

Revelation 9:1-21

December 22, 2019 and January 4, 2020

Sections:

Verses 1-12: the fifth trumpet, resulting in the demonic invasion

Verses 13-21: the sixth trumpet: resulting in the second demonic invasion

Verse by verse:

I. Verses 1-12: The fifth trumpeted and the first demonic invasion

Rev. 9:1-2:

The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. ² When he 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.

- a. Verses 1-2: the home of the demons: the bottomless pit
- b. So, this labeled as the fifth angel. We see that this is the fifth trumpet.
- c. It seems likely that this star that is falling is lucifer.
- d. We know that this cannot be a literal star.
- e. I like what Dr. Mulholland says about this:
- f. Abyss is a synonym for hades or death and hades
- g. This star does not have the key to the abyss but the key to the shaft of the abyss.
- h. Jesus has the keys to death and hades, chapter 1, first thing He said (Rev. 1:18)
- i. The falling star is satan, the name for satan is lucifer and lucifer means "light bearer"
- j. Satan was a brilliant figure of light and number 2 to God, but Satan did not want to be number 2 but number 1.
- k. Isaiah describes satan as a fallen star. Isaiah 14:12: this is related to satan and Babylon. Mulholland says this was connected to satan in the intertestamental period. One commentary reads: *The king of the locust-scorpion-horses is the angel of the abyss, otherwise known as Satan. In the development of the Jewish story (see Introduction, "John's Narrative World"), Isaiah's description of the fall of Babylon (Isa 14:12-14) came to be understood as a description of Satan's fall from heaven. This is carried into the intertestamental literature: 2 Enoch 29:4-5: "And one from out the order of angels, having turned away with the order that was under him, conceived an impossible thought, to place his throne higher than the clouds above the earth, that he might become equal in rank to my [God's] power. And I threw him out from the height" (see also 1 Enoch 86:1-6).*¹
- l. Luke 8:26-31 is interesting about this abyss:

¹ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "[Revelation](#)," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 491-492.

They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. ²⁷ When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!” ²⁹ For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

³⁰ Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹ And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

About the Abyss, the IVP BBC NT shares:

Many Jewish traditions spoke of evil angels imprisoned in dungeons or rivers, awaiting their time to come out and wreak havoc. Some ancient writers assumed that the “abyss” (NIV, TEV; “bottomless pit”—NASB, KJV, NRSV) was a real geographical place that could be found on earth (1 Enoch); angels were assigned over such sites and given keys. The Dead Sea Scrolls also spoke of the wicked as “men of” or “sons of the pit” (probably meaning those destined for death in the grave). Most pagans held stars to be divinities, and many Jews held them to be angels; stars could naturally symbolize angels in Jewish texts, as in this case. John exploits the standard imagery to make his point.²

- m. Verse 2:
- n. He (maybe Jesus, or Lucifer) opened the shaft of the abyss.
- o. Smoke come out and darkens everything.
- p. Fire image: a consistent image for God is fire. Our God is a consuming fire (Heb 12:29).
- q. Fire purifies things.
- r. Fire burns out the dross.
- s. God’s holiness burns against all that is not holy. This is by the every nature of who God is.
- t. The sun and the air were darkened.
- u. The fallenness of creation comes from Satan’s rebellion.
- v. Interesting how much this image and the rest of this chapter compares to Joel 2:1-10. Notice the reference to smoke and then an army of locusts and we will see locusts in a minute. About Joel 2 the ESV Study Bible shares: *The Arrival of the Day of the Lord. Joel describes the coming of an army, whose arrival may yet be averted by*

NIV New International Version

TEV Today’s English Version

NASB New American Standard Bible

KJV King James Version

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

² Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Re 9:1–2.

wholehearted return to the Lord. [Verses 1–11](#) describe the coming of this great army, and [vv. 12–17](#) describe the command to return to the Lord.

Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 sound the alarm on my holy hill.

Let all who live in the land tremble,
 for the day of the Lord is coming.

