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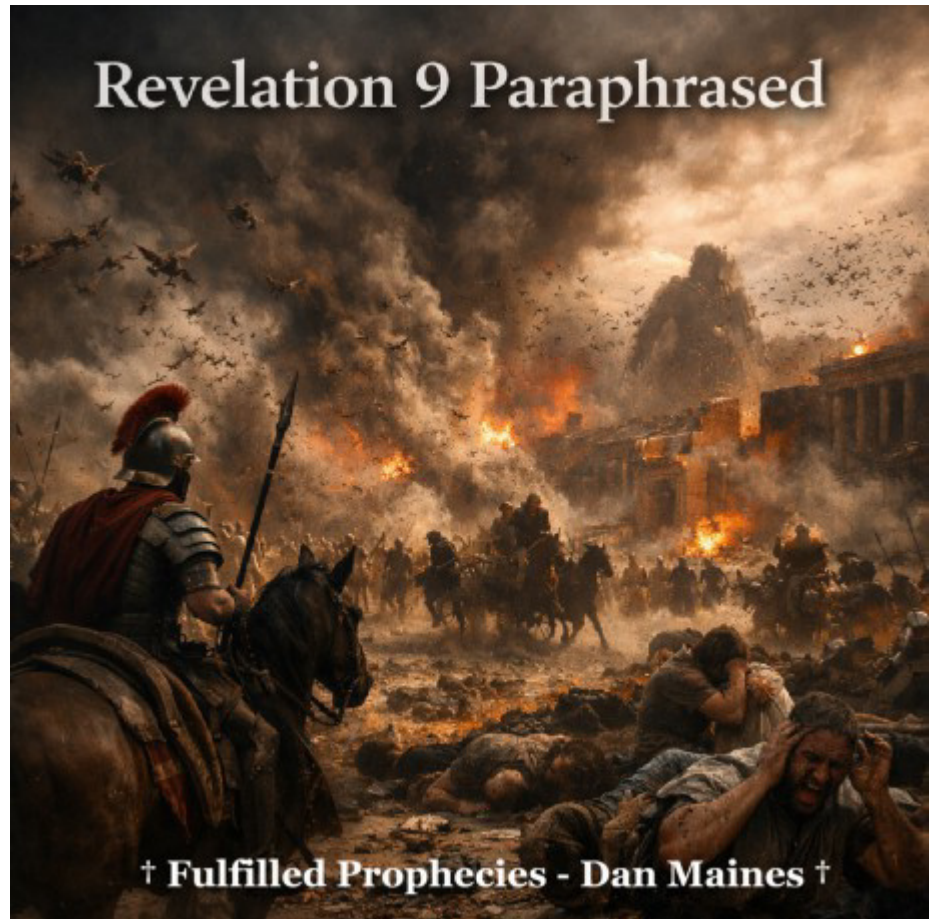
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Revelation 9 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Revelation 9 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Revelation 9 continues the trumpet judgments that began in the previous chapter, showing the devastating consequences that came upon the land during the Jewish War leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Revelation 8:13).

† The imagery describes chaos, torment, invading forces, and spiritual darkness, all fitting the historical events recorded by Josephus during the Roman siege (Josephus, Wars of the Jews

5.1-6).

† From the fulfilled perspective, these symbols reveal the collapse of the Old Covenant world and the judgment that Jesus warned would fall upon that generation (Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34).

Revelation 9:1

The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had already fallen from heaven to the earth. He was given the key that unlocks the deep pit of darkness.

† A fallen star often represents a ruler or authority being cast down from power (Isaiah 14:12; Luke 10:18).

† The key shows authority being granted to unleash judgment, meaning God was allowing these events to unfold during the war (Revelation 1:18).

† The abyss represents a place of chaos and destruction being released upon the land (Luke 8:31).

Revelation 9:2

He opened the pit, and thick smoke poured out like smoke from a massive furnace. The sun and the air became dark because of the smoke rising from the pit.

† Darkened sun imagery often symbolizes national collapse and divine judgment (Joel 2:10; Matthew 24:29).

† The smoke rising like a furnace reflects the devastation of war and burning cities during the Roman invasion (Josephus, Wars 6.4).

† The darkness symbolizes spiritual blindness and chaos among the people of Jerusalem during the rebellion (Isaiah 60:2).

