obscured by the evil in the world.
 - 1. Satan and the fallen angels will be allowed to cover God's light like smoke covers the sun in the sky.
- B. This darkness is compared to a cloud of Locust that cover the sky and devour everything in its path.
 - 1. But these is not like normal locust
 - a) these don't just darken the sky - they sting and poison people.
- C. The darkness that obscures the Gospel will not only be demonic, it will do damage to the church and the people inside it.

II. Notes

- A. Exodus 10:12 - *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt, that the locusts may swarm over it and devour every plant in the land-- everything that the hail has left behind."*
- B. Exodus 10:14 - *The locusts swarmed across the land and settled over the entire territory of Egypt. Never before had there been so many locusts, and never again will there be.*
- C. Ezekiel 10:6 - *But you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words. Do not be afraid, though briars and thorns surround you, and you dwell among scorpions. Do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their presence, though they are a rebellious house.*
- D. Joel 3:10 - *Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.*

- E. The outcome of the gloom is the power of devastation and pain. We still have reference to the Egyptian plagues—this time to the locusts ([Exodus 10:12-15](#)): “They covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened.” Similarly, Joel describes the darkening of the land through the plague of locusts ([Joel 2:3-10](#)): “The sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.” But the locusts of our vision are armed with the power of scorpions, to sting and to torture ([Revelation 9:5](#)): the scorpions are called scorpions of the earth. Some have thought that this expression is equivalent to land-scorpions, in contradistinction from so-called sea-scorpions. This hardly seems likely or necessary. Their power to torment men is the prominent idea. The locusts are not literal locusts: this scorpion- like power given to them is enough to convince us of this, even if the next verse did not clearly show it. The scorpion-like power seems to depict a malicious energy, as the locusts depict a devastating multitude. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

9:4 They were told not to 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.

I. Context

- A. The fifth warning is that the Gospel will be darkened and a poison would enter the church.
- B. The Locust are symbolic
1. They do not harm the earth
 2. but they poison man with darkness (depression)
 3. unless the man has had his eyes opened by Jesus’ sealing process.

II. Notes

- A. Exodus 12:23 - When the LORD passes through to strike down the Egyptians, He will see the blood on the top and the two sideposts and pass over the door; so He will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.
- B. Ezekiel 9:4 - "Go throughout the city of Jerusalem," said the LORD, "and put a mark on the foreheads of the men sighing and groaning over all the abominations committed there."
- C. The locusts which are sent not to injure the vegetation are clearly not literal locusts, and the security of those who have the seal of God in their foreheads (those who were described as sealed, and so assured of safety against the tempest blast - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#))
- D. Whatever the plague be, it is one which cannot injure God’s children. “Nothing,” Christ has said, “shall by any means hurt you. I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy” ([Luke 10:19](#)). It is interesting and suggestive to notice that this promise of our Lord was given immediately after the saying, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,” as the safety of the sealed ones is mentioned here after the vision of the star fallen from heaven. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

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.

I. Context

- A. The fifth warning trumpet would include a demonic darkness that obscures the light of the Gospel.
- B. This process will last about five months
1. This is the lifespan of locust - a season of life.
 2. so this would be a season of darkness.
 - a) that will poison a man’s spirit.

II. Notes

- A. The general period of a locust plague is about five months: “as the natural locusts commit their ravages only for five months, so the ravages of these symbolical ones will be only for a short period” (Stuart). Their power is to inflict torment, and not death. The next verse tells us that men would consider death preferable to this torment; but the relief of the grave is denied them. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

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

I. Context

- A. The fifth warning trumpet announces that the Gospel light will be overshadowed by demonic forces
1. They will poison the people like a scorpion.
- B. This poison will make a person long for death, but will not kill them.
1. It is a picture of a generation of depression throughout the world.