It is close at hand—
² *a day of darkness and gloom,
 a day of clouds and blackness.*

Like dawn spreading across the mountains
 a large and mighty army comes,
such as never was in ancient times
 nor ever will be in ages to come.

³Before them fire devours,
 behind them a flame blazes.
Before them the land is like the garden of Eden,
 *behind them, a desert waste—
 nothing escapes them.*

⁴They have the appearance of horses;
 they gallop along like cavalry.

⁵With a noise like that of chariots
 they leap over the mountaintops,
like a crackling fire consuming stubble,
 like a mighty army drawn up for battle.

⁶At the sight of them, nations are in anguish;
 every face turns pale.

⁷They charge like warriors;
 they scale walls like soldiers.

They all march in line,
 not swerving from their course.

⁸They do not jostle each other;
 each marches straight ahead.

They plunge through defenses
 without breaking ranks.

⁹They rush upon the city;
 they run along the wall.

*They climb into the houses;
like thieves they enter through the windows.*

¹⁰ *Before them the earth shakes,
the heavens tremble,
the sun and moon are darkened,
and the stars no longer shine.*

- w. So notice how Revelation cross references with the rest of the Bible.
- x. Jesus said He saw satan fall from Heaven like lightning (Luke 10:18). The fact that the key to the shaft of the abyss was given to him shows that Satan can do nothing apart from God's permission (ESV Study Bible, also: *However, many scholars think that this "star" represents a good angel, and that this verse in connection with [20:1](#) marks the beginning and the end of the middle section of the book.*).
- y. Verses 3-12: The horror of these demons

And out of the smoke locusts came down on 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. ⁵ They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. ⁶ During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

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 with stingers, 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 is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).*

¹² *The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.*

- i. Verse 3: we now see locusts come out of the smoke.
- ii. These seem to be demons.
- iii. They have power like scorpions on the earth. Notice the comparisons to Joel which I listed above.
- iv. Exodus 10:12-15 is a cross reference. These scorpions echo the 8th plague on Egypt. Also, Joel 2:31:
*The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood,
before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.*
- v. Verse 3: they look like horses ready for battle

- vi. Verse 4: They were told not to harm the grass, green plant, or any tree. They can only harm the people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.
- vii. We see the seal of God in Ezek 9:4; Rev 7:2, 3
- viii. These locusts are not literal.
- ix. It seems that they are demons coming out of the Abyss. They are following their demon leader the devil (verse 11). Others believe they are military and still others believe they are literal locusts but with the destructive powers described with figurative imagery.
- x. They can torment for five months.
- xi. Dr. Mulholland points out that 5 months is the life span of a locusts. They come in the spring and go back underground within 5 months or so and then they do not come back for another 17 years or so.
- xii. The 5 months shows that there is a limitation.
- xiii. Verse 5 shares that they are not allowed to kill them, but their torment is like the torment of a scorpion. The IVP BBC NT shares that scorpion stings were some of the most painful.
- xiv. Dr. Mulholland has an interesting perspective. As we get into verses 5 and 6 we see the torment of sin. Sin has torments. His commentary: **torture them for five months**. John saw an image of limited torment for the people of fallen Babylon. There is no antecedent for the imagery of a five-month period. It may simply play off the locust image since locusts thrive only for the time that vegetation is available (about five months). Truthfully, the demons could be leading the people into sin and sin is attractive at first.
- xv. Dr. Mulholland: John is, in some way, connecting satan's rebellion and the torment of the people of fallen Babylon.
- xvi. His commentary reads: **locusts**. *While locusts recall the plague upon Egypt (Exod 10:4–15), Joel used the image to describe God's judgment upon the ungodly (Joel 1:4), and Jeremiah used it of God's judgment of Babylon (Jer 51:14, 27).* **scorpions**. John's vision combines the destructiveness of locusts with the torment of scorpions, an image used in Sirach for the punishment of the ungodly (Sir 39:30).
- xvii. **9:4 not to harm the grass or plants or trees, but only the people who did not have the seal of God**. *We are dealing with imagery here, not literal swarms of locusts, for these "locusts" attack only "the people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads." Whatever John was seeing relates to the situation of the citizens of fallen Babylon.*³
- xviii. In verse 6 we see that people want death. Dr. Mulholland shares: **9:6 people will seek death but will not find it**. *They will long to die, but death will flee*

³ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "[Revelation](#)," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 489.

from them! This is a picture of deep distress and torment for which there is no relief. Job expressed this condition during his time of torment (Job 3:21).⁴

- xix. One student in Dr. Mulholland's class asked if this was a description of hell and it certainly compares to hell or hades.
- xx. Verses 7-8: They wear golden crowns, and they have men's faces, women's hair, and lions' teeth. Compare this with Joel 2:4.
- xxi. Dr. Mulholland: **what looked like gold crowns on their heads**. *According to the Greek, these are something like gold crowns, but not actual crowns. This distinction undoubtedly relates to the vision's consistent image that only the redeemed or heavenly figures have "crowns" (stephanos [^{TG}4735, ^{ZG}5109]; see note on 4:4; commentary on 6:2).⁵*
- xxii. IVP BBC NT: *The image of human-faced scorpions derived from nightmarish traditions from the East, and Mediterranean zodiacs eventually applied it to Sagittarius, who was often portrayed with long hair (see comment on 9:8). Although the image is not meant literally, it draws on the most terrible, repressed images of that culture's unconscious fears to evoke horror at the impending judgments.⁶*
- xxiii. MORE NOTES FROM THE IVP BBC NT: *Joel 1:6 described locusts with "teeth like lions" to emphasize their destructiveness to the crops and everything else. In Joel, the image would terrify an agrarian society; in Revelation, it would remind readers of the lion's proverbial ferocity. The "hair like women" would be a more obvious allusion to most of John's readers: everyone in the Roman Empire knew that "barbarians" outside the Empire, unlike most people in Greco-Roman society, had long hair. In the context of a military invasion, the readers would immediately think of the Parthians (or, in apocalyptic terms, perhaps the evil spiritual realities behind them). By way of illustration, the reigning emperor Domitian's father was reported—perhaps fictitiously—to have joked about the Parthians' long hair in view of a long-tailed comet portending his death.⁷*
- xxiv. *9:9: They are protected by iron breastplates. Compare this with Joel 2:5.*

⁴ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "[Revelation](#)," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 489.

^{TG} Tyndale-Strong's Greek number

^{ZG} Zondervan Greek number

⁵ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "[Revelation](#)," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 490.

⁶ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Re 9:7.

⁷ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Re 9:8.

xxv. 9:3b, 10a: They have stinging tails like scorpions.⁸

xxvi. Verse 10 shares once again the 5 month limitation.

xxvii. Again, with Dr. Mulholland's perspective: Now the locusts look like horses.

- John may be seeing the way sin presents itself to us. It looks good and alluring, but then we get caught, stuck and taken down. In ministry we see this.
- Sin looks good. Sin looks mighty and powerful and even like human faces. We may really be human if we sin...
- The first time we give in nothing happens, but eventually it stings verse 10.
- We eventually lose control in sin and experience the torment of sin.
- Dr. Mulholland references sitting in people's homes or with them in his pastoral office and they are in tears because of the torment of their sin.

xxviii. 9:11–12: Their king is named Abaddon (in the Hebrew) and Apollyon (in the Greek), meaning “destroyer.” About this Dr. Mulholland writes: *The vision then identifies this angel by the Hebrew and Greek terms for “destroyer”—“Abaddon” and “Apollyon.” The Hebrew term appears in Job, Psalms, and Proverbs as a place of destruction or ruin often as a synonym for Sheol (translated in the Greek OT as “Hades”), the place of the dead (Job 26:6; 31:12; Prov 15:11; 27:20), or of death itself (Job 28:22; Ps 88:11). In these passages, the LXX employs the noun apōleia [¹⁶684, ²⁶724] or the verb apollumi [¹⁶622/A, ²⁶660], both having the same root as Apollyon. John appears to be employing two languages for his readers' benefit, since Hebrew would have been the primary language for some, while for most it was Greek. This identification of the “king” over the locust-scorpion-horses as the “Destroyer” indicates these are manifestations of the consequences of Satan's activity. In the Jewish pool of images, these three are representations of the consequences of Israel's apostasy and rebellion against God: (1) locusts: Deut 28:38 in the context of 28:15ff; 2 Chr 7:13; Joel 1:4; Amos 4:9; (2) scorpions: 2 Chr 10:11, 14—Rehoboam's threat to discipline those who were rebelling against him; (3) horses: Jer 6:23; 8:16; 50:42 (although here against the evil of Babylon); Ezek 23:23; Joel 2:4 (with strong parallels to Rev 9); Hab 1:8.*⁹

