

Table of Contents

General Introduction	xi
Preface to Revelation 8-22	xiii
Abbreviations	xv
14. The Seventh Seal and the First Six Trumpets	1
9. The Seventh Seal: The Seven Trumpets Awaited (8:1)	1
B. The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets (8:2-11:19)	6
1. The Setting of the Trumpets: The Prayers of the Saints (8:2-6)	6
2. The First Trumpet: Burning of a Third of Vegetation (8:7)	14
3. The Second Trumpet: Destruction of a Third of Sea Life (8:8-9)	18
4. The Third Trumpet: Poisoning of a Third of the Fresh Water (8:10-11)	20
5. The Fourth Trumpet: Darkening of a Third of the Heavenly Bodies (8:12-13)	22
6. The Fifth Trumpet: Demonic Locust Plague (9:1-12)	26
7. The Sixth Trumpet: Death to a Third of Earth's Inhabitants (9:13-21)	41
	vii

15. Preface to the Seventh Trumpet	57
8. The Announcement of the End of Delay (10:1-11)	57
9. The Measurement of the Temple and Worshipers (11:1-14)	78
16. The Seventh Trumpet and Background of the Seven Bowls Begun	103
10. The Seventh Trumpet: The Seven Bowls Awaited (11:15-19)	103
C. The Pouring Out of the Seven Bowls (12:1-18:24)	115
1. The Background of the Bowls (12:1-14:20)	115
a. The Woman, the Male-Child, and the Dragon (12:1-18)	116
17. Background Concluded and Introductory Episodes for the Seven Bowls	149
b. The Beast Out of the Sea (13:1-10)	149
c. The Beast Out of the Earth (or Land) (13:11-18)	171
d. The Victorious Followers of the Lamb (14:1-5)	188
e. Four Climactic Announcements (14:6-13)	201
(1) The Everlasting Gospel (14:6-7)	201
(2) The Fall of Babylon (14:8)	205
(3) The Torment of the Beast Worshipers (14:9-12)	208
(4) The Blessedness of Those Dying in the Lord (14:13)	214
f. The Harvest and the Vintage (14:14-20)	217
18. The Seven Bowls or the Seven Last Plagues	227
2. The Rejoicing Over the Seven Last Plagues (15:1-4)	227
3. The Preparation for the Seven Last Plagues (15:5-8)	240
4. The First Bowl: Incurable Sores on the Beast Worshipers (16:1-2)	245
5. The Second Bowl: Death to All Sea Life (16:3)	249
6. The Third Bowl: Transforming of All Fresh Water into Blood (16:4-7)	251
7. The Fourth Bowl: Scorching of All through the Sun's Intensity (16:8-9)	256
8. The Fifth Bowl: Darkening of the Beast's Kingdom (16:10-11)	258

9. The Sixth Bowl: Preparation for the Doom of Earth's Kings (16:12-16)	261
10. The Seventh Bowl: The Destruction of Babylon (16:17-18:24)	271
a. The Bowl Summarized (16:17-21)	271
19. The History and Fall of Babylon	279
b. Religious Babylon Destroyed (17:1-18)	280
c. Commercial Babylon Destroyed (18:1-24)	310
20. Rejoicing over Babylon's Fall and Conquest of the King of Kings	353
D. The Closing Visions of John (19:1-22:5)	353
1. Rejoicing over the Fall of Babylon (19:1-10)	353
2. The Coming of the King of Kings (19:11-16)	380
3. The Great Supper of God (19:17-21)	392
21. The Millennium and the White-Throne Judgment	403
4. The Binding of Satan (20:1-3)	403
5. The Thousand-Year Kingdom (20:4-10)	412
6. The White-Throne Judgment (20:11-15)	427
22. The New Creation	437
7. The New Heaven and the New Earth (21:1-8)	437
8. The Holy City (21:9-22:5)	455
23. Final Words by an Angel, John, and Jesus	493
E. Epilogue (22:6-21)	493
1. The Testimony of the Angel (22:6-7)	493
2. The Testimony of John (22:8-11)	498
3. The Testimony of Jesus and John's Response (22:12-20)	504
4. The Benediction (22:21)	521
Excursus 3: The Structure of the Apocalypse: Recapitulation or Progression?	525
Excursus 4: The Kingdom of Christ in the Apocalypse	545
Excursus 5: An Analysis of the Seventh Bowl of the Apocalypse	567
Index of Subjects	587

Index of Selected Subjects	587
Index of Scripture	597
Index of Ancient Literature	665
Index of Modern Authors	667

14

The Seventh Seal and the First Six Trumpets

The intercalation on “The Servants of God” having ended, the numerical sequence of the seals picks up from the end of chapter 6 as the Lamb opens the seventh and last seal.

9. THE SEVENTH SEAL: THE SEVEN TRUMPETS AWAITED (8:1)

Translation

1And when he opened the seventh seal, there came a silence in heaven for about a half hour.

Exegesis and Exposition

8:1 The repetition of ἤνοιξεν (*ēnoixen*, “opened”) in the first clause, Καὶ ὅταν ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἑβδόμην (*Kai hotan ēnoixen tēn sphragida tēn hebdomēn*, “And when he opened the seventh seal”), signals a continuation of the seal-series from 6:12 (cf. also 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9).¹

As this action occurs, the scene has shifted back to the throne room of chapters 4-5 with the Lamb as the approved representative for opening the seals.

The breaking of the final seal brings an unexpected result: “there came a silence in heaven for about a half hour” (ἐγένετο σιγὴ ἐν τῷ

1. James Moffatt, “The Revelation of St. John the Divine,” in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), 5:401.

οὐρανῷ ὡς ἡμίωριον [*egeneto sigē en tō ouranō hōs hēmiōrion*]). This silence differs markedly from results of the six previous openings and has proven to be a puzzle for interpreters, causing them to advance at least five proposals: (1) It is the silence at the beginning of the sabbatical rest or the Millennium.² (2) It is not literal silence because of the continuing heavenly songs, but is a brief cessation in judgment.³ (3) It is a temporary suspension of the revelations granted to John.⁴ (4) It is a pause in the heavenly praises to allow the prayers of the saints to be heard before the throne.⁵ (5) It is a dramatic pause to symbolize the awe and dread with which the heavenly hosts await the events about to happen.⁶

Viewpoint 1 fails to recognize that the silence is in heaven, not on earth as would be true of the Millennium. Besides, silence is not a characteristic of heavenly rest, so it is exegetically irrelevant to connect this silence to millennial rest (Swete). The most conspicuous failure of the first view is, however, its assignment of an outcome that is diametrically opposed to the results of the other six seals.⁷ They are displays of the wrath of God against earth's rebels, but this view wants to make the seventh a picture of blessing. This is not what the seals portray.

This same consideration rules out view 2 as a solution. The first six seals denoted judgment. To have the seventh picture a cessation of judgment is inconsistent and unacceptable. The third proposed solution has merit in recognizing that the absence of an elder or angel speaking, of a chorus of praise or cry of adoration, and of thunder from the throne points to a temporary cessation of revelation.⁸ Yet it is more accurate not to call it a cessation of revelation, because the period of silence is part of the revelatory process. The fourth view has

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2. Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (London: Longmans, Green, 1903), 4:630.
 3. Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Swengel, Pa.: Bible Truth Depot, n.d.), pp. 168-69.
 4. Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London: Macmillan, 1906), p. 107.
 5. R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John*, ICC (New York: Scribner, 1920), 1:223.
 6. Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John* (New York: Macmillan, 1919), p. 550; J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, 3 vols. (New York: Charles C. Cook, 1909), 2:17; John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody, 1966), p. 150; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 179; Homer Hailey, *Revelation, an Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), p. 214.
 7. George E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 122.
 8. Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman, 1933), 6:356.

contextual advantage in the observation that a half hour was about the length of time necessary for the priest to perform the offering of incense required by the law (cf. Lev. 16:13-14; Luke 1:10, 21) and suggested by 8:3-4.⁹ It also parallels the Talmudic tractate *Hagigah* (12b) where God silences the angels by day so that He may hear the prayers of Israel.¹⁰ The chief disadvantage of this explanation is sequential; the prayers of the saints in this context come after the period of silence, not during it.

The fifth theory that views the silence as preparatory for what is about to happen is most consistent with the immediate context of chapter 8. It is a hushed expectancy that makes the judgments about to begin more impressive (Beckwith, Seiss, Scott, Mounce, Hailey, Walvoord). This kind of silence corresponds to OT occurrences of the same in conjunction with reverence for God and awesome expectation of His judgment (cf. Hab. 2:20; 3:3; Zeph. 1:7-8, 15, 17-18; Zech. 2:13).¹¹ So the silence prepares for what is to come in 8:2 ff.

The limit of the silence to about a half-hour¹² duration is an interesting accommodation of heavenly actions to a human limitation. One must think of heaven under the immediate rule of the eternal God as not subject to time limitations, but for the sake of the prophet a specifically short restriction applies to the period of silence. For the seer this was an impressive intermission in the rapidly moving drama into which his vision had drawn him (Swete, Mounce, Walvoord).

If the silence is only preparatory, what then is the essence of the seventh seal? The answer to this question is a crucial factor in determining the structure of the whole apocalyptic portion, 4:1–22:5. The far-reaching impact of this issue should be in mind in the resolving of this issue.¹³ Two major possibilities have prevailed in the analysis of Revelation's structure. One recommends that the trumpet series in 8:6 ff. covers essentially the same ground as the seals have covered by

9. Lee, "Revelation," 4:595; David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance* (Fort Worth, Tex.: Dominion, 1987), pp. 229-30.

10. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 150.

11. Moffatt, "Revelation," 5:401; J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, vol. 38 of AB (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), p. 134; Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *The Book of Revelation, A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), p. 101.

12. The noun ἡμίωρον is a rare word and occurs only here in the NT. It is a combination of ἡμι, "half," and ὥρα, "hour" (Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:356).

13. The "Introduction to the Commentary" in the earlier volume has anticipated the crucial importance of this issue. Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7, An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), p. 43 n. 161.

describing events that are chronologically parallel but not necessarily identical with what the seals speak about.¹⁴ “Recapitulation” is the term usually applied to this type of explanation. The other structural plan, called the “telescopic” or “dovetailing” view, sees the seventh seal as composed of the seven trumpets with the consequence that the trumpets are chronologically subsequent to the first six seals in their fulfillment.¹⁵

Brief notice should be given to a third view which proposes that the structure follows neither strict chronological arrangement nor a systematic retracing of the same period. It holds that the development is merely literary and is not intended to portray a corresponding historical development.¹⁶ It is proper to credit the writer for his literary art (Mounce), but it is hermeneutically unacceptable to conclude that such expertise excludes rational comprehensibility (contra Mounce).¹⁷ No factor dictates that a description cannot be graphic if it follows a logical scheme. A perfectly logical apocalypse is *not* a contradiction in terms (contra Mounce).¹⁸

Concerning the first of the two major structural possibilities—recapitulation—probably the strongest argument is the similarity between the sixth seal judgment (6:12-17) and events said to follow the Tribulation in Matt. 24:29. Accordingly, the similarity places the sixth seal on the threshold of the end, leaving no other option than for the trumpets to return and cover the same ground again.¹⁹ Other phenomena presented in support of recapitulation include the occurrence of the storm theophany in connection with each seventh member (8:5; 11:19; cf. 16:18) and the presence of an indication of the arrival of the end at each seventh member (Alford).

A response to pro-recapitulation evidence notes that the similarity between Rev. 6:12-17 and Matt. 24:29 is only a similarity. Earlier dis-

14. Lee, “Revelation,” 4:595; William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1944), pp. 139-40.

15. E. W. Bullinger, *The Apocalypse or “The Day of the Lord”* (London: Eyre and Spottiswodde, n.e.), pp. 301-2, 306; W. G. Scroggie, *The Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: Book Stall, 1920), p. 167; C. A. Blanchard, *Light on the Last Days* (Chicago: Bible Institute Colportage, 1913), p. 58.

16. Martin Kiddle, *The Revelation of St. John*, HNTC (New York: Harper, 1940), pp. xxix-xxxiii; J. W. Bowman, “The Revelation to John: Its Dramatic Structure and Message,” *Int* 9 (1955): 436-53; G. V. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 106; Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 178.

17. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, pp. 32-36.

18. See Excursus 3 at the end of this volume.

19. R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Revelation* (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1935), p. 271; Alan F. Johnson, “Revelation,” in *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 12:490.

cussion has noted the difficulty in making the two fulfillments identical (Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, pp. 451-52). The use of the storm theophany is also questionable as proof. These incidents signal only that the end will come in conjunction with that seventh member. The seventh members could begin at different times—i.e., the seventh trumpet later than the seventh seal—and be of extended durations and still end at the same time. This would allow all the trumpets to be subsequent to the first six seals. The same observation applies in reference to other seventh-member indications that the end has arrived. The seventh members could be sequential in their beginnings, but still terminate together.

Contextual considerations are heavily on the side of a telescopic-type structure. The vision of the angels with the trumpets (8:2) comes immediately after the opening of the seventh seal. Since the text assigns no other content to the seventh trumpet, the full impression is that the seals and trumpets are successive.²⁰ These angels are intimately interwoven with the seventh seal and are an integral part of its action through their introduction in 8:2 and their reintroduction in 8:6.²¹ Coupled with this specific observation is a more general one that notes the significant increase in intensity in the trumpet series over that of the seals (Scott, Johnson). The judgments become more severe as the period advances toward the personal return of Christ. This must mean chronological progression. Support for the telescopic analysis of the structure involves other factors that relate to the broader context. At the end of this volume Excursus 3—“The Structure of the Apocalypse: Recapitulation or Progression?”—provides a fuller discussion of all the issues than is possible at this point.

The correctness of the telescopic understanding, therefore, leads to the conclusion that the silence of v. 1 purposes to prepare for the awful consequences of the seven trumpet judgments that will commence shortly. Earlier chronological placement of the first six seals in the first half of the prophetic week of Daniel (Thomas, pp. 452-53) dictates that the first trumpet happen early in the last half of that week.

Additional Notes

8:1 A difference between the temporal clause introducing the other six seals and that of the seventh seal is the use of ὄρα in 8:1 instead of

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20. Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 71.
21. Friedrich Düsterdieck, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Revelation of John*, in Meyer's Commentary, trans. and ed. Henry E. Jacobs (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887), pp. 261-63; Ladd, *Revelation*, pp. 121-23; M. Robert Mulholland, *Revelation, Holy Living in an Unholy World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), p. 185.

the ὅτε in the other six places. Rather than assuming that the change brings the tone of uncertainty into this seventh usage (Alford, Swete, Simcox), one should allow that the Koinê Greek writers sometimes used ὅταν with the aorist indicative to depict a definite occurrence.²² Yet the probable shade of meaning is probably somewhere between definiteness (ὅτε ἤνοιξεν, aorist indicative) and indefiniteness (ὅταν ἀνοίξη, aorist subjunctive) (Swete).

B. THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS (8:2-11:19)

1. THE SETTING OF THE TRUMPETS: THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS (8:2-6)

Translation

2And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. **3**And another angel having a golden censer came and stood at the altar, and much incense was given to him that he might dispense it on behalf of the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which is before the throne. **4**And the smoke of the incense ascended before God with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel. **5**And the angel took the incense, and filled it from the fire of the altar and cast [it] to the earth; and [peals of] thunder and voices and [flashes of] lightning and an earthquake occurred. **6**And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves that they might sound.

Exegesis and Exposition

8:2 A new occurrence of καὶ εἶδον (*kai eidon*, “and I saw”) marks a new phase of John’s seventh-seal vision. This scene follows the half hour of silence and includes preparatory actions for the trumpet series (8:2-6) and the sounding of the first four trumpets (8:7-12), the next *kai eidon* not coming until 8:13.²³

John saw “the seven angels who stand before God” (τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλους οἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἑστήκασιν [*tous hepta angelous hoi enōpion tou theou hestēkasin*]). Because of the article with *angelous* (“angels”) and because of an alleged correspondence with seven archangels in Jewish tradition, some have identified these angels as a special group consisting of Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraqâêl, Gabriel, and

22. Archibald Thomas Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), pp. 958, 973; idem, *Word Pictures*, 6:356; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Revelation* (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1935), p. 266.

23. J. B. Smith, *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1961), p. 137.

Remiel.²⁴ The perfect participle *hestēkasin* (“stand”) indicates that they were in position before God and had been there some time as a special class of angels would be. Another strength of this identification is a similar description of Gabriel’s position in Luke 1:19. Though the Bible never calls him an “archangel,” it does represent him, one of the traditional group, as stationed in that location.²⁵

Two reasons militate against the proposed identification, however. These seven are missing from the heavenly company described in Revelation 4-5 (Beckwith), and the agreement of the present context with Jewish angelology is not complete (Alford). It is an angel distinct from this group who offers the prayers of the saints in 8:2-5. If this were such a special group, certainly one of them would have performed this task. The position of these angels before God does not automatically equate them with the traditional archangels. It simply puts them in a position similar to that of Gabriel (Walvoord).

