

# Jesus Puts The World On Notice

By Rev. Christopher J. Gordon

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**Bible Text:** Revelation 9:1-21  
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## Escondido United Reformed Church

1864 N Broadway  
Escondido, CA 92026

**Website:** [www.escondidourc.org](http://www.escondidourc.org)  
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I invite you to turn this morning in your Bibles to the last book of the Bible as we are making our way through the book of Revelation, and we come to Revelation 9 this morning. We're going to begin our reading at chapter 8 verse 13, 8 verse 13 and read chapter 9, and this is the word of the Lord, his message for us today. This is his word. Let's hear it.

13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

1 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. 2 He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. 3 Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. 4 They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. 6 And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them. 7 In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, 8 their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; 9 they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. 10 They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails. 11 They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon. 12 The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come. 13 Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar 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, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. 16 The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. 17 And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. 18 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound. 20 The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, 21 nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

And there ends the reading of God's word this morning.

Someone said to me last week after the message, the message of Revelation actually as we're going through it, for them, is really somewhat clear, but what is hard in considering this particular book, it's hard when the kind of cries and the prayers and the things that we're seeing by God's people, the sufferings represented in this book are completely foreign to us, in other words, when have we ever prayed like this? That makes the book a little bit of a challenge. I think it's right. If we have utopian ideals of this present world, and if we have built our dreams for the here and the now, and we're living the dream life, this book is a hard book to study, let me tell you. This book is meant to pull people who are in the mud and the muck of living in the world and are discouraged and facing hardship and persecution and trial, this book is meant to pull them up and out. When they've experienced and understand how dark the kingdom of this world, the kingdom of darkness can really be and what can really happen, when people get there, this book becomes alive for them.

So I say, then, that the degree to which we find our happiness in the here and the now, the degree to which we are finding our happiness and pursuing that only for the here and the now, will be the degree that makes us uncomfortable with the book of Revelation. It'll be a good test today of whether you walk away from a passage like Revelation 9 and really say, "That just makes me uncomfortable. I don't want to deal with this." Or do you say, "Wow, look at what the Lord's really saying to me here in the midst of living in a world that is falling apart at the seams. White picket fences we'll stay away from that, that pursuit." But this is reality, isn't it? Regardless of where we are, it's a message just as important for a people who have yet to experience what the world can be, what the world can become, what the world can do to you and your children, how it rises up, what it pushes on you.

We're seeing things coming. I mean, just talk to the generations. You see the changes. You know the changes. You know how radical some of the changes are. And we see

major shifts right in front of us in our short lives of entire belief systems, of morality, changes that are coming in like a flood, aren't they? Revelation is giving us perspective through all of this. Revelation is helping us through all of this. When you understand that the book of Revelation is helping a struggling, languished people, a church in the earth, who are feeling like nothing of what they believe is being validated, nor do they seem to be experiencing any real power, well, then you begin to understand how Revelation is answering them. It's a special book designed at the end of the Bible to encourage the people of God to endurance and perseverance. I mean, that's really one of the great goals of the book, being provided a perspective, if you will, of things with a heavenly view. God is lifting us up. God's letting us look at things from on high.

And that's what happened last time. Last time, we needed to see that God hears our prayers, doesn't he? We needed to know that when we pray, God answers us. God receives them. God hears them. All those prayers of his people come right up on into the throne room of heaven. They're mixed with incense by the angel. They receive intercession. And God is not just tucked away. We're not deists. God is not just tucked away, he spun this whole thing up and lets it go wherever he wants, disconnected from life. God is very much involved in this world. God is answering when his people cry. God is answering your prayers and so that was pictured last time as the angel brought the prayers to God, the smoke went up into the most holy place, and then he takes the censer, where those prayers were, fills it with fire, and hurls it back to the earth. That's answering your prayer. He's answering our prayers.

Well, that was the perspective last time as we looked at some of this. Well, if you were to come now to chapter 9 and say, "Pastor, what is the main point of everything you read in chapter 9? What are we getting at this morning?" I would say, I believe it answers a question that was posed in the Old Testament in one of the Psalms, and it helps us to sort of hold on to the main meaning of this particular passage. When Psalm 73 said, "Why do the wicked prosper?" Is it true that the wicked prosper? There seems to be no pains in their death. They seem to be going free, living a good life, living it up, and they seem to flourish. Look who's at the top. Look who makes it. And the righteous suffer. Why? Is it true? And this will be a good way to answer that because I believe it's the heart and message of Revelation chapter 9 this morning which says, "Don't believe that lie that the wicked are prospering. Let me show you what it's like for the wicked in the earth. Let me tell you their story of what they're facing right now." And this will help immensely as we see how God is meant to encourage the church.

