

Pastor Grady Covin
The Mission
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Revelation 9 The Sixth Trumpet

Revelation 9:13, Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”

15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

16 Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone.

18 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

20 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.

21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Again as bad as things are in the world today, and as powerful and evil and as effective and successful as Satan is, there's coming a time in the future when that will be much, much worst. There is coming a time when virtually all of hell, literally, will be unleashed upon earth, and with it will come an uncountable number of demons with irresistible power and seduction.

And there will be so many of them and they will be so successful that they will literally drown out any and all the preachers who are still attempting to proclaim the gospel and call people to come to Christ.

And when this time comes, the people who are alive at this time will have already had multiple warnings. They will have had some very powerful warnings from those who've been preaching the gospel. They will have heard from the 144,000 Jews who were saved and sealed, from the two witnesses described in Revelation chapter 11, which we'll get to in a few weeks, and also the angel who flies through the heavens and proclaims the gospel across the entire face of the earth.

And there will be some people converted. In fact the Bible tells us that there will be people saved from every tongue and tribe and people and nation, as many believers proclaim the gospel.

But many of those, in fact, most of those who believe, will be martyred. They will die for their faith in Christ; and only a few we're told will survive, and enter into the kingdom of Christ when He returns.

And so this is what the people who are alive during the last days of this seven year Tribulation period will experience. They will experience great tribulation! That's why it's called in the last 3-1/2 years the Great Tribulation Period.

And thank God, the church will already have been raptured. The church will already have been taken out of the world so as to avoid this horrible time.

And so some of the people who are left after the church is gone will be converted. We know that many Jews will come to finally acknowledge Christ as their Messiah. We know that people from every tongue and tribe will be saved. But again, as I said, many will be martyred or die for their faith.

But some will remain alive, and preach the gospel, and the gospel will be preached throughout this entire time period. But at the same time the gospel is being preached, all these horrific judgments will be unleashed like never before. And we saw many of those judgments in the seven seals that started in chapter 6—and we won't go back over all of that, but it was horrible.

Now, these seven seals if you remember symbolize a scroll, a title deed if you will to the earth. And it's, Christ alone who has the authority to take this scroll and to open it. And as He unrolls the scroll; each time He breaks a seal; a judgment comes upon the earth that is horrific and devastating and get more so, as each seal is opened.

And so the people who are still alive by the time we get to chapter 9 will have seen all this divine judgment which has taken place over the course of just a few years. They will have heard the gospel being preached. They will have heard about the forgiveness and mercy and grace of God and they would have been encouraged to confess and repent of their sins.

They will have seen death like never before. They will have witnessed the death in fact of a huge portion of the entire world. In other words, they will know without a doubt that this is God, who in these last days is bringing judgment upon the earth, but at the same time they will also know that He is still offering salvation.

And so tonight we come to the last half of chapter 9 and to the sixth trumpet. And remember, there were seven seal judgments, and when the seventh seal judgment is unleashed, the seven trumpet judgments begin. And then the seventh trumpet judgment is going to be the launching pad, if you will, for the seven bowl judgments, which when completed will usher in the final return of Christ.

And all of this together of course makes up this future time call the Tribulation, the last 3-1/2 years again being the Great Tribulation.

So back in chapter 8, in verses 1 and 2—when the seventh seal is opened, we see seven angels standing before God with seven trumpets. And when that seventh seal is opened, these seven trumpet judgments begin. And one by one these angels blow their trumpet and unleash another judgement of God.

And we have a recap of those judgments beginning in verse 7 of chapter 8. “The first trumpet sounded and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was

burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

“The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers, and on the springs of waters, and many men died from the waters, and from a lack of water, because the fresh waters were made bitter.

The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and so the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.” And so the cycle of day and night was disrupted and the seasons were no more.

And then in chapter 9, verse 1, “The fifth angel sounded, and . . . a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.”

This we determined was a high ranking demon of Satan’s. And “when he opened the bottomless pit, a thick smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; so much so that the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. And then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given to them.

And so this is an unleashing of innumerable demons upon the earth, so many that they appear as smoke ascending from the pit and they’re described as locusts because of their ability to destroy and because of their number and the fact that there’s no defense against them.

And of course these demons are in addition to the millions of demons who will already be in the world and who are in the world today.

But these demons, which have been locked up and bound in the pit since way back in the book of Genesis; when they're released, they're going to come forth with a vengeance like no one has ever seen, because after having been locked up so long, they will have built up even more hatred against God.

And so five of the trumpets have already sounded, and the judgments as you know were horrific. They devastated nearly everything—not just on the earth, but also in the sky. Not only was the land, and plants, and animals, and sea, and fresh water affected on the earth; also the sky, the sun, the moon, and the stars were affected in the heavens.

And so men are being tormented by these demons, and so much that they seek death, but can't find it. God won't allow them to take their own life. And it's only going to get worse as we go forward.

