



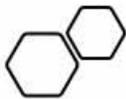
**A STAR FALLS TO EARTH WITH A KEY TO OPEN THE ABYSS
THE POWER AND PLAGUES CAME OUT OF THEIR MOUTHS
REVELATION CHAPTER 9 VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY**

SUMMARY OF REVELATION CHAPTER 9

In Revelation chapter 9 John heard the fifth angel sound his trumpet, and then John saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. Out of the Abyss came smoke and locusts on the earth, and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth.

They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).

The horses and riders John saw had breastplates that were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury. A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.



**The horses and riders
I saw in my vision
looked like this: Their
breastplates were fiery
red, dark blue, and
yellow as sulfur.**

Revelation 9:17 (NIV)



Rev 9:1 The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.

Rev 9:2 When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.

“The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.” We know that Baal was sent into the Abyss (Isaiah 14:15-17), and that the beast emerged from the Abyss (Revelation 17:8). When Baal emerged from the Abyss the Bible says his *“fatal wound was healed.”*

Isaiah 14:15-17 (NIV)

“Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you, saying, ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities, who did not allow his prisoners to go home?’”

Revelation 17:8 (NIV)

The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come.

The expression, *“a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth”* seems naturally to mean the permission directly from God for these evil and calamitous events, which are described to follow from opening the Abyss, which could not have happened but by the permission of the true God. We do not know if this star was a demonic angel or even Satan himself. But God controls everything.

“When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.” Jesus and the Gospel are the light of the world. The dark smoke coming from the Abyss that darkens the sun is the false teaching of the Qur’an. The Muslim hordes sweep across the Christian lands in the Middle East with the sword and false doctrine. Sophronius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, experienced firsthand the inundation of the Saracens; the locusts, scorpions and grasshoppers invading Christendom.

An example of the *“smoke from the Abyss”* is in the Qur’an 5:72 and 5:75. Here Jesus, the Son of God, is made inferior to “Allah” in the Qur’an, the dragon who desires to call himself “God.”

Qur’an 5:72 They do blaspheme who say: “God is Jesus the son of Mary.” But Jesus himself said: “O Children of Israel! worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.” Whoever joins other gods with Allah,- Allah will forbid him the garden, and the Fire will be his abode.

Qur’an 5:75 Jesus the son of Mary was no more than a messenger; many were the messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food.

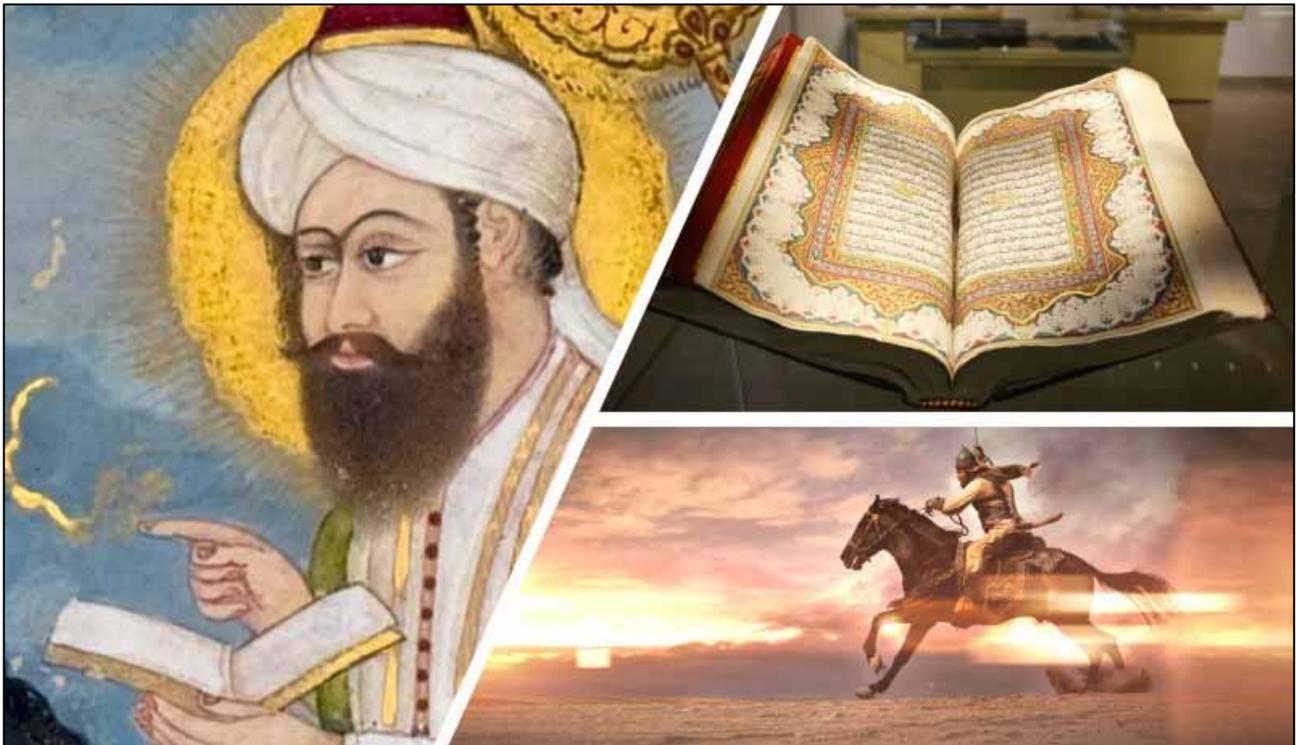
Rev 9:3 And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth.

