
THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Lesson #5 (12 February 2016): Revelation 8-9 The Opening of the Seventh Seal: “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth”

David A. LeFevre – Adult Education Class – Snohomish Stake

INTRODUCTION: THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL (8:1 – 9:21)

In chapters 6-7, the first six seals on the scroll that Jesus took from the Father have been opened. Now it's time to open the last of the seven seals, which happens in chapter 8. This event signals the beginning of the completion of God's work among men, because the seventh seal is the final one—its opening shows that the end is near. It begins with a period of quiet when the events of the previous six seals might be

temporarily forgotten, but it quickly moves into dramatic events that are directly tied to God's intervention.

The judgments of the seventh seal come in two 'waves': the trumpet judgments and the bowl judgments. In this lessons, we'll cover six of the seven trumpet judgments.

OUTLINE

There are many ways to outline any book, and Revelation is no exception. Below are the eleven lessons in this series with chapter summaries. For the lesson in these notes, the chapter is broken down into more detailed sections and bolded.

1. The Majesty of Christ (1:1-20)
2. The Messages to the Seven Churches (2:1 – 3:22)
3. God and the Lamb
 - a. The Vision of Heaven (4:1-11)
 - b. The Sealed Book and the Worthy Lamb (5:1-14)
4. The Scroll Begins to Open
 - a. The Six Seals (6:1-17)
 - b. The Seal of the Living God (7:1-17)
5. **The Opening of the Seventh Seal**
 - a. **The Seventh Seal and the First Four Trumpets (8:1-13)**
 - i. **Preparing the world for judgment (8:1-6)**
 - ii. **First trumpet: trees and grass burnt (8:7)**
 - iii. **Second trumpet: sea becomes blood (8:8-9)**
 - iv. **Third trumpet: Wormwood and bitter waters (8:10-11)**
 - v. **Fourth trumpet: sun, moon, and stars darkened (8:12-13)**

- b. **Two Trumpets and the Great War (9:1-21)**
 - i. **Fifth trumpet/first woe: Apollyon (9:1-12)**
 1. **Bottomless pit opened (9:1-2)**
 2. **Locusts (9:3-12)**
 - ii. **Sixth trumpet/second woe: Two hundred million horsemen (9:13-21)**
6. John's Mission; Two Prophets
 - a. The Little Scroll (10:1-11)
 - b. The Seventh Trumpet (11:1-19)
7. The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon
 - a. The Church and the Devil (12:1-18)
 - b. The Beasts of Revelation (13:1-18)
8. Judgment and Praise
 - a. The Winepress of the Wrath of God (14:1-20)
 - b. The Seven Angels (15:1-8)
9. Seven Last Plagues and Babylon the Great
 - a. The Seven Bowls (16:1-21)
 - b. Babylon the Great (17:1-18)
10. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb
 - a. The Fall of Babylon (18:1-24)
 - b. The King of Kings (19:1-21)
11. Heirs of the Celestial Glory
 - a. The Thousand Years (20:1-15)
 - b. The New Jerusalem (21:1-27)
 - c. Blessed Are They That Do His Commandments (22:1-21)

THE SEVENTH SEAL AND THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS (8:1-13)

Though true for the whole book, it is especially important to recognize in these chapters: Revelation is not about chronology but is instead a tapestry of related images being woven together to show the ultimate victory of God and Christ over Satan. “From this point on, the Apocalypse becomes a multidimensional presentation of the final triumph of God over evil. Any attempt to arrange the material in a strictly sequential pattern is doomed to failure.”¹ Readers should keep that broad picture in mind and not get too caught up in the interpretation of the details, especially the too literal interpretation that plagues many readers and teachers of Revelation today.

The judgments portrayed in chapter 8 particularly are modeled on those given in Exodus as the Lord was softening Pharaoh’s heart to let the slaves of Israel go. As with the opening of the seals on the scroll, the trumpet judgments naturally group into four and three—the first four impact the earth and the natural world, and the last three have a more complex story to tell. (We’ll see the same pattern with the bowl judgments later in chapter 16.)

