

Session 9: The Fifth and Sixth Trumpet Judgments (Rev. 9)

We are continuing in our series on the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls of wrath. We are in session nine, which is the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments found in Revelation 9. Both of those judgments—those fifth and sixth judgments—are in Revelation 9.

OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST SIX TRUMPETS

A quick overview of the six trumpets—of course the seventh trumpet is the coming of the Lord and the rapture of the Church, etc. The six trumpets, paragraph A—the first four of the six destroy the natural resources of the Antichrist empire. They do not actually touch people physically. The fifth and sixth trumpet do touch people physically in a very intense way.

THE PURPOSE OF THE FIFTH AND SIXTH TRUMPETS

Paragraph B. The fifth and the sixth trumpets release two demonic armies into the earth—from hell into the earth. There are two different demonic armies that are described. The first one is an army of locusts. The second army is an army of horsemen. Those two armies come at two different times; one after the other one is released on the earth. It is truly hell on earth in the full sense that it even occurs at this level until the fifth and sixth trumpet.

Hell is opened up and imprisoned demons—hordes of them—are loosed onto the human race, to those who have refused the grace of God and salvation. The purposes of this—well, there are several purposes. One of them is that the Lord wants the wicked to see how terrible the kingdom of darkness is before they have to go there forever. He wants to show them the nature of the kingdom of darkness because they have a very short amount of time before the Lord appears.

He comes at the seventh trumpet. This is the fifth and sixth. He gives them a taste of the kingdom of darkness in full intensity so they will still have an opportunity to say, “I do not want this. I do not want anything to do with this.” They still can be saved.

TWO CATEGORIES OF UNBELIEVERS DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Paragraph C. There are two categories of unbelievers in the Tribulation: those who have taken the mark of the Beast, and those who we call reprobate. They cannot repent. They have responded to the Lord in the equivalency of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which means they cannot repent. I talk to people periodically about this issue, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

If you think you have committed blasphemy of the Holy Spirit and that troubles you, you have not committed it. That is a fact. If it troubles you and you are trying to get free from it—a person who has committed blasphemy of the Holy Spirit has no desire for God or an interest in repenting. If you are troubled by it, it is a demon lying to you to throw off your walk with the Lord. Do not concern yourself with believing that lie. You have not done it.

The second category of unbelievers is those who have not taken the mark of the Beast. They still have a chance to repent. Those are the ones for which this fifth and sixth trumpet judgments are redemptive. They can still wake up to salvation.

WHEN EARTH WORSHIPS DEMONS, GOD RELEASES AN ARMY OF DEMONS

Paragraph E. What is happening as well in another dimension is that the wicked of the earth are worshipping demons. They are worshipping Satan. It is the most powerful satanic worship movement in history in terms of intensity, power, and numbers. Billions are worshipping Satan, which means they are worshipping demons.

What is really happening is that the Lord is lifting His hand off the demons and letting their true nature come to light. These people are worshipping demons, and the demons are now free to come near them, and the demons are tormenting them.

The normal way a demon worshiper would think is, “Hey, if I worship a demon loyally and faithfully, the demon will help me.” Wrong. A person who worships a demon—a demon has no capacity for mercy, no capacity for kindness. If someone is faithful in worshipping a demon, the demon will still murder them and torment them. This is not something the demon worshipers are expecting; the true nature of a demon can never change. The Lord is allowing them to see where they are going and the condition of the kingdom of darkness when it is fully released in hell.

FIFTH TRUMPET: TORMENT BY DEMONIC LOCUSTS (REVELATION 9:1-11)

Roman numeral II. We will look at the fifth trumpet just for a few minutes. Then we will look at the sixth trumpet probably for a shorter amount of time. The fifth trumpet is a release of a demonic army of locusts. Demonic locusts come and torment men for five months.

Revelation 9:1: “Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth.” That star is an angel. “To him”—to this star, this angelic being. There is debate if it is a good angel or bad angel. The argument is persuasive in both directions. What really matters is that Jesus has the authority over this fallen star, this fallen angel. The star is identified as a personage. It is not an inanimate object.

In Revelation 9:1: “To him was given the key to the bottomless pit,” which is commonly referred to as hell or the abyss. Verses 2–3: This fallen star “opened the bottomless pit . . . then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth.” The angel takes the key, opens the pit, smoke bellows out across the earth, and locusts come out of the smoke.