II. Notes

- A. Job 3:21 - [who long for death that does not come, and search for it like hidden treasure,](#)
- B. Job 7:15 - [so that I would prefer strangling and death over my life in this body](#)
- C. Jeremiah 8:3 - And wherever I have banished them, the remnant of this evil family will choose death over life, declares the LORD of Hosts.
- D. Men will seek for death in vain; they will long to die, and lo ! death is seen fleeing from them. We can see an age in which death will be regarded as a sweet respite from the tormenting trials of life: men will stretch out their hands to death as to a welcome deliverer; but behold! death is seen fleeing from them. The word translated “desire” in our English version is a strong word; it has been rendered [vehemently desire](#): it is a passionate longing, as the yearning of the soul after one we love. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- E. It is a state where the distress is so great that people would consider death a relief, and where they anxiously look to the time when they may be released from their sufferings by death. In the case before us it is not intimated that they would lay violent hands on themselves, or that they would take any positive measures to end their sufferings; and this, perhaps, may be a circumstance of some importance to show that the persons referred to were servants of God. When it is said that "they would seek death," it can only be meant that they would look out for it - or desire it - as the end of their sorrows. This is descriptive, as we shall see, of a particular period of the world; but the language is beautifully applicable to what occurs in all ages and in all lands. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

9:7 The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.

I. Context

- A. The fifth warning would be that the light of the Gospel would be overshadowed by a demonic depression that poisons mankind for a generation.
- B. This is a Spiritual Battle against demonic forces
1. Not an internal battle of a person that is not good enough. The stress is that the person is being attacked, not that the person is broken. (Understanding this helps to fight the battle).

II. Notes

- A. Joel 2:4 - [Their appearance is like that of horses, and they gallop like swift steeds.](#)
- B. Nahum 3:17 - [Your guardsmen are like the swarming locust, and your scribes like clouds of locusts, that settle on the walls on a cold day. When the sun rises, they fly away, and no one knows where.](#)

- C. The resemblance of the locust to the horse (especially in the head) has been remarked upon by travellers, and has found expression in the Italian and German names *cavalletta* and *heupferd*. The resemblance is more distinct when the horses are made ready for battle: the hard shell or scales of the locust having the appearance of armour... the antennae, the rugged elevation in the middle of the thorax, have been imagined to have some resemblance to a crown; and the face of the locust, it has actually been said, bears under ordinary circumstances a distant (the adjective is most needful) resemblance to the human countenance. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

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

I. **Context**

- A. The fifth warning from the Church is a demonic darkness that overshadows the light of the Gospel.
1. It is caused by forces outside the person - causing them to desire death
 - a) This is depression
 - b) it is an attack of Satan, not an internal brokenness of the person
 - c) It is something the person can fight with the light of Christ.
- B. The demonic attackers had a scary and unusual appearance.
1. Hair like a woman.
 2. Teeth like a lion.

II. **Notes**

- A. Joel 1:6 - *For a nation has invaded My land, powerful and without number; its teeth are those of a lion, and its fangs are those of a lioness.*
- B. Jeremiah 51:27 - *Lift up a signal in the land, Blow a trumpet among the nations! Consecrate the nations against her, Summon against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz; Appoint a marshal against her, Bring up the horses like bristly locusts.*
- C. The hair: It is said that some locusts are hairy, and the passage in Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 51:27](#)) has been quoted as evidence (the rough caterpillars here spoken of being said to be "locusts bristling with hair"), - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- D. This struck John as a peculiarity, that, though warriors, they should have the appearance of effeminacy indicated by allowing their hair to grow long. It is clear from this, that John regarded their appearance as unusual and remarkable. Though manifestly designed to represent an army, yet it was not the usual appearance of men who went forth to battle. Among the Greeks of ancient times, indeed, long hair was not uncommon (see the notes above referred to on [1 Corinthians 11:14](#)), but this was by no means the usual custom among the ancients; and the fact that these warriors had long hair like women was a circumstance that would distinguish them particularly from others. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- E. The teeth of the locust are by no means prominent, though they are strong, for they readily cut down and eat up all vegetable substances that come in their way. But it is evident that John means to say that there was much that was unusual and remarkable in the teeth of these locusts. They would be ravenous and fierce, and would spread terror and desolation like the lions of the desert. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- F. An Arabic proverb compares the antlers of locusts to the hair of girls. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

9:9 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.