There is also an element of ‘de-creation’ in these judgments, as the Lord enacts “a systematic dismantling of the created order of Gen. 1, though not in the same order.”² Light, air, vegetation, the sun, moon, and stars, sea creatures, and man are all targeted.

Some see the acts of hurting the earth, seas, trees, etc., as symbolic of judging people, as reflected scriptures that speak of people like trees, waters, and more.³ However, hurting the environment does in fact, hurt the people living in it and can bring them to think of God more than in the past. It seems likely that the judgments against the earth come first to prepare people for—and potentially avoid—judgments against them.

Many have attempted to build a chronology. Many Christian interpreters tie it to Daniel 9 and other chapters, creating their vision of the last days that includes Rapture/Seven-Year Tribulation/Second Coming. Michael Wilcox overlays D&C 88 with these chapters to deduce that “the last act of the sixth seal or

the first act of the seventh, if you prefer, will be the great sign in heaven that all people will see.” This is then followed by the events here in chapters 8 and 9, in his estimation.⁴

The events of these chapters are surely those spoken of by the Lord when he said, “For I am no respecter of persons, and will that all men shall know that the day speedily cometh; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion. And also the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst, and shall come down in judgment upon Idumea, or the world” (D&C 1:35-36).

PREPARING THE WORLD FOR JUDGMENT (8:1-6)

8:1 **when he had opened the seventh seal.** “He,” of course, is Christ, the one who has opened all the seals, the only one worthy to do so. Now he opened the seventh one, signifying that the end of God’s work among mortal man is nearing. “In the beginning of the

8:1 **silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.** Hours were not as precise in John’s day—a day was simply divided into twelve “hours,” which varied in length depending on the season (longer hours in summer, shorter in winter). So this likely does not equate to thirty minutes on our modern clocks. In fact, it is more like our practice of having a ‘moment of silence’ to remember something. In this case, though, it is both looking back at recent events *and* looking forward, in anticipation of what the seventh seal will bring—final judgment on the wicked and final reward for the righteous. The end is near but it starts with a pause that lets heaven contemplate the great efforts God made to call sinners to repentance and to anticipate the blasts of the trumpets that come next, still giving wayward man one last chance to come to God.

The silence is in heaven, not on the earth (which is likely in much commotion). Heaven has been very vocal up to this point in John’s vision but now is quiet for a period of time. Several OT passages tie a brief silence to God’s

¹ Mounce, p. 207.

² Beale and Carson, 1112.

³ Wilcox, 17-121.

⁴ Wilcox, 104; he does suggest that this may not be the case on pg. 105: “I do not wish to be dogmatic; I simply find it interesting and worthy of reflection.”

impending judgments, including Isaiah 41:1-5; 47:5; Lamentations 2:10-11; Amos 8:3; Habakkuk 2:20; Zephaniah 1:7-9; Zechariah 2:13. Most relevant are Exodus 11:4-7 and 14:13-14, where first the children of Israel were told to be silent as the final plague occurred, and again when they were fearful because the Egyptians were upon them. In the latter, Moses told them, “ye shall hold your peace,” then he parted the sea at the Lord’s command to allow them to escape. The silence in this verse precedes the judgment on the wicked world, as the Israelites’ silence preceded the Lord’s judgment on the Egyptian people and the army that pursued them.⁵

The silence is not a period of inactivity. During the “half an hour,” the seven trumpets are handed out to the seven angels to prepare them (v. 2) and one angel gathers incense and offers it on the altar to represent the prayers of the holy ones (vv. 3-4). It is the angel’s act of casting the incense and the hot coals from the altar to the earth that ends the silence (v. 5) and starts the progressive judgments God decreed.

D&C 88:95 speaks a similar time of silence, but from the context it is likely a different period of silence than this one, as it directly precedes the events of the Second Coming, rather than being ahead of many judgments (

8:2 **the seven angels**. The definite article implies a specific group. The apocryphal 1 Enoch 20:2-8 gives the names of the seven angels as Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraqâêl, Gabriel, and Remiel.⁶ They are those who are in God’s presence (such as in Isaiah 63:9; Luke 1:19), “which stood before God.” Of course, since seven represents the perfect number, the actual number of angels could be much different.