Don't think that to choose a path of darkness in this life as you have a choice set before you, a choice of life or a choice of death, don't think that to choose the path of darkness is an easier way. Yes, you suffer as Christians at times. Yes, the world rises up against us. Yes, we're persecuted. But you've got heaven secured for you. It's the message of Revelation. The wicked, in contrast, face unimaginable distresses, hardships, and things you can't see with your eyes, but that you should see nonetheless in considering Revelation. Revelation has encouraged us in all sorts of ways to say, listen, it's not the naked eye in the way things look that is the true reality of things. Remember, you can't even see that Jesus is reigning right now seated on a throne, but he is. Revelation's shown

you that. But on the other hand, there are all sorts of bad things happening to the wicked that you can't see. But you need to consider it. Revelation 9 is helping us with that. Get perspective on life. So we're going to have the veil pulled back for a minute to see God's response to collective rebellion against him in the earth. What is God doing with all this? There's a lot of hatred right now and I believe this is immensely helpful this morning of seeing things correctly when you turn on the news, when we get panicked, when we fear, when we're worried about the state of things, to say, "Wait a minute, God has told us a little bit about this." That's Revelation 9.

We're in the midst of the third cycle of the book of Revelation. We've considered the seven seal judgments that have fallen on the earth in the second cycle, and now we have it described in a different way, from a different vantage point, with these seven trumpets. God was pictured last time as hearing our prayers and flinging fire back down to the earth and we read quickly through the first four trumpets, remember, last time. John saw these trumpets sounding, and what he described were plague-like phenomena hitting the earth. Just like the Exodus in Egypt, when God's people were down in the world, in bondage in the world, being held by the world, and Pharaoh and that cruel tyrant was holding them, God plagued the nation of Egypt. We know those plagues. The same story is here given. The world is being pictured here as being hit with all kinds of calamities and frustrations. And you know this, you see it all the time. All of a sudden, you see economic distress. One of the horses is the one pictured, the black horse and the pale horse, and a few of these, remember the one that held scales in his hand. He's controlling the economy, the economics of the world. We're not in control of that. You know how quickly the stock market could fall apart. He's holding that. He's hitting it at times. We know, Jesus said, there's going to be famines. There's going to be pestilences. There's going to be earthquakes in various places. Jesus said these things have to happen. All that's described in these first four horsemen of chapter 8.

That's where we are in this particular section now, and we know, I was thinking as we were singing a little bit ago, think about the turbulence that happens in the earth, that tumults from Psalm 46, a rounder swelling, his grace commanding wars to cease brings peace to every nation. "Be still for he is Lord, by all the earth adored the LORD of hosts is high." He's the one who holds the peace. He's the one who has the prerogative to bring peace, or his wrath brings desolation. Well, we have a United Nations, that great attempt in the earth to bring peace to all the nations. How do they do? Not very well because it's God's prerogative to give peace. That power is his. He's the King. He's the Lord. He commands wars to cease. He brings peace by grace, or his wrath brings desolation. Well, that gives us something to hold onto here, then as we go through this.

Here in this next section, the Lord takes us, if you will, and gives us a closer look in these last three trumpets. Generally, they hit all of creation, but now we're focused on these trumpet judgments in the earth as an answer to prayers. We know judgments happen in the earth generally. We see it. We read it from Romans 1, for the wrath of God is revealed from where? Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth. They're being hit. And now, these next seal judgments, woe, woe, woe, God is stopping and showing us what it's like for them in the earth. God is giving us

a clear picture of what's going on in the earth. It has the effect of saying, "Let me tell you the story of what's going on in the world. You need to see it. You need to understand it. Let me tell you their story." And it comes with the fifth and the sixth woe as two major warnings before the end and that's why I titled the message this morning, God puts the world on notice. That's what you see here.

