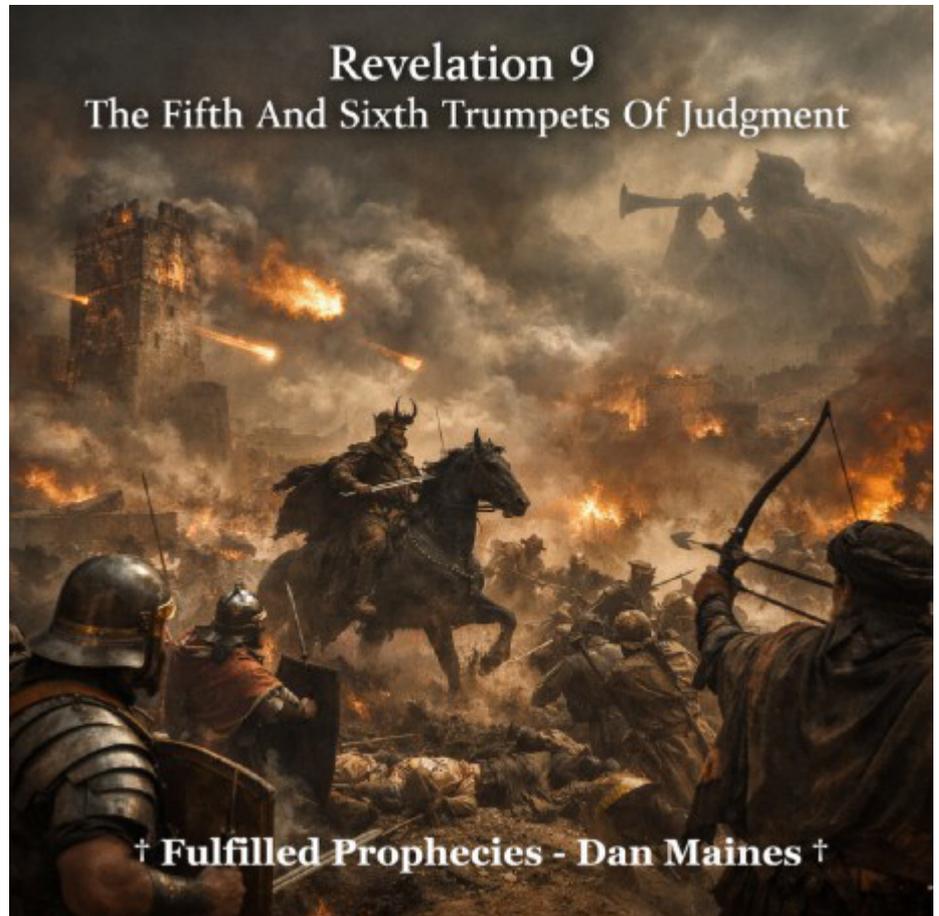


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Revelation 9 The Fifth And Sixth Trumpets Of Judgment



By Dan Maines

Revelation 9 The Fifth And Sixth Trumpets Of Judgment

Introduction

† Revelation continues to unfold the judgment that came upon Jerusalem in the first century. The trumpets reveal increasing levels of warning and destruction, just as the prophets of the Old Testament warned Israel that covenant rebellion would bring national catastrophe (Deuteronomy 28:49-52).

† The imagery in this chapter is not describing modern warfare or some distant future event. It describes the terrifying conditions surrounding the Roman invasion and the siege of Jerusalem leading to AD 70. The language draws heavily from the prophets, who often used cosmic and symbolic imagery to describe national judgment (Isaiah 13:10; Joel 2:10).

† Revelation 9 shows two major realities. First, torment and devastation unleashed upon the rebellious nation. Second, the stubborn refusal of many to repent even while judgment was falling around them. This proves that the warnings Jesus gave in Matthew 24 were fulfilled within that generation.

