

Chapter 1

Seventh Seal and the First Six Trumpets (8:1-9:21)

1.1 The Seventh Seal: The Seven Trumpets Awaited (8:1)

Revelation 8:1

And when he opened the seventh seal, there came a silence in heaven for about half hour.

1. **And when he opened:** It is a continuation of the seal series from 6:12.
2. **Seventh seal:** It resulted in an unexpected event which is silence in heaven. The silence is a preparatory action for the judgment about to happen. Similar occurrences in the OT in connection with reverence for God and awesome expectation of judgment further proves this point

Hab 2:20. But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.

Zeph 1:7. Be silent in the presence of the Lord God; For the day of the Lord is at hand . . .

Zech 2:13. Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!

3. **Silence:** What is the content of the seventh seal? Some see seven seals and seven trumpets as parallel but distinct events. The other possibility is **telescopic** view where the seventh seal composed of seven trumpets,

which chronologically follow the six seals. The former is based on the similarity between 6:12-17 and Mat 24:29 and this case is weak. Reasons for the correctness of the telescopic view:

- (a) there is no specific content for the seventh seal,
- (b) seven angels appear in 8:2 and 8:6 indicates they are sequential actions,
- (c) severity of the judgments increases as the seals and trumpets open.

All these indicate they are chronologically progressing events.

4. **Half hour:** Although heaven is not limited by time, but for the sake of John, God limited the period of silence to a human understandable form.

1.2 Setting of the Trumpets: The Prayers of the Saints (8:2–6)

Revelation 8:2

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

1. **And I saw:** After the half an hour of silence, John saw the preparations for the seven trumpets (8:2-6) and then the sounding of the first four trumpets (8:7-12).
2. **Stand:** The Greek indicates they were standing for some time. The position before God indicated their readiness to serve which is initiating the trumpet calls. Although unlikely, some think one of this angle is Gabriel based on

Lk 1:19. And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings

3. **Trumpets** were used in ceremonial possession, assembling people for war and warning of the coming of the day of the Lord and in announcing new year. Here, they are precursors of divine judgment in the Day of the Lord

Josh 6:4. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets

1Chr 15:24. Shebaniah ...and Eliezer, the priests, were to blow the trumpets before the ark of God ...

Num 10:9-10. "When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the Lord your God, and you will be saved from your enemies. 10 Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I am the Lord your God."

Joel 2:1. Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the Lord is coming, For it is at hand:

Num 29:1. 'And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month... For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets

Zeph 1:14-16. The great day of the Lord is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out. 15 That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers

And another angel having a golden censer came and stood at the alter, and much incense was given to him that he might dispense it on behalf of the prayers of all the saints on the golden alter which is before the throne.

1. **Another angel:** This does not mean that the angel is mediating the prayer which only Christ can do. The angels only enforces or facilitates the prayer. This being is not Christ, but only an angel as evident from the word **another** which denotes of the same kind.
2. **Alter:** Are there two alters, one for burnt offering and the other for incense, as some think according to this verse? No, it is only the alter of incense because: (a) Rev 9:13; 14:18; 16:7 exclude the possibility of alter of burnt offering, (b) Only alter of incense was made of gold and (c) the alter of incense must have been the source ?

Ex 30:1. You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood

Isa 6:6. Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar

Ezk 10:2. Then He spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, “Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.” And he went in as I watched

3. **Golden censer:** or fire pan which carry the frankincense

1Chr 9:29. Some of them were appointed over the furnishings and over all the implements of the sanctuary, and over the fine flour and the wine and the oil and the incense and the spices

4. **Was given:** The next step was for the angel to receive from God much incense to offer on the altar for the prayers of the saints. God is the source is clear from other portions like Rev 6:2f; 7:2; 9:1f; 16:8; 19:8; 20:4.
5. **Incense** has a prominent place in OT and reminds that intercessory prayer is like sweet perfume before the Lord. Here the prayer is like hot coal on which the incense falls which produces much aroma.

Ex 30:34-38. And the Lord said to Moses: “Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with these sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. 35 You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, and holy. 36 And you shall beat some of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you.

6. **On behalf of:** It does not indicate any mediator role but it enforces the prayer (like a loud speaker). The prayers are the cries of the saints during the tribulation for justice (8:4-5; 6:9-10; 9:13; 14:18).

Revelation 8:4

And the smoke of the incense ascended before God with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel.