Rev 9:4 They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

“And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth.” The dragon carries on his evil designs by blinding the eyes of men, by putting out light and knowledge, and promoting false doctrine about Jesus and error. Out of this smoke came a swarm of locusts, emblems of the devil's agents, who promote superstition, prayer to the Kaaba, orders to follow the teaching of the false prophet Mohammad, taking Baal's crescent moon as a symbol, and taking the mark--the Islamic Shahada.

“They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.” The locusts which are sent not to injure the vegetation are clearly not literal locusts, and the security of those who have the seal of God in their foreheads are assured of safety against the beast. Real locusts eat plants and crops. They devastate everything green. These Revelation “locusts” did not eat grass, plants or trees, but were in fact the Islamic hordes of Mohammad, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman sweeping across the Middle East.

The Islamic locusts had no power to hurt those who had the seal of God. God's all-powerful, distinguishing grace and truth of the Gospel keeps his people from the Islamic apostasy. The Islamic power is limited, but it would be very sharp. Those that remain faithful to Jesus are saved. The Islamic followers of Mohammad have been deceived and are not the true servants of God, but are lost and idolatrous souls heading to the lake of fire.



Rev 9:5 They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes.

Rev 9:6 During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

“They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes.” The followers of Satan and Baal could not kill the soul of a true Christian—regardless of what they did to the body. As the Saracens (Muslims) were to hurt only the physical body, so these were not given power to kill the soul of believers, but only to torment the physical realm. They made many weary of their lives. And yes, the followers of Mohammad did authority over a quarter of the earth (Revelation 6:7-8).

The locusts may not hurt God's servants. Thus, we are taught that God always preserves his own, though it may sometimes appear to man as though the innocent suffer with the guilty.

Five months is 152 days, or most likely 152 years. During the time period of 610 AD to 762 AD, the Islamic locusts went from one man with a vision from a demonic spirit (Mohammad seeing Baal) to sweeping over nearly every country in the Middle East that was previously Christian.



MOST OF THE MIDDLE EAST WAS CHRISTIAN IN 610 AD



THE ISLAMIC LOCUSTS SWEEP ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST WITH THE SWORD



MOST OF THE MIDDLE EAST WAS ISLAMIC BY 762 AD

IMPORTANT DATES IN ISLAMIC CONQUEST IN THE FIRST JIHAD 610-762 (THE FIRST WOE)

610 AD-- The Angel Gabriel visits Mohammad

632 AD – Islamic Jihadists conquered Yemen.

632 AD – Invasion of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) but the invading Islamic army was repelled by the orthodox church backed by the Portuguese. This was a particularly disgraceful event, because just seventeen years earlier, Abyssinia had helped the persecuted Moslems.

633 AD – All the desert tribes of Arabia were thoroughly subdued through military campaigns.

635 AD – The attacking Islamic army conquered Damascus.

637 AD – The Persians (Iranians) were defeated at the battle of Qadisiyya.

637 AD – The fall of Iraq

638 AD – Islamic fighters occupied Jerusalem.

639 AD – All of Syria fell into Moslem hands.

642 AD – All of Egypt fell to Moslems after some resistance in Alexandria. The great Coptic church was destroyed never to get strong again.