I. **Context**

- A. The fifth warning of the church is that the Gospel light will be overshadowed by a demonic depression.

- B. This depression is pictured as a cloud of locust attacking and poisoning the people, but not hurting the land.
 - 1. Each of these locust is like a terrible and well armored soldier and the sound they make causes great anxiety from a long way off.

II. **Notes**

- A. Jeremiah 47:3 - *at the sound of the galloping hooves of stallions, the rumbling of chariots, and the clatter of their wheels. The fathers will not turn back for their sons; their hands will hang limp.*
- B. Joel 2:5 - *With a sound like that of chariots they bound over the mountaintops, like the crackling of fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army deployed for battle*
- C. breastplates of iron - Hard, horny, impenetrable, as if they were made of iron. The locust has a firm and hard cuticle on the forepart of the breast, which serves for a shield or defense while it moves in the thorny and furzy vegetation. On those which John saw this was especially hard and horny, and would thus be well adapted to be an emblem of the breastplates of iron commonly worn by ancient warriors. The meaning is, that the warriors referred to would be well clad with defensive armor. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- D. The noise made by locusts is often spoken of by travelers, and the comparison of that noise with that of chariots rushing to battle, is not only appropriate, but also indicates clearly what was symbolized. It was an army that was symbolized, and everything about them served to represent hosts of men well armed, rushing to conflict. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- E. The sound of locusts, when they fly or march in large companies, is very great. Pliny says (r), they make such a noise with their wings, when they fly, that they have been thought to have been other winged creatures; hence a locust, in Hebrew, is sometimes called the same name that is given to the high sounding cymbal. The sound of them is said to have been heard six miles (s). Aristotle (t) ascribes it to the rubbing of their legs or thighs one against another; and so the Ethiopic version here renders it, "the sound of their feet" - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

9:10 They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.

I. **Context**

- A. The fifth warning signal is a demonic depression that overshadows the light of the Gospel.
- B. This depression will last the life span of the locust (1 generation - 5 months)
 - 1. This might suggest that this would signify a generation of depressed people.

II. **Notes**

- A. for though the fancy may imagine a resemblance between the tail of a locust and a scorpion, yet the locusts have properly no sting. The only thing which they have resembling a sting is a hard bony substance like a needle, with which the female punctures the bark and wood of trees in order to deposit her eggs. It has, however, no adaptation, like a sting, for conveying poison into a wound. These, however, appeared to be armed with stings properly so called... Not primarily to kill people, but to inflict on them various kinds of tortures. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- B. the usual time of the life of locusts; - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)

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.

I. **Context**

- A. The fifth warning is that the Gospel light would be overclouded by a demonic depression.

- B. This depression is pictured as a cloud of locust that comes from the Abyss and is led by a king named “the destroyer”
 - 1. This is a warning that the depression comes from outside the person and is a coordinated demonic attack that is meant to destroy that person.