1. **Smoke** is that resulting from the burning of the incense and it followed an upward route to arrive in the presence of God. Prayers unanswered until now is going to get an immediate reply. Note that the prayer of the saints is distinct from the contribution of the angels, however they are acceptable before God.

Revelation 8:5

And the angel took the incense, and filled it from the fire of the alter and cast [it] to the earth; and [peals of] thunder and voices and [flashes of] lightning and an earthquake occurred.

1. **Incense, and filled it from the fire of the alter and cast to the earth** is an indication of the beginning of the judgment. There is a strong connection between the prayers of the saints and divine wrath about to fall on the earth

Ezek 10:2-7. Then He spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, “Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.” And he went in as I watched . . . 6 Then it happened, when He commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, “Take fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim,” that he went in and stood beside the wheels. 7 And the cherub stretched out his hand from among the cherubim to the fire that was among the cherubim, and took some of it and put it into the hands of the man clothed with linen, who took it and went out

2. **Fire of the alter and cast to the earth:** Fire is symbol of torment of the wicked. Remember the question **How long** in 6:10. Casting the fire is an indication of the beginning of the punishment. The interaction between the sovereignty of God and the prayers of His people is a mystery. Saints pray, but God decided timing and execution details.
3. **Thunder, voices, lightning, and earthquake** contrast the silence (8:1) with physical disturbances accompany the manifestation of God’s wrath on the earth.

Ex 19:16-19. Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thundering and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. . . . 18 Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace,

and the whole mountain quaked greatly. 19 And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice

Rev 11:19. Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thundering, an earthquake, and great hail

Rev 16:18. And there were noises and thundering and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth

Revelation 8:6

And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves that they might sound

1. **The seven angels** are the ones blowing the trumpets and they reappear here.
2. **Prepared themselves** may be arranging themselves in some order and ready for the action. Like the seven seals, the first four trumpets differ from the last three. The first four trumpets uses the forces of nature to achieve the destruction. The last three consists of demonic attacks on humanity. Some trumpets parallels plagues in Egypt: (i) First trumpet parallels seventh plague (ii) second trumpet resembles ninth plague (iii) fourth trumpet is similar to ninth plague and (iv) fifth trumpet parallels eighth plague. These judgment are against the enemies of God and steps will be taken to deliver saints.

Ex 9:24. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation

Ex 9:19. Therefore send now and gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is found in the field and is not brought home; and they shall die

Ex 10:21. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt”

Ex 10:12. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land—all that the hail has left.”

1.3 First Trumpet: Burning of a Third of Vegetation (8:7)

Introductory notes on the 7 trumpets: The Seven Trumpets are divine judgments described in the Book of Revelation, chapters 8 to 11.

Hail and Fire Mixed with Blood (8:7) Hail and fire, mixed with blood, are thrown to the earth. A third of the earth, trees, and all green grass are burned up.

Burning Mountain Thrown into the Sea (8:8-9) Something like a great burning mountain is cast into the sea. A third of the sea becomes blood, a third of sea creatures die, and a third of ships are destroyed.

Wormwood – Bitter Waters (8:10-11) A great star called Wormwood falls from heaven, poisoning a third of the rivers and springs, making the waters bitter. Many people die from drinking the bitter water.

Darkening of Sun, Moon, and Stars (8:12) A third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened. There is less light during the day and night.

First Woe – Locusts from the Abyss (9:1-11) A fallen star opens the abyss, releasing smoke and locusts with the power to torment people without God's seal for five months. Their leader is called Abaddon (Hebrew) or Apollyon (Greek).

Second Woe – Four Angels and the Euphrates (9:13-21) Four angels bound at the Euphrates River are released to kill a third of mankind. They lead an army of 200 million mounted troops who bring destruction by fire, smoke, and sulfur.

Third Woe – The Kingdom Proclaimed (11:15-19) Loud voices proclaim, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.” The temple of God in heaven is opened, and the ark of His covenant is seen. There are flashes of lightning, rumblings, thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

1. **Purpose of the 7 trumpets:** The text describes different kinds of **trumpets**, which are divine punishments. The first four trumpets hurt the physical realm (grass, trees, sea, rivers, sun, moon, and stars) and only indirectly affect people. But the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets are in the spiritual realm and directly target humans. These are called first, second, and third woes. The trumpet punishments are meant to make people who don't believe in God change their ways, though this rarely happens. They are more serious than earlier **seal** judgments, but even worse **bowl** judgments are still coming. These trumpet judgments are not for God's followers; they are for those who are against God. These trumpet judgments now beginning were those held back in 7:3 until the servants of God were sealed.