“To them”—these locusts, these demons—“was given power” (v. 3). They were given the power that a scorpion has to torment, to sting people. Verse 4: But these locusts, these demons, “were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth.” They were commanded to only touch the men who do not have the seal of God. In other words, they can only touch unbelievers. Those who have the seal of God on them are protected.

Verse 5: “And they were not given authority to kill them.” That was the next thing they were commanded: not to “kill them, but to torment them” (v. 5). They were to limit their torment to five months—like the torment of a scorpion. “In those days men will seek death and they will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them” (v. 6).

This is mysterious. We do not understand how. They will not be able to commit suicide in the anguish of their torment. I am sure the Scripture is right in saying they will try to, but it will not work. Maybe every time they get to the point of it, a demon appears to take them to hell. You have heard testimonies of people going to hell. Different ones who have had testimonies on their death bed—a demon comes and it is more horrifying than anything they can imagine. Some testify that they end up not dying, and get saved because they are terrified by what they saw. Maybe the spiritual realm is opened up to them.

I do not know how they are prevented from killing themselves. Somehow they are prevented.

LOCUSTS

Paragraph C. These locusts are demonic beings. They are supernatural beings. They are not natural locusts. The details of the prophecy give the specific rank, the specific names, and the five-month period of these demonic beings in Revelation 9.

The fifth and sixth trumpets—the details are given so clearly that they demand that we not simply dismiss them and spiritualize them like many commentators do. Commentators will say, “Well, this is just symbolic.” Then they do not account for the details of the prophecy. We cannot dismiss this. A common interpretation is that these are helicopters. John was seeing a helicopter from the first century, what he thought a helicopter would look like. No, these are not helicopters. They come out of the abyss and have the power to sting for five months. The characteristics of these locusts make it clear they are not natural.

TORMENT LASTS FIVE MONTHS AND CORRESPONDS WITH NOAH’S 150 DAYS

Paragraph F. The torment lasts for five months. It is interesting that that corresponds to the period of time that a locust will pillage an area—for five months, from May to September, in the Middle East.

An interesting fact is that the five months, with thirty days in each, would be 150 days. I do not know what this means. I just find it interesting because the coming of the Lord is likened to the days of Noah, but the waters of the flood were causing trouble to the earth for 150 days. It is the same timeframe. I do not know the relationship, but I am guessing there is one. If one of you could figure that out, that would be nice! I cannot imagine it is purely coincidental that the 150-day periods of the judgment of Noah and of the fifth trumpet are purely accidental.

IT IS GIVEN

Paragraph H. Throughout this fifth trumpet—and the sixth one as well—it is stressed that God is the One granting permission. Permission is given. The unexpressed agent says, “It was commanded to them, or permission was granted them, or given to them” (vv. 3–5). It never says

who say this, but it is understood throughout the book of Revelation that it is God—unless designated as otherwise—as the One with the authority over the angelic and the demonic realm, because demons can only move as far as God will allow them. The devil is on a chain. He can only go as far as the Lord lets him go. He is very measured in his boundaries. He can move within his boundaries, but his boundaries are set by the Lord.

There are strategic, divine limitations on these locusts. They are not supposed to hurt the grass, and they can only hurt men without the seal, and only for five months. You can add another one. They cannot kill. They were not allowed to kill. These limitations are strategic. I do not know the reason for them, but I am sure there is a reason for each one of them.

SEAL OF GOD

Paragraph J. The seal of God will be upon the foreheads of the saints, in the same way that Israel was protected during the plagues of Egypt; in the same way, the saints will be protected during the end-time plagues of Egypt, so to speak, which are the end-time judgments and the Great Tribulation.

The children of Israel were in Goshen. Most of you are familiar with what I mean by the Goshen principle. Goshen was a geographical area in Egypt where the children of Israel lived. It was the slave camp. The Scripture says clearly that in Goshen, God’s judgments fell on the land of Egypt, but not in Goshen. The same principle—there will be a distinction; it is what the Lord told Moses—“I will make a difference between the Egyptians and the children of Israel” (Ex. 8:23, paraphrased). There will be a distinction between the believers and unbelievers in terms of the release of the judgment of God.

When the angel of death came over the land at the Passover to kill the firstborn in the time of Moses—in the generation of Moses—if they put the blood on the doorpost in Exodus 12, it was a picture of the mark of God, of the seal of God. It protected them from the spirit of death.