At the end of chapter 8, we read, "Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, 'Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!'" What John is now describing are a series of warnings here, the first one in the fifth, the second one in the sixth. And it's as if God is saying, "Be warned." You need to understand how the Lord is warning the earth, in particular, who are messing with his people. You have a whole history of persecution and martyrdom and Foxe's Book of Martyrs and all those cries, remember chapter 6 are pictured as going up, "How long, O Lord, till you avenge our blood? They've killed us in the earth." "Don't mess with them," says the Lord. "Don't mess with my people. I'm jealous for Jerusalem. I'm jealous with exceeding great jealousy for my people, and I'm going to defend them." That's the message of this book.

How many times have you felt these awful things happen to believers and it seems that God does nothing. Well, let me introduce you to the first woe, his answer. "And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft." And you'll notice that it says, "Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth." The fifth angel sounds, and he says, "I saw a giant star fall to the earth." A giant star. The passage here particularly calls this the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he's called Apollyon. And you have here described in this fifth judgment, this fifth trumpet, a locust army coming upon the earth. Now this is where people go crazy in Revelation. If you want to say, "I just read Revelation literally," what do you got to say these are? Literal locusts coming upon the earth. You can't say anything else. But no Bible interpreter or even dispensationalist says that; even Hal Lindsay and these guys used to say there were Cobra helicopters shooting people. You can get all kinds of ideas and crazy ideas from this. Nobody reads that literally. How do you read something literally symbolic? It's symbolic. Our question is, what does it mean? That's what we're after here.

Well, I think this message becomes very clear to us in things that Jesus said specifically during the course of his ministry. Remember what happened from the beginning with the angels. They rebelled in heaven. There was a group of angels, boys and girls, that rebelled and they were kicked out of heaven, and particularly, the cross event sealed their doom, especially for Satan. Revelation 12 will describe that, that Satan was kicked down to the earth, and he's come down having great wrath because he was overcome by the blood of the Lamb. That cross event crushed him. That cross event put him out. That cross event stopped the access. He is now bound here. The devil has come down to you having great wrath, says Revelation 12.

Well, what's pictured here? Well, we've already considered the victory of Jesus. He's reigning. He's seated on the throne. And now we have pictured in this particular judgment, this particular trumpet, the fifth one, the activity of Satan in the world. What's he doing? Where is he? Well, we know Peter says he's like a roaring lion roaming around the earth seeking whom he may devour next. This has made him furious that Jesus has won and Jesus described this in the course of his ministry. Remember when he was standing there with the disciples and he said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." There it is. "I saw a star fall from heaven to the earth." We tend to think when we think of demons and demonic activity and Satan, that anyone outside of Jesus is on Satan's side and Revelation is telling us something to correct that thought. Satan has no sides. Satan has no sides. He is all about the utter ruin and destruction of mankind. He does not care. He is about destruction. His name means destroyer. It's captured here. He's a menace. Think of a drug addict. A drug addict decides to take this course. What does Satan want to do with the drug addict? I'm not talking about believers. I'm talking about, let's just say, someone dead in trespasses and sins who is destroying his life. Satan wants to take somebody like that, and Satan wants to begin to let sin dominate him all the way down to the path of utter destruction of his life. He wants to destroy lives. That's what he lives to do. That's what he exists to do. What the fifth trumpet is describing is God lifting his restraint on Satan's activity. That's so important. Martin Luther used to say that the devil is God's devil. Do you know what that means? What that means is he can't do a thing apart from the decree of God and the restraining hand of God. I'll show you that with Job in a minute.

It's captured here. Satan falls to the earth. His army is captured as a swarming locust army coming upon the peoples of the world. God just lifted the lid to let it out. He permitted it. You know, I was just thinking as I was preparing this, we don't think of this about God. We don't realize that every morning we get up and everything goes on in an orderly way, and society goes on, and any amount of goodness that we enjoy in this life, harmony, peace, law, order, every bit of it has come from him. You have somebody break in your house, you're going to call somebody and a police officer is there, and they're going to defend you. Who put all that into play? When evil happens, we have governments that are given to curb this and to stop this. Who put all that into play? The world only continues because of God's hand of providence. He is keeping things down. He's holding down the lawlessness to keep things going. What we don't realize is that he's preventing a lot of stuff always from happening that could happen. In other words, when some great catastrophe happens, what does everyone in the world say? "Where was God in this?" Well, I say God's been holding this back the whole time. What do you mean? You have no idea what it could be. You have no idea where this could go. God has been doing a lot of good in the earth in promoting harmony and justice and peace for a long time.