666 AD—Shahada created in final form

670 AD – Khalif Muawiya ordered an unsuccessful sea assault against Byzantium.

688 AD – The fall of Carthage.

702 AD – The Berber tribes of North Africa conquered.

705 - 708 AD – Occupation of North Africa.

711-713 AD – Arabian expansionists captured all of Spain and Portugal. The place the Islamic Commander pitched his headquarters still bears his name, Gibraltar, in English, or Jebel Tariq (Arabic), meaning mountain of Tariq.

715-717 AD – Arabian armies subdued Afghanistan, central Asia, northern limit of the Caspian sea, much of northern India.

718 AD – Islamic forces started attacking France.

725 AD – The invading Islamic armies besieged Toulouse and raided Burgundy and the Rhone valley.

732 AD – Bordeaux was besieged. The Islamic armies advanced up to Poitiers where they were defeated by Charles Martel.

762 AD-- New caliphate Islamic leaders (Abbasids) change focus to building the new city of Baghdad near the ancient location of Babylon

“During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.” The change of tense from the future (“will seek death”) to the present (“but death will elude them”) gives greater meaning to John’s description. During the Islamic invasions (even today with ISIS) men will seek for death in vain, and they will long to die.

Some of those enslaved by their Islamic masters, death will seem a relief. It will be an end of sufferings. They will find peace in the grave, and are assured they shall suffer no more. They bear their trials with patience, for the end of all sorrow to them is near, and death will come to release their spirits from the suffering physical world, and to bear them in triumph to a “new heavens and a new earth” from Jesus where never a tear is shed. The ravages of the Saracens, their incursions, and the invasions by them, struck such terror into the inhabitants of the Middle East, that they made death more attractive to them than life during the tribulation.

Rev 9:7 The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces.

Rev 9:8 Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth.

Rev 9:9 They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle.

Rev 9:10 They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months.

Many authors have observed that the head of a locust resembles that of a horse. The Italians, therefore, call them "*cavalette*", as it were little horses. The Arabians too have in all ages been famous for their horses and horsemanship. Their strength is well known to consist chiefly in their cavalry. Another distinguishing mark and character is their having on their heads as it were crowns like gold — Which is an allusion to the headdress of the Arabians, who have constantly worn turbans, and boast of having those ornaments for their common attire, which are crowns and diadems with other people. The crowns also signify the kingdoms and dominions which they conquered.



The locust-like Islamic army has characteristics partly human, partly diabolical, partly civilized, partly barbarous, and under the complete command of the dragon and beast. Mohammad spread his false religion both with the sword and with the lie.

Rev 9:11 They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).

Rev 9:12 The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.

“They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).” Is their king Satan, Baal or another equally strong demon? Is Mohammad the king of the Islamic warriors? There is no greater destroyer than the false Gospel of the Qur’an. There is more than one point in which John wishes us to see the contrast between these symbolical and the natural locusts. Locusts have no sting; these have. Locusts have no king (Proverbs 30:27; *“locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks”*); these have a king. Mohammad, and his successors, who were the authors of all those horrid wars and desolations, and openly taught and professed their religion was to be propagated by the sword.

Revelation 17:8 (NIV)

The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come.

The demonic king Abaddon was number 7 in the "seven heads" of the beast. They followed Baal of Babylon-the third head. Baal is the "prince who is to come" in Daniel 9:26-27. Baal was punished by God and sent to Sheol--the Abyss. Baal was the both third and eighth head. Baal "comes out of the seven" and "has a fatal wound that is healed" (Revelation chapters 13-17).

1. Egypt, 2. Assyria, 3. Babylon >> Sheol >> Baal the Beast, 4. Persia, 5. Seleucid Greeks, 6. Rome, 7. Demonic King-rules only a short time {Abaddon from the Abyss}. 8) Baal released from the Abyss.

“The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.” Here we are told again for the true believers to have patience and faith. The ongoing tribulation since the time of the Apostles. The troubles which pass only yield even more, the rest and the victory are not yet; the powers of evil have not exhausted themselves; the sin of the social and spiritual followers of Satan and Baal is not yet complete.

Revelation 13:10 (NIV)

“If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed.” This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people.

John is telling us that it would be a characteristic of the Islamic powers that they would lead others into captivity. This was fulfilled since it was the characteristic of the Islamic Caliphates to invade other countries and to make their inhabitants prisoners of war and slaves of other people. Islam (the Pact of Umar, for example) set up unjust dominion over other people (the "dhimmi"; a person living in a region overrun by Muslim conquest who was accorded an inferior status and allowed to retain his or her original faith if they paid the jizya taxes of Umar). Islam was distinguished for persecuting and imprisoning the innocent.