GOD SEALS THE SAINTS BEFORE HIS JUDGMENT IS RELEASED

Paragraph K. Another example where the Lord protects His own people in a time of judgment is, of course, Egypt in the generation of Moses, which is the most graphic example—the most prolific one. There are more details on it. There is another example; there are several of them in the Old Testament.

This is a very important one in Ezekiel 9. This is in the time of the Babylonian captivity when Ezekiel is prophesying at the same time as Daniel and Jeremiah. Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah were contemporaries. The Lord said to an angel in Ezekiel 9:4, “Go through . . . the midst of Jerusalem”—because judgment was coming on the city of Jerusalem—“and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.”

God essentially tells an angel, “Walk through the city of Jerusalem and whichever people sigh and cry over sin”—in other words, intercession. These are saints. They are troubled by the compromise in the land. They are crying out. Literally, a spirit of intercession saves their lives.

Verse 5: “To the others”—the ones who do not cry out against these things—the Lord “said in my hearing, ‘Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare . . . Utterly slay . . . but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark’” (v. 6). The Lord is essentially telling the angel, “Put a mark on the forehead of those who intercede and cry out to Me for mercy.” When the angel is released, God commands the angel, “Do not touch anyone; do not even go near those who have the mark of God upon them” (v. 4, paraphrased).

JESUS HAS GIVEN THE SAINTS AUTHORITY OVER SCORPIONS

Paragraph L. The Lord spoke in a general way with authority over Satan. I believe it will actually have application in the fifth trumpet. Though I believe the principle is much bigger than the fifth trumpet, I believe it will have application.

Jesus said in Luke 10:19 (paraphrased), “I give you the authority to trample on serpents and I give you authority to trample on scorpions”—then He went on and made it more general—“over all the power of the enemy, and nothing by any means shall hurt you.”

I believe when the Lord said this, He obviously understood the fifth trumpet; that the locusts would be released with tails like scorpions to sting, but that the saints would not be hurt by any of it. Again, that was not the general principle. He was talking about authority over Satan, but it does have an application in the fifth trumpet. These locusts come out of the bottomless pit. The fallen star, or the angel, opens the bottomless pit. I want to give a little bit of teaching here on what the bottomless pit is.

THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

The bottomless pit is what we refer to as hell right now. It is a temporary prison for certain fallen angels. It is also a temporary prison for unbelievers who die. The reason it is a temporary prison is because after the millennial kingdom, everyone in hell, or hades, is thrown into the lake of fire. Hell as we refer to it is actually only like the county jail.

It is not the federal prison. The federal prison is the lake of fire. That is the final place of punishment, the lake of fire. 2 Peter 2:4 gives us a little insight into how the demonic relates to the bottomless pit. Jude tells us the same thing. It relates to the fifth trumpet here. Peter teaches us, “If God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness,” and here is the key word, “to be reserved for judgment” (v. 4).

They are not only reserved to be judged in the lake of fire. They are actually reserved to be an agent of judgment in the Tribulation against the wicked. They are being held. They are reserved to be used as an instrument of judgment as well as to partake of greater judgment in the lake of fire.

Most of the demons are moving around the earth. They are in the mid-heavens, or the second heavens. They are moving on the earth. There are demons—a certain category of demons that are in chains of darkness being held captive in hell right now. Most demons are moving around the

earth tormenting people or doing the work of Satan. There is a category right now in chains of darkness. Those are the demons that will be released in the fifth and sixth trumpet.

They are held in darkness right now in chains. Jude 6 gives us another picture of what Peter was talking about. Jude talks about the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but they left their own abode. God has reserved them everlasting chains. They have chains on them right now under darkness for the judgment of the great day. They are instruments of judgment in the fifth and sixth judgment.

They are also being reserved to receive far greater judgment from the Lord, which is the lake of fire. Most demons are not in chains right now—only a certain category. There is not much in the Scripture about them. I think it gives us enough understanding—those two verses—to know they are in chains, but they are released from their prison for a short amount of time in the fifth and sixth trumpets.