Rev 7:3. Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads

2. **Literal vs. Symbolic interpretation of Revelation?**

- (a) The Book of Revelation can be understood as symbolic **not** expecting everything to be realistic. For

instance, a burning star falling into rivers seem illogical. Those who believe it is symbolic think these strange details are just part of how symbolic writings work.

- (b) Revelation says it's a prophecy, not just a symbolic story. Prophecies don't always need symbolic meanings. Old Testament prophets believed that the amazing events in Egypt from Moses' time would happen again. Deliverance from Egypt is pattern of His deliverance in future.

Is 11:16. There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria,
As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt

Jer 23:7. "Therefore, behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt'

Ezek 38:22. And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone

Mic 7:15. "As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders."

Amos 4:10. "I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt . . .

Amos 8:8. Shall the land not tremble for this, And everyone mourn who dwells in it? All of it shall swell like the River, Heave and subside Like the River of Egypt.

- (c) How we understand prophecies should be the same as how we understand historical narratives. If we think differently, we're judging the text instead of understanding its message.
- (d) The idea that apocalyptic writings can't be logical because they're artistic is wrong. This thought often comes from comparing Revelation to other non-biblical writings, but Revelation is different because it's from God. It's more of a prophecy than a typical apocalyptic book, meaning it should be understood differently.
- (e) It is possible that a prophetic writing can be scientifically and logically consistent at the same time artistically effective in its imagery. No one will oppose this because rationality and artistry are not mutually exclusive.
- (f) On the other hand, symbolic interpretation leads to hopeless contradictions, especially when trying to harmonize the whole text. For example, some try to argue the grass and tress of Rev 8:7 are symbolic of different people. But, then it contradicts Rev 9:4 where both are distinct

Rev 8:7. The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up

Rev 9:4. They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads

Hence, a Literal interpretation is preferred in understanding the book of Revelation. Hence, several of the trumpets resembles the plagues of the Egypt, here also a literal understanding is preferred.

Revelation 8:7

And the first sounded; and hail and fire mixed with blood came, and were cast into the earth; and the third part of the earth was burned up, and the third part of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

1. **The first:** The trumpet series started and the first effect is the arrival of **hail** and **fire** mixed with **blood**. This event looks like what might happen during a volcanic eruption, which John, the writer, may have seen. However, it is very similar to the seventh plague in the Book of Exodus, where hail and fire fell, but with the added element of blood. This mix of fire and blood also reminds us of Joel's [Day of the Lord](#).

Ex 9:24. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation

Ex 9:26. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail

Joel 2:30. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke

2. **Were cast into the earth:** God is the agent of this unparalleled destruction on the earth. While similar natural disasters have happened throughout history, none have been this terrible. How truly awful this event will be depends on whether these descriptions are meant to be understood literally or as symbols. Three effects of the trumpet:

(a) **Earth:** vegetation were burned up like the Egyptian plague

Ex 9:25. And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field.

(b) **Trees:** A third of the trees were burned. Fruit trees are important for humans.

(c) **All grass:** If all grass were burned, then it contradicts

Rev 9:4. They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

The contradiction can be resolved by considering (a) only the grass in one third area, (b) possibility of grass growing later, or (c) grass is green is a seasonal phenomena, and hence, the all the grass at that point burnt up. Hence, all can be literal all.

1.4 Second Trumpet: Destruction of a Third of Sea Life (8:8–9)

Revelation 8:8

And the second angel sounded; and [something] like a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood,

1. **Like a great mountain:** Some think the mountain is symbolic of Babylon, Rome, Zion, or some other country on the earth. However, the word **like** gives a clue that it is not an actual mountain, but a large burning mass. This is similar to the falling stars of Rev 6:13. This is an example of literal approach with provision for figurative language. That is, the term **great mountain burning with fire** is symbolic, while the **sea** is literal. The identity of the sea not known.
2. **Became blood:** Possible that sea actually turned to blood as in Egypt. It is difficult to believe this to a modern person. Man is in no position to question the extent and manner of what God devises and implements.

Ex 7:20. And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the Lord commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.

Ps 78:43-44. When He worked His signs in Egypt, And His wonders in the field of Zoan; 44 Turned their rivers into blood, And their streams, that they could not drink.