The preferable course is to explain the article as pointing out a specific group, not necessarily the one known in Jewish tradition.²⁶ What makes them special is their commission to sound the trumpets. Their position before God marks their readiness for service, in this case the service of symbolically initiating the trumpet afflictions. This is the natural sense of the words, and no reason has arisen to point to another understanding (Scott, Walvoord).

John saw the seven angels receive seven trumpets: καὶ ἐδόθησαν αὐτοῖς ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγες (*kai edothēsan autois hepta salpinges*, “and seven trumpets were given to them”). Trumpets played a major part in the national life of Israel, finding use in ceremonial processions (e.g., Josh. 6:1; 1 Chron. 15:24), in assembling people for war, journeys, and special feasts (e.g., Num. 10:9-10), in warning of the coming day of the Lord (e.g., Joel 2:1), and in announcing the new year (e.g., Num. 29:1) (Seiss, Walvoord, Mounce). As a signal for war, the trumpet found a natural association with judgment (Moffatt). Here they are precursors of divine judgment in the Day of the Lord (cf. Zeph. 1:14-16) (Scott, Smith).

8:3 Before the trumpets sound, however, an interlude sets the tone for them: Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἦλθεν καὶ ἐστάθη ἐπὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου

24. Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:632; Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, p. 550; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:356; Morris, *Revelation*, p. 119; Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 180. Extrabiblical references to these angels, also known as “Angels of the Presence,” include the *Book of Jubilees* 1:27, 29; 2:1-2, 18; 15:27; 31:14; *Tobit* 12:15; *1 Enoch* 20:2-8.

25. Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 180; Hughes, *Revelation*, p. 103.

26. Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:632; Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 119; Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 180.

ἕχων λιβανωτὸν χρυσοῦν (*Kai allos angelos ēlthen kai estathē epi tou thysiastēriou echōn libanōton chrysoun*, “And another angel having a golden censer came and stood at²⁷ the altar”). As John watched, another angel with a golden censer came into the picture and stood before the altar. Attempts to identify this angel as Christ have rested mainly on the theological consideration that only Christ as high priest can help the prayers of the saints.²⁸ A basic canon of interpretation, however, states that one must never depart from the plain meaning of words because of an alleged doctrinal principle (Alford). To insist that the angel is Christ results from reading concepts from the epistle to the Hebrews into this context. Besides, careful observation of what the angel does reveals that the angel performs no mediatorial service in making the prayers completely acceptable; he only enforces the prayers (Beckwith, Lenski, Morris).

A more satisfactory identification is that the angel is another created being like “another angel” in 7:2 (Alford, Lenski). This is an angel of the same kind (*allos*, “another of the same kind”²⁹) as those in 8:2. He does not engage in angelic invocation. He simply takes the provided incense and facilitates the prayers of the saints. Had this been Christ, He would have needed no incense.³⁰ A suggestion is that the angel may be one of the twenty-four elders who hold the incense in Rev. 5:8 (Charles). This view is possible, but it cannot be proved.

The identity of the altars, two in v. 3 and one in v. 5, has been a subject of debate. Hints at 6:9 and 7:15 compare the heavenly scene of John’s visions to a temple, though heaven is not expressly called a temple until 11:19 (Moffatt). Whether the heavenly temple has one or two altars has been the major question (Thomas, pp. 517-19: Excursus 2). Proponents of the two-altar theory usually find both of the altars here, the altar of burnt offering in vv. 3a, 5 and the altar of incense in v. 3b (cited by Beckwith, Ladd). This approach has the angel going first to the altar of burnt offering to secure some coals (v. 3a) and taking

27. “stood at.” ἑστάθη (“stood”) is an ingressive aorist of ἵστημι: the angel came and “took his place.” A number of uses of ἐπί in the LXX favor the meaning of “at” or “by” rather than “upon” in such a situation as this (cf. Gen. 24:13, 43; Amos 9:1) (Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 108; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:226). A use in Acts 5:23 also argues for this meaning (Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, p. 552).

28. Scott, *Revelation*, p. 180; Seiss, *Apocalypse*, 2:26-27; H. A. Ironside, *Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (New York: Loizeaux, n.d.), p. 146; Robert Govett, *Govett on Revelation* (1981 reprint; Miami Springs, Fla.: Conley & Schoettle, 1961), 1:310.

29. Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), pp. 357-61.

30. William R. Newell, *The Book of Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1935), p. 121; Walvoord, *Revelation*, p. 152.

them to the altar of incense (v. 3b) where he places the coals taken from the altar of burnt offering. He then returns to the altar of burnt offering (v. 5) to take fire to cast into the earth. This reconstruction is vivid, but it fails in not connecting the altar of v. 5 with the incense of v. 4 in accord with the contextual flow. Moreover, the two-altar theory itself is open to question. The assumption that in Revelation every part of the earthly temple has its prototype in the heavenly temple is ill-founded (Alford, Charles).

The single-altar theory better satisfies the present context and the context of the whole book (Charles). Attention in this passage is upon the incense. This, along with later references to the altar of incense (cf. 9:13; 14:18; 16:7), effectively excludes the possibility of this being the altar of burnt offering (Beckwith). Only the altar of incense was made of gold (v. 3b) (Lenski). Identifying this with the altar of incense also best satisfies the two OT analogies with John's current experience, where Isaiah's coal came from the altar that was within the ναός (*naos*, "temple") (Isa. 6:6) and Ezekiel's coals of fire were from between the cherubim who were in closest proximity to God (Ezek. 10:2). The altar of incense must have been the source of both of these (Charles). The reason why the stipulation "before the throne" comes with the second instead of the first mention of the altar in v. 3 is to emphasize nearness to God in proximity to the prayers of the saints, not to distinguish the altar in v. 3b from the one in v. 3a (contra Smith).

The "golden censer" (*libanōton chrysoun*), sometimes referred to as a "firepan," was an implement used in the Solomonic temple (cf. 1 Kings 7:50; 2 Kings 25:15; 2 Chron. 4:22; Jer. 52:18-19). Derived from λίβανως (*libanos*, "frankincense") (Matt. 2:11; Rev. 18:13), λιβανωτός (*libanōtos*) in the OT referred to "incense" or "frankincense" (e.g., 1 Chron. 9:29, LXX). It is found only in Rev. 8:3, 5 in the NT, and it means "censer."³¹ The adjective *chrysoun* ("golden") decides for "censer" instead of "incense."

The next step in the drama was for the angel to receive from God much incense to offer on the altar for the prayers of the saints: καὶ ἐδόθη³² αὐτῷ θυμιάματα πολλὰ ἵνα δώσει ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων πάντων ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ χρυσοῦν τὸ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου (*kai edothē autō thymiamata polla hina dōsei tais proseuchais tōn hagiōn pantōn epi to thysiastērion to chrysoun to enōpion tou thronou*, "and much incense was given to him that he might dispense it on behalf of the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which is before the

31. Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 108; Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, p. 553; W. Michaelis, "λίβανως, λιβανωτός," *TDNT*, 4:264.

32. As customary, the verb ἐδόθη (*edothē*) is singular because of the neuter plural subject θυμιάματα (*thymiamata*).

throne"). Though the source of the gift of incense is unstated, customary usage of *edothē* ("was given") throughout Revelation indicates that it was God (cf. 6:2, 4, 8, 11; 7:2; 9:1, 3, 5; 11:1, 2; 13:5, 7, 14, 15; 16:8; 19:8; 20:4) (Alford).

Incense had a prominent place in OT worship (e.g., Ex. 30:34-38) and serves as a reminder that intercessory prayer is like sweet perfume before the Lord (Walvoord). In the temple ritual, the priest poured the saucer of incense over the burning coals on the altar of incense. At the same time, the Israelites bowed in prayer as the fragrant cloud of smoke ascended heavenward. A similar connection between incense and the prayers of the saints occurs in Rev. 5:8, except there the incense and the prayers are one and the same.

In 8:3 "much incense" is either the same as or distinct from the prayers of the saints. Of course, the analogy of 5:8 argues for identifying the two (Seiss), and grammatically *tais proseuchais* ("the prayers") can mean "consisting of the prayers of the saints."³³

But this metaphor differs from 5:8, with the prayers corresponding to the live coals on which the grains of incense fall. The meeting of the incense and the hot coals produces the fragrant smoke cloud, a symbol of divine acceptance (Swete). It is better to observe the contextual distinction between the incense and the prayers.³⁴ The angel adds "much [more] incense"³⁵ to the prayers to increase greatly the volume of aromatic smoke (Lenski). The prayers and the incense ascend together (8:4), but this does not require a merging of the two.

The preferable understanding of *tais proseuchais* ("on behalf of the prayers") is as a dative of advantage. The offering of incense is to help the prayers, i.e., to make them more acceptable to God. This does not assign a mediatorial role to the angel, but it simply says that the prayers rise directly to God, being enforced by the accompanying incense (Beckwith). In the context of the Apocalypse the prayers are unquestionably the cries of the saints during the future Great Tribulation for judgment against their persecutors as the present paragraph will shortly reveal (8:4-5; cf. 6:9-10; 9:13; 14:18).³⁶ This being the case, it is

33. "Consisting of" is possibly equal to the Hebrew ב of definition (F. F. Bruce, "The Book of Revelation," *A New Testament Commentary*, ed. H. C. D. Howley [London: Pickering & Inglis, 1969], p. 646), or it can be construed as a dative of reference, "in token of the prayers" (Caird, *Revelation*, pp. 103, 107).

34. Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:633; William Lee, "The Revelation of St. John," in *The Holy Bible*, ed. F. C. Cook (London: John Murray, 1881), 4:598; Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 182.

35. Note the plural noun θυμιάματα (*thymiamata*).

36. Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation* (Philadelphia: Clarence Larkin, 1919), p. 69.

improper to see them as the prayers of all the saints of all time.³⁷ Martyrs in heaven will perhaps cry the loudest, but the number of these future saints will not be limited to them (Alford). The destination of their prayers is the golden altar before God's throne, the place of power and the source of the trumpet judgments about to be initiated.³⁸

8:4 Leaving the angel's hand, the smoke followed an upward route to arrive in the presence of God: καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ καπνὸς τῶν θυμιαμάτων ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων ἐκ χειρὸς τοῦ ἀγγέλου ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ (*kai anebē ho kapnos tōn thymiamatōn tais proseuchais tōn hagiōn ek cheiros tou angelou enōpion tou theou*, "and the smoke of the incense ascended before God with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel"). The smoke is that resulting from the burning of incense (*ho kapnos tōn thymiamatōn*, "the smoke of the incense"). Because of the ripeness of the season in the divine purpose, it denotes acceptability. Prayers unanswered until now become welcome and receive an immediate reply (Alford).

An inflectional form identical to one in v. 3, *tais proseuchais*, performs a different function in v. 4, where it is an associative instrumental.³⁹ The smoke produced by the burning incense rises "in the company of the prayers." The association of the two guarantees divine acceptance of the prayers for God to act in vengeance.

8:5 The next step in the interlude before the trumpet series brings earth's inhabitants into the picture: καὶ εἴληφεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸν λιβανωτόν, καὶ ἐγέμισεν αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν γῆν (*kai eilēphen ho angelos ton libanōton, kai egemisen auton ek tou puros tou thysiastēriou kai ebalen eis tēn gēn*, "And the angel took the incense, and filled it from the fire of the altar and cast [it] to the earth"). The angel does so by taking⁴⁰ and filling his golden censer with coals from the fire on the altar and hurling them earthward. This connotes judgment about to be imposed in answer to the prayers connected with

37. William Henry Simcox, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (Cambridge: Cambridge U., 1893), p. 104; Caird, *Revelation*, p. 107; Ladd, *Revelation*, p. 125.

38. Excursus 2 (Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, pp. 517-22) develops the close association of this scene with 6:9-11, which also involves the altar and the prayers. See also John Paul Heil, "The Fifth Seal as a Key to the Book of Revelation," *Bib* 74 (1993): 232-33; Grant R. Osborne, "Theodicy in the Apocalypse," *TrinJ* 14NS, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 75-76.

39. Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 529; Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 182.

40. See 5:7 for a discussion of the perfect tense of εἴληφεν. The dramatic perfect function preferred there is the best here also (cf. Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 899; Lenski, *Revelation*, p. 271). Perhaps the angel had laid aside the censer after its use in 8:3-4, and now takes it up again, though εἴληφεν may simply be pleonastic (Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 109; Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, p. 554; Morris, *Revelation*, p. 121).

that same altar in 8:3-4 (Alford, Swete, Charles, Beckwith). The connection between the divine wrath about to fall upon the earth and the prayers of God's people is conspicuous (Lenski, Morris). The censer normally used for offering incense has become a symbol of judgment in response to prayer (Swete, Walvoord), an action similar to the one in Ezek. 10:2-7 where the hands rather than a censer carry the hot coals (Moffatt).

Fire is a frequent symbol for divine torment of the wicked (Seiss).⁴¹ The hurling of the fire into the earth recalls the saints' question of 6:10, "How long?" and signals that an answer to those prayers is on the way in the form of judgmental visitations against the earth.⁴² The interaction between the sovereignty of God and the prayers of His people is part of the ultimate mystery of existence (Beasley-Murray). The saints pray for justice and their prayers play a part, but it is God's business to determine the time and nature of actions against their persecutors.⁴³

The second announcement of the storm theophany (cf. 4:5) follows: καὶ ἐγένοντο βρονταὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ ἀστραπαὶ καὶ σεισμός (*kai egenonto brontai kai phōnai kai astrapai kai seismos*, "and [peals of] thunder and voices and [flashes of] lightning and an earthquake occurred"). The thunder, voices, and earthquake are in marked contrast with the silence of 8:1 (Lenski). They along with the lightning are physical disturbances that accompany the manifestation of God's wrath against an impenitent world (cf. Ex. 19:16-19; Rev. 11:19; 16:18) (Moffatt). They see in the string of catastrophes in the coming trumpet series the accomplishment of what God set out to do in "the hour of trial that is about to come upon the whole inhabited earth, to try those who dwell upon the earth" (3:10; cf. 4:5). By the time the seven trumpets have run their course, also marking the completion of the seventh seal, God's purging of this creation will be complete. This is the implied import of the storm theophany.

The earthquake is an added feature not found in the earlier theophany of 4:5. In the mind of the prophet John, this enhanced even more the magnitude of the importance of what he was witnessing. Whether literal or not, in his state of being "in the spirit" the earthquake was undoubtedly an experience of reality for him.

8:6 To close the interlude, the seven trumpet angels reappear and prepare to sound: Καὶ οἱ ἑπτὰ ἄγγελοι οἱ ἔχοντες τὰς ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγας

41. This fire possibly bears a direct connection with the fire that is part of the first three trumpets (Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 186).

42. Alford, *Greek Testament* 4:634; Kiddle, *Revelation*, p. 146; Johnson, "Revelation," 12:489.

43. J. P. M. Sweet, *Revelation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, Pelican, 1979), p. 160.

ἠτοίμασαν αὐτοὺς ἵνα σαλπίσωσιν (*Kai hoi hepta angeloi hoi echontes tas hepta salpingas hētoimasan autous hina salpisōsin*, “And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves⁴⁴ that they might sound”). Their preparatory activity, probably in a deliberate arranging of themselves in the proper order and raising their trumpets in readiness to sound, heightens the sense of expectancy even more.⁴⁵ The signal for them to prepare was the presentation of incense on the altar (8:3) and the casting of fire to the earth (8:5) (Lee).

Following the pattern of the seal series, the first four trumpets are different in kind from the last three. These four set in motion the forces of nature to achieve their destructive effects on natural objects. Of the fifteen items affected by the plagues of the first four trumpets, one-third receives injury or destruction in twelve instances (8:7, 10, 11 being the exceptions) (Charles). God uses the world of nature to punish mankind.

On the other hand, in the last three trumpets, sustaining human life in the face of demonic onslaughts is the major concern, particularly among earth’s godless inhabitants (Moffatt). Like the bowls to follow (16:1 ff.) the trumpet series has reminiscences of the OT plagues against Egypt—the first trumpet paralleling the seventh Egyptian plague (Ex. 9:24), the second trumpet resembling the first plague (Ex. 7:19-20), the fourth trumpet recalling the ninth plague (Ex. 10:21), and the fifth trumpet paralleling the eighth plague (Ex. 10:12). Both series are judgments against the enemies of God’s people and comprise steps toward deliverance of the saints (Lee, Beasley-Murray).

Additional Notes

8:2 Ἔστάναι ἐνώπιον translates עמד לפני (cf. 1 Kings 17:1; 18:15; 2 Kings 3:14; 5:16; Jer. 15:19). It means to “attend upon,” “be the servant of” (Charles). How long the angels had been in that position is uncertain. They may have arrived just before or just after the hour of silence, or they may have been like Gabriel or other special angels who stand before God continually (Seiss).

8:3 Other proposed functions of the dative ταῖς προσευχαῖς have been dative of indirect object after δώσει (Alford) and dative of reference because of the sense carried over from 5:8.⁴⁶ The indirect object possibility would have required προστίθημι in place of δίδωμι which

44. As occasionally happens, the intensive pronoun αὐτοὺς functions here as a reflexive.

45. Albert Barnes, *The Book of Revelation* (New York: Harper, 1851), p. 223; Seiss, *Apocalypse*, 2:41; Scott, *Revelation*, p. 183; Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 183.