And so that brings us to the sixth trumpet in verse 13.

13 Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

Now, without getting too deep into this; though it's very important to learn about all the different parts and pieces of the tabernacle; that's a very involved study within itself.

So let me just say this. There were two altars associated with the tabernacle. There was the brazen altar, or the altar of sacrifice, where the animals were killed and sacrificed; and it was located in the outer court yard of the tabernacle. It would be the first thing a person would see when they entered the tabernacle.

And it was built exactly according to God's instruction. It was a certain size and height and on each corner were these protrusions that were actually one piece with the rest of the altar. And they extended up like horns and these were referred to as the four horns of the altar.

And when a sacrifice was made to God on the altar, the priest would dip his finger in the blood and he would put some blood on each horn to consecrate the altar. And also on the Day of Atonement, blood would be applied to the horns of the altar again to consecrate or make holy the altar.

And you can read about all that in Leviticus chapter 16. And once the brazen altar was consecrated, or set apart as holy, whatever touched it from that time forward would also become holy.

And so the Israelites would come daily and they would make their sacrifices to God on this altar and on the Day of Atonement there would be this elaborate ceremony where the priest would enter into the holy of holies and make atonement for all the sins of the people. And that's what you'll read about in Leviticus 16.

But now, there was also another altar called the golden altar or the altar of incense. And it was located in the tabernacle just before the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. And on the other side of the veil was of course the Ark of the Testimony, and this is where the presence of God resided and a place that was only entered once a year by on the Day of Atonement by the priest after going through all the ceremonial requirements we read about in Leviticus 16.

And this altar was similar to that of the brazen altar, only it was smaller in size and its purpose was different. It too had four horns though that extended up on each corner and just like on the brazen altar they were constructed of one piece with the altar. And once a year, on the Day of

Atonement, the high priest would also put blood on the horns of this altar to cleanse it and consecrate it to the Lord.

The priests would burn incense on the golden altar or the altar of incense each morning and every evening as a regular offering to the Lord. The coals or the fire he used to burn this incense would come from the brazen altar or the altar of sacrifice. And when the incense would burn, the sweet aroma of this incense would rise up to God and they were symbolic or represented the prayers of God's people, who sought mercy and forgiveness for their sin.

Now, why does all that matter?

Well, because all of this pointed to; and was symbolic of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us at His first coming. When He came and gave His life on the cross of Calvary and offered Himself as the one and only perfect sacrifice for man's sin.

You see these sacrifices on this brazen altar, they were only a temporary covering for a man's sin, but they pointed to the day, and symbolized the day when Jesus would come; and once and for all; would become the final atonement for every man and woman's sin on this earth; or at least for those who would receive Him as their Lord and Savior.

And so these are the four horns of the golden altar or the altar of incense.

But what about the voice that John hears?

Well, it doesn't say whose voice it is. Maybe it's the voice of God, maybe it's the voice of the Lamb of God, maybe it's the voice of an angel. We just don't know for sure. We only know that it's a voice; and that it comes from the area around the four horns of the golden altar which is before God.

Now, I tend to lean toward it being the voice of Jesus for a few reasons. First, because the golden altar, or the altar of incense, is also symbolic of the intercessory prayer of Jesus on our behalf. It not only represents the prayers of the people of God, but it also represents the prayers of Christ for the people of God. And since the voice comes from this vicinity, then I tend to believe it's probably the voice of Christ.

Not only that, but no one else has the authority to direct angels. Only God has that authority. And so for those two reasons, I believe it's probably the voice of Jesus Christ.

And then in verse 14 this voice says to the

14 sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”

Now who are these angels? Well, we know they're not holy angels, because nowhere in Scripture are holy angels ever bound. And so these have to be fallen angels and we've already met some just like them in the first half of this chapter. Those who were bound in the time of Genesis and had been kept for this very special time here during the Tribulation.

And so these are evidently more of those bound demons, which have been bound for a very long time. And apparently, each of these four bound demons has an army of demons that comes with them, because the armies that are with them in verse 16 are in the plural.

And so exactly who are these demons, and what is the meaning of the River Euphrates? Why are they bound in that place?

Well, that we know that the River Euphrates is the area of the Garden of Eden. And that the Euphrates River was one of the four rivers in the original Garden. It was also the place of Satan's original deception of Adam and Eve. It was the place where Adam was first tempted and fell, and of

course the whole human race with him. It was the place where the first assault on God and man took place.

Now, we also know the Euphrates River rises from sources near Mount Ararat in Turkey. And then it flows more than seventeen hundred miles before finally emptying into the Persian Gulf, which makes it the longest and most important river in the Middle East. And we read about it many times in the Old Testament, beginning all the way back in Genesis chapter 2 in the Garden of Eden.

And so it's like the focal point of all evil. And evidently God bound some demons there and held them in captivity until this future time, along with their army of two hundred million. And by the way, that area in the Middle East, is still the home of many of the major false religions of the world!