Revelation 8:9

and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, which had life, died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

1. **The third part:** The extend of this trumpet judgment is that it affected one third of the sea and one third of the sea creatures died and one third of the ships were damaged. One can only imagine the environmental impact of this.
2. **Creatures** are primarily fishes in the sea and they died because of the blood, similar to what happened in Egypt. Creature implies a Creator and creation, and He has the right to take their life.

Ex 7:21. The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

3. **Ships** destruction implies it affected the crew as well.

1.5 Third Trumpet: Poisoning of a Third of the Fresh Water (8:10–11)

Revelation 8:10

And the third angel sounded; and a great star burning as torch fell from heaven, and fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters.

1. **Great star:** Some symbolically interpret this as a false teacher, a harmful influence, or even an angel. Literal understanding identify it as a meteor.
2. **Torch lampas** was used in those days to denote falling meteors.
3. **Rivers . . . fountains of waters:** When this star falls, it pollutes one-third of the rivers and all the springs. This event is similar to the first plague in Egypt, where the drinking water was contaminated. This type of pollution was a common sign of God's punishment for all people's general ungodliness.

Revelation 8:11

And the name of the star us called Wormwood. And the third of the water became wormwood, and many among men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

1. **Wormwood**: The word not found anywhere else in the NT. It is plant with bitter taste. It was a symbol of divine punishment in OT. It is poisonous and may lead to death.

Jer 9:15. therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink

Jer 23:15. "Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets: 'Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, And make them drink the water of gall; For from the prophets of Jerusalem Profaneness has gone out into all the land.'"

Lam 3:15, 19. He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drink wormwood. 19 Remember my affliction and roaming, The wormwood and the gall

2. **Many** but not all, who drank the water died. Everyone who drank it suffered, but not all suffered death. Note that the purpose of these first four judgments is to punish, not necessarily to kill.

1.6 Fourth Trumpet: Darkening of a Third of the Heavenly Bodies (8:12–13)

Revelation 8:12

And the fourth angel sounded; and the third part of the sun and the third part of the moon and the third part of the stars were stricken, so that the third part of them was darkened and the day did not brighten for a third part of it, and the night was likewise.

1. **Stricken eplege**: Sun, moon, and stars receive the impact of the punishment. The word is related to plague and occurs in Ex 9:31-32 (LXX). We do not know the mechanism of how God did this or what instrument he used.
2. **Darkened** is a symbol of judgment throughout OT. The ninth plague is a symbol of judgment throughout OT. The Day of the Lord is associated with darkness. Some interpret this as removal of truth or the spiritual darkness associated with Mohammedanism or the collapse of long-standing governments in the western empire. However, a literal interpretation leads this to an actual reduction of light as warning for more severe judgments to come.

Ex 10:21. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt."

Amos 5:18. Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! For what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness, and not light

Isa 13:10. For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine

Joel 2:2. A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains . . .

Mark 13:24. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light

3. **Day did not brighten for a third part:** How the sun, moon, and stars becoming partially darker can shorten the amount of daylight and nighttime light is a bit of a mystery. However, just because we don't understand how it happens doesn't mean the author is being inconsistent. A partial dimming of light result in shorter periods of light. The impact will clearly be huge. Many parts of life, like farming, travel, health, and

work, will suffer from this plague. On top of that, the darkness itself hints at even worse plagues to come, adding to the fear.

Revelation 8:13

And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven saying with a loud voice, Woe woe woe to those who dwell on the earth because of the rest of the trumpet-sounds of the three angles who are about to sound

1. **Eagle aetou:** is best supported by manuscripts than angel **aggelou**. Since eagles can't speak, some think this should be seen as symbolic. However, we see in Gen 3:1-5 and Num 22:28-30 serpent and donkey is speaking. Eagle is a strong and swift bird. Sometimes eagle is used with negative connotation. At on extreme, the eagle speaks of the salvation of God's new age. but at the other, it is bird of prey, associated with blood, death, and rotting flesh.

Deut 28:49. The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand,

Hos 8:1. "Set the trumpet to your mouth! He shall come like an eagle against the house of the Lord, Because they have transgressed My covenant And rebelled against My law.

Hab 1:8. Their horses also are swifter than leopards, And more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; Their cavalry comes from afar; They fly as the eagle that hastens to eat.