Revelation 9:1-2

Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key to the shaft of the abyss was given to him. He opened the shaft of the abyss, and smoke ascended out of the shaft like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened from the smoke of the shaft.

† The fallen star represents a fallen ruler or angelic power. Stars symbolize leaders in Scripture, Isaiah 14:12; Revelation 1:20. This star is not Christ but one cast down.

† The abyss imagery recalls Isaiah 24:21-22, where rebellious powers are imprisoned. The smoke darkening the sky shows spiritual deception and chaos covering the land.

† The darkening of the sun and air echoes prophetic judgment language used against nations, Isaiah 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7. This signals the collapse of Israel's covenant world.

Revelation 9:3-4

Then out of the smoke came locusts onto the earth, and power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

† Unlike literal locusts, these harm people, not vegetation. Their symbolic nature is clear. They represent invading forces unleashed in judgment.

† Joel 2 describes locusts as an army advancing in ranks, a prophetic image of invading armies sweeping across the land.

† The sealed represent the faithful remnant preserved by God. Revelation 7 already showed that God marked His people for protection during the coming destruction.

Revelation 9:5-6

And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a person. And in those days people will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

† Five months corresponds with the natural season of locust activity, showing that the torment was intense but limited.

† The siege of Jerusalem created exactly this kind of suffering. Starvation, disease, and violence filled the city.

† Josephus records that people inside Jerusalem experienced such misery that many wished for death but could not escape the horrors of famine and internal violence (Josephus, Wars 5.12.3).

† Josephus also records that famine and suffering became so severe that people fought each other for scraps of food and many died slowly in agony during the siege, showing the torment described in the vision (Josephus, Wars 5.10.3).

Revelation 9:7-10

The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like human faces. They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots of many horses rushing to battle. They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt people for five months.

† The description blends animal and human features to portray terrifying military forces.

† Horses prepared for battle reflects cavalry formations, which were a major part of Roman and allied forces.

† The sound of chariots rushing into battle captures the thunder of advancing armies approaching Jerusalem during the war (Josephus, Wars 3.4.2).

† The prophet Nahum also described invading armies using lion imagery and overwhelming military power, reinforcing the symbolic war language used here (Nahum 2:11-13).

Revelation 9:11

They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

† Abaddon and Apollyon both mean destroyer. The name emphasizes the destructive purpose of the forces unleashed.

† Proverbs 30:27 says locusts have no king, which proves the locusts in Revelation are symbolic organized forces.

† These armies ultimately served God's purpose of judgment, even though they operated under destructive powers.

Revelation 9:12-15

The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still coming after these things. Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind.

† The Euphrates marked the historic boundary from which invading empires came against Israel.

† Assyria and Babylon both crossed this boundary when they invaded the land (Isaiah 8:7).

† Rome's eastern legions and allied forces also moved from this region toward Judea during the Jewish War (Josephus, Wars 3.4.2).

Revelation 9:16

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

† The number represents overwhelming and unstoppable force rather than a literal count.

† Apocalyptic literature regularly uses enormous numbers to portray massive armies (Daniel 7:10).

† Josephus described the armies surrounding Jerusalem as an innumerable multitude, emphasizing the same overwhelming presence (Josephus, Wars 6.9.3).

Revelation 9:17-19

And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire, of hyacinth, and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, and have heads, and with them they do harm.

† The imagery reflects the fiery destruction brought by Roman siege warfare.

† Roman catapults and siege engines hurled burning projectiles into the city, igniting fires across Jerusalem.

† Josephus describes how entire sections of the city were set ablaze by these attacks (Josephus, Wars 5.6.3).

Revelation 9:20-21

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders, nor of their witchcraft, nor of their

sexual immorality, nor of their thefts.

† Even under devastation, the survivors refused to repent. This reveals the hardness of heart that had long characterized the nation.

† The prophets repeatedly warned Israel about idolatry and moral corruption, yet the people continued in rebellion (Jeremiah 7:9-11).

