

REVELATION – SERMON 41

THE INFERNAL ARMY

Revelation 9:13-21

INTRODUCTION

- There was a great increase in demonic activity during Christ's first advent
- There will also be an increase in demonic activity as Christ's second advent approaches
- Our present "last days" are characterised by demonic deception (1 Timothy 4:1)
- During the tribulation, the people of the earth are said to "worship devils" (9:20), and even the kings of the earth will come under the spell of miracle-working devils (16:13-14)
- Today's study considers the sixth trumpet
 - ✓ First trumpet – hail and fire mingled with blood destroying vegetation (8:7)
 - ✓ Second trumpet – burning mountain cast into the sea, turning it to blood and destroying sea creatures and ships (8:8-9)
 - ✓ Third trumpet – star called Wormwood falling on rivers making them bitter (8:10-11)
 - ✓ Fourth trumpet – third part of sun moon and stars smitten and darkened (8:12)
 - ✓ Fifth trumpet – demonic locusts torment men for five months (9:1-12)

✓ Sixth trumpet – demonic horsemen kill one-third of humanity (9-13-21)

- Note that the judgments of the trumpets and vials are described as “plagues” (9:20; 11:6; 15:6,8; 16:9,21; 21:9; 22:18)
- There are numerous correlations between the Egyptian plagues and the tribulation plagues

PLAGUE	EGYPT	TRIBULATION
1 - Water to blood	Exodus 7:20	Revelation 8:8-9; 11:6; 16:3-6
2 – Frogs	Exodus 8:6	Revelation 16:13
3 – Lice	Exodus 8:24	(Revelation 11:6)
4 – Flies	Exodus 9:6	(Revelation 11:6)
5 – Cattle destroyed	Exodus 9:6	(Revelation 8:9)
6 – Boils	Exodus 9:10	Revelation 16:2
7 – Hail	Exodus 9:23	Revelation 8:7; 16:21
8 – Locusts	Exodus 10:13	Revelation 9:3
9 – Darkness	Exodus 10:22	Revelation 8:12; 9:2; 16:10
10 – Death of firstborn	Exodus 12:29	

- They are similar in their *nature* – literal, and increasing in severity
- There is a similarity between these plagues and the divine purpose in sending them
- They test and prove the unrepentant, showing their hardness of heart (Exodus 9:34; Revelation 3:10; 9:21)
- They prepare the way for the coming kingdom

- They culminate with the destruction of God’s enemies, the deliverance of God’s people, and the victory “song of Moses” (Revelation 15:1-3)
- The fifth trumpet brought about the release of demonic locusts from the bottomless pit to torment mankind
- The sixth trumpet brings about the release of another demonic horde, this time from the Euphrates river, who will not only torment men, but kill them

I. THE RELEASE OF THE DETAINED SPIRITS (13-15)

A. A voice from the altar

1. At the fifth trumpet John *saw* the sight of Satan fall from heaven; at the sixth trumpet John *heard* the voice of God call from heaven
2. The person behind the voice is not identified – it may be the angel that attends the altar (8:3) or God himself
3. This altar is the incense altar (Exodus 30:2-3)
 - a. The prayers of the saints are again linked to the events that unfold upon the earth (Revelation 8:4-5)
 - b. The horns signify the power of God that man has access to in prayer

B. The four angels bound

1. This indicates that they are fallen angels (cf. 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6)
2. These four angels evidently have charge over a great demonic horde who follow them

C. In the great river Euphrates

1. This river is of great Biblical significance

2. It was one of the four rivers of Eden (Genesis 2:14)
3. It subsequently became the place of sin's entrance into the world, the first lie and the first murder
4. It became a primary source of rebellion against God, with the tower of Babel built there, and then Babylon with its mystery religion, idolatry and devil worship
5. This river was the eastern boundary of the Promised Land (Gen. 15:18) and did fall under Israel's dominion during David's and Solomon's reigns (1 Chronicles 18:3; 2 Chronicles 9:26)
6. The Jews spent seventy years exiled to this place, and wept on the banks of this river (Psalm 137:1-4)
7. The kings of the East and their armies will cross this river to fight in the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:12-16)