Lk 17:37. And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

Deut 32:9-11. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance. . . . 11 As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings,

Ex 19:4. 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

Job 39:27-30. Does the eagle mount up at your command, And make its nest on high? 28 On the rock it dwells and resides, On the crag of the rock and the stronghold. 29 From there it spies out the prey; Its eyes observe from afar. 30 Its young ones suck up blood; And where the slain are, there it is."

2. **Mid-heaven:** The position of eagle is mid-heaven where all can see and hear him for the disasters he announces will affect earth-dwellers in every part of the world.

3. **Woe Woe Woe:** Eagle's announcement is brief, notwithstanding the severity of the earlier trumpets, greater judgment is going to happen. Woe indicates great calamity is going to come. Double woe indicates severity as in and in Rev 18:10; 16; 19. Triple woe refers to the three remaining trumpets (Rev 9:1, 12; 11:14) which are going to be more severe.
4. **Those who dwell on the earth:** The upcoming punishment is aimed at the same wicked people that the martyrs prayed for vengeance against. This means the current events are a further answer to those prayers

Re 6:10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

Ezk 16:23. Then it was so, after all your wickedness—"Woe, woe to you!" says the Lord God.

1.7 Fifth Trumpet: Demonic Locust Plague (9:1–12)

The fifth trumpet, like the last three seals, is a distinct event that introduces the final three trumpets. The seventh trumpet mirrors the seventh seal, as it concludes the entire sequence and contains the next set of events which is seven bowls. The fifth trumpet is described in two parts: the effects of the locusts (1-6) and the features of the locusts themselves (7-12).

1.7.1 Impact of the locusts (9:1-6)

Revelation 9:1

And the fifth angel sounded and I saw a star, fallen from heaven into the earth, and the key of the pit of the abyss was given to him.

Star (astera): This text explains that the star mentioned is different from the stars in the sixth seal (6:13) and third trumpet (8:10). The star is a living, intelligent being because it is given and uses [the key of the pit of the abyss](#). The identity of this being has been the subject of much speculation. Many explain him as Satan, Antichrist, Mohamed, etc. Satan could be a possibility, but he will be introduced later. So this star must be an unfallen angel dispatched on a divine mission to advance the next stage of God's punishment against the rebellious earth-dwellers.

Key: No angel has the power to release these fallen angels unless given by God.

Abyss (abysos phrear) or bottomless pit: Two wrong views are prevalent: (i) abyss represents all evil in the world. This is only an imagination. (ii) the abyss is same as hell. But hell is better described by stronger words like [lake of fire](#). Best possibility is that the abyss is a temporary prison for fallen angels, some of

whom are to be released. The word also used in NT as some sort of deep well with a lid on the earth where demons dwell. This view is supported by several biblical passages such as:

Lk 8:31. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep

Ro 10:7. Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead

Rev 9:11. And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. . .

Rev 11:7. When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them

Rev 17:8. The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. . .

Revelation 9:2

And he opened the pit of the abyss, and smoke came up from the pit as smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.

Smoke: An angelic figure uses a key to open a pit, causing smoke to pour out like from a volcano. This smoke is a real, physical event, not a metaphor. The massive amount of smoke, which is a sign of divine judgment, is so thick that it blocks the sun and darkens the sky. This is different from a previous event where the sun's light was weakened, as here the smoke actively obstructs the light from reaching the earth.

Gen 19:28. Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.

Ex 19:18. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly

Revelation 9:3

Ans locusts came out of the smoke into the earth, and authority was given to them as scorpions of the earth have authority.

Locusts: This trumpet parallels the eighth of the Egyptian plagues (Ex 10:12-20). Locusts are destructive (Deut 28:38; 2 Chr 7:13; Joel 2:25) and they are huge in number (Ps 105:34; Nah 3:15). The central OT passage is Joel 1-2 where locust visits before the Day of the Lord. But these locusts are not ordinary ones. They have a leader (9:11), they have power to hurt men, they breed in the center of earth, do not eat grass

(9:4), etc. Who are they: some say human armies, others say they are symbolic of God's judgment. Best explanation is that they are demons or fallen angels who assume a locust-like form. They attack people rather than green vegetation which shows their demonic nature. They have a shape which no human being have ever seen. Rev 16:13 also shows demons can take any form like frogs.

Scorpion belongs to the largest and most malignant of all insect tribes. It ranks with snake in its hostility toward man. The misery of humanity is unparalleled.