46. Caird, *Revelation*, pp. 103, 107.

normally does not mean “add.” The dative of reference will not satisfy, because it is a vague and rather awkward way of equating the prayers with the incense, which is the goal of the suggestion.

8:4 Besides the associative instrumental function of ταῖς προσευχαῖς, suggested uses have included (1) the dative of advantage (Beckwith, Charles, Seiss, Lenski), (2) the dative of indirect object (Alford), (3) the dative of reference (Swete), and (4) the dative of possession (Lee). In regard to (1), the notion of benefit present in 8:3 pales into the idea of accompaniment in 8:4 (Mounce). Views (2) and (3) rest on inadequate meanings for the same form in 8:3. The possibility of (4) finds its basis in the functioning of the dative, like the Hebrew ל, to show possession (cf. Gen. 9:5; Deut. 1:3; 2 Sam. 3:2, LXX) (Lee). This is interesting, but lacks credibility because of the rarity of the dative of possession in the NT. The key consideration that favors the associative instrumental in v. 4 is the difference between the verbs in vv. 3 and 4: in v. 3, δώσει lends itself to the idea of advantage, and in v. 4, ἀνέβη to that of association.

8:6 To view the first four trumpets as the end of the Jewish nation before the outbreak of war with the Romans in the late sixties A.D.⁴⁷ is purely imaginative and without any valid exegetical evidence. It is also the height of unwarranted allegorism to limit the scope of the trumpets to Judea and Jerusalem.⁴⁸ This does flagrant injustice to the worldwide scope of the prophecy.

2. THE FIRST TRUMPET: BURNING OF A THIRD OF VEGETATION (8:7)

In contradistinction to the last three trumpets, the first four afflict natural objects, i.e., earth, trees, grass, sea, rivers, and the like. The fifth and sixth have men as their special objects,⁴⁹ and unlike the first four which are connected and interdependent, are separate and independent. In contrast to these two, the first four have only an indirect effect on mankind. Besides these differences, the voice of the eagle in 8:13 separates the trumpets into two groups (Alford, Swete, Beckwith, Sweet).

God’s people are not the objects of the trumpet judgments, but a world violently hostile toward God is (Mounce, Morris). The visitations purpose to lead unbelievers to repentance (cf. 9:20-21). This purpose is realized in only exceptional cases, however (Moffatt, Caird). They mark an increase in severity compared to the seals, with afflic-

47. Chilton, *Days of Vengeance*, p. 236.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

49. The seventh trumpet is the same as the fifth and sixth, but will be developed in connection with the seven bowls of wrath.

tions that are of a more supernatural nature, but the wrath of God will become even more evident in the series of bowls yet to come (Beckwith). The third part affected in the first through the fourth and the sixth trumpets is an indication that, bad as they are, these plagues are not the ultimate ones (Kiddle).

The judgments now beginning were those held back in 7:3 until the servants of God were sealed.⁵⁰

Translation

7And 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.

Exegesis and Exposition

The words *Καὶ ὁ πρῶτος ἐσάλπισεν* (*Kai ho prōtos esalpsen*, “And the first sounded”) launch the reader into the trumpet series.⁵¹ The immediate consequence of the first sounding is the arrival of *χάλαζα καὶ πῦρ μεμιγμένα*⁵² ἐν αἵματι (*chalaza kai pyr memigmēna en haimati*, “hail and fire mixed with blood”). This combination resembles the results of local volcanic activity in Asia Minor that John may have witnessed. However his constant use of OT material argues for a background of Ex. 9:24 in this description (cf. Ps. 105:32) (Mounce). Hail and stones fell in a shower of blood as hail and/or volcanic fireballs commonly fall in a shower of rain. The allusion to the seventh Egyptian plague (Ex. 9:23-27)—which spared the Israelites—is clear, except here blood is an added feature (Alford). The combining of fire and blood recalls an eschatological feature connected with the Day of the Lord in Joel 2:30 (Charles).

God is probably the unnamed agent who casts this unfathomable deluge into the earth: *καὶ ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν* (*kai eblēthē eis tēn gēn*, “and were cast into the earth”). History of both the first century A.D. and the twentieth century has recorded upheavals of nature resembling this plague (Swete, Moffatt), but none nearly so awful. Just how dreadful it will be depends somewhat on whether the phenomena connected with the plague are literal or only symbolic.

Resolution of this issue depends largely on one’s basic philosophy

50. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, pp. 456-66; Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:637.

51. The verb form *ἐσάλπισεν* occurs to initiate each of the seven trumpets (cf. 8:8, 10, 12; 9:1, 13; 11:15).

52. This perfect passive participle is neuter in agreement with the neuter *πῦρ* and plural because of the compound subject *χάλαζα καὶ πῦρ* (Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:358).

for interpreting Revelation as a whole. A symbolic interpretation assumes the absence of strict realism in a vision of this sort because of the introduction of illogical results, such as the darkening of a part of the luminaries diminishing the duration rather than the intensity of light, a single burning star falling on a third part of all rivers and fountains, and fire burning amid a rain of hail and blood (Beckwith).⁵³ The prophet describes a marvelous scene without attention to realistic details. Advocates of the symbolic approach generally chalk up these inconsistencies to the nature of apocalyptic literature in its orientation toward symbolism.⁵⁴

Yet Revelation is according to its own self-claim primarily a prophecy rather than a typical apocalyptic writing,⁵⁵ and works of prophecy require no such hermeneutical predisposition toward symbolism. The OT prophets understood that the miracles of Egypt were to be repeated in the future (e.g., Isa. 10:22-25; 11:12-16; 30:30; Jer. 16:14-15; 23:7-8; Ezek. 38:22; Mic. 7:15) (Govett). At several points the prophet Amos uses God's miraculous work of deliverance from Egypt as a reference point for the way He will deal with His people in the future (cf. Amos 2:10; 4:10; 8:8-9; 9:5-7). The same principles of interpretation apply in prophecies as in historical narrative. To contend otherwise is to stand in judgment over the text rather than listening to its message.⁵⁶

Furthermore, the proposal that apocalyptic literature cannot be logically cohesive because of its essentially poetic or artistic bent cannot stand. This assumption stems mostly from reading into the Apocalypse characteristics that apply to nonbiblical apocalypses. One cannot make such an across-the-board comparison, however, because Revelation is divinely inspired and the other apocalypses are not. It is fundamentally prophetic, not apocalyptic, and hence falls into an entirely different category of hermeneutics. No one has made a thorough case against the possibility of a prophecy's being scientifically and logically consistent *and* artistically effective in its imagery as well. Nor will such a case be made, because rationality and artistry are not mutually exclusive.

In addition, symbolic interpretation leads to a hopeless quagmire

53. Other indications that this is the language of ecstatic experience and scenes cannot fit into a consistent pattern include the prohibition not to hurt the green grass (9:4) after all the grass has already been burned up (8:7) and the falling of a great star from heaven (8:10) after all the stars have already fallen (6:12) (Ford, *Revelation*, p. 132; Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 184).

54. Morris, *Revelation*, p. 123; Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, p. 157; Vern Sheridan Poythress, "Genre and Hermeneutics in Rev 20:1-6," *JETS* 36/1 (March 1993): 48-52.

55. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, "Introduction to the Commentary," pp. 23-29.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-38.

of contradictions. For instance, the earth, grass, and trees are symbols for nations and men in the first trumpet (8:7), but in trumpets 3, 5, and 6 these objects of nature appear side-by-side with men (8:11; 9:4, 15). This type of explanation leads to endless conjecture and turns Revelation into an incomprehensible riddle (Seiss). As Alford observes, “all analogy requires that in the same series of visions, when one judgment is to destroy earth, trees, and grass, and another not to injure earth, trees, or grass, . . . the earth, trees, and grass bear the same meaning in the two cases.”⁵⁷ Symbolic presuppositions cannot constitute a reasonable pattern for interpreting any literature. Only the text under scrutiny can justify figurative understanding by indications of its own, none of which is present at this point.

In view of the resemblances of the trumpet visitations to five and possibly six of those against Egypt in Moses’ day, the plain literal sense of the plagues is far superior to the fanciful associations attached to them by those who spiritualize the text.⁵⁸

The casting of the hail and fire mixed with blood has a threefold result: καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῆς γῆς κατεκάη,⁵⁹ καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν δένδρων κατεκάη, καὶ πᾶς χόρτος χλωρὸς κατεκάη (*kai to triton tēs gēs katekaē, kai to triton tōn dendrōn katekaē, kai pas chortos chlōros katekaē*, “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”). The destructive power of this plague lies in the fire that burns significant portions of earth’s vegetation (Alford). It was the hail in the comparable Egyptian plague that wrought the destruction of vegetation (Ex. 9:25) (Lee). The first object is the cultivated soil on earth’s surface apart from the sea (cf. 8:8-9) and the inland bodies of water (8:10-11), a third of which was burned up (Alford, Beckwith, Mounce). The second object is a third of the trees, a particular part of cultivated area already named (Mounce). Fruit trees in particular were important to life in Palestine and in Asia Minor (cf. Matt. 7:17; Jude 12). Flames destroyed these too.

The third element of vegetation to be burned is πᾶς χόρτος χλωρός (*pas chortos chlōros*, “all the green grass”). This poses a dilemma, because grass still exists when the fifth trumpet arrives (9:4). It is hermeneutically wrong to see this as an inconsistency retained to achieve artistic effect (contra Morris, Hailey). Also, the text does not

57. Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:635.

58. *Ibid.*; Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 110; Bullinger, *Apocalypse*, pp. 299-300; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:358; Walvoord, *Revelation*, p. 153.

59. Κατεκάη is an aorist passive indicative from κατακαίω, a κατα- prefix intensifying the simple verb καίω, with the meaning “I burn up.” The threefold repetition of the verb in v. 7 is for dramatic effect (Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:358).

allow a limitation of “all the green grass” to that within a third part of the earth (Alford). Two considerations help to resolve the quandary. First, a time lapse between the first and fifth trumpets allows time for grass to be regrown after the burning, but before the assault of the fifth seal. Second, in most parts of the earth grass is not green the year round, but is seasonal. Burning of all the grass that is green during a particular season would leave the remainder untouched until its season of dormancy is over (Simcox). Whether the affected portion was one-third or some other percentage, the text does not say. The description simply says “all” that is green at the time of the plague. Either of these two explanations allows for taking “all” in its literal sense without contradicting 9:4.

3. THE SECOND TRUMPET: DESTRUCTION OF A THIRD OF SEA LIFE (8:8-9)

Translation

8And 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, **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.

Exegesis and Exposition

8:8 What John heard and saw next was, *Καὶ ὁ δεύτερος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ὡς ὄρος μέγα πυρὶ καιόμενον ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν* (*Kai ho deuterios angelos esalpisen; kai hōs oros mega puri kaiomenon eblēthē eis tēn thalassan*, “And the second angel sounded; and [something] like a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea”). Opinions regarding the meaning of *ὡς ὄρος μέγα πυρὶ καιόμενον* (*hōs oros mega puri kaiomenon*, “[something] like a great mountain burning with fire”) are in three camps. One opinion sees the mountain as representative of spiritual Babylon or some other great kingdom.⁶⁰ Besides the occasional figure of a mountain to represent a kingdom in the OT (e.g., Ps. 48:1; Jer. 51:25), this explanation lacks for support. The variety of suggested identifications—i.e., Babylon (e.g., Swete), Zion (e.g., Hailey), a heathen nation (*ibid.*), Rome (e.g., Lee)—reflects the subjectivity of this viewpoint. Most crippling, however, is the use of *ὡς* (*hōs*, “like”) to indicate it was not an actual mountain, but a burning mass so large as to look like one.⁶¹ It confuses figures of speech to have the mountain in a metaphorical sense, and then to use it as a simile to identify the object (Walvoord).

60. Lee, “Revelation,” 4:601; Ironside, *Revelation*, p. 150.

61. Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:636; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:359.

A second opinion has connected the fall of the mountain-like object with local volcanic activity in the area (Moffatt, Mounce). But this also falters in that it was not something from the mass, but the mass itself that fell into the sea (Alford, Simcox, Swete). The third explanation takes the mountain-like mass to be a meteoric chunk, ablaze with fire (Alford, Walvoord). This allows for the comparative *hōs* and falls into the category of the falling stars from heaven under the sixth seal (6:13). This maintains a basically literal approach to the text that incorporates provisions for figurative language when the text itself so indicates (Walvoord).

“The sea” into which the burning mass is thrown is the sea as a whole, not just the Mediterranean Sea (Alford). The result was, “The third part of the sea became blood” (καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ τρίτον τῆς θαλάσσης αἷμα (*egeneto to triton tēs thalassēs haima*). Was this actual blood or only a blood-like color? The sea around Thera, an island near Patmos where volcanic eruptions were frequent, was often a bright orange color (Moffatt, Kiddle). This may be what the description means, but it is doubtful, because the text says the sea becomes blood, not *like* blood. On the basis of his vision, John believed that a large part of the sea would, quite literally, turn into blood as it had under the first deliverance in Egypt (Kiddle; cf. Ex. 7:20; Ps. 78:43-44). On a natural plane it is impossible for an object like a burning mountain to turn one-third of the sea into blood, cause one-third of marine life to perish, and destroy one-third of the shipping vessels. On a supernatural one it is not, however. The advances of modern science are staggering to the human mind, but the impact of this trumpet is even beyond that. Man is in no position to question the extent and manner of what God devises and implements.⁶²

8:9 The account continues by telling the impact on sea-life and shipping: καὶ ἀπέθανεν τὸ τρίτον τῶν κτισμάτων τῶν ἐν τῇ θαλάσσει, τὰ ἔχοντα ψυχὰς, καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν πλοίων διεφθάρησαν⁶³ (*kai apethanen to triton tōn ktismatōn tōn en tē thalassē, ta echonta psychas, kai to triton tōn ploiōn diephtharēsan*, “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”). As under the first Egyptian plague (Ex. 7:21; cf. Zeph. 1:3), the fish in the blood-filled environment perished (Moffatt).

62. J. O. Yoder, in Smith, *Revelation*, p. 139.

63. The *διά* prefix of *διαφθείρω* adds a perfective force to the simple verb *φθείρω*. The verb occurs again in 11:18 where its objects are personal. Proximity to the plural *πλοίων* probably explains the plural number of *διεφθάρησαν* (Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, p. 557; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:359).

Κτίσμα (*Ktisma*, “creature”) refers to something created (cf. 1 Tim. 4:4; James 1:18), which in this situation must be fish.

The seagoing vessels are hard hit too. To take τῶν πλοίων (*tōn ploiōn*, “the ships”) to stand for little states which become engulfed along with the Roman Empire (Lee) is untenable. These are literal ships on the high seas at the time the calamity strikes. They meet with destruction, διεφθάρησαν (*diephtharēsan*, “were destroyed”) attributing “a quasipersonal life to the ships in view of their human masters and crews” (Swete).

Additional Notes

8:8 The second trumpet blast brings a phenomenon similar to something described in *1 Enoch* 18:13, “seven stars like a great burning mountain.” The dating of *1 Enoch* is uncertain, but among those placing the section with this quote before Revelation, some feel that this trumpet is possibly an allusion to the Enoch passage mentioned (e.g., Swete). But John simply wrote what he saw, though his visions were part of his total experiences—physical, psychic, and spiritual. In the last analysis, his judgment did not determine what he was to write. The phenomena he saw portray eschatological judgment and exceed any natural explanation (Mounce).

8:9 The nominative participle τὰ ἔχοντα is in apposition with the genitive τῶν κτισμάτων. This appositional nominative, a grammatical rarity, is rather common in the Apocalypse (cf. 2:13, 20; 3:12; 9:14; 14:12).⁶⁴

4. THE THIRD TRUMPET: POISONING OF A THIRD OF THE FRESH WATER (8:10-11)

Translation

10And the third angel sounded; and a great star burning as a torch fell from heaven, and fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters. **11**And the name of the star is called “Wormwood.” And the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many among men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

Exegesis and Exposition

8:10 The sound of the third trumpet brings another object falling from heaven: Καὶ ὁ τρίτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἔπεσεν ἐκ τοῦ

64. Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:572, 637; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:234; Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, p. 557; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:359.

οὐρανοῦ ἀστήρ μέγας καιόμενος ὡς λαμπάς, καὶ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν ποταμῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων (*Kai ho tritos angelos esalrisen; kai epesen ek tou ouranou astēr megas kaiomenos hōs lampas, kai epesen epi to triton tōn potamōn kai epi tas pēgas tōn hudatōn*, “And the third angel sounded; and a great star burning as a torch fell from heaven, and fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters”). This time the falling object is ἀστήρ μέγας καιόμενος ὡς λαμπάς (*astēr megas kaiomenos hōs lampas*, “a great star burning as a torch”). The symbolically inclined interpreters have seen the star as representing a false religious leader,⁶⁵ a deluding influence given the people as an act of judgment (Lenski), and an angel (Johnson). The first two suggestions are hard-pressed to survive, because heresy is hardly a judgment inflicted on men as a penalty for sin (contra Lee). All three symbolic interpretations fail in the absence of any textual indication that the star is a symbol for something else. Most naturally understood, this is a literal star or meteor (Walvoord). Ancient usage of λαμπάς (*lampas*, “torch”) to denote a meteor shooting through the air confirms this conclusion.⁶⁶ An apparent contradiction in light of earlier words about the stars falling from the sky (6:13) (Moffatt) is resolved by identifying these stars with the earlier stars as falling meteors (Thomas, pp. 453-54). Stars remain in the sky until the time of the third and fourth trumpets.