D. They are prepared

1. God sovereignly fulfils his purposes according to his will and in his timing (Ephesians 1:11)
2. Jonah demonstrates this (Jonah 1:17; 4:6-8)
 3. God graciously prepares what is best for his people (Psalm 23:5; John 14:3; Hebrews 11:16; Revelation 12:6; 21:2)
3. God also has prepared evil men and spirits to be instruments of his judgment (Proverbs 16:4)

E. For an hour, day, month, year

1. Some interpret this to be the length of time that the angels assault mankind

2. But it is more likely speaking to the precise moment in time that they are released

F. To slay the third part of men

1. The locusts were not permitted to kill men (9:5)
2. Under the fourth seal, one-fourth of mankind were killed
3. Many others would have died during the previous trumpets with fires, earthquakes, tsunamis and poisoned waters
4. Factoring also the removal of believers at the Rapture, the earth's population will be greatly reduced during the tribulation
5. "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matthew 24:22)

II. THE RAMPAGE OF THE DEMONIC SQUADRONS (16-19)

A. The number of them – two hundred thousand thousand (two hundred million)

1. The Greek literally reads "two myriads of myriads" (cf. 5:11), and is understood by some to be an innumerable multitude
2. Yet there is no reason that it cannot be understood as a literal number, as with the rest of the numbers recorded in this book

B. The army of horsemen

1. Unlike the locusts who were "like" horses (9:7) these creatures are called horses, with riders upon them
2. One view is that this is a human army, made up of the eastern nations including China, India, Japan, etc.
3. It is more likely, however, that this is a demonic army

- a. The description, if taken literally, goes far beyond natural men and animals
- b. There will be armies of men from the east cross the river Euphrates later under the sixth bowl judgment, but this is a separate event (Revelation 16:12)
- c. The logistics and physical limitations would make the amassing of such an army all but impossible
- d. Their reach appears to be global, which would again be impossible by mere men on horseback

C. The description of the army

1. The riders have breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone
 - a. This is a hellish description of hellish beings
 - b. Such armour will prove invincible against the weapons of men
2. The horses have heads like lions
3. They issue fire, smoke and brimstone from their mouths
4. Their tails are like serpents, having heads that inflict damage

D. The destruction of the army

1. They will kill one-third of mankind with the fire from their mouths

III. THE REACTION OF DEPRAVED SINNERS (20-21)

A. God's mercy displayed

1. Two-thirds of mankind are mercifully allowed to live, that they may repent

2. God, in wrath, remembers mercy (Habakkuk 3:2)
3. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11)

B. A catalogue of sins

1. Note their false worship is related first, then their sinful activities second
2. The sinful activities of man emanate from a will that is opposed to God and his commandments
3. Idolatry
 - a. Idolatry is to worship anything instead of God
 - b. Those who worship idols worship devils (Leviticus 17:7; Deuteronomy 32:16-17; Psalm 106:37; 1 Corinthians 10:20)
2. Murder
 - a. Murder comes from a hateful heart (1 John 3:15)
 - b. Some murders occur in the brutality of violence, but many others take place in medical clinics
3. Sorcery
 - a. The Greek word is *pharmakeia*
 - b. This indicates witchcrafts associated with drugs
 - c. Drug use and demonism are closely related
4. Fornication
 - a. The Greek word is *porneias* and indicates any form of sexual immorality

- b. The 20th century “sexual revolution” with the acceptance of sodomy is a clear indication that we are in the last days
5. Theft
- C. They repented not
1. Repentance does not come from mere trials or hardship
 2. “The sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7:10)
 3. True repentance means to hate one’s sin and to turn from it unto God (1 Thessalonians 1:9)
 4. Most people love their sin too much to turn from it to God (Matthew 19:22; John 3:19)

CONCLUSION

1. The sins listed in these verses are prevalent and increasing in our day
2. They are catalogued as “works of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19-21)
3. Paul’s description of the last days shows clearly we are currently living in them (2 Timothy 3:1-4)
4. God answered an explosion of wickedness in Noah’s day with the flood
5. He will answer it soon with the great tribulation
6. Man’s heart is so depraved that even the judgments of the tribulation cannot make him repent (cf. Luke 16:30-31)
7. It requires a divine work of grace and a contrite heart to bring a soul to true repentance (2 Timothy 2:25)
8. Have you come to repentance and faith in Christ?
9. Are you calling others to repent and believe the Gospel? (Luke 24:47)