II. Notes

- A. Job 26:6 - Sheol is naked before Him, and Abaddon has no covering.
- B. Job 28:22 - Abaddon and Death say, 'We have heard a rumor about it.'
- C. Job 31:12 - For it is a fire that burns down to Abaddon; it would root out my entire harvest.
- D. Psalm 88:11 - Can Your loving devotion be proclaimed in the grave, Your faithfulness in Abaddon?
- E. Proverbs 15:11 - Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD--how much more the hearts of men!
- F. Luke 8:31 - And the demons kept begging Jesus not to order them to go into the Abyss.
- G. The king of these locust hordes is named in Hebrew Abaddon, or Perdition, a name sometimes given to the place or abode of destruction - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- H. In Greek his name is Apollyon, or Destroyer: The spirit of the destroyer is the spirit that inspires these hosts. It is a great movement, but its end is destruction, as its inspiring genius is from beneath, from an angel of the nether world. It is not necessary for us to seek some great historical personage for the fulfilment of this portion of the prophecy, any more than we ought to accept any great historical event as an exhaustive fulfilment of the vision. The picture is vivid and forcible, and its full and certain meaning will be plain hereafter - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- I. The word "angel" here would seem to refer to the chief of the evil angels, who presided over the dark and gloomy regions from whence the locusts seemed to emerge. This may either mean that this evil angel seemed to command them personally, or that his spirit was infused into the leader of these hosts. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- J. The name Abaddon means literally "destruction," and is the same as Apollyon... The word properly denotes "a destroyer," and the name is given to this king of the hosts, represented by the locusts, because this would be his principal characteristic. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

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

I. Context

- A. Five warnings have been given by the church to the world - to call people to God.
 - 1. First: Don't rely on the things you know — the earth is failing. (Laws)
 - 2. Second: Don't rely on the “mysteries” — the seas are failing. (Teachings)
 - 3. Third: Don't rely on the things give us life — the fresh water is failing (Worship)
 - 4. Fourth: Don't rely on the things that guide us — the stars are fading (Leaders)
 - 5. Fifth: The light of the Gospel will be overshadowed by a demonic cloud of depression.
- B. If this is not bad enough - there is two more warnings left to be given.
 - 1. Don't give up now.

II. Notes

- A. The rest and the victory are not yet; the powers of evil have not exhausted themselves - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

The Sixth Trumpet—Army from the East

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

I. **Context**

- A. Five warnings have been given by Christ's church
 - 1. First - Dry land will fail.
 - 2. Second - Seas will fail
 - 3. Third - Drinking water will fail
 - 4. Fourth - the stars will fail
 - 5. Fifth - depression will set in
- B. Now the sixth warning is given.
 - 1. As a response to all the prayers given by the churches at the altar before God, a response is given as the 6th warning.

II. **Notes**

- A. Exodus 30:2 - *It is to be square, a cubit long, a cubit wide, and two cubits high. Its horns must be of one piece.*
- B. Exodus 30:10 - *Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on the horns of the altar. Throughout your generations he shall make atonement on it annually with the blood of the sin offering of atonement. The altar is most holy to the LORD."*
- C. Such a voice, proceeding *from the four horns of the golden altar*, is a strong indication of the divine displeasure; and plainly intimates, that the sins of men must have been very great, when the altar, which was their sanctuary and protection, called aloud for vengeance. - *Benson Commentary*
- D. The golden altar stood in the holy place, between the table of show-bread and the golden candlestick. See the notes on [Hebrews 9:1-2](#). This altar, made of shittim or acacia wood, was ornamented at the four corners, and overlaid throughout with laminae of gold. Hence, it was called "the golden altar," in contradistinction from the altar for sacrifice, which was made of stone... on its four corners it had projections which are called horns [Exodus 30:2-3](#), which seem to have been intended mainly for ornaments - *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*
- E. *voice* is said to have proceeded *from the golden altar*, (in allusion to [Exodus 30:3](#)), because there God received the prayers of his people; and this voice proceeding from that place, might signify the following judgment to come, in answer to the prayer's of his servants' souls from thence crying to him for vengeance - *Matthew Poole's Commentary*

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

I. **Context**

- A. The sixth warning from the churches has been issued as a response to the first five warnings.
- B. With this warning a Spiritual boundary at the Euphrates River will be lifted to allow invaders to cross
 - 1. This heralds a war at the Euphrates River.

II. **Notes**

- A. The general meaning here is, that in the vicinity of the river Euphrates there were mighty powers which had been bound or held in check, which were now to be let loose upon the world. What we are to look for in the fulfillment is evidently this - some power that seemed to be kept back by an invisible influence as if by angels, now suddenly let loose and suffered to accomplish the purpose of desolation mentioned in the subsequent verses - *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*

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

I. **Context**

- A. The sixth warning from the churches is about an invasion across the Euphrates River.