8:2 **seven trumpets**. It’s not known if these were the *shofar* (ram’s horn) types used by priests to call people to worship or the metal trumpet (more like big bugles) such as used by an army to rally the troops or signal orders.⁷ One could also be used to signify the coronation of the king.⁸ There were “at least twenty-one blasts of the trumpet daily in the temple, and on feast days as many as forty-eight.”⁹ Either way, the angels stand ready to announce God’s will.

The seven trumpets here echo the seven trumpet blasts used to signal the destruction of Jericho as the Israelites

entered the Promised Land (Joshua 6:4-20). When the ark came to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:24) and when the walls of Jerusalem were dedicated after the return from exile (Nehemiah 12:41) were two other occasions where seven trumpets were used to mark a special occasion.¹⁰ Seven angels blowing trumpets are also mentioned in D&C 88:94-110.

D&C 77:12 teaches: “Q. What are we to understand by the sounding of the trumpets, mentioned in the 8th chapter of Revelation?

“A. We are to understand that as God made the world in six days, and on the seventh day he finished his work, and sanctified it, and also formed man out of the dust of the earth, even so, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years will the Lord God sanctify the earth, and complete the salvation of man, and judge all things, and shall redeem all things, except that which he hath not put into his power, when he shall have sealed all things, unto the end of all things; and the sounding of the trumpets of the seven angels are the preparing and finishing of his work, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years—the preparing of the way before the time of his coming.”

In other words, just as the seven days of creation are symbolic of the creation of the world, so the seven trumpets are symbolic of the end of it (or at least the beginning of the end). They may or may not represent actual individual events but are given to teach us how God will interact with mankind prior to the Second Coming and Millennial day.

8:3 **a golden censor**. A censor or container holding incense, probably shaped like a small shovel or bowl with a handle,¹¹ would be used in the temple for carrying hot coals and burning incense. The angel is acting like a priest who carried incense into the holy place in the temple and put it on the altar of incense that the smoke from it might represent “the prayers of all saints.” Compare verses 3-5 to Leviticus 16:12-14, where the priest takes a “censer full of burning coals of fire” and dumps a handful of incense on it to bring inside the temple and fill it with a “cloud of the incense” to symbolically “cover the mercy seat” with the prayers of the people. Ezekiel 10:1-4 is another story with similar imagery.

⁵ Beale and Carson, 1110; Arnold, 299.

⁶ Mounce, 172.

⁷ Arnold, 300-301.

⁸ Mounce, 173.

⁹ Osborne, 342, quoting the Mishnah, *m. Sukk.* 5.5.

¹⁰ Osborne, 342-343.

¹¹ Parry and Parry, 105.

8:3 **there was given unto him much incense.** The prayers of the faithful were large in quantity and impactful. See also 5:8 and 6:10 which references these prayers. Incense in the OT was made of several substances combined: “Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight” (Exodus 30:34).

8:4 **the prayers of the saints.** Psalm 141:2 equates incense with prayer: “Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense.” Wilcox explains, “Incense symbolized the prayers of the Saints. The smoke could pass through the veil into the presence of God, just as do our prayers. It filled the whole temple with its sweet odor, thus making the temple a house of prayer.”¹²

8:5 **cast it unto the earth.** Having filled the censor with additional “fire” (meaning, coals) from the altar, the angel then threw it down from heaven onto the earth. Taking the symbol for their prayers and throwing it to the earth, this marks the Lord beginning to fulfill the prayers of the Saints to avenge their blood and deaths (6:10). Ezekiel saw something similar in 10:2-7.