† Josephus wrote that even during the siege, violence and corruption continued inside the city and even within the temple itself (Josephus, Wars 5.13.6).

† Jesus warned Jerusalem that judgment would come because the nation refused to repent even after receiving the prophets and the Messiah Himself (Matthew 23:37-38; Luke 13:34-35).

Historical References

† Josephus recorded the horrors of the Jewish War in great detail, describing famine, internal violence, and overwhelming Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem.

† Eusebius later confirmed that the Christian believers remembered Jesus' warnings and fled Jerusalem before the destruction came (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5).

† Tacitus, the Roman historian, also wrote about the massive armies involved in the siege and the devastation that followed (Tacitus, Histories 5.13).

How It Applies To Us Today

† God's judgments are just and measured. Even when they come through earthly powers, they fulfill His righteous purposes

(Romans 12:19).

† God always knows how to preserve His faithful people in times of judgment and crisis (2 Peter 2:9).

† Hard hearts do not change simply because suffering appears. Only the transforming power of Christ can produce true repentance.

† The Lamb reigns over history. Even the darkest moments of judgment ultimately reveal His authority and justice.

Q And A Appendix

Q: Were the locusts literal insects?

A: No. Their description shows they are symbolic of invading armies. Joel 2:1-11 uses the same imagery to describe a military invasion.

Q: Why were the sealed people protected?

A: God marks and preserves His faithful people. Revelation 7:3 shows that the servants of God were sealed before the judgment began.

Q: Did people really experience this level of suffering during the siege of Jerusalem?

A: Yes. Josephus describes famine, internal violence, and desperation so severe that people longed for death but could not escape the horrors of the siege (Josephus, Wars 5.12.3).

Q: Why didn't the survivors repent?

A: Scripture shows that many hardened their hearts despite clear warnings. Jeremiah 5:3 shows the same pattern of refusing correction even under discipline.

Q: Why does Revelation use such terrifying imagery?

A: Revelation uses prophetic apocalyptic language. The

prophets used dramatic imagery to describe national judgment and war. Isaiah 13:10 and Joel 2:1-11 use the same style when describing the fall of nations.

Q: What is the abyss mentioned in Revelation 9?

A: The abyss represents the place of restraint for destructive spiritual powers. Scripture connects it with judgment and imprisonment of rebellious forces. Luke 8:31 shows demons begging not to be sent into the abyss, and Revelation 20:1-3 shows it as a place where Satan is bound.

Q: Why are the invading forces described with such strange features like lion teeth and scorpion tails?

A: Prophetic literature often combines animal imagery to describe the character of armies. Lion imagery represents ferocity and destruction, while scorpion stings represent torment. Similar symbolic language appears in Daniel 7:4-7 where beasts represent powerful kingdoms.

Q: What does the phrase a third of mankind mean in this chapter?

A: In prophetic judgment language a third represents a large but partial destruction rather than total annihilation. Ezekiel used the same proportion when describing judgment on Jerusalem, showing that a portion of the people would perish while others survived (Ezekiel 5:1-12).

Q: Why does Revelation emphasize that people still did not repent?

A: This shows the deep spiritual blindness of the nation at that time. Even while judgment was unfolding around them, many continued in idolatry and violence. This fulfills the pattern described by the prophets, where repeated warnings were ignored until destruction finally came (Jeremiah 5:3; Amos 4:6-11).

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

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Source Index

† Revelation 9; Isaiah 14:12; Isaiah 24:21-22; Isaiah 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7; Joel 2:1-11; Nahum 2:11-13; Proverbs 30:27; Daniel 7:10; Jeremiah 7:9-11; Matthew 23:37-38; Luke 13:34-35; Romans 12:19; 2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:20; Revelation 7:3

† Josephus, Wars 3.4.2; Wars 5.6.3; Wars 5.10.3; Wars 5.12.3; Wars 5.13.6; Wars 6.9.3; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5; Tacitus, Histories 5.13

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