- B. The time for this invasion is set - and it will cause a devastating war that effects every nation in the world — a world war at the Euphrates River.

II. Notes

- A. But the expression (“made ready unto the hour,” &c.) is not to be taken to imply that such was the duration of the plague; it implies that the loosing of the angels would take place at a definite period, the year, month, day and hour of which were known; the expression corresponds somewhat with our Lord’s words, “Of that day and hour knoweth no man.” It reminds us that there is a period—an unknown period, but nevertheless a certain period—at which the latent powers of retribution wake and begin to avenge themselves, at which the restraints which have withheld the long-deserved scourges are removed - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

9:16 The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.

I. Context

- A. The sixth warning from the churches is that there would be a world war starting at the Euphrates River.
- B. The armies involved are larger than any army ever assembled.
1. They are said to be “Two Myriads of myriads”
 - a) A Myriad was considered to be 10,000
 - (1) or “10,000 x 10,000”
 - (2) 200 million horsemen (don’t forget that this includes the horses).
 2. This was not meant to be a literal number, but to say that this is the largest army that has ever been assembled.

II. Notes

- A. The writer heard, perhaps from some herald angel, the number of this vast army of horsemen; it was twice ten-thousand times ten thousand—i.e., two hundred millions... This utterly bewildering number might have been sufficient to keep interpreters from looking for some slavishly literal fulfilment: it simply stands for an immense host, - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- B. It is to be observed here that the strength of the army seemed to be cavalry. In the former plagues there is no distinct mention of horsemen; but here what struck the beholder was the immense and unparalleled number of horsemen... This would be a larger army than was ever assembled, and it cannot be supposed that it is to be taken literally... The language is, "two myriads of myriads" - δύο μυριάδες μυριάδων duo muriades muriadōn. The myriad was ten thousand. The idea would seem to be this. John saw an immense host of cavalry. They appeared to be divided into large bodies that were in some degree separate, and that might be reckoned by ten thousands. Of these different squadrons there were many, and to express their great and unusual numbers he said that there seemed to be myriads of them - two myriads of myriads, or twice ten thousand myriads. The army thus would seem to be immense - an army, as we should say, to be reckoned by tens of thousands... They were so numerous that he did not pretend to be able to estimate the number himself, for it was beyond his power of computation; but he heard it stated in these round numbers, that there were "two myriads of myriads" of them - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

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.*

I. Context

- A. The sixth warning by the churches will be a world wide war that starts at the Euphrates River.
- B. This army was strange to John, but it corresponds very well to that of a modern military.

II. Notes

- A. The army is mainly of horsemen, and they are described as resolute and relentless: we are reminded of somewhat similar features in the Chaldean armies spoken of by Habakkuk, "I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation: they are terrible and dreadful: their horses also are swifter than leopards," &c. ([Habakkuk 1:6-10](#)). - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- B. The meaning of the whole then is, that these horsemen appeared to be clad in a special kind of armor - armor that shone like fire, mingled with blue and yellow... He does not say that they were the heads of lions, or that the riders were on monsters, but only that they, in some respects, resembled the heads of lions. It would be easy to give this general appearance by the way in which the head-dress of the horses was arrayed... The exact idea, whether that was intended or not, would be conveyed by the discharge of musketry or artillery. The fire, the smoke, and the sulphurous smell of such a discharge would correspond precisely with this language; and if it be supposed that the writer meant to describe such a discharge, this would be the very language that would be used. Moreover, in describing a battle nothing would be more proper than to say that this appeared to issue from the horses' mouths. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

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.

I. Context

- A. The sixth warning from the churches is a world war at the Euprates River.
- B. A large amount of the world will be killed by their war.

II. Notes

- A. By these three - Three things - explained immediately as referring to the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

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.

