

The Book of Revelation



Hailey, The Book of Revelation, 225

“The student of Revelation must be ever conscious that he shares with John signs and symbols of a vision which God showed to him. He has not been dealing with literal trumpets, hail, fire, a burning mountain, a sea of blood, etc., or now with real locusts, scorpions, or horsemen, but with symbols which convey ideas and reveal messages from God to man. Therefore, in the following vision of the three woes we need not look for some specific time in history when terrible locust hoards invade a land, bringing a scourge upon it. Rather, we need to see spiritual forces at work in the world of unregenerated, wicked men—forces which are symbolized by these monsters of the infernal realm.”



5th Trumpet/1st Woe (9:1-12)

Abaddon/Apollyon/Destroyer (9:1-2, 11)

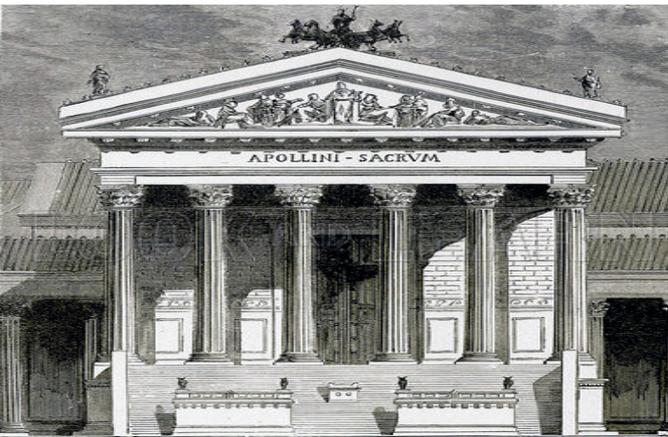
- “A star from heaven which had fallen to the earth” (cf. Lk. 10:18; prelude to Rev. 12:7-12; should we consider Isa. 14:12?)
 - Contrast the Bright and Morning Star, Jesus, who brings forth light instead of darkness (22:16)
- Some identify Abaddon separately from Satan, whether an agent of Satan, or even Christ Himself, but see Rev. 20:1, 3 (see Hailey, 232)
- Given (cf. Job 1:12; 2:6) the key to the bottomless pit (cf. Lk. 8:31; 10:7; see ahead in Rev. 11:7; 17:8)
 - Compare & contrast Jesus’ possession of the key of death and Hades (1:18)
 - God has undeniably used a destroying angel (e.g., 2Sam. 24:15f; 1Chron. 21:12-15; 2Chron. 32:21//2Kgs. 19:35)

Abaddon/Apollyon/Destroyer (9:1-2, 11)

- Abaddon is used in tandem with Sheol/Hades in the OT (Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; 33:18; Ps. 88:11; Prov. 15:11; 27:20)
- This one is viewed as god and king (cf. 2Cor. 4:3f; Eph. 2:2)
- This one brings death & destruction via darkness (cf. 9th Plague on Egypt) and torment (Rom. 1:24-28; Prov. 14:34)
 - *“there is nothing strange in God giving a people up for their iniquity to permit them to go further into iniquity and then, when it suits him, to destroy them for their iniquity.”* (McGuiggan, 134)

Abaddon/Apollyon/ Destroyer (9:1-2, 11)

- Note the similarity of Apollyon to the prominent god of the Roman Empire, Apollo
- Caesar Augustus built a large temple to Apollo in Rome in 28 BC on the Palatine hill and portrayed himself as Apollo in a statue nearby (a copy of this was found at Prima Porta)



Abaddon/Apollyon/Destroyer (9:1-2, 11)

- One of Apollo's attributes was "Parnopius" – "the expeller of locusts"
- There was a statue of Apollo with this designation on the Acropolis of Athens:
 - *"Opposite the temple is a bronze Apollo, said to be the work of Pheidias. They call it the Locust God, because once when locusts were devastating the land the god said that he would drive them from Attica. That he did drive them away they know, but they do not say how. I myself know that locusts have been destroyed three times in the past on Mount Sipylus, and not in the same way. Once a gale arose and swept them away; on another occasion violent heat came on after rain and destroyed them; the third time sudden cold caught them and they died."* (Pausanias 1.24.8)
- The locust imagery in Rev 9, along with the similar-sounding name in v 11, suggests that this is meant to be understood as a criticism of the Roman empire and the emperors, who associated themselves with Apollo