Every bit of good the world enjoys comes from him. The care we see even in common peoples that they care for their neighbor, that's all from him. But as the world stands more and more in opposition to the Lord and his Christ, as rebellion grows, as hatred grows, he begins to let the lid of hell open. That's how you're able to explain the madness that's

going on, the stuff that makes no sense to you. Satan falls from heaven. God allows him to go down and open the lid, the imagery here you're getting, and he opens it and out comes a dreadful army on the earth. He opens the shaft to the bottomless pit and smoke, it says, "rose like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. From the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given a power like the power of scorpions of the earth." Where does that come from? Well, something that any Bible reader should know, the eighth plague of Egypt. Listen to this. "Hand over the land of Egypt for locusts so that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left. So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind had brought the locusts. The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before nor ever will be again. They covered the face of the whole land so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field throughout all the land of Egypt." It's borrowing this symbolically. Same thing. The difference is these locusts don't eat green things. Here's what they look like. They look like horses. They've got crowns of gold with human faces. They have women's hair. Long hair. Lion's teeth. Giant tails that sting like scorpions. Their power is to hurt people for five months. It's a dreadful army. You ever seen an army like that imagery? Think of the imagery being given to you. Deathly terrifying.

Now, as we stand back from this and start to say, "Well, what is it describing here?" You want to say nothing is static in the earth. In other words, you ever notice how things are always moving? What has stayed the same? Nothing. What you're seeing develop in societies, it always is moving. It's always going somewhere. When we read that people desire death, it's describing the sad consequences of all of this, in other words, it's brought about a misery in the earth, but they can't find death. It's describing the misery of all this. And then the sixth trumpet goes on and adds to the description by saying, this is the first warning God gives, then the last one's described here, "Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.'" And he goes on to describe this army. It's two million strong. "The power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound." What is this? It's all going to come together, I hope, in a second here. The Euphrates was on the far east of the Roman Empire. There were all sorts of fears of Eastern armies coming that would threaten the empire. Rome had the largest empire of the time. Here, these horses are presented, this army of two million that's unparalleled in history, symbols of strength, and what are they bringing on the earth now? The first locusts didn't bring death. They weren't allowed to. But this leads to death and destruction in the earth. They're killing now.

All right, let's answer it. What is it? What is all this? What does it describe? Satan lives to assault the world, unleashing, as one pastor said, the smoke of deception, delusion, sin. He unleashes a moral hell on the earth. It's a spiritual assault leading to death. Do you

ever stand back from all this and say, "Where's the sanity anymore?" Law and order, what's happening to it? Moral degeneracy, what's happening to morality? Where's the line going, better or back that we accept and tolerate? Directly against God's law. When you think of police officers right now, what do you think? They were set up for your good. They were set up to promote justice and protect and honor and serve. What do you think might that look like if the restraint is lifted? Interesting thought, isn't it? What would it look like? Would they be attacked? Would they no longer function well? When you think of government, that's given for the promotion of justice and an orderly society. What would happen if the restraint is lifted and Satan brings his army? Would corruption come? Would it get worse? Where would it go? What would happen? Would there be dishonesty that marks it? What would happen to law and order in society?

How about this? God gave the family. From the beginning, he made them male and female. The family was the basic building block of society that God put in place to make society work. You destroy the family, you destroy society. You will. What would happen if the restraint is lifted and Satan comes out? What would he do to the family? What would he do? Think he would attack the structure? You think he would want roles redefined that God gave? What would happen to men and women in this society? What would happen to fathers and mothers in this society? What would happen to children in this society? What would being given over look like? I know you're all very smart people. You know. You'd blur all creational distinctions and you'd create a moral chaos. A moral chaos.

Lift the lid, let God's restraint, God says, "Okay, you want it, you got it. Here come the locusts." Smoke of deception and delusion. That's what you have pictured here. You have pictured Satan in the earth, God warning the earth, "If you want to stand in collective rebellion against me, this is what it's going to be. This is where it's going to go." Now, if you're going to be a waking and observant people, you're going to say, "I can't put my head in the sand on this stuff. It's all over. Stuff's moving. Stuff's happening." So what they think is progress and love and tolerance and acceptance is the promotion of their own undoing. That's the tragedy, isn't it? In the name of love, they undo the fabric of society. Do you see it? Do you see if you fully lift the restraint, what would happen? That would bring a moral hell to this earth.