Rev 9:13 The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God.

Rev 9:14 It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”

Rev 9:15 And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind.

Rev 9:16 The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number.

Satan has permission to release at least 200,000,000 demons. In the vicinity of the river Euphrates there were mighty Islamic powers which had been bound or held in check, which were now to be let loose upon the world. It is also symbolic of spiritual realm boundaries.

The sixth trumpet references the river Euphrates. The sixth trumpet and bowl deal with demonic spirits moving past the “Euphrates river” spiritual boundary as they get ready for the final battle with Jesus Christ. In the sixth trumpet, demonic spirits kill one third of souls. In the sixth bowl the Euphrates river spiritual boundary is “dried up” and wide open for demons to cross. Jesus signals that his return is imminent. We also learn in Job 38:8-11 that God set the boundary of the sea (*“when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place”*), not the watery oceans because the oceans have moved over time, but the interface between the earthly realm and the “sea”, the spiritual realm.

Job 38:8-11 (NIV)

“Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt’?”

The river Euphrates is listed having four characteristics in the Bible and history. The Euphrates is the longest river of Western Asia. It emerges from the confluence of the Kara Su or Western Euphrates and the Murat Su or Eastern Euphrates upstream from the town of Keban in southeastern Turkey.

1. It was the boundary of David and Solomon’s kingdom, Deuteronomy 11:24 (*“Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea.”*)

2. It was that river by which Babylon stood, Jeremiah 13:4 (*“Take the waistband that you have bought, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates and hide it there in a crevice of the rock.”*)

3. It was the Eastern boundary of the Roman empire, beyond which it could never extend itself.

4. And it also was the seat of the Islamic Ottoman Empire, who having some years before come over the Euphrates, controlled vast territory in Asia, in Syria, Iraq, and Jerusalem, among other places.

Rev 9:17 The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur.

Rev 9:18 A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths.

Rev 9:19 The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

The army is mainly of horsemen, and they are described as resolute and relentless. The Islamic riders wore breastplate of fiery red, dark blue and yellow as sulfur. *“The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur.”* The power of Islam is from its’ mouth. The Qur’an proclaims a false gospel about Jesus from the mouth of Mohammad.

“A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths.” Those that listen to the Qur’an have their souls spiritually killed. Islam is approaching the largest religion in the world. Some 28% to 30% of the world is Muslim. Many Christians also believe the Mohammad “was a prophet from God” and that “Muslims and Christians worship the same God.” Islam has spiritually killed a third of the world.



The fire, and smoke, and brimstone; which may be referred either to the horses, or to the horsemen, or both. Some interpret this allegorically, and by "fire" understand it to be the tyranny of the troops of Mohammad over the Christian lands.

Their fury against others, and especially their blasphemy against God, and Christ, and his people, being like so many demonic locusts fighting against the God of the Christians; and by “smoke” the false doctrine of Mohammad and prayer to Baal in the Kaaba.



THEY KILL WITH THEIR MOUTH—THE FALSE GOSPEL OF THE QUR’AN

Revelation 19:17; “*out of their mouths*”, Revelation 19:18; “*came out of their mouths*”, Revelation 19:19; “*having heads with which they inflict injury.*” The Qur’an is full of verses blaspheming Jesus, the Son of God. They kill with their mouths, the false teaching of the Qur’an. The “Allah” of the Qur’an is the dragon. Baal, the beast, is worshipped in the Kaaba.

