



The Trumpet Judgments - Part 4
Revelation 9:13-21
GCSP - 09/25/2011

The depravity of mankind seems to know no boundaries. The evil thoughts and imaginations of the sick human mind run amuck. The deception that Satan spreads in the minds of those who keep themselves in check though is one that mankind is inherently good and only turns to evil when their environment and circumstances in essence force them to a life of crime, depravity, and immorality.

But that is the furthest thing from the truth. If not for the restraining hand of God and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, the evil that resides in every human on this planet would be manifest unhindered in the most severe ungodly ways. Mankind, including you and me, is not basically good but instead we are inherently evil. The only thing that separates us from utter chaos and inhuman actions is God. The only good we do is from God. And the only morality we have is from God.

Before we get to our primary passage this morning, allow me to read for you just a few passages in Scripture to support this truth (I will have the references on the screen if you want to jot them down and review at a later time), and we will turn together to another:

"Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14b-15).

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: Immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you" (Galatians 5:19-21a).

"Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry...But now you also, put them all aside: Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices" (Colossians 3:5; 8-9).

"Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:2-4).

"The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the Day of Judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed...like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct...reveling where they have no knowledge...They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions as they carouse with you, having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in

greed, accursed children; forsaking the right way, they have gone astray...speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice fleshly desires, by sensuality...they themselves are slaves of corruption" (2 Peter 2:9-10; 12a; 13b-15a; 18a; 19b).

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Romans**.

Romans 1:18-32

There are other passages but I hope you get the gist of the depravity of mankind. And the point in all of these passages is that we were once in that same state of mind and spirit, and we are fully capable of falling back into any of the sins mentioned. Only as we walk moment-by-moment and day-by-day in the power of the Holy Spirit within us are we able to restrain from committing these and other sins.

One of the most common issues that come to my attention through my FaceBook ministry is men who are supposedly Christian who are addicted to pornography, many of whom that have become so accustomed to it they no longer even view it as sin; they have pushed aside the conviction of the Holy Spirit one too many times and they are now un-phased and even hardened to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in this regard. Satan has them right where he wants them; they are rendered useless for the ministry God has for them even if they are able to cover it up and put on a good front when at church or in the company of other Christians.

Others who claim to be Christian struggle with other incessant sins but even under God's discipline they refuse to repent or they only half-heartedly repent.

The depraved state of mankind is never more evident than during the judgments of the Book of **Revelation**, which we will see vividly this morning.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Revelation**.

Revelation 9:13-21

Let's pray.

Before we dig into this next section, allow me to make mention of a few things I failed to cover last week, of which a few in our church questioned me about. As much as I would like to cover everything in the minutest of detail, I'd also like to finish this series of sermons in less time than it will take for all of these events to take place in real time. But feel free to ask after each sermon and I will determine if it needs to be touched upon the following week as I am doing here.

In **Revelation 9:4** it mentions that those **who have the seal of God on their foreheads** will not be affected by the plague of demons that will inflict torment on mankind for five months. I failed to properly identify who these sealed individuals are. It is not just the 144,000 as some would lead you to believe; this group includes all on the earth who are genuine believers. I have emphasized many times that the judgments befalling the earth during the Tribulation are directed only at those who continue to reject God. None of the judgments will directly come upon believers; once they have confessed Jesus as Lord of their life their judgment has already been satisfied at the cross, just like all the other believers before the Tribulation.

Another question was asked after last week's sermon concerning if others will be saved from this point on in the Tribulation; I can't say for sure. Chronologically we are approaching the end of the seven years of Tribulation so time is quickly running out. As we will see at the close of today's sermon, mankind continues to reject God even after this horrible sixth trumpet judgment, so it appears that no one else gets saved but it doesn't necessarily mean that's the case. There are a lot of details that will be filled in over the next several months but the 5th and 6th trumpets will most likely be taking place during the last year to year and a half of the Tribulation. But since the judgments also represent the mercy of God in giving mankind one last chance to repent, it is possible that others will come to the Lord at the eleventh hour but nothing is said concerning this possibility.

Okay, let's get to the sixth trumpet judgment.

Revelation 9:13-14

The altar was mentioned earlier when we were at the breaking of the fifth seal. There, the martyrs are seen praying and crying out to God from under the altar for the Lord to avenge them. We are not told who is now speaking from the altar; it could be the Lord, it could be an angel of the Lord, and it is even possible that God allows this privilege to fall on these same precious martyrs, we just aren't told. What we do know is the voice tells the sixth angel to release four fallen angels who have been bound at the great river Euphrates.

We are also not told the identity of these four fallen angels but we do have some clues that I would like to touch on for just a moment, even though this will be somewhat speculative which I have warned against during this series. My speculation in this case though is to point out a Biblical principle, and will not have any bearing on the meaning of the text.