The star lands on and pollutes a third of the rivers (8:10)—the “third” (τὸ τρίτον [*to triton*]) stipulating the partial nature of the trumpet judgments once again—and falls on all the springs of water, but pollutes only a third of them (8:11) (Alford; Simcox; Beckwith). This again recalls the first Egyptian plague with its contamination of the drinking-water supply (Ex. 7:21).⁶⁷ This was a familiar token of divine punishment (cf. Jer. 9:15) (Beckwith). Pagan worship of spirits associated with rivers and springs was widespread in John’s time, so this could be an expression of God’s displeasure with such (Mounce). It is more probably His punishment of all people for their diverse kinds of ungodliness (Kiddle).

8:11 The star has a name: καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ἀστέρος λέγεται ὁ ᾠψινθος. καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ τρίτον τῶν ὑδάτων εἰς ᾠψινθον (*kai to onoma tou asteros legetai ho Apsinthos. kai egeneto to triton tōn hudatōn eis apsinthon*, “And the name of the star is called ‘Wormwood.’ And the third part of the waters became wormwood”). ᾠψινθος (*Apsinthos*, “Wormwood”), a word found nowhere else in the Greek Bible (Ladd), is a plant with a bitter taste appearing in several varieties in Palestine.

65. Ironside, *Revelation*, p. 151.

66. LSJ, p. 261.

67. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:359.

At Marah a tree made the bitter water sweet (Ex. 15:23-25; cf. 2 Kings 2:19-21), but here the reverse occurs (Walvoord). This is probably a reminiscence of the bitter water forced on the rebellious Israelites of old (Kiddle). Wormwood in the OT was a symbol for divine punishment (Jer. 9:15; 23:15; Lam. 3:15, 19), an appropriate background for this trumpet (Beckwith). Wormwood itself was not a poison, though poisonous effects were sometimes connected with it (e.g., Jer. 3:15). Its bitterness at times could sometimes lead to death, however (Beckwith).

The remainder of v. 11 indicates that some deaths do result: καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπέθανον ἐκ τῶν ὑδάτων, ὅτι ἐπικράνησαν (*kai polloi tōn anthrōpōn apethanon ek tōn hydratōn, hoti epikranthēsan*, “and many among men died from the waters, because they were made bitter”). One perspective is that πολλοὶ (*polloi*, “many”) is simply a stylistic variation referring to the one-third that is customary in this series (Kiddle, Mounce). This, however, would amount to a duplication of the destructive effect of the sixth trumpet (9:18). The unlikelihood of *polloi* referring to one-third is shown also in this writer’s freedom to repeat specific figures with no concern for stylistic variation (e.g., three occurrences of τὸ τρίτον [*to triton*] in 8:7 and five in 8:12). The plain statement is that many, not all, who drank the water died. If a third of mankind drank it, they all suffered, but the suffering did not always result in death (Beckwith). The death here is only incidental. The first four trumpets are to punish, not necessarily to kill (*ibid.*).

Additional Notes

8:11 The construction ἐγένετο . . . εἰς is common in the LXX and in the NT when citing the OT (cf. 16:19; John 16:20; Acts 5:36).⁶⁸ Wormwood mixed with water does not kill, but this construction could indicate that the water became wormwood (Swete; contra Charles and Mounce). The text does not say the water became *like* wormwood. Yet the ἐπικράνησαν in 8:11 mandates that the water was not transformed into wormwood, but only embittered by it. Probably the εἰς would have been omitted from the construction as in 8:8 if the waters had become literal wormwood (Charles, Mounce).

5. THE FOURTH TRUMPET: DARKENING OF A THIRD OF THE HEAVENLY BODIES (8:12-13)

Translation

12And 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

68. Moffatt, “Revelation,” 5:405; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:359.

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 likewise. ¹³And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven 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 angels who are about to sound.”

Exegesis and Exposition

The sun, moon, and stars receive the immediate brunt of the fourth trumpet: Καὶ ὁ τέταρτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἐπλήγη τὸ τρίτον τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῆς σελήνης καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων, ἵνα σκοτισθῇ τὸ τρίτον τῆς σελήνης καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων, ἵνα σκοτισθῇ τὸ τρίτον αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα μὴ φάνη τὸ τρίτον αὐτῆς, καὶ ἡ νύξ ὁμοίως (*Kai ho tetartos angelos esalpisen; kai eplēgē to triton tou hēliou kai to triton tēs selēnēs kai to triton tōn asterōn, hina skotisthē to triton autōn kai hē hēmera mē phanē to triton autēs, kai hē nux homoiōs*), “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 likewise”. Ἐπλήγη (*Eplēgē*, “Were stricken”) is a verb form of the noun πληγή (*plēgē*), which means “plague.” The verb occurs in Ex. 9:31-32 [LXX] to describe the devastating effects of the hail on the crops (cf. Ps. 102:4) (Mounce). This trumpet has no mention of the instrument used to strike the heavenly bodies, the idea perhaps being that the instrument should not receive as much attention as the plague itself (Alford).

Darkening (cf. σκοτισθῇ [*skotisthē*, “was darkened”]) is a symbol for judgment throughout the OT. The particular parallel with this trumpet is the ninth Egyptian plague (Ex. 10:21-22). Amos called the Day of the Lord a day of darkness (Amos 5:18; cf. Isa. 13:10; Joel 2:2; Mark 13:24). The fourth trumpet fulfills this anticipation (Mounce). A questioning of the literality of the plague arises once again. The non-literal explanation sees this as a removal of the light of the truth (Lee, Scott, Kiddle), but this reads into v. 12 something that is not there, resulting in a wide variety of meanings such as a reference to the spiritual darkness of Mohammedanism (Lee) or the fall of long-established governments in the western empire (Scott). The literal understanding of an actual reduction of light to serve as a suitable warning for more severe judgments to come (cf. 8:13) is more satisfactory (Walvoord).

How the fractional darkening of the heavenly bodies can produce a reduced duration⁶⁹ of daylight, moonlight, and starlight is a puzzle

69. In τὸ τρίτον αὐτῆς, τὸ τρίτον is an adverbial accusative to express the duration of the “not shining” of the day.

(Swete). Yet man's ability to grasp the "how" of the cause and effect is no basis for attributing inconsistency to the author. The way this works out belongs to the altogether supernatural region of the visions (Alford). The Creator of all things can certainly devise a means by which a partial eclipse can result in a shortening of duration from the light-bodies.

The verse mentions no direct effect of this judgment on mankind, but clearly the impact will be great. Almost every area of life—agriculture, navigation, human health, productivity, and the like—are bound to feel the consequences of this plague. The dread of plagues yet to come as signaled by the darkness is over and above all these.

8:13 John signals a new scene in his vision with his usual *καὶ εἶδον* (*kai eidon*): *Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἤκουσα ἑνὸς⁷⁰ ἀετοῦ πετομένου ἐν μεσουρανήματι λέγοντος φωνῇ μεγάλῃ* (*Kai eidon, kai ēkousa henos aetou petomenou en mesouranēmati legontos phonē megalē*, "And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven saying with a loud voice"). The beginning of this scene is a transition from the first four trumpets (8:7-11) to the last two trumpets (9:1-21) (Alford, Mounce).

"Eagle" (ἀετοῦ [*aetou*]) has much stronger MS support than "angel" (ἀγγέλου [*aggelou*]), the rendering of the KJV in this verse (Lee). The ability of the eagle to speak (λέγοντος [*legontos*]) is insufficient ground on which to conclude it is symbolic (contra Johnson). Animate creation other than mankind receive that ability occasionally in Scripture (cf. Gen. 3:1-5; Num. 22:28-30). The picture is that of a strong bird rushing to its prey, in this case referring to the rapid approach of God's remaining vengeance (cf. Deut. 28:49; Hos. 8:1; Hab. 1:8; cf. also 2 *Baruch* 77.17-22; 87.1).⁷¹ The depredatory nature of eagles is in view in this choice of birds (Mounce). "Vulture" is the rendering of this word sometimes (cf. Luke 17:37), a meaning that would not be completely inappropriate here.⁷² At one extreme, the eagle speaks of the salvation of God for Israel, reminding that the plagues are but the birth pangs of God's new age (cf. Deut. 32:9-11; Ex. 19:4; Mark 13:8), but at the other, it is a bird of prey, associated with blood, death, and rotting flesh (cf. Job 39:27-30).⁷³

Μεσουρανήματι (*Mesouranēmati*) fixes the eagle's position in "mid-heaven," the position of the sun at noon. This is a place where all can

70. This form of εἷς which usually means "one" represents the English indefinite article "an" in this instance as it does elsewhere in the book (cf. 9:13; 18:21; 19:17) (Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, p. 559; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:360; Lenski, *Revelation*, p. 283). It is not a reference to "one solitary" eagle (Morris, *Revelation*, p. 125).

71. Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:639; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:360.

72. Mulholland, *Revelation*, pp. 192-93.

73. Caird, *Revelation*, p. 117; Chilton, *Days of Vengeance*, p. 241.

see him (Alford, Swete). His “loud voice” (φωνῆ μεγάλη [*phonē megalē*]) assures that all will hear him. Broad coverage is important, for the disasters he announces will touch earth-dwellers in every part of the world (Kiddle).

The eagle’s announcement is brief, but vital: Οὐαὶ οὐαὶ οὐαὶ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῶν λοιπῶν φωνῶν τῆς σάλπιγγος τῶν τριῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν μελλόντων σαλπίζειν (*Ouai ouai ouai tous katoikountas epi tēs gēs ek⁷⁴ tōn loipōn phōnōn tēs salpiggos tōn triōn angelōn tōn mellontōn salpizein*, “Woe woe woe to those who dwell on the earth because of the rest of the trumpet-sounds of the three angels who are about to sound”). The past trumpets have been woeful in themselves, but this announcement forebodes that the remaining three will be especially grievous, so much so as to have the name “woe” reserved for each of them (Swete, Beckwith). One reason for using this word that usually refers to great calamity is that these will have people, not objects of nature, as their direct objects (Alford, Mounce). Double “woes” are for emphasis in Ezek. 16:23; Rev. 18:10, 16, 19, but the triple woe refers to the three remaining trumpet blasts (cf. 9:1, 12; 11:14).

The objects of the coming vengeance, τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (*tous katoikountas epi tēs gēs*, “those who dwell on the earth”), are the same as the ones on whom martyrs in 6:10 invoke vengeance, so this is a further step in the answer to their prayers (Alford). They comprise only the wicked according to regular usage in Revelation (cf. 3:10; 9:4, 20). From this point on their future is especially bleak.

Additional Notes

8:12 Beckwith views ἵνα σκοτισθῆ . . . μὴ φάνη as a result clause because the analogy with the first three trumpets requires it. As important as analogy may be, however, the normal function of ἵνα is to express purpose: the purpose of the smiting is to produce these effects. If accented on the ultima, φάνη would be aorist passive, but this accentuation on the penult makes it an aorist active.⁷⁵

8:13 Τῆς σάλπιγγος is singular here because it defines or characterizes the plural φωνῶν. The plural is unnecessary since the noun draws the reader’s attention, not to the plurality of the trumpets, but to the “trumpetlike” sound proceeding from each of the angels (Swete, Beckwith).

74. The preposition ἐκ denotes the source whence the woes spring (cf. usage in 8:11) (Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:639). “As a result of” is a possible rendering for it here (Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:360).

75. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:360.

6. THE FIFTH TRUMPET: DEMONIC LOCUST PLAGUE (9:1-12)

Translation

1And 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. **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. **3**And locusts came out of the smoke into the earth, and authority was given to them as scorpions of the earth have authority. **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. **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. **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.

Exegesis and Exposition

Already introduced by the eagle's proclamation in 8:13, the fifth trumpet sets the tone for the last three trumpets through its specificity and independence of the two to follow. This feature marks the last three seals too. The seventh trumpet also resembles the seventh seal in the way it solemnly concludes the whole and contains the next series within in its scope. As with the seals also, two episodes intervene between the sixth and seventh members. In so doing, the episodes set the stage for the seventh trumpet.

9:1 The lengthy description of the fifth trumpet falls into two parts: the impact of the locusts (vv. 1-6) and the characteristics of the locusts (vv. 7-12).

The impact of the locusts (9:1-6). With the sounding of the fifth trumpet, the seer beholds yet another fallen star: *καὶ εἶδον ἀστέρα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεπτωκότα εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἡ κλεῖς τοῦ φρέατος τῆς ἀβύσσου* (*kai eidon astera ek tou ouranou peptōkota eis tēn gēn, kai edothē autō hē kleis tou phreatos tēs abyssou*, “and I saw a star, fallen from heaven into the earth, and the key of the pit of the abyss was given to him”). This star differs from those under the sixth seal (6:13) and third trumpet (8:10), however. The star's receipt and use of “the key of the pit of the abyss” (vv. 1-2) shows that it stands for an intelligent being (Lenski, Johnson). Suggested identifications of this intelligent being have abounded.

The idealist approach to Revelation usually tries to dodge the issue

of identification by saying the star could be any one of a number of persons throughout history (Lee, Beasley-Murray). Yet as much information is available here as has been for other trumpets where attempts to specify have been made. The suggestion that he is the Antichrist (Scott) has very slim evidence. Considerable input has gone into efforts to prove the star is a man like Mohammed. The possibility of stars being personified as men as in the OT (e.g., Judg. 5:20; Job 38:7) and Jewish apocalyptic (e.g., *1 Enoch* 88:1; 90:24) is part of the argument.⁷⁶ The tie to Mohammed lies in the leader's reputation for gathering armies and leading them against corrupt Christianity as Mohammed did, although the elect are left unharmed.⁷⁷

Besides ignoring the possibility that the masculine pronoun αὐτῷ (*autō*, "to him") could refer to an angel just as well as to a man, this view goes too far in assuming that every true Christian remained untouched by Mohammed's conquests (Alford). It also goes beyond revealed truth to assume that Mohammed or any other man had a heavenly origin. This could characterize only an angel. To a large degree, the participle πεπτωκότα⁷⁸ (*peptōkota*, "fallen") in v. 1 is determinative in this issue. If it is simply another way of noting an angel who had descended from heaven on a divine mission (Charles, Lenski), the star is one of God's angelic agents (cf. Judg. 5:20; Job 38:7). If on the other hand the participle has the theological connotation of casting from heaven because of divine disapproval (Alford, Lee, Kiddle, Walvoord, Sweet), this must be either Satan (Alford, Swete) or an unidentified evil angel (Simcox), the former being the more probable (cf. Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:7-9). The edge of probability in deciding between an unfallen angel and Satan favors the unfallen angel as the star's identification, because to make the participle *peptōkota* refer to Satan's one-time fall from heaven is to attach too much theological significance to a passing detail in the unfolding of one of the trumpet judgments (Morris). Besides this, "fallen" to describe a star rather than an angel divests the word of the notion of divine judgment (Charles). 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.

No angel retains permanent possession of the key of the abyss, so God had to give it to him (ἔδόθη αὐτῷ [*edothē autō*]) for use on this

76. Moffatt, "Revelation," 5:406; J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, vol. 38 of AB (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), p. 143.

77. Barnes, *Revelation*, p. 211; E. B. Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticæ or A Commentary on the Apocalypse, Critical and Historical*, 4th ed. (London: Seeleys, 1851), 1:414-22.

78. The perfect tense of πεπτωκότα indicates that the star was already on earth, not in the midst of his fall, when John saw him.

special occasion (cf. 20:1 also) (Alford, Charles). The term ἄβυσσος (*abyssos*, “abyss”) rendered the Hebrew תְּהוֹמוֹת (*tēhōm*) in the LXX when the latter referred to “deep waters” (cf. Gen. 1:2; 7:11; Ps. 105[106]:9; 106[107]:26) or to the depths of the earth (cf. Ps. 70:21[71:21, English]) (Swete). Etymologically, the alpha privative combines with βυθός (*bythos*, “depth”) to mean “without depth,” but in usage the word means “bottomless.”⁷⁹ Seven of the nine NT uses of the word are in Revelation (cf. Luke 8:31; Rom. 10:7). Here it is the picture of a subterranean cavern connected to earth’s surface by a “shaft” or “well” (τοῦ φρέατος [*tou phreatos*]) whose opening has a secured lid of some type (Moffatt). Its inhabitants include the demonic prince of 9:11 and the beast from the abyss mentioned in 11:7; 17:8 (Sweet).