IN THE QUR’AN 5:116, JESUS BEGS ALLAH TO FORGIVE HIM

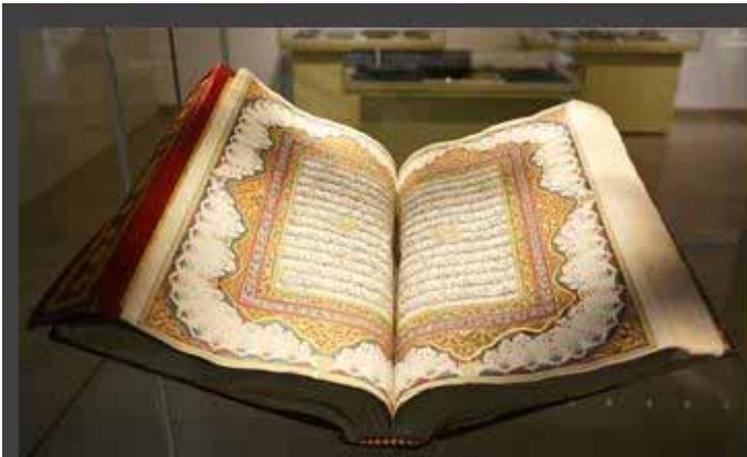
Qur’an 5:116 Allah will say: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Did you say unto men, worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah?" Jesus will say: "Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right to say. Had I said such a thing, you would indeed have known it. You know what is in my heart, and I do not know what is within You."

IN THE QUR’AN 5:17, ALLAH SAYS HE CAN DESTROY JESUS

Qur’an 5:17 They have certainly disbelieved who say that God is Jesus, the son of Mary. Say, "Then who could prevent Allah at all if He had intended to destroy Jesus, the son of Mary, or his mother or everyone on the earth?" And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. Allah creates what He wills, and Allah is over all things competent.

IN QUR’AN 61:6, JESUS PROMISES THAT MOHAMMAD WILL FOLLOW HIM

Qur’an 61:6 And mention when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, "O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad. [Mohammad]"



The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

Revelation 9:19 (NIV)

Rev 9:20 The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk.

Rev 9:21 Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

“Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.” Paul tells us *“God sends them a powerful delusion”* to those who failed to listen to the truth of the Gospel. The truth that Jesus is the Son of God, the truth that Jesus died for our sins, the truth that Jesus rose from the dead, and the truth that Jesus is the only path to the Father and eternal life. The Qur’an and false teachings of Mohammad deny all the essential truths of Jesus.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 (NIV)

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

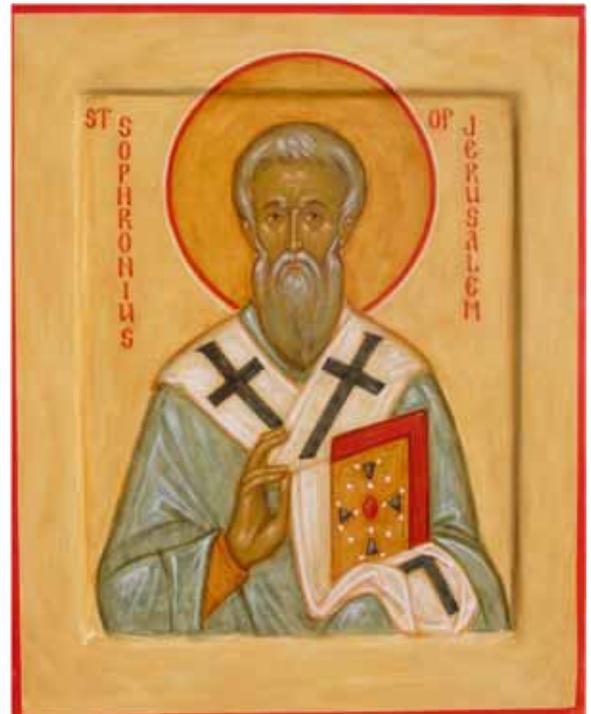
Men will not repent; therefore the last final judgment becomes necessary. These verses make one or two points clear. First, they show us that, whatever the nature of the Islamic plagues might be, they were afflictions designed to bring about repentance and return to the teachings of Christ.

Sophronius, (born in 560 AD in Damascus, Syria and died March 11, 638, in Jerusalem), was the patriarch of Jerusalem. He was a monk and theologian teaching on the essential nature of Christ. He saw these plagues first hand. Sophronius surrendered Jerusalem to Umar (Daniel 11:41-42) when Islam conquered Jerusalem. Sophronius called the Muslims “Saracens”, which means “the ones that Sarah sent away.”

Daniel 11:41-42 (NIV)

He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape.

Sophronius noted the “Saracen menace” to Palestine in his Christmas sermon of 634, in which he commented that the Arabs already controlled Bethlehem.



Sophronius lived during a time of horrific upheaval. He was an eyewitness to the four horsemen of Revelation chapter 6 (Mohammad, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman) and the trumpet plagues of Revelation chapter 9. His references to the first Islamic invasion of Palestine and Jerusalem during the 632-638 time period provides us with a trustworthy, eyewitness account of the merciless brutality of the Muslims (referred to in antiquity as "Saracens"), which we see again sweeping the world in our own day in Islam's renewed war against Christians.

