

The Pouring Out of God's Wrath

Revelation 9:1-21

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May 19, 2024 a.m.

Introduction: Chapter 9 continues the theme begun in chapter 6 & continued in chapter 8, the pouring out of God's wrath. That wrath is intensified with each successive judgments, even as 8:13 pointed out, "...woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound." In 9:12, we read, "One woe is past; & behold, there come two woes more hereafter." We might call this the unrelenting **wrath** of God. This chapter will also point out the unrestrained **power** of Satan & the unrepentant **heart** of man.

I. The unrelenting **wrath** of God (:1 & :12)

A. The picture of Satan's rebellion >

1. The fallen star (cf. Luke 10:18, "And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.")
 - a. Perfect tense, "fall" - an action completed in the past, results continue in the present.
 - b. Having been ("fallen") cast out of heaven - Rev. 12:7-10 & cf. Isaiah 14:12-17
"The tragic delusion of an eternal cosmic evolution must have had its first expression in the mind of Satan himself, attempting to rationalize his mad presumption that he could actually hope to defeat God." (H. Morris)
2. The bottomless pit (cf. Luke 8:31; Rom. 10:7 & Rev. 20:1-3).
 - a. Literally - "pit of the abyss" - deep in the earth's interior; abyss means 'without depth,' hence, bottomless (see also II Peter 2:4, & Jude :6).
 - b. If it is at the center of the earth; there is no bottom, only ceilings.

B. The permitting of Satan's resistance >

1. Given the key - must be from Christ: Revelation 1:18.
2. God is still in control; Satan has his limit (cf. Job 1 & 2; contrast Rom. 1:24, 26, & 28 > God removes Satan's restraints).

II. The unrestrained **power** of Satan (:2-19) (after sounding of the 5th trumpet)

"Finally the restraints will be relaxed, however, & the hosts of darkness will be unleashed to torment the age-long cause of their frustrations & resentments (mankind). But even this is no victory for Satan, God is simply using it as one of His means of judgment on rebellious men" (Morris).

A. The locust-like creatures (:2-12) >

1. Their source (:2-3) -
 - a. From the bottomless pit.
 - b. Out of the smoke - so much smoke as to darken the sun & sky; symbolic of the spiritual corruption caused by these demons.
 - c. They are demons - fallen sons of God seen in Genesis 6??
2. Their suffering (:3-6) -
 - a. Limited as to *what* they could torment (not vegetation, as normal locusts would do).
 - b. Limited as to *who* they could torment: only those not sealed of God - (1) The 144,000 of chapter 7:3-8 (2) Probably all believers sealed by the Spirit (II Tim 2:19 & Eph. 1:13-14), judgment is upon Christ-rejecting men, those who have repented.
 - c. Limited as to *how* they could torment (:5-6): (1) Unable to kill them (:5), sting of a scorpion is very painful but not usually fatal - here they torment for 5 months (?) - (2) Unable to kill themselves (:6), they can't even commit suicide to escape the torment.

"Formerly, no doubt, they (demons) had appeared as "angels of light" (II Cor. 11:14). But this time they appeared in a manifestation more appropriate to their character, as agents of cruelty, locusts of darkness, scorpions of torment, striking men with their stings instead of deceiving men with their lies" (H. Morris).

3. Their shape (:7-10) -

- a. Like unto horses, crowns of gold (:7) - John seeks to describe what he saw in words capable of understanding (cf. Joel 2:4).
- b. Hair of women, teeth of lions (:8) - Their ferociousness & destruction (Joel 1:6).
- c. Breastplates of iron; sound of wings as chariots (:9) - Army which is speedy & invincible so that one is unable to escape their attack (Joel 2:5 & 28).
- d. Tails like scorpions able to sting for 5 months (:10) - Able to hurt, not kill; limited.

4. Their Sovereign (:11) King -

- a. Satan himself > "Abaddon" & "Apollyon" both mean "Destroyer."
- b. Another angel?? - One in charge of those in the pit (cf. I Peter 3:19 & II Peter 2:4).

B. The army of horsemen (:13-19) - the 6th trumpet judgment >

1. Their determination:

- a. The occasion - Voice from the altar of incense, in answer to the prayers of the martyrs (Rev. 6:9-11 & 8:3).
- b. The origin - Four angels (demons) bound in the Euphrates River (near ancient Babylon).
- c. The orders - To kill 1/3 of the earth's inhabitants: (1) Specific time - God's control; (2) Specific number; 1/3 added to 1/4 in Rev. 6:4, 8 means earth's population reduced 1/2.

2. Their description: (:16-17)

- a. The number (:16) - 200 million: demons? Or a human army?? (cf. China?).
- b. The nature (:17) - "...a demonic legion of nightmarish animals indwelt by evil spirits" (H. Morris). Creatures that breathe out fire, smoke, & brimstone (mechanical warfare?).

3. Their destruction: (:18-19)

- a. Death - 1/3 of mankind is killed.
- b. Deadly power - their tails likened unto snakes with heads to bite.

III. The unrepentant heart of Man (:20-21) Why?

A. Devil worship > Satan seeks to be worshiped (Matthew 4:9).

1. Consider the interest today in occultism, astrology, Spiritism, & witchcraft.
2. Compare worship of idols (gold, silver...) with the demons associated with them (I Cor. 10:20) Creed determines conduct; what one believes determines how one behaves.

B. Demon possession (& resulting lifestyle of devil worship) >

1. Widespread murders & thefts.
2. Wicked immorality.

C. Drug use > "sorceries" >

1. Greek word *pharmakeia* ('druggings') - our English words pharmacy & pharmaceutical.
2. Compare the rising drug use with the upsurge in occultism (& efforts to legalize drugs).

There are 3 categories of sin outlined here: Idolatry, immorality, & insubordination.

Conclusion: Will you be exposed to the unrelenting wrath of God? Will you experience the unrestrained power of Satan? Will you express in that day an unrepentant heart? If you are not saved, meditate on the gracious love of Christ shown at Calvary. But if that does not draw you to salvation, consider the coming wrath of the Lamb shown here in Revelation. Jude exhorts believers, "*And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire*" (:22-23). If you are not yet saved, heed the warning, "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*" (Hebrews 10:31). Where do you stand with God today?