Lk 10:19. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Lk 11:12. Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

Revelation 9:4

And it was said to them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth or any green [thing] or any tree, except [they should hurt] men, such ones as do not have the seal of God upon their foreheads.

They should not: God must be telling this and He exercises His sovereign control. Demons can go only to the extent He permits.

Hurt men: Ironically the group of people who are in rebellion against God are the victims of the demons who themselves are in rebellion against God. This is a classic example of the utter confusion and the irrationality of the forces of evil which logically should have formed an alliance with their victims.

Seal: As seen in Rev 7:4-8, the 1,44,000 servants of God are exempted from the locusts.

Revelation 9:5

And it was given to them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented for five months and their torment [was] as the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

Should not kill: Demons were given further limitation that they can torment but not kill and the time period is also fixed. Under the third trumpet death was possible, but not here.

Torment is acute physical or mental pain and is connected with the punishment of highest degree.

Five months is best understood literally and non-literal understanding had lead diverse interpretation leading to confusion.

Revelation 9:6

And in those days men will seek death and will in no way find it, and they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

Seek death: The torment is so severe that men would seek with an intense desire for death. It is unlike Paul's desire for death (Phil 1:23) where he wanted it for greater glory. Here, it is to escape from the misery.

Will flee: Death will be rare and aggressively run away from those who are pursuing it. Need God's grace even to die!

1.7.2 Characteristics of the locusts (9:9-12)

Revelation 9:7

And the likeness of the locusts [were] similar to horses prepared for battle, and upon their heads [somethings] like crowns as of gold, and their faces [were] as faces of men.

Likeness: several times John uses the words *like* to portray the locusts. He describes it beginning with the head and move towards tail. These cannot be referring to natural locusts or human army because one needs

to stretch the imagination. The description points to the demonic locusts. They are best understood as descriptions of supernatural features of the locusts like demons.

Horses prepared for the battle: They have the resemblance of an army.

Crowns are distinctive feature of the locust and thus indicates victory for five months.

Faces of men: indicates that they have appearance of man, and may poses intelligence.

Revelation 9:8

And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth [were] as [those] of lions,

Hair: Ordinary locusts have very short hair, but here they are long one. This is also another characteristics of demonic locusts.

Teeth: Ordinary locusts have teeth, but here the teeth is powerful as it is compared to that of lion. However, in spite of their fierceness, they do not tear down the victims.

Revelation 9:9

and they had breastplates as breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings [was] as the sound of chariots of many horses running into battle.

Breastplate. . . Iron: Two additional features resemble aspects of forces on the battle field. Breastplate and Iron points to an armour protecting front and back of the chest of a soldier. Iron indicated strength. Together they indicated invincibility (Rev 1:9; Eph 6:14; 1 Thes 5:8).

Sound: The movement of the wings produces loud rushing sound similar to that of a marching army. Its effect is more psychological and points to the hopelessness of resisting them (Joel 2:4-5; 2Ki 7:6; Jer 47:3).

Revelation 9:10

And they have tails like scorpions and stings, and their authority in their tails is to hurt men for five months.

Tails: The scorpion-like power to inflict pain, or **torment**, comes from their tails, which are equipped with stings. The Greek word for **stings** is also used to describe an ox-goad. This power to **hurt** is a more specific description of the torment mentioned earlier and is limited to a period of five months.

Act 26:14. ... 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

1Co 15:55. "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

Revelation 9:11

They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek he has the name Appollyon

King: They have their leader. It is another indication that they are different from the ordinary locusts. He is a king, he has two names and he is an angel. He cannot be Satan because: (a) Satan is not bound in absysis, (b) Satan is free to move on earth and on heaven. (c) Satan's entry will be more dramatic. Hence, this is best understood as a higher order fallen angel who is obeyed by all the fallen angels in the abyss. So this fallen angel rules the locusts from the abyss.

Pr 30:27. The locusts have no king, Yet they all advance in ranks;

Eph 6:12. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Rev 12:3, 9. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Abaddon . . . Appollyon: Abaddon means destroyer and *Appollyon* is the translation from Hebrew to Greek. Such bilingual translation is characteristic of John in the gospel and revelation.

Revelation 9:12

The first woe has passed away behold, two woes still come after these things.

With the description of the fifth trumpet complete, the first woe is complete, and now the two more woe is remaining. Mankind will welcome the completion of the first woe but there is no time to relax as the next woe is just arriving. The next woe continues till 11:14 with a parenthetical stuff in 10:1-11:13. This also shows the woes are consecutive.