ABYSS IS A BETTER TERM THAN BOTTOMLESS PIT

“The bottomless pit” I do not think is the best term. The Greek word is “the abyss.” The bottomless pit is actually in the earth and it is not technically bottomless. If it were bottomless, it would go right through the earth. I think “abyss” is a better term. Most translations either use “hell” or “abyss.” The earth—the center of the earth is 4,000 miles from the surface—8000 miles in diameter. We do not know that it is at the center, but we know that it is 4,000 miles from the surface to the center. The demons—the demonic underworld is actually under the surface of the earth.

Somewhere down there—you know, 100 miles or 1,000 miles or 4,000 miles down; we do not have any idea—but we will never, ever be able to contact that realm in a natural way. Nobody is going to drill down and see it. There is a whole world—a whole underworld that is actually in the earth. There is a huge shaft that will be opened up.

The pit will be opened up. The key will be given to this star that is fallen, and he will open up this huge shaft. These demons will come out that are in prison right now, in chains. They will torment people for five months; those that do not have the mark of God, that have the mark of the beast.

SHEOL, HADES, GEHENNA, TARTARUS, AND THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

Paragraph P. There are five words—and this is what I was referring to a minute ago. They describe the underworld. Five biblical words—five words used in the Bible. Not every translation uses all of them. “Sheol” is the Hebrew word. That is the main one used in the Old Testament.

“Hades” is the Greek word that is used in the New Testament. “Gehenna,” “tartarus,” and “the bottomless pit” or “the abyss.” When the King James Version runs into any of those words, it always says “hell.” It just says “hell” every time, but there are actually distinctions within the

underworld. There are three distinct chambers in the underworld that are described in the Old Testament or described in the Scripture.

Number one is where the unbeliever goes in the Old and New Testaments. If an unbeliever dies today, they go to that chamber—that place right now called hades. If you are in the Old Testament, you called it sheol. It is the underworld, the chamber for where the unredeemed go to wait for final judgment, which is after the millennial kingdom at the great white throne.

The second chamber in the Old Testament is where the redeemed went. When David died, he went to that good chamber in the underworld. It is called Abraham's bosom. When Jesus died and rose from the dead, He went and cleared out that chamber, and took them to the presence of God. That chamber is finished now from the cross and resurrection on. That chamber is no longer functional.

There is a third chamber in the underworld where the demons go that are chained. Most demons are not chained in the underworld except for this particular category. There could be several categories of chained demons. I do not know. I do not really have that much interest in all those kind of details. It gives you a little more insight on that. I just wanted you to have a little bit of a bearing on what this bottomless pit is that is being opened. It is the chamber where the demons are held captive. It is opened.

DEMONIC LOCUST ARMY

Paragraph X. Now John describes the locust army. This is a demonic army. He compares them to horses prepared for battle. He gives several descriptions of this demonic army. This is actual; this is not figurative. This is actual. He is seeing it. He uses the word like eight times. He is not saying it is exactly that, but it's as if he says, "What I am seeing is like it. I do not really have terms to describe exactly what I am seeing."

It is literal—what he is seeing. He is describing demons. This particular imprisoned army that is set free—not set free, but being used in a mission of judgment. They have crowns of gold upon their heads. That speaks of their supremacy. They have human faces. That speaks of their human abilities and emotion. They have hair like women. I am not touching (not exploring) that. They have teeth like lions. I have taught this several times through the years, and I am politically correct or something. I always dodge it. They have teeth like lions, which means they have the ability to tear their prey apart, although their power is in stinging, tormenting. They have breastplates, durability in battle. They have wings, and when they move, it is a terrifying sound to their prey. The power is in their tails to sting for five months. Again, these limitations I find are interesting. Why only five months? We know that the locusts—it parallels a natural locust destruction for five months. It is far more significant than that, I am sure. These are very strategic descriptions. They are not given to entertain us. They are given because they will have meaning to us in that hour.

Paragraph Y. They have a king. There is a hierarchy even in the imprisoned demons. There is a very deliberate hierarchy in Satan's kingdom.

Let's move to the sixth trumpet. There are a lot of distinctions between this demonic army and the other one. This is an army of demonic horsemen, and the other was of demonic locusts. There are similarities. They have tails that sting. It is interesting that the fifth trumpet is likened to a scorpion. The sixth one is likened to a serpent.

Jesus said, "Scorpions and serpents you will have authority over" (Lk. 10:19, paraphrased). Again, He meant through history, but He undoubtedly understood Revelation 9 before He gave it to John. This is the most terrifying of the judgments up to this point and time.