II. THE SIXTH TRUMPET, RESULTING IN THE SECOND DEMONIC INVASION (9:13–21)

The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four 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

⁸ H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Re 9:3–9. LXX Septuagint

¹⁶ Tyndale-Strong's Greek number

²⁶ Zondervan Greek number

¹⁶ Tyndale-Strong's Greek number

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⁹ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., [“Revelation,”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 490.

and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶ The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number.

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.

²⁰ The rest of mankind who 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.

- a. We now see the sixth trumpet.
- b. Now there will be the ability for these demons to take life.
- c. Interesting that these woes come from the golden altar before God which means they are a response to the prayers of the saints (Rev. 8:4-5).
- d. We saw the 4 angels before in chapter 7 and they were holding back at that time.
- e. In the Roman world there was a Roman eschatology that the end of the world would come when the hordes from the other side of the Euphrates would take over the Roman Empire. It never happened that way, it came from the north.
- f. For some reason that was the Roman eschatology though we do not know how that arose.
- g. Somehow Nero was associated with this. After his death in 68 AD he was associated with leading this horde.
- h. Nero committed suicide in 68AD. He was deposed by the senate. Titus destroyed the Jewish temple in 70 AD.
- i. Verse 14 mentions the Euphrates River. That is interesting. Dr. Mulholland shares: *The Euphrates had played a significant role in both the Jewish history and the perceptions of the Roman-Hellenistic world. Twice in their history, the Jews had been taken captive by dynasties from across the Euphrates. In 722 bc, the Assyrians took the 10 tribes of the northern kingdom, Israel, into captivity from which they never returned. In 587 bc, the Babylonians took the two tribes of the southern kingdom, Judah, into captivity. In both instances, this was understood to be God's judgment against the unholiness of the old covenant people (2 Kgs 17:5–24 recounts the conquest of the northern tribes of Israel; 2 Kgs 24:1–25:21 the conquest of the southern tribes of Judah). The Roman psyche had also been scarred by events associated with the Euphrates. In Rome's invincible conquest of its Mediterranean empire, its legions had never known defeat until they tried to extend their control into areas beyond the Euphrates. For the first time in their history, a Roman legion was defeated and their standards captured by the enemy in 53 bc, as Crassus*

attempted to invade Parthia (modern Iran). There grew up in Roman eschatology the belief that the end of the world would come when the hordes (“kings from the east,” 16:12) beyond the Euphrates would sweep westward and overcome the Roman Empire (Sibylline Oracles 4.115–139). For those of Jewish and Roman traditions, therefore, this was an image of profound loss, destruction, and judgment.

- j. Their preparation (9:15a): They have been kept in readiness for a particular year, month, day, and hour.
- k. Their purpose (9:15b): Upon being released, they kill a third of all mankind.
- l. **The horror of these demons (9:16–19)**
- m. *Their number (9:16): Verse 16: the number of their horsemen was 2 hundred million, he heard the number. Dr. Mulholland: Another image of the inexorable reality of coming judgment is the size of the army. This is an unimaginable army in the first century, to say nothing of being an image of invincibility. Yes, the number is symbolic. The largest number of troops in the OT is 200,000 (1 Sam 15:4; 2 Chr 17:16–17). A thousand times that number would have been unimaginable in the first century. John is not very clear whether they were holding back this Calvary like Rev. 7 or were the demons the Calvary. What is released, 200 million in the Roman world is amazing. The IVP BBC NT: “Two hundred million” would be a huge standing army even today (nearly the entire population of the United States, almost four times that of Great Britain, over twice that of Nigeria, and eight times that of Canada); in the first century it may have represented more than the population of the entire world.¹⁰*
- n. *Their nature (9:17–19): They have the appearance of horses and riders.*
- o. *The horses have heads like lions and tails like deadly serpents, and they breathe out smoke and flaming sulphur (9:17b–19).*
- p. *The riders wear brightly colored breastplates (9:17a).*