The Locusts (9:3-10)

- Loads of Old Testament Background!
 - The 8th Plague of Egypt in Ex. 10:4-20//Ps. 105:34f
 - Punishment for idolatry in Deut. 28:14, 38//1Kgs. 8:35, 37//2Chron. 7:13f
 - Punishment for depravity in Joel 1-2, esp. 1:6; 2:4-7; even Jer. 51:27
- Locusts normally destroyed vegetation; these are specifically forbidden. Their purpose, symbolically, is to afflict mankind directly rather than indirectly.
- Like scorpions to torment (cf. 1Kgs. 12:11, 14; Deut. 28:28f, 34, 65-67)

The Locusts (9:3-10)

- *“Just as the Israelites had been exempt from the plagues of Egypt, so now the Christians who have God’s seal upon their foreheads will be completely unharmed by these awful creatures of divine judgment (9:4).”* (Metzger, 65) (cf. Ex. 8:22; 9:4, 6, 26; 10:23; 11:7; consider Lk. 10:19)
- 5 months is the life cycle of many natural locusts, but since numbers usually have symbolic value, this likely indicates incompleteness
- The tormented wish to die but do not (cf. Job 3:20-22; Jer. 8:3)
- *“Certainly John’s powers of description amaze us!”* (Metzger, 65)

The Locusts (9:3-10)



The Locusts (9:3-10)

- *Regarding the locusts crowns and faces:*

“The victory of wickedness is only an imitation of the genuine; it is never lasting or true. The locusts’ terrifying appearance and their crushing conquest will not last for ever. Their human faces indicated intelligence and show that these terrible inflictions were brought about by deluded and deceived mankind whose intelligent wills are in rebellion against God. Their spiritual faculties have been befogged by the cloud of spiritual falsehood, guile, and deceit turned loose on earth by the evil one.” (Hailey, 230)

The Locusts (9:3-10)

- *Regarding the locusts having hair of women:*

“Here is a horror indeed. They combine the beauty and softness of a woman’s hair with the ‘teeth of a lion.’ This surely speaks a sinister message. The destructive power with the soft appearance. The combination of innocence and yieldingness with vicious and devastating power. And isn’t this so characteristic of decadence? Doesn’t it offer so much while eating and devouring? Doesn’t it combine a natural healthiness (or a healthy naturalism) with a deadly eating at the inner man?” (McGuiggan, 135)

Some have also suggested that the hair is an illustration of their subservience to their master (cf. 1Cor. 11:10)

The Locusts (9:3-10)

- *Regarding the locusts having breastplates of iron:*

“How powerful they are. How hard to beat or kill. Fully equipped to dispose of the enemy. Evil seems to have the right answer to every protest of conscience or reason. Think for a moment of the decadence which threatens to devour our societies—how well it defends itself. Is the issue pornography? Well, we’ve got to protect freedom of speech, remember. Is the issue the homosexual legislation? Bear in mind now we have to protect the freedom of the individual, because that’s plainly stated in the constitution. He must be left to do as he pleases, especially if his ‘crime’ is a victimless crime. Remember ‘the pursuit of happiness’ and all that. Is it the issue of abortion? For whatever reason? Well, after all, it is her baby and her life! Is the issue the ravages of the liquor business? Bear in mind it is unconstitutional to say what a man can and can’t put into his belly. Breastplates of iron! That’s what evil wears. And it can only be pierced by the Sword of the Spirit.” (McGuiggan, 135-136)

The 1st Woe Is Over (9:12)

“It seems that we have before us a vivid picture of moral and spiritual decay which brings torment to the souls of men. The torment does not kill, but it abides for a definite period. Sin is responsible for bringing this decay into the world, behind which is Satan with his diabolical purpose to destroy.”

“Sin is disobedience to God’s rule and is accompanied by deception and mental or spiritual torment from which man cannot escape by his own will or power. Sin carries with it the poisonous venom of moral decay and ultimate perdition, and Satan is the father and king of it all. This condition should serve as a trumpet warning to the world of unregenerate men to turn from Satan and sin to God—but how seldom do men heed the warning!” (Hailey, 233)