Making the abyss emblematic of the accumulated power of evil in the world (Caird) is too imaginative to be plausible. With this kind of fanciful interpretation, one could make the passage say almost anything he wanted. Another position is to make the abyss synonymous with hell since, of the two other-world places, heaven and hell, it could not be heaven (Lenski). This reasoning is too simplistic, however, because Jesus in Luke 16:19-31 showed distinctions between different parts of the underworld. The ultimate destiny of the Devil and his angels, the lake of fire, differs from this abyss and is more deserving of the title “hell” (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 19:20; 20:10) (Lee, Charles). Better judgment dictates that the abyss is the preliminary place of incarceration for fallen angels from which some of them are about to be released under this trumpet. Luke 8:31, as well as the other six uses in the Apocalypse (9:2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3), supports this opinion.⁸⁰

9:2 The angel proceeds with his mission of releasing the occupants of the abyss: καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ φρέαρ τῆς ἀβύσσου, καὶ ἀνέβη καπνὸς ἐκ τοῦ φρέατος ὡς καπνὸς καμίνου μεγάλης, καὶ ἐσκοτώθη ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ὁ ἀὴρ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ τοῦ φρέατος (*kai ēnoixen to phreatos tēs abyssou, kai anebē kapnos ek tou phreatos hōs kapnos kaminou megalēs, kai eskotōthē ho hēlios kai ho aēr ek tou kapnou tou phreatos*, “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”). The divine agent used the key given to him to unlock (ἤνοιξεν [*ēnoixen*, “he opened”]) the shaft leading to the underground chamber. When he did so, smoke rose from the shaft as from an erupting volcano, but this was no volcano (Swete). This was literal smoke that John saw, not a figurative representation of extreme deceptions and error propagated by Satan (contra Hailey). The literal understanding of the trumpets up to this point verifies this. In Revelation smoke may per-

79. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:361.

80. *Ibid.*; Walvoord, *Revelation*, p. 159.

tain to holy things (8:4; 15:8), but most of the time it is in connection with judgment, doom, and torment (9:17, 18; 18:9, 18; 19:3) (Smith). This unfavorable tone applies here too. The smoke is a vivid reminder of divine judgment at Sodom (Gen. 19:28) and Sinai (Ex. 19:18).⁸¹ The volume of smoke compares to that produced by a large smelting furnace, usually used for purifying metals (ὥς καπνὸς καμίνου μεγάλης [*hōs kapnos kaminou megalēs*]) (cf. 1:15).

The volume is so great that it darkens the light of the sun and the air through which that light must pass (Alford). Under the previous trumpet the striking of the luminaries had obscured their light too, but this is a hindering of the sun's effect (ἐσκοτώθη [*eskotōthē*]), not an enfeebling of its ability to illuminate (Swete, Charles).

9:3 From the cloud of smoke emerged a swarm of locusts: καὶ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ ἐξῆλθον ἀκρίδες εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐταῖς* ἐξουσία ὡς ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν οἱ σκορπίοι τῆς γῆς (*kai ek tou kapnou exēlthon akrides eis tēn gēn, kai edothē autais* exousia hōs echousin exousian hoi skorpioi tēs gēs*, “and locusts came out of the smoke into the earth, and authority was given to them as scorpions of the earth have authority”). This trumpet parallels the eighth of the Egyptian plagues (Ex. 10:12-20), but these locusts are not ordinary locusts. They have a leader (cf. 9:11) unlike locusts of the earth (cf. Prov. 30:27), and unlike regular locusts, their power to hurt is in their scorpion-like tails (ἐξουσία ὡς ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν οἱ σκορπίοι τῆς γῆς (*exousia hōs echousin exousian hoi skorpioi tēs gēs*, cf. 9:5).⁸²

The irresistible destructive power of locusts is proverbial in the OT (e.g., Deut. 28:38; 2 Chron. 7:13; Joel 2:25) as is their seemingly limitless number (e.g., Ps. 105:34; Nah. 3:15) (Lenski). The central OT passage about locusts is Joel 1-2 which describes a locust-visitation that serves as a harbinger or component of the Day of the Lord. The fifth-trumpet locusts similarly serve as a part of end-time events (Beckwith, Mounce). Locusts were also part of the diet of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:4; Mark 1:6).

But these locusts are different, and it remains to establish their identity. One perspective is that they signify human armies, either Arabic⁸³ or Oriental.⁸⁴ The parallel with Joel 2:1 ff., which shows the analogies between a locust swarm and a human army, is probably the chief factor favoring this opinion. The characteristics differentiating

81. Hughes, *Revelation*, pp. 108-9.

82. Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:640; Swete, *Apocalypse*, 115; Moffatt, “Revelation,” 5:406; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:242; E. W. Bullinger, *The Apocalypse or “The Day of the Lord”* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, n.d.), p. 279.

83. Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticæ*, 1:264-68.

84. Barnes, *Revelation*, pp. 212-13.

these locusts from ordinary ones are a serious obstacle to this view, however.

The view that takes the locusts to represent God's superhuman judgment against the consciences of men (Scott) is too vague to do justice to the details of the passage. The passage contains no hint of this kind of symbolism.⁸⁵ To fall back on taking these as ordinary locusts according to the Exodus pattern (Morris) because of the ways they differ from "normal" locusts is another alternative. As noted above, however, their leadership pattern and means of inflicting harm contrast with ordinary locusts. Ordinary locusts do not breed in the center of the earth, the origin of this swarm.⁸⁶ These locusts do not eat grass (cf. 9:4) like natural ones (Caird, Johnson). So it is out of the question to see these as locusts of the type in the eighth Egyptian plague.

Heavy evidence favors the identification of these locusts as demons or fallen angels who assume a locust-like form. They have an angel as their leader (9:11). They come from the abyss where evil spirits are imprisoned (Beckwith, Lenski). Their attack against men rather than consuming of green vegetation points to their demonic nature (Beasley-Murray). They have a form such as no human being has ever seen (Bullinger, Seiss, Walvoord). The ability of demons to assume an assortment of material forms is further illustrated in 16:13 where three demons appear as frogs (Smith).

What emerges to afflict rebellious mankind, then, is a horde of supernatural creatures bent on spreading as much misery as possible. Divine permission (ἐδόθη [*edothē*]) allows them the stinging power of scorpions in their tails (cf. vv. 5, 10) (Swete) to inflict their agony. The scorpion belongs to the largest and most malignant of all insect tribes. Its general appearance is like a lobster, but much more hideous. Its sting located near the end of its tail is not always fatal, but can be. It ranks with the snake in its hostility toward human beings (cf. Luke 10:19; 11:12).⁸⁷

9:4 The locusts have strict limitations assigned: καὶ ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα μὴ ἀδικήσουσιν τὸν χόρτον τῆς γῆς οὐδὲ πᾶν χλωρὸν οὐδὲ πᾶν δένδρον, εἰ μὴ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους οἵτινες οὐκ ἔχουσι τὴν σφραγίδα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων (*kai errethē autais hina mē adikēsousin ton chorton tēs gēs oude pan chlōron oude pan dendron, ei mē tous anthrōpous hoitines ouk*

85. Jack MacArthur, *Expositional Commentary on Revelation* (Eugene, Oreg.: Certain Sound, 1973), pp. 207-8.

86. Henry M. Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1983), p. 158.

87. Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 116; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:242; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:362; *Collier's Encyclopedia*, 20:512-13.

echousi tēn sphragida tou theou epi tōn metōpōn, “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”). The one issuing these limitations is unnamed, but the unexpressed agent of the passive action ἐρρέθη (*errethē*, “it was said”) is probably the same as the unexpressed agent of the three uses of ἐδόθη (*edothē*, “it was given”) in 9:1, 3, 5—God Himself. God exercises His sovereignty to control this plague. The demons can go only as far as He permits. Their release was in order to do their own wills up to a certain point (cf. Ezek. 9:4-6) (Bullinger, Lenski, Mounce).

The restraint did not allow the demonic locusts to touch what locusts usually destroy, the vegetation (cf. Ex. 10:5, 12, 15). Damage to plant life came earlier (cf. 8:7). The grass damaged under the first trumpet has regrown by now, but the locusts are to leave it alone. Men, not foodstuffs, are the objects.⁸⁸ Εἰ μὴ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους (*Ei mē tous anthrōpous*, “Except [they should hurt] men”) states the exception to the “do not hurt” limitation. Ironically it is a group of people in rebellion against God who are victims of demons who themselves are in rebellion against God (Beasley-Murray). This is a classic example of the confusion and irrationality of the forces of evil which logically should have formed an alliance with one another.

The demons may not afflict all humans, however, only “such ones as do not have the seal of God upon their foreheads” (οἵτινες⁸⁹ οὐκ ἔχουσι τὴν σφραγίδα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων [*hoitines ouk echousi tēn sphragida tou theou epi tōn metōpōn*]). Those whose foreheads lack the seal of God will receive the torment. Those with the seal, the one granted earlier to the 144,000 in 7:4-8, are secure against this physical pain. As Israel in Egypt escaped the plagues that punished their neighbors (cf. Ex. 8:22 ff; 9:4 ff.; 10:23), the servants of God will be exempt from the attack of the locusts (Swete, Smith, Sweet).

9:5 The demonic horde receives a further limitation: καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα μὴ ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτούς, ἀλλ' ἵνα βασανισθῶσιν⁹⁰ μῆνας πέντε· καὶ ὁ βασανισμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς βασανισμὸς σκορπίου, ὅταν παίσῃ ἄνθρωπον (*kai edothē autois hina mē apokteinōsin autous, all' hina basanisthēsontai mēnas pente; kai ho basanismos autōn hōs basanismos*

88. Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 116; Bullinger, *Apocalypse*, p. 319; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:362.

89. Οἵτινες apparently retains its qualitative force here (cf. 1:7; 2:24; 20:4) (Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:362).

90. The future passive indicative with ἵνα is relatively rare in the NT, but occurs several other times in Revelation, e.g., 3:9; 6:4; 8:3; 13:12 (Charles, *Revelation*, 1:243).

skorpiou, hotan paisē anthrōpon, “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”). They have permission to torment, but not to kill. Under the third trumpet, death was possible (8:11), but not here.

In the NT, βασανίζω (*basanizō*, “I torment”) entails acute pain, either physical (Matt. 8:6; Rev. 12:2), mental (Matt. 8:29; 2 Pet. 2:8), or metaphorical (Matt. 14:24; Mark 6:48). In Revelation where persecution is so much in view, the thought of torment as punishment is uppermost (cf. 9:5; 11:10; 14:10, 11; 18:7, 10, 15; 20:10). Revelation 12:2 is the only exception.⁹¹

The duration of the torment is five months.⁹² This corresponds to the normal season of pillaging by ordinary locusts, beginning in May and extending through September. The continuous-historical school of interpreting Revelation, by understanding the period nonliterally, has suggested at least seven “fulfillments” of the five months during the Christian era (Lee). Major motifs involved in the consummation of the age do appear throughout Christian history, but the locust imagery of this prophecy relates to the ultimate conflict between God and Satan at the close of the age (Mounce).

Beyond this, precise understandings of the five months have varied. Most views search for a hidden or figurative meaning. Definiteness of time is one meaning assigned to the five-month period (Swete).⁹³ Some suggest that the period signifies a long period of time (cf. Beasley-Murray). Some see an allusion to a limited or brief period of time (Lee, Scott, Kiddle, Sweet). (Comparing this time-frame to the “ten days” in 2:10 is unjustifiable, however, because there it is a genitive expressing the kind of time and here it is an accusative of duration of time.) Lastly, some understand the five months figuratively with no chronological connotation (Lenski, Mulholland), in spite of the absence of any indication in the text that nonliterality is intended.

An acceptance of the text’s plain meaning is satisfactory. The habit of ordinary locusts furnishes the starting point for the description of this demonic swarm.⁹⁴ There is no good reason for changing the normal meaning of the time element. The objections that normal locusts do not remain stationary (Beasley-Murray) and do not wreak their havoc continuously for the stated period (Beckwith, Lenski, Hailey) are not valid. The torment of this plague could be intermittent and

91. Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 116; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:362.

92. Μῆνας πέντε is an accusative of the extent of time.

93. Düsterdieck, *Revelation*, p. 277.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 278; Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:641; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:243; Walvoord, *Revelation*, p. 161.

move from place to place too. But it continues doing so for five months. Such torture may be offensive to some modern minds (Sweet), but this is a divinely appointed method of punishing sin.

9:6 The painfulness of the scorpion sting brings men to desperation: καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ζητήσουσιν οἱ⁹⁵ ἄνθρωποι τὸν θάνατον καὶ οὐ μὴ⁹⁶ εὕρῃσουσιν αὐτόν, καὶ ἐπιθυμήσουσιν ἀποθανεῖν καὶ φεύγει ὁ θάνατος ἀπ’ αὐτῶν (*kai en tais hēmerais ekeinaiis zētēsousin hoi anthrōpoi ton thanaton kai ou mē heurēsousin auton, kai epithymēsousin apothanein kai pheugei ho thanatos ap’ autōn*, “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”). The words καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ζητήσουσιν . . . (*kai en tais hēmerais ekeinaiis zētēsousin . . .*) (“and in those days men will seek . . .”) mark a change in style from a witness of visions to a prophet predicting the future. Since 4:1, John has been an apocalyptic reporter, but he now switches to being a direct organ of the Spirit (Alford). This confirms the distinctly prophetic, as opposed to an apocalyptic, nature of the Apocalypse, and along with it the literal mode as the correct way of interpreting such material (Thomas, pp. 23-40).

Ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις (*En tais hēmerais ekeinaiis*, “in those days”) covers the five-month period of v. 5. Hopefully the scorpion sting would bring repentance, but instead it evokes a quest for death (Swete, Bullinger, Charles). Physical pain, not depression, is their reason for seeking death (Mounce). Even though the death-quest is prompted by a vehement desire, as the strong word ἐπιθυμήσουσιν (*epithymēsousin*, “they will desire”) indicates, death will escape them.⁹⁷ This motive for wanting to die is quite different from Paul’s desire to die so as to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23). This is a fleeing from the misery on this side, but for Christians death is gain because of what is on the other side of death (Alford, Swete). The motivation for dying in 1 Kings 19:4, Job 3:21, and Jer. 8:3 resembles that of these fifth-trumpet victims, though the circumstances differed in each case.

The meaning and form of φεύγει (*pheugei*, “will flee”) emphasizes the elusiveness of death. As a futuristic use of the present tense, it not only predicts the flight of death, but it also affirms the certainty of that flight.⁹⁸ Death will not be just hard to find. It will aggressively run away from those pursuing it.

95. The article is generic, pointing out the category that includes all people (Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:363).

96. The strong double negative οὐ μὴ expresses emphatic negation. By no means will men find the death they desire (Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:641).

97. Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:641; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:363.

98. Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:363; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:244; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:363; Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 870.

Additional Notes

9:3 Sinaiticus and a few other MSS have the masculine αὐτοῖς instead of the feminine αὐταῖς. This views the locusts as personal agents rather than as locusts. External evidence for the feminine is stronger, however.

The characteristics of the locusts (9:7-12). With the effects of the locust plague in mind, the author now turns to describe the locusts themselves.⁹⁹

Translation

7And the likenesses of the locusts [were] similar to horses prepared for battle, and upon their heads [something] like crowns as of gold, and their faces [were] as faces of men. **8**And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth [were] as [those] of lions, **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. **10**And they have tails like scorpions and stings, and their authority in their tails is to hurt men for five months. **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 Apollyon.

12The first woe has passed away; behold, two woes still come after these things.

Exegesis and Exposition

9:7 In his description of the locusts, John uses the words ὡς (*hōs*, “as”) and ὅμοιος (*homoios*, “like”) nine times to convey a picture of the demonic locusts (Moffatt, Charles). He begins his description with an etymological relative of the latter adjective ὁμοιώματα (*homoiōmata*): Καὶ τὰ ὁμοιώματα τῶν ἀκρίδων ὅμοιοι ἵπποις ἡτοιμασμένοις εἰς πόλεμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν ὡς στέφανοι ὅμοιοι χρυσοῦ*, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν ὡς πρόσωπα ἀνθρώπων (*Kai ta homoiōmata tōn akridōn homoioi hippois hētoimasmēnois eis polemon, kai epi tas kephalas autōn hōs stephanoι homoioi chrysō, kai ta prosōpa autōn hōs prosōpa anthrōpōn*, “And the likenesses of the locusts [were] similar to horses prepared for battle, and upon their heads [something] like crowns as of gold, and their faces [were] as faces of men”). He begins with the head and moves progressively toward the tail of the creatures (Smith). Opinions differ widely about the meaning of each comparison.

Broadly speaking, the description has occasioned three views. It is an idealized depiction of a natural swarm of locusts (Moffatt), an

99. Dürsterdieck, *Revelation*, pp. 278-79.

idealized picture of an army of men (probably Mohammedan warriors),¹⁰⁰ or a representation of the demonic locusts who will torture men for five months (Swete, Charles, Lenski). The comparative terminology might justify a reference to natural locusts (Moffatt, Charles), but some parts of the description could not apply to them (e.g., tails like scorpions). Some might construe these comparisons to refer to frightening military strength,¹⁰¹ but the creatures are like locusts, not men, and no events of history can match the details of this visitation (Walvoord). Viewing this as a representation of demonic locusts is preferable, because it partially explains the unusual features of the afflictors. Basically, they are like locusts, but their supernaturalness adds a degree of dreadfulness to their appearance for the sake of enhancing their terrifying effect.¹⁰² As for the objection that demons cannot assume a physical shape (Walvoord, Ladd), Jesus' experience in the gospels nullifies this (e.g., Matt. 8:30-32; Mark 5:11-13; Luke 8:32-33).