Extra info about this from Dr. Mulholland’s commentary:

9:17 the horses and the riders. These rider-horse beings, while often identified as a demonic cavalry or a demonic horde (Mounce 1977:201; Witherington 2003:154), represent, like the locust-scorpion-horse figures of the fifth trumpet, the destructive consequences of rebellion against God. **The primary source for John’s imagery seems to come from Jeremiah’s vision of Babylon’s destruction of Egypt (Jer 46), which includes a cavalry with breastplates (Jer 46:4), more numerous than locusts (Jer 46:23), and coming from the river Euphrates (Jer 46:2).** An additional source might well be Jer 8:16–17, where the consequence of Israel’s rebellion is imaged as a cavalry that devours the land (like locusts?) and is like serpents among the rebellious.

fiery red and dark blue and yellow ... fire and smoke and burning sulfur billowed from their mouths.

Fiery red is the color of fire, blue is the color of smoke, and yellow is the color of sulfur. The riders and horses are of a single piece. The image of fire, sulfur, and smoke appear first in the OT in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah where fire and sulfur rained upon the cities, and Abraham saw the smoke like the smoke of a furnace (Gen 19:24–28). The image is a regular one in the OT (for example, Ps 11:6 says, “He will rain down blazing coals and burning sulfur on the wicked”; and Ezek 38:22 says, “I will punish you

¹⁰ Craig S. Keener, [*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Re 9:16.

[Gog] and your armies with disease and bloodshed; I will send torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur"). Especially interesting is Isaiah's prophecy of God's destruction of Assyria: "For his burning place has long been prepared; ... the breath of the LORD, like a stream of sulfur, kindles it" (Isa 30:33, NRSV).

- q. Verse 18: 1/3rd of humanity was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths (verse 17).

The ESV Study Bible:

Two hundred million is an incredibly large army but not as great as the countless multitude that worships the Lamb (7:9). This cavalry, like the locusts from the Abyss (9:1–12), consists of demons. Their horses have heads like lions' heads and tails like serpents. But God's faithful servant can trample both of these deadly enemies underfoot (cf. Ps. 91:13). (Satan is the "ancient serpent" [Rev. 12:9; see Gen. 3:15].) Red fire, blue smoke (like sapphire), and yellow, rancid sulfur spewing from the horses' mouths reflect the colors of their riders' breastplates. What proceeds from the mouth represents the power of words, either to judge justly or to deceive and destroy, as when the Euphrates reappears in Rev. 16:12–14. The demonic horsemen kill by deluding human armies into war. Some think these 200 million troops represent a very large actual human army.

- r. These last three trumpets: the 5th, 6th (we are in the 6th) and the 7th are all dealing with fallen Babylon. 1/3rd of human kind is 1/3rd of the citizenship of fallen Babylon.
- s. Verse 19 is the opposite of the imagery in verse 10. Dr. Mulholland shares: Verse 19 is a modulation of the imagery of the locusts-horses. Here there is a difference. *The vision also seems to connect the imagery of the fifth and sixth trumpets through the "horses" in them. In the fifth trumpet the horses have the teeth of a lion (9:8); in the sixth the horses have heads like lions. In the fifth, the power is in the tails of the horses (9:10). In the sixth, their power is also in their tails, although in the sixth the tails have heads like snakes in place of tails that sting like scorpions (9:19). It would seem that the vision is indicating two different aspects of the same reality.*¹¹
- t. Remember Dr. Mulholland has an idea that this is showing the effects of sin. This is an interesting idea and it could still be the demons causing this. See below.
- u. **The reaction (9:20–21): How do the survivors of this horrible invasion respond after witnessing the death of untold millions?**
 - i. *They refuse to repent* (9:20a).
 - ii. *They continue to rebel* (9:20b–21).¹²

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

¹¹ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "[Revelation](#)," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 491.