1.8 Sixth Trumpet: Death to a Third of Earth's Inhabitants (9:13–21)

1.8.1 The deadly attack (9:13-19)

With the sixth trumpet, the severity of the judgments increases even more than with the fifth. A voice from the golden altar responds to the sounding of the sixth angel.

Revelation 9:13

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God,

Here the angel not only **sounded** the trumpet, but also did some actions in the following verses. The **voice from the altar** John heard cannot be from God as God is the subject in a similar usage in Rev 16. Most likely, it is the angel in Rev 8. This angel is connected to the golden altar and to the prayer of the saints for judgment

Rev 16:7. And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments”

Rev 8:3. Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar . . .

The alter has four **horns** and voice might be coming from the midst of it. Horns are seen as an indication of the sovereignty of God and His judicial judgment.

Revelation 9:14

saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Loose the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

Sixth angel is the one who has the trumpet. This is one of the seven angels responsible for the seven trumpets (8:2, 6).

The four angels who are bound: The article **the** indicates that these angels are familiar, but their familiarity is unknown and nowhere they are mentioned in the Bible. The context suggest that they are evil angels and apparently the leaders of the invading hosts. They should not be confused with the four good angels of

Rev 7:1. After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree

Great river Eupretes: This is the river that the enemies of God will cross prior to the last conflict before the Millennium. This river is of 2800 km long and starts in Turkey and pass through Syria, Iraq and Iran. It

separated Israle from her chief enemies: Assyria and Babylon. The name referes not merely the river, but the whole region drained by the river.

Gen 2:14. The name of the third river is Hiddekel; it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates

Gen 15:18. On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—

Deut 1:7. Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites . . . to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates.

Josh 1:4. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.

Rev 16:12. Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.

And four angels, who were prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were loosed that they might kill a third of men.

Prepared: Although they were fallen angels, they are divinely prepared. Similar instances are there in the Scripture

Mat 25:34, 41. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: . . . 41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

The Hour and day and month and year: the hour refers to the appointed time for the action of these four angels. God's actions are not accidental, but planned and precise in time to the point of an hour. All the events in history are fully under the control of God and they happen precisely at the time decided by Him.

Kill a third of men: The goal of these angels is not merely to harm, but to inflict death. This death is literal, just as previous judgments were physical. Verse 20 also confirms this by focusing the judgment on those who are unrepentant, suggesting that those who have repented have escaped death.

A third: The number of those killed increases from one-fourth under the fourth seal (Rev 6:8) to one-third under the sixth trumpet (Rev 9:18). This will result in half of humanity being wiped out. It's important to note that those who have been sealed by God will not be affected by these trumpet judgments.

Revelation 9:16

And the number of the armies of cavalry [was] twenty thousands of ten thousands; I heard the number of them.

Army: Abruptly, armies that kill a large portion of humanity appear on the scene. The origin of the army is not given. However, it is implied that the four fallen angels did something that resulted into an army of horsemen. It is possible that these armies are humans since the evil one could use a human army as his agents. However, they are most likely demons, as is evident from their descriptions below. The horses are the destructive agents along with the riders. Both the horses and the riders wear breastplates, and the fire coming out of their mouths indicates they must be of supernatural origin. They are not ordinary horses. We have also noted that the agents in the previous trumpet were also supernatural.

200 million . . . I heard: This number represents the size of the army; many believe it is too large to consist of humans. The Chinese army, for example, is 2.2 million, and the combined strength of the top 30 countries is only 16 million. The maximum world army size in human history was 30 million, so 200 million is not a

problem if the army is composed of demons. Furthermore, this number is intended to be precise. In contrast, other verses (like 5:11 or 7:9) use imprecise language for large numbers. The number was not counted by John, but rather revealed to him, and he heard it and recorded it for us.

Revelation 9:17

And thus I saw the horses in the vision and those sitting upon them, having breastplates of fire and hyacinth and brimstone and the heads of the horses [were] as heads of lions, and from their mouths issued forth fire and smoke and brimstone.

Horses are mentioned in the Bible in connection with war. Note that horses are the main subject in these discussion rather than the rider. Hence, breastplate is applicable for both horse and its rider. The rider has only defense armour and not any offensive ones.