Revelation 9:3

Out of the smoke came swarms like locusts spreading across the land, and they were given power like the stinging power of scorpions.

† Locust imagery is used throughout Scripture to describe invading armies (Joel 1:4; Joel 2:1-11).

† The torment like scorpions reflects intense suffering rather than immediate death (Deuteronomy 8:15).

† Josephus described violent factions within Jerusalem causing immense torment to the population during the siege (Wars 5.1).

Revelation 9:4

They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only the people who did not have God's seal on their foreheads.

† This echoes the sealing of the faithful earlier in Revelation, showing protection over believers during the coming judgment (Revelation 7:3).

† The focus on people rather than vegetation confirms the symbolic nature of the locust army (Joel 2:25).

† Jesus warned His followers to flee Jerusalem before the destruction, which protected them from the coming disaster (Luke 21:20-21).

Revelation 9:5

They were not allowed to kill them, but only to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the agony of a scorpion sting.

† The five months may correspond to the typical lifespan of a locust season, reinforcing the imagery (Joel 2:25).

† The suffering described reflects the internal conflict and famine inside Jerusalem during the siege (Josephus, Wars 6.3).

† The torment shows judgment falling before the final

destruction of the city (Matthew 24:21).

Revelation 9:6

During those days people will seek death but will not find it. They will long to die, but death will escape them.

† This reflects the unbearable suffering experienced during the siege of Jerusalem (Josephus, Wars 5.10).

† The statement echoes covenant curses where life becomes unbearable under judgment (Deuteronomy 28:65-67).

† It demonstrates the severity of the tribulation Jesus warned about for that generation (Matthew 24:21).

Revelation 9:7

The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces.

† The description strongly resembles military forces ready for war (Joel 2:4).

† Crowns suggest authority or victory associated with conquering armies (Revelation 6:2).

† The human faces reinforce that these are symbolic depictions of people, not literal creatures.

Revelation 9:8

They had hair like women's hair and teeth like the teeth of lions.

† The lion imagery reflects ferocity and destructive power (Joel 1:6).

† Hair like women may symbolize wild appearance or barbaric soldiers.

† The combined imagery portrays terrifying invading forces.

Revelation 9:9

They wore armor like iron breastplates, and the sound of their wings was like the roar of many chariots rushing into battle.

† The sound of chariots mirrors Old Testament descriptions of invading armies (Joel 2:5).

† Iron armor represents disciplined military power.

† Josephus recorded the overwhelming force of Roman legions during the Jewish War (Wars 3.5).

Revelation 9:10

They had tails like scorpions with stingers, and in their tails was the power to torment people for five months.

† The scorpion symbolism continues to describe painful torment inflicted during the war (Luke 10:19).

† The repeated five month period again points to a limited season of judgment.

† The torment emphasizes suffering leading up to the final destruction.

Revelation 9:11

They had a king ruling over them, the angel of the abyss. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek his name is Apollyon.

† Both names mean destroyer, fitting the destructive nature of the Roman campaign (John 10:10).

† This figure symbolizes the destructive power unleashed during the war.

† The description reflects the devastation brought by military conquest.

Revelation 9:12

The first great disaster has passed. Two more disasters are still coming.

† This marks a transition between trumpet judgments (Revelation 8:13).

† The warnings show escalating judgment against Jerusalem.

† Jesus described these events as the beginning of devastating calamities (Luke 21:23).

Revelation 9:13

Then the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar before God.

† The altar imagery connects the judgment to the cries of the martyrs earlier in Revelation (Revelation 6:9-10).

† It shows that divine justice was responding to persecution.

† The horns symbolize authority and power issuing the command.

Revelation 9:14

The voice told the sixth angel holding the trumpet to release the four angels who had been bound at the great river Euphrates.

† The Euphrates often marked the boundary from which invading armies came (Isaiah 8:7).

† Releasing the angels symbolizes unleashing destructive forces.

† Historically, Roman forces came from regions east of Judea during the campaign.

Revelation 9:15

The four angels who had been prepared for this exact hour, day, month, and year were released to kill a third of humanity.

† The specific timing shows divine sovereignty over the unfolding events (Daniel 2:21).

† A third represents a large but partial judgment.

† Josephus recorded massive loss of life during the war leading to Jerusalem's fall (Wars 6.9).