8:5 **voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.** This is clearly tied to Exodus 19:16-18, where the Lord manifested himself to Israel in the wilderness with “thunders and lightnings...and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud...and the whole mount quaked greatly.” There is a pattern that progresses through Revelation itself with these items, tying them to the various judgments:

4:5 lightnings, and thunderings and voices

8:5 voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake

11:19 lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail

16:18-21 voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and...a great earthquake, and...a great hail

“Like the theophany at Sinai the world trembles before the presence of God.”¹³

8:6 **prepared themselves.** The acts of the angel with the censor took place during the same silence (8:1)

during which the angels were preparing their trumpets. Now all is ready to make seven world-changing announcements.

FIRST TRUMPET: TREES AND GRASS BURNT (8:7)

8:7 **hail and fire mingled with blood.** In Exodus 9:23-24 the Lord “sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground.” Revelation adds blood to the mix, to represent the deadly nature of the hail and fire (which could be caused by many lightning strikes).

Fire is mentioned in the first three trumpets, perhaps relating to the opening scene of the angel casting fire to the earth (v. 5). A great hailstorm that destroys crops is talked about in D&C 29:15.

8:7 **the third part of trees was burnt up.** The importance of the “third part” is that only a portion of the trees and grass were destroyed (and later other things as well). In fact, the twelve or so things that are destroyed in a third part “symbolically show that their bounds have been set. They can only go so far.”¹⁴ The destruction, while impactful, is not complete, giving the world a chance to recognize God in these events and repent. Giving them so many chances to return to the Lord shows his great mercy and love for his children. (However, the third part of the trumpet judgments is greater than the fourth part destroyed in the opening of the seals; see 6:8.)

Ezekiel used a similar concept when he symbolically cut his hair and beard and divided it into three parts. The Lord then had him (in front of the people so they understood the prophecy) burn the first third, cut up the second third with a knife, and scatter the last third in the wind (Ezekiel 5:1-2; see also v. 12).

It’s helpful to note that the Greek manuscripts on which the KJV was based were missing a phrase that is in the older, better manuscripts available now. This verse should read (with the missing part italicized): “...and they were cast upon the earth: *and the third part of the earth was burnt up*, and the third part of trees was burnt up...”¹⁵ This means that the land as well as the trees and grass were burned by the fire and the hail.

¹² Wilcox, 111.

¹³ Mounce, 175.

¹⁴ Draper, 95-96.

¹⁵ Draper and Rhodes, 566.

SECOND TRUMPET: SEA BECOMES BLOOD (8:8-9)

8:8 **a great mountain.** The similarity to 18:21 lends to the interpretation that this is the fall of a great city or civilization, and links to Jeremiah 51:63-64 where a book weighted with a stone is thrown in the Euphrates River to represent the fall of Babylon.¹⁶

8:8 **the third part of the sea became blood.** The first trumpet impacted the land, the second one the sea. This could possibly represent a volcanic eruption where the explosion from the volcano and/or the lava flows down to the sea, killing sea life and destroying ships in its wake.¹⁷ Whatever the manifestation, the allusion to Exodus 7:20-21 is clear, where the Lord through Moses turned the water of the Nile into blood and the fish in it all died.

THIRD TRUMPET: WORMWOOD AND BITTER WATERS (8:10-11)

8:10 **a great star from heaven.** This may perhaps be a comet or other celestial object crashing to the earth that destroys fresh water supplies. The destruction of the water continues the allusion to Exodus 7:19.

8:11 **the name of the star is called Wormwood.** Greek *apsinthos*, meaning 'bitter wood.' This could relate to a real plant called *Artemisia absinthium* which can cause stomach and headaches.¹⁸ The name is reminiscent (but opposite) of Exodus 15:23-25 when the children of Israel encountered bitter water and it was made drinkable by a piece of wood the Lord provided to Moses. It is also similar to Jeremiah 9:15 and 23:15, both of which refer to wormwood and bitter water.

TWO TRUMPETS AND THE GREAT WAR (9:1-21)

Chapter 8 presented the first four trumpet judgments, which were judgments on the earth itself. Chapter 9 now offers the next two trumpets, which are more complex scenes than that of the first four trumpets and focus on the impact on mankind more than the world around them. Each one is a "woe" by itself, so the fifth

FOURTH TRUMPET: SUN, MOON, AND STARS DARKENED (8:12-13)

8:12 **smitten.** The Greek means to strike a heavy blow or to inflict a plague.¹⁹ The sun, moon, and stars are struck with something much like a plague that impacts their brightness for a third part of the day and night.