I. Context

- A. The sixth warning will be a world war that starts at the Euprates River.
- B. The calvary is made up of instruments of war that are deadly from all directions.
 - 1. they send smoke from their front and they attack like a serpent from behind.

II. Notes

- A. That is, as described in the fire, smoke, and brimstone that proceeded out of their mouths. What struck the seer as remarkable on looking on the symbol was, that this immense destruction seemed to proceed out of their mouths. It was not that they trampled down their enemies; nor that they destroyed them with the sword, the bow, or the spear: it was some new and remarkable power in warfare - in which the destruction seemed to proceed from fire, and smoke, and sulphur issuing from the mouths of the horses themselves... It would seem most probable that the heads of these serpents appeared to extend in every direction - as if the hairs of the horses' tails had been converted into snakes, presenting a most fearful and destructive image - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- B. in their tails; which may design their foot soldiers, which were as the tail to their horse, and who sometimes did great service; or their way of fighting when they fled, by casting up arrows into the air, which would fall upon the heads and horses of those that pursued them - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- C. That is, they are harmful on all sides: on whatever part you put your hand to them, or they touch you, they do hurt. - [Geneva Study Bible](#)
- D. Heads attached to their serpentine tails are an allusion not only to the well-known tactics of the Parthians (cf. [Parad. Regained](#), iii. 323 f.) but to a trait of ancient Greek mythology; on the altar of Zeus at Pergamos (cf. note on [Revelation 2:12](#)) the giants

who war against the gods are equipped with snakes (instead of limbs) that brandish open jaws. The amphisbaena of ancient mythology was often described as possessing a headed tail - [Expositor's Greek Testament](#)

- E. The image is not uncommon among the ancients. We may paraphrase the passage thus: "Their power is for the most part in their mouth; but also, to some extent, in their tails; for their tails are like serpents," etc. An endless variety of interpretations have been given to these details, which are probably not intended to bear any distinct signification. Bengel refers to a species of serpent in which the head and tail were so alike as to be with difficulty distinguished; which he thinks may have suggested the image. Many apply it (though in different ways) to the Turkish horse, who fight as they retreat, etc. - [Pulpit Commentary](#)

9:20 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;

I. Context

- A. The Sixth warning from the churches will be a world wide war that starts at the Euphrates River.
B. The point of these six warnings and the plagues that come from them, is to call people back to God.

II. Notes

- A. Deuteronomy 4:28 - And there you will serve man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell.
B. Psalm 115:4 - Their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men.
C. Psalm 135:15 - The idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by the hands of men.
D. Jeremiah 1:16 - I will pronounce My judgments against them for all the evil they did, when they abandoned Me to burn incense to other gods and to worship the works of their own hands.
E. Jeremiah 8:6 - I have listened and heard; they do not speak what is right. No one repents of his wickedness, asking, "What have I done?" Everyone has stayed his course like a horse charging into battle.
F. Daniel 5:4 - As they drank the wine, they praised their gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone.
G. Micah 5:13 - I will also cut off the carved images and sacred pillars from among you, so that you will no longer bow down to the work of your own hands.
H. Acts 7:41 - At that time they made a calf and offered a sacrifice to the idol, rejoicing in the works of their hands.
I. Acts 19:26 - And you can see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in nearly the whole province of Asia, Paul has persuaded a great number of people to turn away. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all.
J. I Corinthians 10:20 - No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God. And I do not want you to be participants with demons.
K. whatever the nature of the plagues might be, they were afflictions designed to bring about repentance, and to rouse men, whether nominally Christian or not, from the lethargy into which long indulged sin had plunged them - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

9:21 and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

I. Context

- A. This six warnings were given to the churches in order to wake up the world to return to God.

- B. But many people will not heed the warning - they will hold onto the destructive elements of their life
 - 1. Sorceries — trying to control God and the Spiritual world
 - 2. Immorality - addictions and habits that they have always hid behind.
 - 3. thefts - looking after themselves above others.

II. Notes

A.