Revelation 9:16

The number of mounted troops was two hundred million, I heard the number.

† The enormous number emphasizes the overwhelming nature of the invading forces.

† Symbolic numbers are common in apocalyptic literature.

† The point is the unstoppable scale of destruction.

Revelation 9:17

The horses and riders looked like this in my vision: their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and sulfur yellow. The horses' heads resembled lions, and fire, smoke, and sulfur came out of their mouths.

† Fire and sulfur imagery is often associated with divine judgment (Genesis 19:24).

† The fierce imagery highlights destructive military power.

† It mirrors the chaos and violence of the Roman assault.

Revelation 9:18

A third of humanity was killed by these three plagues, the fire, smoke, and sulfur coming from their mouths.

- † The triple imagery intensifies the destructive judgment.
- † This corresponds with massive casualties reported during the siege.
- † The partial judgment shows escalating warnings before total collapse.

Revelation 9:19

The power of the horses was in their mouths and their tails, because their tails resembled snakes with heads that inflicted harm.

- † Serpent imagery often symbolizes danger and deception (Genesis 3:1).
- † The dual attack imagery shows relentless destruction.
- † The symbolism continues to emphasize the terror of war.

Revelation 9:20

The rest of the people who were not killed by these plagues still did not turn away from the works of their hands. They continued worshiping demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood.

- † Despite judgment, many remained hardened in rebellion (Jeremiah 5:3).
- † Idolatry and corruption had deeply infected the nation (Ezekiel 8:10).
- † Jesus warned that Jerusalem would refuse to repent before its destruction (Matthew 23:37).

Revelation 9:21

They did not turn away from their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality, or their thefts.

† The list reflects moral corruption condemned throughout Scripture (Galatians 5:19-21).

† Josephus described lawlessness and violence dominating Jerusalem during the war (Wars 4.3).

† The refusal to repent sealed the city's fate.

Historical References

† Josephus described extreme violence, famine, and internal conflict in Jerusalem during the Roman siege (Wars of the Jews 5-6).

† Eusebius recorded that Christians fled Jerusalem before the destruction, fulfilling Jesus' warning (Ecclesiastical History 3.5).

† Tacitus also documented the devastating Roman campaign in Judea (Histories 5.13).

How It Applies To Us Today

† Revelation 9 reminds us that God's warnings are real and must not be ignored (Hebrews 3:15).

† It shows that spiritual blindness can persist even when judgment is evident.

† It encourages believers to remain faithful and trust Christ's completed victory.

Q&A Appendix

Q Who do the locusts represent?

A They represent destructive forces associated with the war against Jerusalem, similar to how invading armies are described as locusts in Joel 2:1-11.

Q What is the abyss mentioned in Revelation 9:1?

A It represents a realm of chaos and destruction being unleashed as judgment, similar to the demonic abyss referenced in Luke 8:31.

Q Why did people refuse to repent in Revelation 9:20-21?

A Their hardened hearts reflect the same resistance to God's warnings that Jesus described in Matthew 23:37.

Q What does the five month torment represent in Revelation 9:5?

A It reflects a limited season of intense suffering during the Jewish War. Locust plagues in the ancient world often lasted about five months, which reinforces the imagery of judgment being severe but temporary. Scripture also shows God limiting periods of judgment rather than allowing them to continue endlessly (Joel 2:25; Matthew 24:22).

Q Who is the destroyer called Abaddon or Apollyon in Revelation 9:11?

A The name means destroyer and represents the destructive force unleashed during the judgment on Jerusalem. It symbolizes the devastating power of the Roman war machine that brought the city to ruin. Jesus had already warned that armies would surround Jerusalem and bring destruction upon it (Luke 21:20; Matthew 24:2).

Q Why does Revelation say people still refused to repent after the plagues?

A The passage shows how hardened the people had become. Even after seeing judgment unfold, many continued in idolatry and corruption. This fulfills the pattern seen throughout Israel's history where prophets warned the nation but the leaders refused to listen (Jeremiah 5:3; Matthew 23:37).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Revelation 9; Joel 1:4; Joel 2:1-11; Matthew 23:36-37;
Matthew 24:21, 34; Luke 21:20-23

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews 4-6; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical
History 3.5; Tacitus, Histories 5.13

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