8:12 **the day shone not.** The fourth trumpet blast impacts the heavens. Several things could cause a third part of the sun, moon, and stars to darken or be blocked out, such as ash from a volcanic eruption, an eclipse, or even a plague of insects, all of which could be the result of the previous trumpets. The darkening of the heavens represents judgment of the wicked and God's disapproval (Ezekiel 32:7; Amos 5:18; Joel 2:2). This also is seen in Exodus 10:22 and Amos 8:9.

8:13 **heard an angel flying.** Many of the oldest manuscripts have "eagle" here instead of "angel" (*aetou* verses *angelos*), and most modern translations used "eagle" accordingly (e.g., NIV, NASB, NAB, RSV, NJB, CJB).²⁰ The *aetou* (which could be translated "eagle" or "vulture"²¹) is often used to represent the coming of divine judgment (Hosea 8:1; Deuteronomy 28:49; Job 9:26; Jeremiah 48:40; 49:22; Ezekiel 17:3).

As a bird of prey or one that feeds on the dead, an eagle/vulture is surely part of the birds that come to "the supper of the great God" (19:17, 21), so his voice hear giving warning to the world anticipates that event.

8:13 **Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth.** The first four trumpets impacted the natural world, while the final three are more focused on the affairs of men. The events associated with these last three take many verses, especially the sixth trumpet. Each is called a "woe" (9:12), so this verse anticipates all three.

¹⁶ Beale and Carson, 1113.

¹⁷ Arnold, 301.

¹⁸ Arnold, 303.

¹⁹ Osborne, 355.

²⁰ From Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000).

²¹ Mounce, 182, n3.

numbers cannot be counted and who do great damage to everything around them. Sadly, in the end, the people who are suffering under these judgments neither repent nor turn to God, which the limited judgment is designed to help them do. Instead, they grow more strong in their anger, bitterness, and sin, and leave themselves completely vulnerable to the plagues.

D&C 77:13 records: “Q. When are the things to be accomplished, which are written in the 9th chapter of Revelation?

“A. They are to be accomplished after the opening of the seventh seal, before the coming of Christ.”

This means that all the events of this chapter precede the Second Coming still, as do subsequent chapters.

FIFTH TRUMPET/FIRST WOE: APOLLYON (9:1-12)

The first woe is a plague of locusts like no one has ever seen that come out of the abyss where the fallen star is sent to dwell, led by a fallen angel whose name is *Apollyon* in Greek.

BOTTOMLESS PIT OPENED (9:1-2)

9:1 KJV	9:1 JST
1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.	1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to the angel was given the key of the bottomless pit.

The KJV sounds like the key was given to the fallen star (and some read it that way, such as Mounce, 184), but the JST change clarifies that the fifth angel is the one holding the key. Satan does not have the key to the abyss that will eventually hold him and his messengers (20:2).

9:1 **the fifth angel sounded.** D&C 77:13 teaches that the events of chapter nine follow the opening of the seventh seal but precede the Second Coming. We don’t know how long that period of time will be but it will be long enough for a large number of events, as described in these chapters.

²² Beale and Carson, 1114.

9:1 **I saw a star fall from heaven.** The “star” represents an angel who has fallen from heaven. This person who once held power in the heavens now is only given power in the world beneath the earth—the “bottomless pit.” The fallen star uses his power to bring destruction and misery to mankind. This is remarkably similar to language Jesus used to describe the fall of Satan from heaven (Luke 10:18) and matches the image of 12:7-9.

9:1 **the bottomless pit.** Or, ‘the abyss,’ from the Greek *abyssos*, meaning ‘bottomless’ or ‘unbounded.’ It is the opposite of heaven and refers to the waters under the earth or the deep waters of the sea.²² The same word is used in Luke 8:31, though translated “the deep” in the KJV, but referring to the place of banishment for spirits, and in Romans 10:7, asking the question “Who shall descend into the deep?” to raise Jesus from the dead.