Geographically, the current path of the Euphrates River runs from eastern Turkey, through Syria, through Iraq, and empties into the Persian Gulf between Kuwait and Iran. The reason I say the current path is because the face of the earth is going to be so drastically altered during the previous judgments that we can't be sure the same path will still be in place at this point in the Tribulation.

The Euphrates River was supposed to be the eastern border of Israel, the Promised Land, and it will be eventually during the Millennial Kingdom; but if you looked at a map today you would notice that modern day Israel is a long way from the Euphrates at every point of her border. To say the Euphrates ran through the Middle East would be an accurate statement, and unlike our Christian brothers and sisters who walked this earth 100 years ago or more, it is easy and obvious to see how the Middle East plays the primary role geographically in the end times.

If we traveled back in time though, all the dominant world powers in Scripture had this piece of real estate as part of their holdings; the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman Empires had this in common. The Egyptians were also a world power during Bible times but not on the scale of these other four. All of the other powers and nations in Scripture pale in comparison to these four dominant ones.

Hold your place in the Book of **Revelation** and turn with me in your Bibles to the Prophecy of **Daniel**.

Daniel 10:2-3; 12-13; 20-21

As I briefly mentioned last week, here we have the account of Daniel and an implied hierarchy of the angel/demon world. Daniel had prayed for understanding concerning the prophetic visions God had given him. At the very moment Daniel had prayed God dispatched an angel to Daniel with the answer, but a high ranking demon, called here the **prince of Persia**, fought against this angel for three weeks. Finally, Michael was sent to subdue this demon so the angel could get through to Daniel. After he gives Daniel the answers he had asked for, he begins his journey back to heaven but is given the foresight to know he will do battle again not only with the prince of Persia but also the **prince of Greece**.

The clear implication of this passage is that these two former world powers had very powerful demons which were most probably pulling the strings of the human kings and emperors who ruled over these kingdoms. And even though they are not mentioned in Scripture, there was no doubt a prince of Babylon and a prince of Rome as well; and since all of these world powers were so vast you also probably had the four most powerful demons in existence ruling over these kingdoms.

On a lesser scale, it is not a stretch of reality to assume there is a prince of Jefferson, or Fairplay, or South Park, along with every other human territory in this world. And each of these princes have untold numbers of lower ranking demons doing their bidding on smaller scales. I don't tell you this to frighten you, for if you are a genuine and obedient believer there is nothing to be frightened about, but I do want you to ponder the implications of the spiritual forces of darkness that influence the unbelieving world.

Should we really be shocked when immoral and unrighteous and ungodly decisions are made in our local, state, national, and world governments? As much as we desire to lash out at the human powers that be in all levels of this world, we must remember who is behind their evil and immoral actions.

Armed with this knowledge it should be a much easier pill to swallow when we are commanded to pray for those in authority over us. Regardless of what you feel personally about any of our leaders in this country and any outside this country, understanding the demonic influence that pervades their minds and actions should loosen up the aversion, if any exist in your mind, to praying for them.

Getting back to our text in **Revelation**, even though my speculation seems to make sense the identity of these four fallen angels is not revealed to us.

Revelation 9:15

There are two major points in this verse that warrant our attention:

First and foremost, these super powerful and wicked demons were prepared by God for this very moment in time! God is in control! The most powerful demons in Satan's evil hoard can do absolutely nothing apart from God's allowance!

I don't know about you, but to me that is not only amazing but tremendously reassuring and comforting. At the same time it should also be one of those "*Well duh*" moments for each of us. If God was not controlling how far demons are allowed to act in this world, wouldn't we all be dead? Why would any demon leave us around to witness and to spread the message of God's love and forgiveness and salvation? And armed with this knowledge, why are we so

complacent and inactive in the call to be His witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the world?

One of the points made at the conference this week was that doing witnessing is very different from being a witness, and **Acts 1:8** is clear that we are commanded to be a witness. Doing witnessing is the mechanics of presenting the gospel message and trying to persuade men and women to yield to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Being a witness is living your life in total agreement and obedience to the Word of God to such a point that unbelievers instantly and automatically know there is something amazingly different about you. In **2 Corinthians 2:15-16**, the Apostle Paul even says there is a divine aroma unbelievers should notice when in the presence of a genuine sold-out believer.

Quite honestly, we should be fearless when it comes to being a witness for our Lord. The forces of darkness and even Satan himself cannot stop us when God is leading us. The only honest excuse for not being a witness is we do not believe or trust God at His word.

The second point that warrants our attention is that one-third of the remaining population of the world will be wiped out by these demons and their forces described next. It is impossible to even estimate what this represents in pure numbers at this point. Upwards to 1.5 billion were killed during the opening of the fourth seal, and multitudes have been killed by the ensuing judgments, not to mention the multitudes of believers who have been martyred. If we started with 6 billion people it is not unlikely the population of the world is at 3 billion or less by now, which would mean another billion die during this plague.