Haycinth ... brimstone: Breastplate made of materials such as *fire* and *haycinth* and *brimstone* is difficult to conceive, hence, the color connotation (red, blue, and yellow) should be preferred. They indicate wrath of God.

Ex 25:4. blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats' hair;

Ex 27:16. "For the gate of the court there shall be a screen twenty cubits long, woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. It shall have four pillars and four sockets.

Gen 19:24, 28. Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. 28 Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.

Lion: the army combines the swiftness of horse and terror (10:3), ferocity (9:8), and destructiveness (13:2). the mouth of the horse was the most destructive.

Revelation 9:17

From these three plagues were killed the third [part] of men, from the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which issued from their mouths.

Plague: is the same word used in LXX. It describes the destructive power of the horses. This word is going to appear several times from here (Rev 9:20; 11:6; 13:3, 12, 14; 15:1, 6, 8; 16:9, 21; 18:4, 8; 21:9; 22:18). The fire, smoke, and brimstone (sulphur), each plays a role in the largest death-toll in human history up to that point.

From (ek) and By (apo): The text uses two different prepositions, "ek" and "apo," to emphasize the three ways people will die. While they have slightly different meanings, they both point to the source of the destruction.

The (tou... tou... tou): The repeated use of the definite article "the" before each of the three destructive elements (fire, smoke, and sulfur) highlights that each one is a separate cause of death. Together, they are responsible for a massive death toll.

Ex 11:1. And the Lord said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether

Revelation 9:19

For the authority of the horses is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads and with them they do harm.

For This word appears twice to explain how the demonic horses can do so much damage. (i) First, it explains that their power is in their **mouths** and **tails**. The tails are mentioned here for the first time. The second **for** then clarifies the new detail about the tails: they are like snakes with heads, able to inflict painful bites.

Note: While the tails weren't actual snakes, they functioned like them, causing physical harm. Just as the locusts in the previous trumpet plague inflicted pain like a scorpion's sting, these horses cause a similar or worse pain, and are also able to kill.

1.8.2 The response of the survivors (9:20–21)

We may think that the loss of a third of the earth's population and the suffering due to various calamities would cause the survivors to be more responsive to God. However, to our surprise, it will not happen showing how hard is human heart when it comes to God.

Revelation 9:20

And the rest of men, who were not killed by these plagues, did not even repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship the 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,

The rest denotes those who are spared or escaped from the death caused by fire, smoke, and brimstone.

Not even: This adverb shows the absolute failure of the survivors of the sixth trumpet to respond to God by changing their ways, beliefs, or attitudes toward God, despite the horrific events they had just witnessed.

Repent: This word is frequent in chapters 2-3 as it was a recurring theme in the messages to the seven churches. The rest of the book, every mention of repentance is negative, indicating that while God's care is evident to his people, the opportunities for people of the world to repent are rare. Even then, they would use the opportunity. Repent denotes a change of mind in rejection of all that is against God.

Works of their hands: They refused to change their minds because of what they were doing which in the Bible refers to idolatry. Idol worship has always been a major problem of humanity. Even a catastrophe is not enough to make people stop. Worshiping idols is the main reason for God's anger because it takes away the glory that belongs to Him alone.

Demons: Idolatry has strong connection with demons. The survivors continued to worship idols made of various materials like gold, silver, and wood. Repentance would have led them to stop this behavior, but their refusal to change keeps the practice going.

Duet 32:17. They sacrificed to demons, not to God, To gods they did not know, To new gods,
new arrivals That your fathers did not fear

Psa 106:37. They even sacrificed their sons And their daughters to demons

1 Cor. 10:21. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

Revelation 9:21

and they did not repent of their murders or of their sorcerers or of their fornication or of their thefts.

And they did not repent: In the previous verse they were accused of idolatry which is direct sin against God. In this verse they were accused of four sins. The first three are social sins in the sense that they are visibly against humanity and are listed in the ten commandments. These are murder, fornication, and theft.

Sorceries: This sin is a broad term that encompasses various harmful practices, including witchcraft, magic spells, use of charms, use of drugs, etc. It is considered a severe sin, equivalent to idolatry, murder, and fornication.

Re 21:8. But . . . murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone . . .

Rev 22:15. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie

Note: After the sixth trumpet which is also the second, the seventh trumpet doesn't follow immediately. Instead, its sounding is delayed while two events prepare the way: (i) the declaration that there will be no more delay (10:1–11) and (ii) the measuring of the temple and its worshipers (11:1–14).

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