9:2 **as the smoke of a great furnace.** Not a furnace to heat a home but one to smelt ore or burn limestone into lime.²³ Jesus used a similar term in Matthew 13:42, 50., tying it to the judgment of the wicked.

LOCUSTS (9:3-12)

9:3 **out of the smoke locusts.** Coming out of the smoke of the abyss, a plague of locusts spread out across the earth. Locusts were part of the Egyptian plagues in Exodus 10:13-15. However, these are not like the ordinary locusts in Exodus that ate crops but are rather sent to torment man.

9:4 **only those men which have not the seal of God.** The locusts were commanded to ignore the natural environment and instead torment men only—at least, those who do not have “the seal of God in their foreheads” (referring back to the event of 7:3).

9:6 **men seek death, and shall not find it.** The torment from the locust curse shall be so bad that people will prefer to die but will be unable to; “death shall flee from them” making it unattainable, for some reason.

9:7 **like unto horses prepared unto battle.** The locusts have heavy armor to protect them as they attack mankind. Much of the imagery comes from Joel 1-2.

9:7 **crowns like gold.** They wear laurel wreaths symbolizing victory, but not out of plants. Instead, their “crowns” are made of something resembling gold—but

²³ Arnold, 304-305.

not the real thing. This is in contrast to the twenty-four elders who have crowns of pure gold (4:4).

9:7 **the faces of men.** John's purpose is to portray these locusts as terribly fearful. They have intelligence, they have long hair (perhaps like some ancient armies, verse 8), they are well-armored (verse 9), they move with wings (verse 9), and they have powerful tails that sting. This surreal image has caused many to see them as conquering armies, and attempt to represent modern weaponry in John's ancient language.²⁴ That could be correct, or it could be that they also represent the armies of Satan come to bring misery and sin to the world, which is how they torment people.

9:8 **hair as the hair of women.** "Roman and Greek males cropped their hair. It was the barbarians and, therefore, the enemy, who let it grow long."²⁵

9:8 **the teeth of lions.** Compare Joel 1:6, where the prophet sees a nation attacking Israel "whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth ('fangs') of a great lion." Though not in Exodus, Jewish tradition has it that the locusts of the Exodus (Exodus 10:13-15) had the teeth of lions.²⁶

9:9 **the sound of chariots of many horses.** Compare to Joel 2:5, "Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap."

9:10 **hurt men five months.** The locusts had the power to hurt and cause pain for five months but did not kill, though their victims desired to die as a result of their suffering (v. 6). They come stinging like a scorpion and last for five months, matching the normal life span of locusts. The period should probably not be taken literally: "it is best to translate the term as a whole number often meaning 'a few'."²⁷

9:11 **Abaddon...Apollyon.** *Abaddon* in Hebrew is 'destruction' while *Apollyon* in Greek means 'destroyer.'²⁸ Thus the name of the king of the locust army and the fallen star with the key to the abyss is one who brings destruction.

²⁴ Parry and Parry, 118, give examples of this.

²⁵ Draper and Rhodes, 602.

²⁶ Beale and Carson, 1114.

²⁷ Draper and Rhodes, 600.

²⁸ Mounce, 191.

9:12 **One woe is past.** The last three trumpet blasts are equated with three woes (see 8:13); the locusts were the first.

SIXTH TRUMPET/SECOND WOE: TWO HUNDRED MILLION HORSEMEN (9:13-21)

9:13 **a voice from the four horns of the golden altar.** The incense altar in the temple had four upturned corners that resembled horns and was where the burning incense was placed each day.²⁹ As usual, the horns represent power—in this case, the power of God—though its location refers back to the prayers of the Saints crying out for justice in 6:10.

9:14 KJV

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the ~~great river~~ Euphrates.