At the sixth trumpet, the demonic horsemen kill one-third of the earth—literally kill one-third of the earth. Again, those who read this chapter symbolically—I understand why people want this chapter to be symbolic. You cannot wish a meaning on the Bible. We have to take it at face value. The men who are seeking to die from the fifth trumpet, the ones that are stung by the scorpion tails of these locusts—for five months they want to die.

SIXTH TRUMPET: DEATH BY DEMONIC HORSEMEN (REVELATION 9:12-21)

Now, in the sixth trumpet, they will die. Their wish is now going to come to pass. Again, the reason this is so horrific is that the Lord is actually trying to wake them up before they go to hell forever. He is giving them a snapshot, a taste of hell on earth while there is still time to change.

Revelation 9:13: "I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar." You know the golden altar. That is where the prayer ministry from the earth is; we read about it in Revelation 8—that the prayers of the saints go to the golden altar and the angel throws in incense. Then it ascends to God from the golden altar. The golden altar is connected to the prayer movement. It is interesting that it is from the prayer center, if you will—from the prayer headquarters. Of course, it is not headquarters in that sense. From the central place where prayers ascend before God, the voice goes forth and commissions this most horrific sixth trumpet.

"A voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God"—and obviously it the voice of God, or a voice He has commissioned to speak—"saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates'" (Rev. 9:13-14). The angel of the sixth trumpet has the job of blowing the sixth trumpet. He has a second job of releasing the four demonic angels—the fallen angels that are bound. We know these are fallen angels because they are bound. All angels that are bound—that is negative. They are evil angels. The Bible calls demons angels, fallen angels, or evil angels, or demons, because the word angel means messenger. It is an evil messenger, whereas the good angels are good messengers, because the word angel means "messenger."

"Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates" (v. 14). These four angels who had been prepared—God prepared them. 2,000 years ago, John sees that God has four demonic beings prepared strategically for one hour of history. It says that the four angels have been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year exactly.

There is a specific time on God’s calendar that these demonic angels were reserved in judgment to be released—for this very moment in human history, in natural history. The mandate of these four powerful principalities—I do not know that would be their formal designation. They are four mighty demonic angels. They are released, these four, to kill one third of the human race.

KILLING ONE THIRD OF THE WORLD POPULATION

This is a literal number. John hears it twice. “Now the number . . . of the horsemen”—under their authority, the number of the demons under these four mighty demons—“was two hundred million” (Rev. 9:16). We have four leading demons with 200 million. That would be fifty million under each one of them, not that it is perfectly symmetrically proportioned like that. It would be fifty million. You are talking about powerful demons. These four have 200 million demons under the four of them collectively.

John said in verse 16, “I heard the number of them.” 200 million. There is no guesswork! Verse 17: “Those who sat on them”—horsemen— “had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of these horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone.” Out of the mouth of these horses and horsemen—fire, and smoke, and brimstone came out of their mouths. Fire comes out of these horsemen, or horses, or both.

We do not have all the clarity—but fire comes out of their mouths. Not just fire; smoke does too. Smoke comes out and kills. Being killed by fire, killed by smoke, or killed by brimstone: I would not choose any of the three, but they are three different descriptions of the way that the one-third of the human race will be killed.

“By these three plagues”—they are different plagues (v. 18). The brimstone plague is different from the smoke, which is different than the fire. A third of mankind will be killed by the fire, by the smoke, and by the brimstone that came out of the mouths of these horses.

“For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents” (v. 19). I picture the head of a serpent at the end of their tail—“with them they do harm.” We know the scorpion tails would sting. We do not know what these tails do, but we know it is bad. The power in these horses or horsemen is in their mouths. Three plagues come out of their mouths. Their tails are like serpents that obviously, or seemingly, bites and kills, or at least causes great harm.

LITERALLY ONE-THIRD WILL DIE WITH SIXTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT

Paragraph B. To emphasize the literalness of this judgment, John twice—in verses 15 and 18—repeats it two times, “One-third will be killed” (paraphrased). If we honor the Scriptures, we cannot take a part of the Scripture we are uncomfortable with and just dismiss it. I have asked guys who have done that, “How can you dismiss it?”

The answer I have received several times: “It is just ridiculous. The gravity—it could not mean that.”

I say, “That is not a good reason to dismiss the Bible.” Others have given other answers, but none of them were satisfactory or convincing.