A resemblance between natural locusts and horses, particularly those with armor, is the reminder brought by ὅμοιοι ἵπποις ἡτοιμασμένοις εἰς πόλεμον (*homioia hippois hētoimasmēnois eis polemon*, "similar to horses prepared for battle").¹⁰³ This similarity occasioned a similar comparison in Joel 1-2 (Swete, Charles). It is without foundation to think that John at this point had in mind the mythical monsters called centaurs whose upper bodies were like human beings and lower parts like horses (contra Ford).

The creatures also had something like crowns on their heads: καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν ὡς στέφανοι ὅμοιοι χρυσῷ (*kai epi tas kephalas autōn hōs stephanoi homioioi chrysō*, "and upon their heads [something] like crowns as of gold"). Suggested associations of these have included the yellow-tipped antlers of a natural locust (Lenski), the golden turbans of the Muslim hordes (Moffatt), the bronze helmets of the Roman legionnaires (Ford), and a feature distinctive to these demonic locusts (Lenski). Earlier discussion favors the last of these in pointing to the success to be enjoyed by the locusts throughout the five months (Swete, Lenski, Kiddle). The victory implication derives from the symbolic import of στέφανος (*stephanos*, "crown" or "wreath") (cf. 14:14).

The end of v. 7, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν ὡς πρόσωπα ἀνθρώπων (*kai ta prosōpa autōn hōs prosōpa anthrōpōn*, "and their faces [were] as faces of men"), suggests that the creatures have the intelligence and capaci-

100. Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticæ*, 1:414-22.

101. Hughes, *Revelation*, p. 110.

102. Düsterdieck, *Revelation*, p. 279; Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:642.

103. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:363.

ties of human beings, not just that of insects (Lenski, Swete). Because of this comparison, some have concluded they are literal men, but the whole imagery opposes the picture of men afflicting men (Lenski). In fact, men and locusts are distinct from each other in 9:3-4. The creatures are not a product of nature, but are creatures of superhuman evil.

9:8 Verse 8 adds two more attributes of the locusts' appearance: καὶ εἶχον τρίχας ὡς τρίχας γυναικῶν, καὶ οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτῶν ὡς λεόντων ἦσαν (*kai eichon trichas hōs trichas gynaikōn, kai hoi odontes autōn hōs leontōn ēsan*, "and they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth [were] as [those] of lions"). The reason why the hair of the creatures cannot refer to the antennae of natural locusts (contra Beckwith) is that two relatively short organs of sensation protruding from the head can hardly be called hair (Mounce). The reason the reference cannot be to hair on the legs or bodies of natural locusts (contra Mounce) is that the text says it must be like the hair of women which is on their heads. This must be another feature that differentiates the creatures from natural insects and adds to the gruesomeness of the demonic army (Alford, Lenski).

Ordinary locusts have teeth (cf. Joel 1:6), but not the powerful teeth of these creatures. These lionlike teeth denote voracity (Bullinger, Beckwith). Yet in spite of their fierceness, these demons do not tear their victims apart (Mounce).

9:9 Two additional characteristics resemble aspects of forces on the battlefield: καὶ εἶχον θώρακας ὡς θώρακας σιδηροῦς, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ τῶν περυγῶν αὐτῶν ὡς φωνὴ ἁρμάτων ἵππων πολλῶν τρεχόντων εἰς πόλεμον (*kai eichon thōrakas hōs thōrakas sidērous, kai hē phōnē tōn pterygōn autōn hōs phōnē harmatōn hippōn pollōn trechontōn eis polemon*, "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"). One was their iron breastplates. The noun θώραξ (*thōrax*) referred originally to the human chest—i.e., the area from the neck down to the navel. From this it developed the meaning of a breastplate of armor covering the chest and the back.¹⁰⁴ It has this meaning here and in its other NT usages (cf. 9:17; Eph. 6:14; 1 Thess. 5:8). The material of which it was made, iron, adds the connotation of invincibility to the description of the demonic locusts. The scaly backs, thoraxes, and flanks of literal locusts may be in view in this element of the likeness (Alford), but this too may be another element distinctive to the creatures of this plague to denote their invulnerability (Lenski). Earlier considerations in this discussion make the latter more probable.

104. Ibid., 6:364.

The other battlefield resemblance lies in the sound made by the wings of the agents of misery. The loud rushing sound of the swarm creates a formidable psychological problem for mankind and implies the hopelessness of resisting them. Joel compares the noise of locusts' wings to the clatter and clangor of chariot wheels and the hoofbeat of horses moving swiftly into battle (Joel 2:4-5; cf. 2 Kings 7:6; Jer. 47:3). The same is the picture here.

9:10 As awesome to the eye and ear as these other elements of the special locusts are, they are only peripheral in comparison with the damage caused by their tails: *καὶ ἔχουσιν*¹⁰⁵ *οὐράς ὁμοίας σκορπίοις καὶ κέντρα, καὶ ἐν ταῖς οὐραῖς αὐτῶν ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἀδικῆσαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους μῆνας πέντε* (*kai echousin ouras homoiias skorpiois kai kentra, kai en tais ourais autōn hē exousia autōn adikēsai tous anthrōpous mēnas-pente*, “And they have tails, like [the tails of] scorpions, and stings, and their power in their tails is to hurt men for five months”). This is a further detailing of v. 5. The power to inflict torture lies in these scorpionlike tails with stings (Swete, Bullinger, Beckwith). The word for “stings” (κέντρα [*kentra*]) derives from κεντρέω (*kentreō*), a verb meaning “I prick” or “I sting.”¹⁰⁶ The noun designated the goad used for oxen (cf. Prov. 26:3, LXX) and the spur, quill, or sting of an insect.¹⁰⁷ Its only other NT uses are in Acts 26:14, Paul’s kicking against “the goads,” and 1 Cor. 15:55, “the sting” of death (Swete, Charles).

What was referred to as torment in v. 5—*βασανισθήσονται . . . βασανισμὸς* (*basanisthēsontai . . . basanismos*, “they may be tormented . . . torment”)—in v. 10 becomes a power to “hurt” (ἀδικῆσαι [*adikēsai*]) for five months’ duration.

9:11 A further characteristic of this locust swarm is their leader, another indication that these are no ordinary earthbound locusts (cf. Prov. 30:27): *ἔχουσιν ἐπ’ αὐτῶν βασιλέα τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς ἀβύσσου· ὄνομα αὐτοῦ*¹⁰⁸ *Ἐβραϊστὶ*¹⁰⁹ *Ἀβαδδὼν καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ ὄνομα ἔχει Ἀπολλύων*¹¹⁰ (*echousin ep’ autōn basilea ton angelon tēs abyssou; ono-*

105. As a follow-up to the two imperfects of ἔχω in vv. 8-9, this present tense must be a historical present to heighten the vividness of the tails’ description (Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 197).

106. G. A. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950), p. 244.

107. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, 2d ed. (McLean, Va.: MacDonald, reprint of 1888 ed.), 1:615.

108. See Rev. 6:8 for this same dative of possession with ὄνομα (cf. also John 1:6; 3:1; 18:10).

109. The adverb Ἐβραϊστὶ appears only in John’s writings in the NT (cf. John 5:2; 19:13, 17, 20; 20:16; Rev. 16:16) (Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 119; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:245).

110. The nominative case of Ἀπολλύων is retained though the proper name is in apposition with accusative ὄνομα (Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:365).

ma autō Hebraisti Abaddōn kai en tē Hellēnikē onoma echei Apollyōn, “they have over them the angel of the abyss as king, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek he has the name Apollyon”). The resemblance of the advancing locusts to an army suggests the need of a commander to coordinate the battle plan (Beckwith). The identifying of this commander-king as an angel is further evidence these are not regular locusts.

Some prefer not to attempt a definitive identification of this king, relegating him to the sphere of symbolic delusion or imagination (Swete, Charles, Lenski, Mounce). Yet according to 9:6, the fulfillment of this vision will be much more than a delusion. The verse gives the leader a name (two, in fact), calls him an angel, and assigns him a role as king of the demonic locusts. He cannot be disregarded as a delusion, not having actual existence.

Another idea has been that he is Satan,¹¹¹ but the fact that Satan is “the prince of demons” (Matt. 12:24) does not necessarily make him king over the demons confined in the abyss. His domain is the heavenly places, not the lower parts (cf. Eph. 6:12).¹¹² Nowhere does Satan have a connection with the abyss until being cast into it later (cf. 20:1-3).¹¹³ Satan will become prominent later in the book (cf. Rev. 12 ff.), but it is unlikely that this obscure reference introduces him this early (Beckwith, Mounce). When he does enter the sequence, his introduction is dramatic (cf. 12:3, 9) (Alford).

On the other hand, a significant case exists for identifying this king as an otherwise unknown angel who is in charge of the abyss. Satan has leaders and sub-leaders under his command (cf. Eph. 6:12), so this could easily be one of those (Swete). The angel’s title assures that the demon locusts obey his orders (Swete). Demons were assigned specific responsibilities like this in the Jewish thought of the day.¹¹⁴ The highly developed angelology of Judaism had a special angel assigned to many spheres. Consequently, this is simply an angel whose name and responsibility in the hierarchy of evil the text discloses.

John gives the angel’s name in two languages (Ἑβραϊστὶ . . . ἐν τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ [*Hebraisti . . . en tē Hellēnikē*, “in Hebrew . . . in Greek”]) because the end-time plague will afflict both groups (Seiss). Then too, John had to transfer his Hebrew thought-mold in order to communicate with his predominantly Gentile readership in Asia Minor (cf. Rev. 16:16). In the NT, the habit of supplying information bilingually char-

111. Theodore H. Epp, *Practical Studies in Revelation* (Lincoln, Neb.: Back to the Bible, 1969), 2:117; Smith, *Revelation*, p. 145; Walvoord, *Revelation*, p. 163.

112. H. Morris, *Revelation*, p. 164.

113. Newell, *Revelation*, p. 132.

114. Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, pp. 70, 445, 563.

acterizes only the gospel of John and Revelation in the NT (cf. John 1:38, 42; 4:25; 6:1; 9:7; 11:16; 19:13, 17, 20; 20:16; Rev. 1:7; 3:14; 12:9) (Lee, Johnson).

The name Ἀπολλύων (*Apollyōn*) comes from ἀπόλλυμι (*apollymi*) which means “I destroy.” So the Greek term has the same meaning as the Hebrew Ἀβaddōn (*Abaddōn*), “Destroyer.” This is expressive of the effect to be wrought by the demonic locusts whom the angel leads (Charles, Beckwith). The suggestion that John is sarcastically associating the angel with the god Apollo (Moffatt, Kiddle, Beasley-Murray, Mounce, Johnson), tempting as it is, is hardly correct. John calls him an angel, not a god, and Apollo was never associated with the abyss. To propose that the king is a figure of speech for death (Kiddle) takes the OT usage of the Hebrew name into account, but it fails to acknowledge that the angel is a real being and not merely a personification. Reasons for not identifying him as Satan appear in the discussion above. The name is simply an appropriate designation given to the fallen angel who rules the locusts from the abyss.

9:12 With the description of the fifth trumpet complete, the announcement of the completion of the first woe and the anticipation of the remaining two are in order: Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ μία ἀπῆλθεν· ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται ἔτι δύο οὐαὶ μετὰ ταῦτα* (*Hē ouai hē mia apēlthen; idou erchetai eti dyo ouai meta tauta*, “The first woe has passed away; behold, two woes still come after these things”). This is probably a parenthetical word by John, but it could be a continuation of the eagle’s announcement from 8:13 (Moffatt, Johnson). Mankind will welcome the passing of the first woe, but they have no room to heave a sigh of relief. Two more are yet to come (Beckwith). When John writes ἀπῆλθεν (*apēlthen*, “has passed”), he means, of course, in the future time of fulfillment. The woe had not passed away at the time Revelation was written (Beckwith, Lenski, Ladd).

The present tense ἔρχεται (*erchetai*, “comes”) following ἰδοὺ (*idou*, “behold”) makes this announcement quite dramatic. The second woe commences with the conclusion of this announcement and continues until 11:14, with an intervening intercalation in 10:1–11:13. Μετὰ ταῦτα (*Meta tauta*, “After these things”) shows that the woes are not contemporaneous, but consecutive (Lee, Smith). Two woes are still to come after the first.

Additional Notes

9:7 Ἦπιποις is an associative instrumental in function, as occurs frequently following ὅμοιος in this book (cf. 1:15; 2:18; 4:6; 9:10, 19; 11:1; 13:2, 11).¹¹⁵

115. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:363.

Instead of ὅμοιοι χρυσῶ, some MSS have the rare plural form χρυσοῖ, and a few others read χρυσοῖ ὅμοιοι χρυσῶ. Χρυσοῖ has the support of more MSS and is the harder reading because of the rarity of the plural, but its witnesses are of a much later date. Χρυσοῖ ὅμοιοι χρυσῶ is an obvious conflation of the other two readings, and besides, has only weak MS evidence.¹¹⁶ Besides having the support of stronger witnesses, ὅμοιοι χρυσῶ is more in accord with the style of Revelation.¹¹⁷ Though not the more difficult reading because of this stylistic agreement, it still receives the nod as the correct reading.

9:10 Οὐράς ὁμοίας σκορπίοις is a condensed idiom whose expanded meaning would be “tails like [the tails of] scorpions.” A similar idiom appears in 13:11 (cf. Matt. 5:20; 1 John 2:2).¹¹⁸

9:11 βασιλέα being anarthrous, is the predicate accusative in apposition with the accusative of direct object, τὸν ἄγγελον.

Ἀβαδδὼν is a transliteration of the Hebrew word אַבְדֻן (cf. Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps. 88:11; Prov. 15:11; 27:20). The LXX renders it by ἀπόλεια which means “destruction.” In the OT it refers to destruction, parallel to Sheol (Job 26:6; Prov. 15:11; 27:20), death (Job 28:22), and the grave (Ps. 38:11). The Greek rendering “Apollyon” comes from the name’s association with ἀπόλεια in the LXX.

9:12 Οὐαί used substantively is usually neuter, but the feminine article occurs here, perhaps because John was thinking of θλίψις or ταλαιπωρία, both of which are feminine (Beckwith).

Μία (*Mia*) is an ordinal number meaning “one,” but here its use is as a cardinal in place of πρώτη, “first” (cf. 6:1; Mark 16:2).¹¹⁹

Though the subject of ἔρχεται is the plural δύο οὐαί, the verb is singular because it comes before its subject in the sentence. This is commonly called a “Pindaric” construction: “a third person singular verb occurs in the clause prior to its subject which may be plural and is placed in the singular regardless of the number of the subject.”¹²⁰

The καὶ that begins v. 13 either disappears or is moved to a position before μετὰ ταῦτα in a number of respected MSS including p⁴⁷. To move the καὶ or do without it is also the harder reading, because it differs from John’s usual pattern for introducing the trumpet angels.

116. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), p. 743.

117. *Ibid.*, p. 743.

118. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:365.

119. *Ibid.*, 6:366.

120. James Home Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek. Prolegomena*, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), p. 58; cf. Düsterdieck, *Revelation*, p. 282; Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:644.

This variation has the effect of reading μετὰ ταῦτα with the beginning of v. 13 rather than with the end of v. 12.¹²¹

Substantial witnesses, including Alexandrinus, also stand in support of leaving the καὶ where it is at the beginning of v. 13, thereby keeping μετὰ ταῦτα as the conclusion of v. 12. This too can be construed as the harder reading, because usually in this book the phrase begins a sentence or clause. With an evenly divided external testimony, the decision comes down to deciding between two “harder” readings. Because the removal or relocation of καὶ is so hard that it is probably impossible, the reading that leaves it at the beginning of v. 13 is the preference.¹²²

7. THE SIXTH TRUMPET: DEATH TO A THIRD OF EARTH'S INHABITANTS (9:13-21)

Translation

13And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God, **14**saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Loose the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” **15**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. **16**And the number of the armies of cavalry [was] twenty thousands of ten thousands; I heard the number of them. **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. **18**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. **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.

Exegesis and Exposition

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: Καὶ ὁ ἕκτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μίαν ἐκ τῶν [τεσσάρων]* κεράτων τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ (*Kai ho hektos angelos esalpisen; kai ēkousa phōnēn mian ek tōn [tessarōn]**)

121. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 743.

122. *Ibid.*

keratōn tou thysiastēriou tou chrysou tou enōpion tou theou, “And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God”). In this case, for the first time, the trumpet angel in addition to blowing his trumpet assumes an active role in initiating the visitation.