9:14 JST

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the **bottomless pit.**

Scholars suggest that the Euphrates was used in the text because it was north and east of Israel, where invasion and destructive weather often originated. The JST change points back to the abyss, tying these particular angels (which word means 'messengers') to Satan, not the Lord. Such a change makes sense, given their destructive force, but is also supported by scholarship.³⁰

9:14 **Loose the four angels.** Four angels were first mentioned at 7:1 and were held back until the righteous were sealed up. Now these angels are loosed to begin their destruction of the wicked. They may not be the same four angels because in chapter 7, they were given power to save, but these angels only destroy.³¹

9:15 **prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.** These angels have been waiting for this exact moment to unleash their efforts on men.

9:15 **to slay the third part of men.** The first woe was torment but not death and gave people five months to repent. When they do not, they now face death. Though

²⁹ Arnold, 299, where he notes that it was the role of Zacharias in the temple when he had his encounter with the angel to put incense on the altar (Luke 1:9-11).

³⁰ For example, Beale and Carson, 1115, calls them "the four (presumably wicked) angels."

³¹ Draper and Rhodes, 618.

a third part is a lot, it still demonstrates that these angels have limited power and that God is still in control of everything that is happening.

9:16 KJV	9:16 JST
16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.	16 And the number of the army of the horsemen two hundred thousand thousand: and I saw the number of them.

The deletion of the verb “were,” though not present in the Greek text, actually makes the English a bit more difficult, though the concept is still maintained. But the change from “heard” to “saw” in the JST changes it from John hearing their number reported to him to seeing it for himself (and presumably counting them all).

9:16 **two hundred thousand thousand**. Literally, a double myriad of myriads (2 x 10,000 x 10,000), which equals 200,000,000.³² Compare Daniel 7:10; the number is not to be taken literally but means the army is so large that it cannot be counted.

9:17 **breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone**. Or, “breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow” to represent “fire, smoke, and sulfur that was coming out of the mouths of the horses.”³³

9:19 **their power is in their mouth, and in their tails**. The massive army directed by the four messengers of destruction hurt by speaking fire and smoke (compare Job 41:19-20) and by biting like snakes from their tails. In other words, no matter which way you approach the creatures, they can harm you.

9:19 **their tails were like unto serpents**. The most likely reason for this symbol is to represent the demonic origins.³⁴

9:20 **idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk**. Deuteronomy 4:28 speaks of “gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.” Psalm 115:4-7 similarly calls attention to “idols [of] silver and gold, the work of men’s hands” which “speak not...see not...hear not...smell not.”

9:20 **yet repented not**. The purpose of the Lord allowing these things to happen is to call me to repentance. This sad verse shows that for many, it will not be successful.

CONCLUSION

The judgments of the trumpets blown by the seven angels signal the coming of the wrath of the Lord on the unrepentance inhabitants of the earth. In these scenes, the church and the righteous are not seen, though their presence is implied in chapters 6-7; they will be the subject of chapters 11-13. They are protected from the judgments just as the children of Israel were protected from the plagues in the Exodus account as they prayed, stayed faithful, were silent, and put the blood of the lamb—the mark of God for their day—on their doorposts.

The promise of Revelation is that those who give their lives fully to God and become his known slaves and possession will be able to watch these judgments of the seventh seal without concern for themselves. See D&C 45:66-70 for a similar promise. Also, in a quote that surely applies here with locusts that sting like scorpions and horses with snake-head tails, Jesus promised the faithful “power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Luke 10:19). However, watching all this, those sealed of God, like the heavens in Moses 7:37, will surely weep for the suffering of all those struggling souls around them.

³² Arnold, 306.

³³ Mounce, 196.

³⁴ Mounce, 197.

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 KJV – King James Version (Authorized Version)
 JST – Joseph Smith Translation
 BYU – BYU New Testament Rendition (from Draper and Rhodes)
 CJB – Complete Jewish Bible
 LXX – Septuagint (Greek Old Testament)
 NAB – The New American Bible
 NASB – New American Standard Bible
 NIV – New International Version
 NJB – New Jerusalem Bible
 NLT – New Living Translation