We also take the literalness of it because John told us the specific number. He heard it. It is not just a symbolic picture. It is an actual number. He actually saw what they really look like, these demons. He understood there was a specific hour, day, month, and year that they were being prepared—these four mighty demons—to release this judgment. This is all very literal and specific.

HOW MANY IS ONE-THIRD?

Paragraph C. Just put your seatbelt on here on paragraph C. Of course, the numbers are so big, I cannot relate to them; none of us really can. It is just incomprehensible—the numbers.

The population in 2025 in the earth is estimated at eight billion. I am in no way suggesting this will take place in 2025. My point is to give you a feel for the population. It could be fifty years after this. It could be decades after; it could be sooner. Just to give you a feeling for that—it could be eight billion people.

I want to give you a sense of the gravity of it. After the fourth seal, one-fourth of the human race dies at the fourth seal. One-fourth. So if there were eight billion, that means two billion will die in the fourth seal.

That leaves six billion left. If a third of six billion die, that leaves four billion total dead and four billion who remained. We cannot fathom what four billion deaths would mean in a three-and-a-half-year period of time. That would boil down to three million people a day or 100 million a month—100 million people dying a month under judgment before the transition to the age to come.

That is mind-boggling—to understand that the Lord is doing this in order to create the optimum environment for the most amount of people to be saved and to grow in the deepest levels of love without violating their free will.

ISAIAH PROPHESED OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED (ISAIAH 13:6–13)

Paragraph D. Isaiah describes this time frame in Isaiah 13. It is describing specifically the timeframe of the Great Tribulation. Undoubtedly, at the very forefront is the sixth trumpet. It is not only the sixth trumpet, but certainly the sixth trumpet is paramount. At least in the Lord’s mind when He is giving this to Isaiah. I do not know that Isaiah understood it.

“Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel”—Isaiah 13:9. It will come cruelly. It will be fierce. God will destroy sinners. Verse 10: “The stars . . . will not give their light.” This is when the sun will be darkened. This is the Great Tribulation time. Verse 11: “I will punish the world for its evil.” Verse 12: “I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold.”

According to these numbers, about four billion—could be more or could be less, but that is the approximate number. The Lord says, “I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold” at this time (Isa. 13:12). Of course, it intensifies through the seven bowls of wrath. It actually gets more intense than that. Isaiah 24:6 describes the same time frame: “Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and a few men are left.”

Those who dwell in the land are desolate. The inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men are left. This is Isaiah describing the events that are associated with the Great Tribulation. The sixth trumpet and the seventh bowl are really intense as well. The voice in verse 13—“The voice from the golden altar which is before God” (Rev. 9:13). The golden altar, again, is the place of intercession. There is a voice, the voice of God—whether it is God directly, or God through an angel, or some agency that He chooses.

A voice comes out of the prayer center, so to speak—out of the prayer center of heaven, the golden altar. That is not a perfectly accurate description to call it the prayer center, but you get the idea. God commissions the angel with the sixth trumpet. He says, “You have blown your trumpet. Now I have another mandate. Release these four mighty, demonic angels. They are bound at the Euphrates River” (Rev. 9:13, paraphrased).

EUPHRATES RIVER

Why the Euphrates River? Well, I am not going to go into it now. I do not have that much insight. There are a few points. Ask the Lord a question—and you can find it in different commentators about the significance of the Euphrates in redemptive history. It is where the garden of Eden was and where the garden of Eden will be restored. It is the boundaries of the Promised Land. These demons are bound there.

“Like where? Where is there?”

“I do not know, but there.”

“Underneath the Euphrates River?”

“Probably.”

“How far down?”

“I do not know.”

Those are questions I get asked, and I say, “I do not have a clue. Bound in some proximity to the Euphrates River. Whether below the earth where other demons are in prison; who knows?” The point I am making is that the voice from the golden altar is related to the prayer ministry through history and the prayer ministry of the Church in the end times. The prayers are accumulated through history, but they are accelerated in the final years before the Lord’s return.

OLD TESTAMENT TWO PLACES WHERE YOU CAN FIND MERCY

Paragraph I. In the Old Testament, there are two places of asylum, or two places in the Old Testament where you can find mercy if you were charged with a crime. The horns of the altar were one place, and the cities of refuge were the second place.