I mean just think about it. That's where Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and a lot of other isms—originated. And so it's still the focal point of many of Satan's counterfeit religions.

And so these demons and their armies, which are bound there even as we speak, will be released when this sixth trumpet is sounded. And for what purpose?

Well, look at verse 15.

15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

Back in chapter 9, during that release of demons, they were released with restraints; they weren't permitted to kill anyone. They could only torment certain folks for a specific period of time.

But now the restraints are removed and they're given permission to kill. And they're given that permission by God.

Now, how do we know that?

Because it says here that they were prepared for that hour, the day, the month, and the year. And since it was God who bound them in the first place, it's no doubt only God who has the authority to release them. And He will use them as agents of His judgment; to continue the death and destruction of the world before Christ returns to set up His kingdom.

And the hour and day and month and year has already been established for their release. God already knows that day and hour.

And then we're told the number of demons that would be released.

Verse 16 says, Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.

So this is not a guess or an estimate. There will be 200 million demons that will be released all at once and their orders will be to kill a third of mankind.

Now, that's the thirteenth time we've heard that term one-third, when one-third of something would be killed, or destroyed; and that's just in connection with the trumpet judgments.

Now back in chapter 6, verse 8, under the fourth seal, a fourth of the population of earth was killed. Since then, many more have been killed in all these terrible judgments. And here in this judgement another slaughter will take place, and another third of those in the world that are left will be killed. And so it's unimaginable, that in such a short period of time; all the bodies that will be laying dead. It's inconceivable. And it's hard to imagine even how they would even be able to dispose of billions of dead people.

This is not like anything in history. And there's no power on earth that will be able to stop it or withstand it, because these demons are operating as instruments of God's will.

And then in verse 17, we're given a description of them, or at least a description as John sees them.

He sees them as armies. And he's not talking about seeing them as literal people, he sees them in this vision as literal demons, just like God want's him to see them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone.

18 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths.

And so in this vision, God gives John a picture of “horses, and they have riders; and the riders had breastplates on the color of fire.

And he saw red, which is obviously the major color of fire. And he saw hyacinth, which is blue, and is the deepest color of a very hot fire. And he saw brimstone which is yellow like a sulfuric gas, which also depicts a very hot and destructive and deadly fire. And it's as if the fires of hell have arrived on earth, and in essence it has.

And then he describes their heads as that of a lion, which just points to the fact that these demons are fierce, and strong, and very determined as they come to murder and slaughter.

“And out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone,” which they use to kill a third of the remaining population of

the world. And though it doesn't describe exactly how all that will occur, and we can come up with all kinds of theories as to what all this all means, the bottom line is that many people will be killed by the fire, and the smoke, and the brimstone that these demons generate: by whatever means they generate it. And many people will become breathless, whether it's by asphyxiation by smoke and gas, or by being burned by literal fire. Either way it will be a horrible death.

And then verse 19,

19 For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

Again, we don't know exactly what form these demons will take on, but whatever it is, their power to kill will come from every direction and angle, from which there will be no defense.

And they will do deadly harm to one-third of the people left on earth at that time.

And then in verses 20 and 21, we have the reaction of the people who are left.

20 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.

21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

“The rest of mankind, who were not killed,” those that are still alive—the two-thirds that remain when the one-third are killed—still did not repent,” Even after all that, they still did not repent—which means they still had a chance to repent. They could have still repented, which means the gospel is still being preached in the world. God is still somehow communicating His offer of forgiveness, but still they don’t repent.

And so this ought to be a very sobering reminder to people who think they have all the time in the world to be saved. And who think that even if they are left behind in the Rapture, they’ll have an opportunity to be saved during the Tribulation.

Because when you get into this particular part of God’s plan, you won’t really have any control over your ability to repent or not repent. You may very well be among those who have no capacity to repent, just like these two-thirds mentioned here.

You say, but if I saw what they saw, I believe I’d repent at that point! But would you?

The Bible says these people don’t.

Why don’t they repent?

It’s unbelievable what they’ve seen, the judgment they’ve seen. They’ve seen the majority of the human race disappear before their eyes. They’ve seen demons torturing people and slaughtering people, but still they don’t repent.

And again, they could, but they don’t. Why is that?

Because they’ll be completely committed to their sin.

They'll be engulfed in drugs, and drunkenness, and in pornography, and sexual sins without restraint—rape, child molestation, pedophilia, homosexuality, bestiality—every conceivable and inconceivable expression of sexual evil imaginable.

And then at the end of verse 21, it mentions theft and stealing. In other words, honesty will be nonexistent. Property rights will be ignored.

And of course we see remnants of that even now in some cities in this country as people act out and riot and destroy other people's property.

But as bad as it might seem, it's not even comparable to what lies ahead. There will be no restraint whatsoever on sin.