What John heard (ἤκουσα [*ēkousa*]) in this vision replaces—but has the same force as—what he saw (εἶδον [*eidon*]) in most of the others. He heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar. Whose voice it is that speaks to the angel is the puzzle. Assigning the voice to the Messiah¹²³ is rather far-fetched in this context. It could be the voice of the altar itself if 8:3, 5 mean that the altar spoke as a result of the prayers of the saints (Alford). However Revelation never explicitly says an inanimate object speaks. John heard a voice from somewhere near the altar.¹²⁴ Others say that this could be the unified voice of the prayers of the saints that so consistently are associated with the altar (cf. 6:9-11; 8:3-4) (Alford, Swete, Lee). Yet the facts that the saints nowhere else issue a command to an angelic agent and that the noun φωνήν (*phōnēn*, “voice”) is singular in number render this view improbable. Taking God as the One speaking has merit in that the altar is in the vicinity of the throne.¹²⁵ God certainly has the authority to set the second woe into action. Furthermore, a voice from the throne in 19:5 is probably God’s (Beasley-Murray). Even if this is true in 19:5, though—and it is doubtful—a voice emanating from the altar in 16:7 is clearly not God’s, because He is the One addressed (Beckwith). To identify this as the voice of the angel of the altar in 8:3 captures the strong points of earlier views, but eliminates their weaknesses. The stated connection of this angel with the golden altar and with the altar-requests of the saints for this judgment, is ample reason to understand him to be the one giving direction to the sixth angel (Swete, Smith, Mounce). The triple use of the article τοῦ . . . τοῦ . . . τοῦ (*to . . . to . . . to*) with the identical phrase in 8:3 (τὸ . . . τὸ . . . τὸ [*to . . . to . . . to*]), supplies corroboration for this conclusion. This is “*the* altar, *the* golden one, *the* one before God” in both places.

The horns of the altar were four in number, one at each corner. The voice coming “from” (ἐκ [*ek*]) them probably implies an origin “from the midst of” them (i.e., an implied μέσου [*mesou*]) (Alford, Beckwith). The horns simply belonged to the surroundings, though one suggestion is that they recall God’s sovereignty and judicial judg-

123. James Glasgow, *The Apocalypse* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1872), p. 262.

124. Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse* (Edinburgh: Maclachlan, Stewart, 1847), p. 577; Barnes, *Revelation*, p. 225.

125. Stuart, *Apocalypse*, p. 577; Barnes, *Revelation*, p. 225.

ment (Walvoord). It is better to see the voice as coming from the surface of the altar lying between the four corners (Alford, Beckwith).

9:14 The instructions to the sixth angel are explicit: λέγοντα τῷ ἕκτῳ ἀγγέλῳ, ὁ ἔχων τὴν σάλπιγγα, Λῦσον τοὺς τέσσαρας ἀγγέλους τοὺς δεδεμένους ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ Εὐφράτῃ (*legonta tō hektō angelō, ho echōn tēn salpinga, Lyson tous tessaras angelous tous dedemenous epi tō potamō tō megalō Euphratē*, “saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘Loose the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates’”). To avoid misunderstanding as to which sixth angel, the parenthetical words ὁ ἔχων τὴν σάλπιγγα (*ho echōn tēn salpinga*, “who had the trumpet”) clarify that it is one of the seven introduced in 8:2, 6 (Swete).

His instruction is to “loose the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates” (Λῦσον¹²⁶ τοὺς τέσσαρας ἀγγέλους τοὺς δεδεμένους ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ Εὐφράτῃ [*Lyson tous tessaras angelous tous dedemenous epi tō potamō tō megalō Euphratē*]). The article τούς (*tous*) indicates that these four angels are familiar figures, but the reason for their familiarity is unknown. They appear nowhere else in the biblical record until this point where they apparently serve as leaders of the invading host (Beckwith). Some have seen them as good angels because of a supposed resemblance to the angels of 7:1, but those are at the four corners of the earth, not bound at the river Euphrates (Swete, Charles). Good angels are never bound (cf. 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 20:1 ff.) (Seiss, Walvoord). To take these angels as symbols of heathenism¹²⁷ is also unjustified, because nowhere else in the Apocalypse are angels symbolic. It is true that ἀγγέλος (*angelos*) without qualification occurs nowhere else in Revelation to refer to an evil angel (Lee), but in this one instance the context makes evident that this is an evil angel. They are fallen angels who are kept bound (δεδεμένους [*dedemenous*]) until the divinely appointed time for them to perform as agents of God’s wrath.¹²⁸

“The great river” (τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ [*tō potamō tō megalō*]) is a standing epithet for the Euphrates in the OT (cf. Gen. 15:18; Deut. 1:7; Josh. 1:4) as it is later in this book (Rev. 16:12) (Beckwith). It forms one of the borders of the land promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:18) and is the river that the enemies of God will cross prior to the last conflict before the Millennium (Rev. 16:12). Its headwaters are in the moun-

126. Λῦσον is an ingressive aorist carrying the force of “let loose” (Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:366).

127. John Peter Lange, *The Revelation of John*, Lange’s Commentary, ed. E. R. Craven (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1968), p. 211.

128. Alford, *Greek Testament* 4:645; Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 121; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:366.

tains of Armenia, and it joins the Tigris in lower Babylon, the two rivers combining for a length of 1,800 miles. It separated Israel from her two chief enemies, Assyria and Babylon. The name refers not to just the river itself, but to the whole region drained by the river.¹²⁹ This was also the frontier between Rome and her enemy to the east, the Parthian Empire (Moffatt). The area beyond the Euphrates to the east is traditionally the source from which enemy attacks came against Israel (Beckwith). Some have ventured to understand this “Euphrates” in a symbolic way (e.g., Lee, Hailey), but its OT background requires that it be literal. Mingling literal designations of places with mystic language is quite uncommon in Scripture (Alford).

9:15 The sixth angel complies with his instructions and releases the four angels: καὶ ἐλύθησαν οἱ τέσσαρες ἄγγελοι οἱ ἡτοιμασμένοι εἰς τὴν ὥραν καὶ ἡμέραν καὶ μῆνα καὶ ἐνιαυτόν, ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσιν τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων (*kai elythēsan hoi tessares angeloi hoi hētoimasmēnoi eis tēn hōran kai hēmeran kai mēna kai eniauton, hina apokteinōsin to triton tōn anthrōpōn*, “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”). The four angels were in a state of readiness (ἡτοιμασμένοι [*hētoimasmēnoi*, “prepared”]) awaiting the appointed time to swing into action. Though they had fallen from divine favor, they still had experienced divine preparation for their nefarious task. Other instances of divine preparation, in either a positive or negative sense, occur in Matt. 25:34, 41; Mark 10:40; Luke 2:31; 1 Cor. 2:9; Rev. 12:6; 16:12 (Swete).

“The hour and day and month and year” (τὴν ὥραν καὶ ἡμέραν καὶ μῆνα καὶ ἐνιαυτόν [*tēn hōran kai hēmeran kai mēna kai eniauton*]) has been the basis for various chronological calculations as though the article τὴν (*tēn*, “the”) were not present or as though it appeared with each noun (Lee). One article governing all four nouns shows that duration is not in view, but that the occasion of each one of the time designations is one and the same: the appointed hour occurs on the appointed day in the appointed month and in the appointed year. The four angels await the signal that this hour has arrived.¹³⁰ Once again, this sounds the note of divine providence that recurs so often in this book (e.g., δεῖ [*dei*] in 1:1, μέλλει [*mellei*] in 1:19) (Moffatt). God’s actions are not accidental, but planned and precise in time, to the point of a fixed hour of a fixed day of a fixed month of a fixed year

129. Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, p. 266; Glasgow, *Apocalypse*, p. 262; Moffatt, “Revelation,” 5:408; Vincent, *Word Pictures*, 1:616; Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 201.

130. Vincent, *Word Pictures*, 1:616; Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:645; Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 122; Charles, *Revelation*, 1:252; Bullinger, *Apocalypse*, p. 329; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:367.

(Johnson). All the forces of history are under His sovereign control (Mounce).

The purpose of the angelic preparation is “that they might kill a third of men” (ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσιν τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων [*hina apokteinōsin to triton tōn anthrōpōn*]). ἵνα (*Hina*, “That”) expresses the goal of the mission as it does in v. 5, but there the goal was torture, not death (Alford, Charles). This must be physical death, not spiritual or metaphorical death. Physical death has already plagued the world under the fourth seal (6:7-8) and the third trumpet (8:10-11) (Beckwith), but not to the same extent as this. The fifth trumpet has brought torture in the physical sense (9:5), so the present trumpet naturally supersedes it, bringing death in a physical sense (Swete). A later reference to the survivors in v. 20 (οἱ λοιποὶ [*hoi loipoi*, “the rest”]) confirms that the afflicted are no longer on the scene after the plague.

“A third of men” (τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων [*to triton tōn anthrōpōn*]) is a third of “those who dwell on the earth” (τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς [*tous katoikountas epi tēs gēs*]), i.e., the earth-dwellers who are the designated objects of the three woes (8:13) (Alford, Charles). The designated proportion does not include any of God’s servants who were explicitly excluded under the fifth trumpet (cf. 9:4). The account of the sixth trumpet is not that explicit about the exclusion, but the word about the unrepentant two-thirds who escape in 9:20 implies that the plague had nothing to do with those whose repentance had already placed them in God’s service (Sweet).

The fractional “one-third” represents an increase in intensity over any plague so far. One-quarter of earth’s population earlier met the same fate under the fourth seal, so this trumpet signals the nearing of the climax of the period of wrath. Perhaps the one-third mortality will not be numerically much larger than the one-quarter already slain, but proportionately it will be a significantly larger percentage than any death-toll before it.

9:16 Abruptly the armies used to kill the large portion of humanity appear on the scene: καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν στρατευμάτων τοῦ ἵππικοῦ δισμυριάδες μυριάδων· ἤκουσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν (*kai ho arithmos tōn strateumatōn tou hippikou dismyriades myriadōn; ēkousa ton arithmon autōn*, “and the number of the armies of cavalry [was] twenty thousands of ten thousands; I heard the number of them”). The four angels, once they are set free, turn into a huge force of cavalry. No explanation tells the source of the armies. It is only by implication that their origination has something to do with the four angels. Perhaps each of four armies (plural, τῶν στρατευμάτων [*tōn strateumatōn*]) has one of the angels as a leader,¹³¹ but this is not verifiable.

131. Glasgow, *Apocalypse*, p. 132.

The identity of the armies' constituents has raised questions. Are they men or demons? The presence of the four angels in the area of the Euphrates River is a point in favor of these being men (cf. 16:12) (Walvoord). God's use of human armies of heathen nations to fulfill His purposes in the OT accords with this understanding (cf. Isa. 10:6-7, 25-26; 44:27-45:7; Hab. 1:6-11; Jer. 51:11, 28) (Hailey). If the two witnesses can breathe fire from their mouths in 11:5, the fire and brimstone spewing from the horses' mouths in 9:17 could pertain to mortals too (Seiss). The fact that the horses rather than the riders are the destructive agents and that they and their riders wear brightly colored breastplates matching the destructive forces proceeding from their mouths suggests that the combination of horse and rider is of superhuman origin.

The determining aspect in favor of these being demons is the description of the horses that differs so greatly from any ordinary horse that these horses must be of another order. Couple with this the association with the four demonic angels of 9:14 (Seiss), the fire, smoke, and brimstone proceeding from their mouths (Charles, Beasley-Murray), and the nature of the visiting hordes under the fifth trumpet (Seiss), and a case strongly favorable to seeing these as angels emerges.

The armies resemble a force composed of mounted troops (τοῦ ἵππικου [του *hippikou*, "of cavalry"]). A comparable term τὸ πεζικός (*to pezikos*) would have denoted infantry.¹³² The horses rather than the horsemen are the active members of this group (Beckwith). They are quite numerous, δισμυριάδες μυριάδων (*dismyriades myriadōn*, "twenty thousands of ten thousands") giving their number as two hundred million. The feeling on one side is that the number is too large to be precise. Until modern times, rarely if ever has an army that large been assembled.¹³³ But these armies are demonic, not human, so the largeness of the number is no obstacle (Bullinger). Some have used ἐν τῇ ὁράσει (*en tē horasei*, "in the vision") as a ground for interpreting the number figuratively, but this would require allegorizing throughout the book. This phrase is no different from John's frequent εἶδον (*eidon*, "I saw").¹³⁴ Probably an exact number of two hundred million is intended; otherwise, some specification such as in 5:11 ("ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands") or 7:9 ("which no one could count") would have been used (cf. Ps. 68:17; Dan. 7:10; Heb. 12:22; Jude 14) (Morris, Ford). John is careful to point out how he knew the number. "I heard the number of them" (ἤκουσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν

132. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:367.

133. Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 122; BAGD, p. 199.

134. Düsterdieck, *Revelation*, p. 288; Smith, *Revelation*, p. 148.

αὐτῶν [*ēkousa ton arithmon autōn*]) indicates the figure came to him as part of the vision.¹³⁵

9:17 After hearing the number of the horsemen, John saw what they looked like: καὶ οὕτως εἶδον τοὺς ἵππους ἐν τῇ ὄρασει καὶ τοὺς καθημένους ἐπ’ αὐτῶν, ἔχοντας θώρακας πυρίνους καὶ ὑακινθίνους καὶ θειώδεις· καὶ αἱ κεφαλαὶ τῶν ἵππων ὡς κεφαλαὶ λεόντων, καὶ ἐκ τῶν στομάτων αὐτῶν ἐκπορεύεται¹³⁶ πῦρ καὶ καπνὸς καὶ θεῖον (*kai houtōs eidon tous hippous en tē horasei kai tous kathēmenous ep’ autōn, echontas thōrakas pyrinous kai hyakinthinous kai theiōdeis; kai hai kephalai tōn hippōn hōs kephalai leontōn, kai ek tōn stomatōn autōn ekporeuetai pyr kai kapnos kai theion*, “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”). He proceeds to describe the manner (οὕτως [*houtōs*, “thus”]) in which they appeared.

The mention of horses in the Bible is usually in connection with warfare.¹³⁷ The horses John saw in his vision are no exception. Grammatically ἔχοντας (*echontas*, “having”) could modify the horses and the riders or the riders alone, assigning the breastplates to both or to the riders only. The first impression is to assign it to the riders only because τοὺς καθημένους (*tous kathēmenous*, “those who sat”) is nearest to ἔχοντας (*echontas*) (Swete). On the other hand, with this as the first feature in the description the stronger probability is that it applies to the horses as well, because they are the main subject of the rest of the description.¹³⁸ For horses to wear such apparel was not unheard of in ancient times (Moffatt). This is the only detail given about the horsemen’s appearance. They have defensive armor only, a characteristic agreeing with their subordinate role (Beckwith).

Θώρακας πυρίνους καὶ ὑακινθίνους καὶ θειώδεις (*Thōrakas pyrinous kai hyakinthinous kai theiōdeis*, “Breastplates of fire and hyacinth and brimstone”) may refer to the actual materials which compose the breastplates, but it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to conceive of material objects made of these. Besides, in the LXX ὑακίνθινος (*hyakinthinous*) is a dye the color of blue smoke (cf. Ex. 25:4; 27:16) (Swete, Moffatt). Even though the same word in Rev. 21:20 is a precious stone,

135. Lange, *Revelation*, p. 211.

136. The verb ἐκπορεύεται is singular in agreement with the nearest member of the compound subject, because it appears before the compound subject (Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:368).

137. Vincent, *Word Pictures*, 1:617.

138. Düsterdieck, *Revelation*, p. 289; Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, p. 165.

the color connotation fits better here as matching the καπνός (*kapnos*, “smoke”) that proceeds from the horses’ mouths. So the other two materials must represent colors too. Though no ὥς (*hōs*) appears, its presence is strongly implied.¹³⁹ The breastplates were the color of “fire and hyacinth and brimstone.”

Πυρίνουσ (*Purinous*, “Of fire”) represents a fiery red color (Alford). As noted above, ὑακίνθινος (*hyakinthinous*) referred to a dark-shaded color including that of sulphurous smoke.¹⁴⁰ Θειώδεις (*Theiōdeis*, “Brimstone”) described something made of sulphur and also something with a sulphurous hue or light yellow. Brimstone was traditional as an accompaniment of God’s wrath.¹⁴¹ The association of the three colors recalls the fate of the cities of the plain in Gen. 19:24, 28 (Swete). It also denotes the relationship of these horses with the lake of fire introduced later in the book (cf. 14:10-11; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8) (Beckwith). They are of the nature of those who will eventually arrive at such a fate.

The likeness of the horses’ heads to those of lions (ὥς κεφαλαὶ λεόντων [*hōs kephalai leontōn*]) suggests that the army combines the swiftness of horses with the majestic bearing of lions (Swete). Lions elsewhere in Revelation betoken terror (their roar in 10:3), ferocity (their teeth in 9:8), and destructiveness (their mouth in 13:2) (Scott). Here their eminence seems to be in view.

The most destructive facet of the horses was their mouths which emitted “fire and smoke and brimstone” (πῦρ καὶ καπνός καὶ θεῖον [*pur kai kapnos kai theion*]). The word στόμα (*stoma*, “mouth”) appears three times in vv. 17-19, as it does in connection with the sixth bowl judgment too (cf. 16:13). It is impossible to determine from the text whether all three elements come from the mouth of each horse or whether each element alone proceeds from the mouths of one-third of the horses (Alford, Lee). Probability is on the side of the former, however.