The fall of Jerusalem to Umar in 638 probably hastened Sophronius' death after he had negotiated the recognition of civil and religious liberty for Christians in exchange for tribute. In his writings Sophronius relates his hope that surrendering Jerusalem would win clemency from the Muslims, and how that hope was dashed. Toward the end of his life, Sophronius and his flock lived through a two year siege of Jerusalem by the Muslims. Worn down by famine, the Christians finally agreed to open the gates of Jerusalem, on the condition that the Muslims spare the holy places. But this condition was not fulfilled, and Sophronius died in grief in 638 over the desecration of the Christian holy places.

The false prophet Mohammad had planned on a campaign against Christian Syria and Palestine, but when he saw Heraclius's armies of the Byzantine Eastern Roman Empire, Mohammad decided to bide his time. Mohammad died in 632 and was succeeded by Abu Bakr (the second rider on the red horse in Revelation 6:3-4). Abu Bakr was murdered in 634, and his successor Umar (the third rider on the black horse with a pair of scales to calculate his Islamic taxes in Revelation 6:5-6) waged a campaign of conquest in fulfillment of Mohammad's ambitions.

The great battle of the Yarmuk river in 636 spelled the doom of Christian government in the Levantine regions. The Byzantine army was utterly destroyed. The Persian and Muslim wars, coming as they did in quick succession, had exhausted the Byzantine Empire's military resources. Heraclius, who lived until 641, could do nothing to recover what had just been recovered. He spent the rest of his days broken hearted, having seen his great conquests lost. Umar defeated three kings, and Heraclius was one of the three. (Daniel 7:24). The other two were the Afghan king and the Persian king.

Daniel 7:24 (NIV)

The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings.

Sophronius recognized that the plagues of the Muslims were to cause Christians to repent, just as Revelation 9:20-21 says. Sophronius wrote: *"We, however, because of our innumerable sins and serious misdemeanors, are unable to see these things."*

Sophronius also recognized that the invasion of the Muslims in Jerusalem and the Temple Mount was the "abomination of desolation" foretold by the prophet Daniel. Sophronius wrote: *"That is why the vengeful and God-hating Saracens, the abomination of desolation clearly foretold to us by the prophets, overrun the places which are not allowed to them, plunder cities, devastate fields, burn down villages, set on fire the holy churches, overturn the sacred monasteries, oppose the Byzantine armies arrayed against them, and in fighting raise up the trophies of war and add victory to victory. Moreover, they are raised up more and more against us and increase their blasphemy of Christ and the church, and utter wicked blasphemies against God."*

SOPHRONIUS SEES ISLAM AS A PUNISHMENT

The pride of all the barbarians, and especially of the Saracens who, on account of our sins, have now risen up against us unexpectedly and ravage all with cruel and feral design, with impious and godless audacity. More than ever, therefore, we entreat your Holiness to make urgent petitions to Christ so that he, receiving these favorably from you, may quickly quell their mad insolence and deliver these vile creatures, as before, to be the footstool of our God-given emperors.

We, however, because of our innumerable sins and serious misdemeanors, are unable to see these things, and are prevented from entering Bethlehem by way of the road. Unwillingly, indeed, contrary to our wishes, we are required to stay at home, not bound closely by bodily bonds, but bound by fear of the Saracens.

But the present circumstances are forcing me to think differently about our way of life, for why are so many wars being fought among us? Why do barbarian raids abound? Why are the troops of the Saracens attacking us? Why has there been so much destruction and plunder? Why are there incessant outpourings of human blood? Why are the birds of the sky devouring human bodies? Why have churches been pulled down? Why is the cross mocked?

Why is Christ, who is the dispenser of all good things and the provider of this joyousness of ours, blasphemed by pagan mouths so that he justly cries out to us: "Because of you my name is blasphemed among the pagans," and this is the worst of all the terrible things that are happening to us.

That is why the vengeful and God-hating Saracens, the abomination of desolation clearly foretold to us by the prophets, overrun the places which are not allowed to them, plunder cities, devastate fields, burn down villages, set on fire the holy churches, overturn the sacred monasteries, oppose the Byzantine armies arrayed against them, and in fighting raise up the trophies of war and add victory to victory.

Moreover, they are raised up more and more against us and increase their blasphemy of Christ and the church, and utter wicked blasphemies against God.