¹² H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Re 9:13–21.

Dr Mulholland:

- John is seeing the destructiveness of sin.
- In the 5th trumpet he sees the torment of sin 5th trumpet was chapter 9 verses 1-12 and the 6th started in verse 13).
- Now he sees the destructiveness of sin.
- Verse 20 is amazing: those not killed still did not repent.
- Sometimes people do not stop regardless of the consequence. He shared a story of a man at one of his churches dying of lung cancer. Regardless of the cancer and it killing him he kept on smoking. The man ended up screaming in pain in a nursing home because of this. He died and he pastored the family. Right after the benediction the rest of the family lit of cigarettes, even though their uncle just died a painful death from smoking. One of them was a phys ed instructor too.
- Verse 20: the people say the consequences and saw many die, but they did not repent.
- John is seeing the destructiveness of sin, but also the way it blinds us.
- John is seeing the horrible side of sin.
- Chapter 10 and part of 11 is an interlude between the sixth and the seventh trumpets.

Both the fifth and sixth trumpets give a vision of the anatomy of sin very similar to that of James. James says we are lured and enticed by our own desire. “These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death” (Jas 1:14–15). The vision gives us a frightening picture of the hopeless condition of humanity in its rebellion against God. Rebellion places us in a situation from which we have no power or ability to extract ourselves. The next vision reveals God’s response to this intolerable state.¹³

As a final thought the Moody Bible Commentary shares about this last section (verses 13-21):

*The sixth judgment describes the worst destruction yet in John’s vision. A voice sounded from the altar (v. 13), a place of worship in heaven. Perhaps it is intended to call to mind the former pleas of the martyrs (6:9-10; 8:3). An unidentified source commanded the angel to release four other angels for more mayhem (v. 14). These will likely be demons cast from God’s presence to incite the actions that followed. The remaining activity originated from the Euphrates River. Verse 15 identifies the terrific scope of this judgment: one third of remaining humanity would die. The army of two hundred million in the next verse has occasioned much discussion, principally around two questions: (1) Are the riders on the horses men or demons? (2) Should their numbers be understood figuratively or literally? Those who believe that a human army is meant cite the numerous times in Scripture when God uses such units as instruments of His chastening. Walvoord, while not holding the position himself, cites the size of the modern Chinese army as evidence for the plausibility of the numbers (John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* [Chicago: Moody, 1966], 166 n. 13). If this most literal interpretation is maintained,*

¹³ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., [“Revelation,”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 491–493.

then vv. 17-19 represent John's best attempt to describe modern, mechanical warfare given the experience and vocabulary at his disposal. **Those who see demons as the principals cite that it is actually the horses and not the riders who inflict the harm, suggesting a more figurative approach** (Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22: An Exegetical Commentary* [Chicago: Moody, 1995], 46). This view has in its favor the connection between the locust-like demons in 9:2-10 and the two hundred million in 9:16-19 (both groups resembling horses, having breastplates, pain-inflicting tails, the features of lions). If the two groups are not identical, they are closely related, supporting the demonic identity of the two hundred million in 9:16. Others question whether the number is intended literally (Gregory Beale, *The Book of Revelation* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999], 509), or if such a massive corps, if literal, could be mobilized. These latter objections are no impediment to the second, preferred view, as such numbers of angels are present earlier in the book (5:11). Innumerable hordes of demons would torment the rebels. The chapter closes with yet another indictment of humankind's hard-heartedness. Rather than being moved to repentance by the ghastly events taking place, the inhabitants of earth would persist in multifaceted idolatry. **Modern Christ-followers should gain an appreciation for the ingrained rebelliousness of the human race and the righteousness of their God in addressing it.**¹⁴

¹⁴ The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 82892-82894). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.