9:18 It is through these three plagues that a third of mankind perishes: ἀπὸ τῶν τριῶν πληγῶν τούτων ἀπεκτάνθησαν τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τοῦ καπνοῦ καὶ τοῦ θείου τοῦ ἐκπορευομένου¹⁴² ἐκ τῶν στομάτων αὐτῶν (*apo tōn triōn plēgōn toutōn*

139. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:367.

140. Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:646; Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 123; J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 647.

141. Stuart, *Apocalypse*, p. 579; Barnes, *Revelation*, p. 228; Moffatt, “Revelation,” 5:409-10.

142. The participle ἐκπορευομένου is singular in agreement with last member of the series of three. In sense, it modifies all three, however (Lee, “Revelation,” 4:616).

apekthanthēsan to triton tōn anthrōpōn, ek tou pyros kai tou kapnou kai tou theiou tou ekporeuomenou ek tōn stomatōn autōn, “from these three plagues were killed the third [part] of men, from the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which issues from their mouths”). Πληγή (*Plēgē*, “Plague”) is the term applied to the threefold destructive capacity of the horses. It is the same word used in the LXX to name the plagues of Egypt (e.g., Ex. 11:1). It will appear frequently from here on in the Apocalypse also (cf. 9:20; 11:6; 13:3, 12, 14; 15:1, 6, 8; 16:9, 21; 18:4, 8; 21:9; 22:18).¹⁴³

For further emphasis the preposition ἐκ (*ek*, “from”) repeats the threefold way people will die by echoing the ἀπό (*apo*, “by”) from earlier in the verse. Ἀπό (*Apo*) is used with a passive verb to express agency in 12:6 also (Charles), but agency depicted indirectly as the direction or the source from which the result comes (Alford, Swete).

The repeated article with each of the destructive mediums (τοῦ . . . τοῦ . . . τοῦ (*tou . . . tou . . . tou*, “the . . . the . . . the”) indicates that each element is a separate agency of destruction (Swete). The three together will be responsible for the largest death-toll in human history up to that point.

9:19 The prophecy continues by explaining the power of the horses: ἡ γὰρ ἐξουσία τῶν ἵππων ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν καὶ ἐν ταῖς οὐραῖς αὐτῶν· αἱ γὰρ οὐραὶ αὐτῶν ὅμοιαι ὄφεσιν, ἔχουσαι κεφαλᾶς, καὶ ἐν αὐταῖς ἀδικοῦσιν (*hē gar exousia tōn hippōn en tō stomati autōn estin kai en tais ourais autōn; hai gar ourai autōn homoiai ophesin, echousai kephalas, kai en autais adikousin*, “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”). Verse 19 has two uses of γὰρ (*gar*, “for”), the first appearance of the conjunction since Rev. 3:2. The first of them furnishes an explanation that the general power of the horses lies in their mouths and tails. Prior discussion has already elaborated on this power in vv. 17-18. This is the first mention of the power of their tails, however (Beckwith).

Because the contribution of the tails to the plague is new, the second *gar* explains what the power of the tails is. They resemble snakes, including the heads, which are capable of inflicting painful injury to their victims. This detail would have been especially meaningful to the church at Pergamum where the temples in honor of the gods Zeus and Asklepios emphasized the role of snakes in their worship (Thomas, p. 179; Beckwith, Mounce). The description of fire-breathing demonic horses with tails like snakes is grotesque, causing some to interpret them as figurative references to the serpents on the

143. Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 124; Abbott-Smith, *Lexicon*, p. 364; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:368.

pagan altars or to the custom of the Parthians of binding their horses' tails to look like serpents (Charles, Kiddle). Great variety has marked the assortment of mystical meanings attached to the tails (Lee). The ὅμοιοι (*homoioi*, "like") gives a basis for some figurative understanding of the tails, but most suggestions ignore the power attributed to the tails. The tails were not actual serpents, but they did *function* like serpents. The power of the tails enables the horses to hurt (ἀδικουσιν [*adikousin*, "they do harm"]) people physically. They torture with the pain of a snake-bite as the locusts of the previous trumpet did with a scorpion sting. The sting is the extent of the pain from the locusts, but the demonic horses not only inflict comparable or worse pain; they also kill (cf. v. 15) (Beckwith).

Additional Notes

9:13 An accusative object φωνήν follows ἤκουσα here, but in 8:13 the object is genitive. Sometimes this distinction denotes a difference between the sound only (Acts 9:7, genitive) and understanding the sense of what is heard (Acts 22:9, accusative). Here this differentiation between the two cases does not apply, however, for the sense was clear in both cases.¹⁴⁴

Whether to understand μίαν as a simple indefinite article or as reflecting singleness is a question. It is the simple article in 8:13 and 18:21 (Charles), but the adjective may deserve more attention as calling attention to the singleness of the voice though it came from four horns (Swete). In favor of the former possibility is John's inclination to show the influence of Hebrew usage in his style (e.g., Dan. 8:3, תִּקְרָא) (Charles). The context has no strong indication of any intention to emphasize singularity, so the probability of μίαν function as an indefinite article is stronger.

The two strongest MSS, p⁴⁷ and A, omit τεσσάρων from the text, yet the witnesses for including it are almost as impressive. The omission could have been accidental because of the word's similarity to κεράτων, but it could also have been added to match the four angels bound at the Euphrates (9:14) or as an antithesis to the *one* voice John heard. Most decisive, however, is the consideration that the omission is the harder reading, because it was a well-known fact from the OT that the altar had four horns. So it would have been easier to add it than to leave it out. The omission is correct.¹⁴⁵

9:14 The nominative participle ἔχων is in apposition with the dative ἀγγέλω, a phenomenon that occurs also at 2:20; 3:12; 14:12.¹⁴⁶

144. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:366.

145. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 744.

146. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:366.

9:15 Compare ἐλύθησαν to δεδεμένους in v. 14. Λύω is the regular correlative of δέω (cf. Matt. 16:19; 18:18; Mark 11:4-5; Luke 13:16; 1 Cor. 7:27) (Swete).

The preposition εἰς following ἐτοιμάζω commonly means “with a view to” or “for” (cf. v. 7; 2 Tim. 2:21) (Alford).

9:16 The accusative case of the thing τὸν ἀριθμὸν about which one hears follows the classical rule for a direct object after ἀκούω.¹⁴⁷

9:17 Some are of the opinion that οὕτως along with ἐν τῇ ὁράσει points backward to v. 16,¹⁴⁸ but the adverb can look forward. This context requires it to refer to what follows as it does frequently (e.g., Matt. 1:18; 2:5; John 21:1; Heb. 4:4).¹⁴⁹ John would not repeat v. 17 by telling that he saw what he heard, as the backward reference would require. This would be redundant.

The phrase ἐν τῇ ὁράσει occurs nowhere else in the book, though it is frequent in Daniel (cf. Dan. 7:2; 8:2, 15; 9:21) (Beckwith). It could possibly mean “in appearance, not in reality” (Lee), but this is quite remote. “In the vision” is preferable, though the phrase is pleonastic coming after εἶδον.

9:18 The verb ἀπεκάνθησαν is plural even though the subject τὸ τρίτον is singular. The reason is that τὸ τρίτον is neuter singular to capture a collective concept.¹⁵⁰

The response of the survivors (9:20-21). The loss of a third of the earth’s population and the suffering of many more hopefully would cause the survivors to be more responsive to God, but it does not.

Translation

20And 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, **21**and they did not repent of their murders or of their sorceries or of their fornication or of their thefts.

Exegesis and Exposition

9:20 In spite of the plain evidences of God’s wrath all around them, the remaining earth-dwellers continue adamant in their obduracy toward God: Καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οἱ οὐκ ἀπεκάνθησαν ἐν¹⁵¹ ταῖς

147. BDF, par. 173.

148. Vincent, *Word Pictures*, 1:616; Lenski, *Revelation*, p. 304.

149. Lee, “Revelation,” 4:615; Barnes, *Revelation*, p. 228.

150. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:368.

151. The preposition ἐν is clearly used instrumentally here (Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 124; Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, p. 569).

πληγαῖς ταύταις, οὐδὲ* μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν, ἵνα μὴ προσκυνήσουσιν τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα τὰ χρυσᾶ καὶ τὰ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ τὰ χαλκᾶ καὶ τὰ λίθινα καὶ τὰ ξύλινα, ἃ οὔτε βλέπειν δύνανται οὔτε ἀκούειν οὔτε περιπατεῖν (*Kai hoi loipoi tōn anthrōpōn, hoi ouk apektanthēsan en tais plēgais tautais, oude metenoēsan ek tōn ergōn tōn cheirōn autōn, hina mē proskynēsousin ta daimonia kai ta eidōla ta chrysa kai ta argura kai ta chalka kai ta lithina kai ta xylina, ha oute blepein dynantai oute akouein oute peripatein*, “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 text is quite explicit in identifying “the rest” (οἱ λοιποὶ [*hoi loipoi*]) as those “who were not killed by these plagues” (οἱ οὐκ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν ταῖς πληγαῖς ταύταις [*hoi ouk apektanthēsan en tais plēgais tautais*]). These are the survivors of the visitation of the demonic cavalry. It is an outside possibility that “these plagues” refers to all the judgments of chapters 8-9 (Johnson), but contextual support favors limiting them to the three instruments of death—fire, smoke, and brimstone—under the sixth trumpet (cf. 9:18) (Beckwith).

The survivors shunned repentance. The adverb οὐδὲ (*oude*, “not even”) intensifies negating of μετενόησαν (*metenoēsan*, “repent”) and the force of the tragic statement about the ones who remained alive. They absolutely failed to change their conduct, their creed, or their attitudes toward God, which would have appeared to be the least they could do in light of what the world had just experienced.¹⁵² This is the first mention of repentance since 4:1, though the seven messages in chapters 2-3 had a number of references to it (cf. 2:5 (twice), 16, 21, 22; 3:3, 9). The only remaining occurrences are 9:21; 16:9, 11 (Ford). In all cases in the apocalyptic portion of the book, the word about repentance is negative as here. God’s loving care for His people is repeatedly evident, but opportunities to repent, though they are there, are rare (Beckwith).

Μετανοέω ἐκ (*Metanoēō ek*, “I repent of”) in Revelation denotes a change of mind in rejection of something that is anti-God (cf. 2:21, 22; 9:21; 16:11). What they failed to turn away from here was τῶν ἔργων τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν (*tōn ergōn tōn cheirōn autōn*, “the works of their hands”). Throughout Scripture the works of man’s hands stands for idolatry (Deut. 4:28; 27:15; 31:29; 2 Kings 19:18; 22:17; 2 Chron. 32:19; 34:25; Ps. 115:4; 135:15; Isa. 2:8; 17:8; 37:19; Jer. 1:16; 10:3, 9; 25:6, 7, 14; 32:30; 44:8; Hos. 14:3; Mic. 5:13; Hag. 2:14; Acts 7:41) (Alford,

152. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:368.

Bullinger, Scott). Worshiping idols has been a longstanding problem for earthlings and will continue to be into the future as this prophecy anticipates. Even something so great as the deaths of a significant portion of the world's people will still be insufficient to deter men from this practice, though presumably God's servants will have warned them against it repeatedly.

Like Paul (Rom. 1:18-32), John was utterly intolerant of any kind of pagan worship. Such was the fountainhead of moral corruption and the primary cause of the outpouring of God's wrath against mankind (Beasley-Murray). To worship idols is to rob God of the glory due Him alone (cf. Rom. 1:23) and to consort with evil spirits who excel in the corrupting of man (cf. 1 Cor. 10:19-20) (Johnson). The negative purpose of not repenting (ἵνα μὴ προσκυνήσουσιν . . . [*hina mē proskynēsousin* . . .], "that they should not worship . . .") elaborates on the forms of idol worship. Repentance would have led to the abandoning of the worship of unclean spirits and of the idols that represent them, but failure to repent does just the opposite. It perpetuates the continued worship of idols representing demons, whether made of gold, silver, brass, stone, or wood (Alford, Swete).

Τὰ δαιμόνια (*Ta daimonia*, "the demons") clearly refers to unclean or evil spirits, as the gospels call them. On the surface, the demons carry the appearance of idols, but throughout the Bible worship proffered to idols is ultimately the worship of demons (cf. Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37; 1 Cor. 10:21) (Alford, Swete). The continuation of demon worship enhances the irony of the situation: the very demons who were agents in inflicting such wide-scale death under the sixth trumpet continue to be the objects of worship for the remaining two-thirds of mankind (Kiddle).

Τὰ εἶδωλα τὰ χρυσᾶ καὶ τὰ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ τὰ χαλκᾶ καὶ τὰ λίθινα καὶ τὰ ξύλινα (*Ta eidōla ta chrysa kai ta argyra kai ta chalka kai ta lithina kai ta xylina*, "the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood") tells the outward form that demons assume in order to receive worship. Εἶδωλον (*Eidōlon*, "Idol") refers to any image that represents a heathen god. John could hardly forget the innumerable pagan shrines around him, where false priests and prophets led their followers in bowing down before the representations that claimed to be gods. Nor could he ignore the rapid increase in temples devoted to emperor-cult worship (Kiddle). Sins of idolatry mostly characterized his Gentile readers, but the moral sins in v. 21 marred the lives of both Jews and Gentiles (Lee).

He reminds his readers of the helplessness of these idols, a fact which they undoubtedly knew already: ἃ οὔτε βλέπειν δύνανται οὔτε ἀκούειν οὔτε περιπατεῖν (*ha oute blepein dynantai oute akouein oute peripatein*, "which can neither see nor hear nor walk"). This is an oft-

repeated formula from the OT (cf. Deut. 4:28; Ps. 115:5-7; 135:15 ff.; Isa. 44:12-20; Dan. 5:23) (Charles, Mounce). It highlights the senselessness of idol worship.

9:21 Not only are the earth-dwellers unrepentant of their sins against the first table of the Mosaic law through their worship of other gods, but they also have a general disregard for the cardinal principles of the moral code (Kiddle): καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν φόνων αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν φαρμάκων* αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν κλεμμάτων αὐτῶν (*kai ou metenoēsan ek tōn phonōn autōn oute ek tōn pharmakōn autōn oute ek tēs porneias autōn oute ek tōn klemmatōn autōn*, “and they did not repent of their murders or of their sorceries or of their fornication or of their thefts”). Men are no less unwilling to repent of their social sins than of their idolatries (Swete, Beckwith, Charles, Lenski). Three of the Ten Commandments—the sixth, seventh, and eighth—explicitly prohibit three of the four vices listed—murder, fornication, and theft (Ex. 20:13-15). The NT condemns the same three (Luke 18:20; Rom. 13:9) (Mounce).

The fourth of the sins, φαρμάκων (*pharmakōn*, “sorceries”) is a broader word than the variant φαρμακειῶν (*pharmakeiōn*, “sorceries”) in that it can refer to poisons, amulets, charms, drugs, magic spells, or any object that is supposed to possess holiness, elicit lust, or be otherwise enchanting.¹⁵³ It can refer to witchcraft too. Usually drugs were involved in such practices. If the use of the drugs is to cause an abortion or infanticide, this is tantamount to the sin of idolatry (v. 20) on the one hand and to murder and fornication on the other (v. 21) (Lee). If the drugs create magic spells as practiced in Asia to incite illicit lust, this is equivalent to fornication (v. 21) (Moffatt). Sorceries were common in Asia (cf. Acts 19:18-19) (Sweet). The Bible sternly denounces this form of sin (cf. Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:27; Deut. 18:10-12; cf. also 1 Sam. 28:7; Acts 8:9; 13:8; 19:13-15).¹⁵⁴

“Murderers,” “fornicators,” “sorcerers,” and “idolaters” are in the lists of those excluded from the New Jerusalem in 21:8 and 22:15, doubtless because of their failure to repent of their law-breaking.

Additional Notes

9:20 Instead of οὐδὲ some sources have οὔτε and still others have οὐ. It is possible to eliminate οὐ from consideration because its external support is very weak and it is the easiest of the readings. External support for the other two variants is about equal. Both are also harder readings by virtue of their normal function as adverbs but used as

153. Glasgow, *Apocalypse*, p. 273; Moffatt, “Revelation,” 5:410; Vincent, *Word Pictures*, 1:617-18.

154. Scott, *Revelation*, p. 215; Chilton, *Days of Vengeance*, p. 258.

conjunctions here.¹⁵⁵ Beyond this, however, οὔτε is easier to explain in that scribes would try to match the correlative οὔτε . . . οὔτε at the end of v. 20 rather than trying to insert a reading that differs here.¹⁵⁶ In this light οὐδὲ is preferable.

9:21 Some respected MSS, including Alexandrinus, read φαρμακειῶν instead of φαρμάκων. The former also appears in 18:23 as well as in Gal. 5:20. The latter occurs nowhere else in the NT. The former has the added advantage of matching more easily the other categories listed in v. 21 as belonging to the second table of the law. Nevertheless, φαρμάκων enjoys stronger external support and is the harder reading because of being a *hapax legomenon*.¹⁵⁷ So it is the chosen reading.

Πορνείας is the only sin in the list that occurs in the singular, perhaps because of the nature of the sin. It is one never-ceasing impurity with those whose hearts are so tainted. The term represents sexual sin in general, not a specific act of fornication (Morris).

155. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 744.

156. *Ibid.*

157. *Ibid.*