The horns of the altar in heaven are the place of mercy, where you can cry out for mercy from death if you were being charged. The reason the voice is coming from the horns of the altar—the clear place of mercy—it is where you went and cried out for mercy from death. At the horns of the altar, the saints are to have the assurance that there will be mercy in the judgment, even upon the wicked if they want it. There will be mercy for the saints if they cry out for it as well.

Throughout the judgment, it will be related to prayer. That is the golden altar. It will also be related to the horns of the altar, which is a place of mercy.

Though this judgment is so severe, it flows from prayer and from mercy at the throne of God. God is seeking the good of His people, and even the unbelievers—that they would be saved and they would come to Him. It is an act of mercy, the whole thing. It flows from the prayer center and the mercy place around the throne of God. We are taking hold of the horns of the altar every time we pray in this age.

MERCY FROM THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR IS GOD FAVORING THE SAINTS

In essence, we are grabbing the horns of the altar and asking for mercy. In Daniel 7—paragraph J. Daniel 7:22, I love this prophecy. It is talking about this time of the Great Tribulation, the end of it. “For the Ancient of Days”—Daniel saw the Father as the Ancient of Days—He came, “and a judgment was made in favor of the saints, and a judgment was made that would remove the wicked from killing them (v. 22, paraphrased). It would give the government of the earth to the saints. From the throne of God, favor is being granted throughout this whole Tribulation scenario to those who love God and those who want His mercy.

WORLDWIDE HARDNESS OF HEART: FOUR MAIN STRONGHOLDS IN SOCIETY

Roman numeral IV. In conclusion here: Revelation 9:20–21. “But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent from the works of their hands.” They did not repent from worshiping demons, because the Antichrist worship movement is a demon worship movement. It is Satan worship. Verse 21: “And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or sexual immorality or their thefts.”

Paragraph A. The greatest height of sin in all of history will be in the Great Tribulation time. Sin will reach its highest pinnacle of history. There will be more demonized people than at any time in history in those final years. Not just the final three years—but in the final years leading up to the second coming. We are already seeing a great increase of sin in the earth in just the last couple of decades, where sin is increasing and abounding. The moral climate of the earth is becoming more and more perverse, quickly.

MURDER, IMMORALITY, SORCERY AND THEFT

There are four major strongholds in society in the final years of natural history. We are seeing already the early tokens of it: murder, sorcery, immorality, and theft. Those will be the four main Satanic strongholds in society. That is why the Great Tribulation—one reason—is so severe. Men will increase in these four things the closer they get to the coming of the Lord. Daniel saw this time in Daniel. 8:23. He said, “In the latter time . . . when the transgressors have reached their fullness.”

There is a time when sin will reach its fullness, but so will righteousness. Sin will become ripe, but righteousness will also become ripe. There will be a deeper maturity in love and righteousness in the saints than at any time in history.

Someone asks the question, “Well, does it get worse, or does it get better?”

The answer is both. Yes. The wheat and the tares will mature together, is what Jesus said (Mt. 13:30). The wheat—the righteous, the good—will mature at the same time that the tares or the wickedness matures.

MURDER

Paragraph C. There will be more people possessed by demons of murder than at any time of history. There will be a great murder movement, and of course, they will be focused upon the saints and upon Israel. The prayer movement and the Great Tribulation will be a check that stops and hinders the increase of murder against the saints.

One of the reasons the Great Tribulation seems unreasonable is that we do not know the height of what human rebellion will be against God. We cannot imagine the height of where it is going. We do not mean to, but we accidentally imagine the Lord is a little bit over-doing it. The Lord might say, “No, I know you love Me, but I am not overdoing it. You do not know what I know about what this situation of the earth will be like. I will not do anything that is not absolutely necessary for love and righteousness to increase.”

IMMORALITY

Paragraph D. Immorality. Of course with technology, where technology is going in the next ten, twenty, thirty, forty years if the Lord tarries, we cannot even imagine the amount of sexual bondage and the number of people who will have demons related to sexual bondage.

Imagine forty years from now—not just the technology of today, but holograms and whatever happens beyond holograms—above and beyond anything we can imagine today with where technology is going. Perversion will follow in the wake of that.

SORCERY

Sorcery is demon worship. There will be an antichrist worship movement, which is a Satan worship movement. The earth will be filled with Satan worshippers.

You hear them sometimes say, “Well, America is becoming more and more secular.” That is certainly happening right now. However, it will not end up that way. The nations will not become more secular, meaning more intellectually based and distant from spiritual reality.