Another reason to assume the earth's population is relatively low at this point is that in **11:13** a big deal is made about 7,000 being killed in an earthquake. I'm not discounting the loss of 7,000 lives but that's a paltry number compared to what we have already seen; almost hardly worth mentioning.

Revelation 9:16

Many try to refute the size of the army headed up by these four demons (literally in the Greek, two hundred thousand, thousand). They say it is impossible to mobilize such a force. One of the problems in their thinking is the Scripture does not say this is a human army. If you can accept the four super demons why can't you accept or even assume that these are demon forces and not human? As we will see in a moment, the horses certainly are not of the animal world. And quite honestly, as I mentioned a moment ago, 200 million people may represent a good portion of the remaining humanity in the world by this time; there wouldn't be many left to kill if 200 hundred million humans are the ones doing the killing. But since Scripture is not specific it is possible the riders represent demon controlled or demon possessed humans.

Revelation 9:17-19

Notice the figurative language used to describe these "**horses**" – and it's hard to call them horses to be honest, it is just the best description John could muster. Heads like lions and tails like a serpent but with more heads on each tail. What seems to be literal is that these demonic horses shoot **fire and smoke and brimstone** out of their mouths. And the way this reads the heads on the tails must have the same ability for this is how they do harm, as it says, and those who are killed are killed by this manner.

One possible issue that would point to these riders being human is that John does not mention anything special about them. If the riders were demons it is highly doubtful they would look completely human, although it is possible. Regardless, this is a massive demon-led and demon-controlled force of killers.

Revelation 9:20-21

Chuck Swindoll writes, *"Perhaps more disturbing than the death and destruction just depicted is the reaction of the survivors of these plagues...I wish I could tell you that **9:20-21** declares that the rest of humanity, upon seeing these things, will turn from their wicked ways and acknowledge their righteous Redeemer as Lord and God."*

The sad fact of the matter is the survivors of this decimation will become even more hardened than ever against God. They did not repent and the implication is they simply continue on with their evil sinful lifestyles.

Romans 3:11-18 describes these survivors very appropriately; just listen as I read. **"There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their paths, and the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."**

Although you may not have put it together this way, John shows us the root problem that causes men to reject God even under these circumstances is idolatry; idolatrous addictions to the world's treasures and the world's pleasures. We won't take the time this morning, especially since we will see this later in our study of **Revelation**, but idolatry is compared with drunkenness and with adultery. An idolatrous person becomes so enamored and infatuated with his or her lust that nothing else registers. In the same way they become so intoxicated with their idolatry that nothing else can be recognized or perceived.

They did not repent because they are too lustful and too drunk. They cannot think straight because of their idolatry.

Unfortunately, idolatry is alive and well in the lives of believers. We may not recognize it as such but it is idolatry nonetheless.

Ephesians 5:5 describes an idolater as one who is immoral, impure or covetous.

Colossians 3:5, which I read to you in the introduction, describes an idolater as one who is immoral, impure, lustful, having evil desires, and greedy.

Idolatry is not just bowing down to a carved image or worshiping a false god, idolatry is desiring the things of the world, and thus not being content with the things of God. Lack of contentment with the provision of God is the same as not being content with God Himself.

The primary areas we become idolatrous in are:

- Material Possessions
- Important People (important to us)
- Worldly Positions

- Uncontrolled Passions
- Selfish Pursuits

In and of themselves most of these things are not evil per se, but the line can be crossed very easily and we will in essence be aligning ourselves with these hardened and idolatrous sinners I our text this morning.

There is nothing wrong with having a measure of material possessions, or loving the people close to you, or striving to get ahead in your career, or having passions or pursuits and goals, but each of these are ripe for becoming an idol in your life. Any one of these become an idol when it crosses the line into sin and when it takes precedence over God in your life.

When your craving for possessions sees you going into debt to obtain it or causes you to ignore your responsibilities of being generous in your giving to the church and to the needy, material possessions moves into the category of idolatry.

When you love the people in your life more than you love God, you have slid into idolatry.

When getting ahead in your career causes you to take short-cuts or to lose your integrity, or even causes you to relinquish your service to the Lord even if in your mind it is temporary, you have become idolatrous.

When your passion for a relationship or in a relationship slips into sinful lust, or leads you to pornography and immorality, you are an idolater.

And when your goals and pursuits turn selfish and all-consuming, idolatry has taken root in your life.

There are many other avenues for idolatry but you get the picture. Idolatry can at times have a stranglehold on your life. The only way out is through repentance; something the people during the Tribulation refuse to do.

Let's pray.