The earth is going to become intensely spiritual. They will be deeply involved in spiritualism (on the negative side) and on the kingdom of God (the positive side). Right now there is a trend toward the secular, meaning the more intellectually-based: “I do not really believe that. I do not believe it. I want to see it. Prove it through science.”

Before it is over, even the most intelligent people of the earth who are moving in darkness will be far more spiritually than they are intellectually-based in their lifestyles. There will be a demonic worship movement and a sexual perversion that is connected to the occult—and the sexual perversion will not just be heathenism. It will not just be pleasure seekers. There will be a dark spiritual reality related to the occult, murder, immorality, and perversion. It will all come together in a dark spirituality. It will not just be people in sexual perversion for physical pleasure.

There will be a murder and an occult dimension to it as well. It will be a profound, dark spirituality that will cover the earth. So will the kingdom of God cover the earth. There will be a great collision, and the prayer movement is in the balance.

THE NATIONS WILL HAVE HARDENED HEARTS AS PHAROAH DID

Paragraph G. This happens to individuals through history. God gives them up, meaning He allows them to do what they have set their heart to do. It’s as if He says, “If you want to do it, I will let you do it, but when I give you up, I will not restrain you any more.” There will be a demonic power. When the Lord gives up a person, it means He lifts His hand and they go to the natural direction of darkness with the demon realm helping them.

God hardened Pharaoh. He gave Pharaoh up to his own wickedness. God gives up different people throughout history. There is going to be a time when He is going to do this in a corporate, wholesale way.

He is going to give the nations over to what is in their heart coming up to the time of the second coming, and then He is going to replace all of darkness with the greatest transfer—the greatest revolution of all of history—when Jesus Himself comes and drives all the evil leaders off the planet.

“GOD GAVE THEM UP...”

Romans 1:24–28 will be happening on a global level. At the same time, the Church is going to be growing and maturing like no time in history. “God . . . gave them up to uncleanness” (v. 24). This means they want to move in uncleanness. He will lift the restraint off and let them have the uncleanness that they want. That uncleanness has a demonic power that is bigger than most people think when they play with it.

God gives them up to vile passions. A person steps over the line in sexual perversion. The Lord, after a season, will woo them, woo them, discipline them, and get their attention. There is a time He lifts His hands off and says, “That vile passion will bring you to a level you did not want to go and has a power rooted in the kingdom of darkness with devils.”

Verse 28. Not just uncleanness and not just defiled passions; it is not just sexual immorality and murder as well—He gives them over to an entirely debased mind where they cannot make sense of truth at all. That is what is going to be happening in the nations, but in a minute—the sixth trumpet. Of course, to be a “minute”—I do not really have a timeframe for that. A minute afterwards—the seventh trumpet, and Jesus is coming and announcing His takeover of the whole earth.

Amen, let’s stand.



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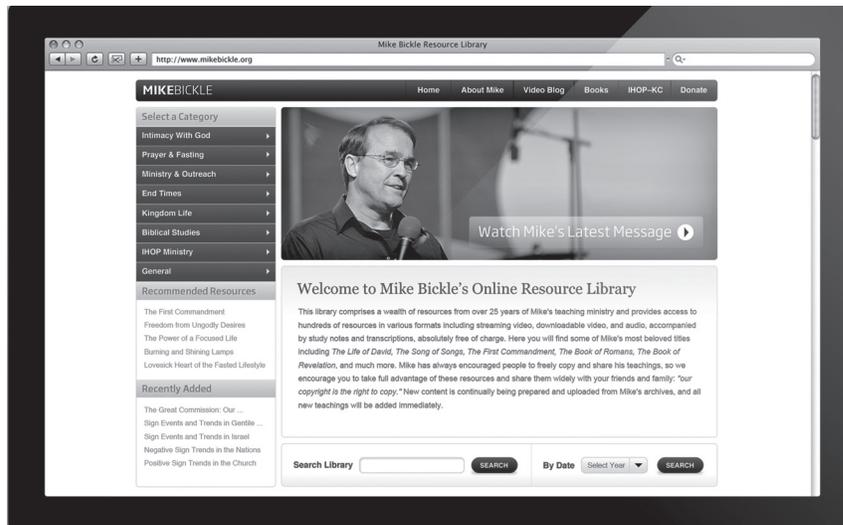
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