Now this is why Revelation scares people, right? It shouldn't. It shouldn't scare the believer. The intention is exactly the opposite today. That's the bad news for the world, but the intention is to have a message for the people of the Lord and you know what that message is? If we have utopian ideals of the present world, if we've only made our home in the here and now and not sought the things that are above where Christ is, if we don't think heaven's better than this and we think this is it and we're living for this, this is going to be so disturbing to you. If we're striving for the picture of perfect life with a white picket fence, this just isn't even going to connect with people who've had it so good because then we're not living in reality. But it's not reality, and you know that because the book is meant to pull and help you who are in the distress say, "I've got a message for you." What is the message? Here's the encouragement. Here's the wonderful encouragement of Revelation 9. Did you catch it? Last time, the saints all cried, it seemed



like God's doing nothing. It seems that God's silent, and that's just a half hour, by the way. Their affliction is five months. Again, symbolic. The cherubim went silent around the throne because God was getting up. Well, in the fifth trumpet, you have described Satan's activity. What would you expect? That's our greatest fear, is it? Satan hates us. If Satan could, he would want to destroy us.

What is the fifth trumpet saying to you today? And the sixth? Well, doesn't verse 4 shine? Look at verse 4. They were told, this is the locusts, not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. You need that. You need to understand that. We've been talking about foreheads and you've seen enough movies where things are stamped and you don't need to listen to that stuff. What is the forehead? What is the mark? God has his mark on his people, remember? That was from the book of Ezekiel, when the ink horn writer, God said, "Go through the city, and I want you to mark all the people who are crying out for all the abominations that are happening in the earth, that are just worried and concerned about all of this, and cry out to the Lord for justice and what's right and what's true." So he goes and he marks all the people on their foreheads. "Pass through the city after him and strike. You shall not spare. You shall not know pity. Kill old men outright, young men and maidens, little children of women, but touch no one on whom is the mark and begin at my sanctuary." Angel comes back, says, "Lord, it's done. They're marked." Before any of this happens, what is this? None of these locusts or Satan can touch you. Did you hear me? None of Satan or his locusts, his army, can touch you.

You say, "Okay, you're talking madness now. What do you mean?" Remember Job? The worst example of satanic assault in the Bible, one of them, on the righteous. Remember what had to happen? "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. The Lord said, 'Satan, from where have you come?' Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, from walking up and down on it.'" We know what he's doing. He's destroying. "And the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job, that there's none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?' Then Satan answered the Lord and said, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has on every side? You've blessed the work of his hands and all his possessions have increased in the land. But, but, but, but, stretch out your hand and touch all he has and he'll curse you to your face.'" Made it too good for him. And the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your hand,'" and here's the verse, "'only against him do not stretch out your hand.'" You can't touch him. Did you hear it? What does that mean? These armies and the wickedness and the deception and the darkness can never, ever, ever steal you. You're marked. Here's what he's saying. "You're my people. I love you. I'm going to protect you. I'm going to defend you through all of this. But don't have all the wrong fears here and don't get caught up too much here. Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you his wheat, but guess what I've done for you? I've prayed for you that your faith should not fail." I've prayed. You think that prayer was heard? In other words, "I'll defend you and I'm going to defend your children."

I look at my children and I think they don't stand a chance. In the midst of all this, all these ideas, all of these temptations, all of these philosophies, all these ideas, all these pressures. If you appreciate what's being said to you right now, I can tell you right now you're not going to stop it. Even the best parenting can't stop it. You should be immensely thankful for what the Lord just said to you. "I'm going to keep you and I'm going to keep your children. Nothing can take heaven from you. So they strike your life, in other words, you get hit with death. You're going right to be with me." That's not really a strike, is it? He's throwing it back at them. He's lifting hell's lid on them. He's letting them taste it.

But as you face these things, don't buy into the lie that the wicked have it better. It's not true. See what's happening to them. Look at this with redeemed eyes and look at what the world's embracing. Look at the system of the world and look at what it's pushing and embracing the philosophies, the ideas, the change of nature and you want nothing to do with that system that stands against God. Anyone who makes himself a friend with the world makes himself, what? An enemy of God. This is why Jesus said, "Don't fear him who can kill the body. Fear him who can kill the body and soul in hell."

How is this going to go? Well, "The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues did not repent nor did they give up worshiping demons and idols and silver and bronze and stone, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual morality or their thefts." In other words, even after all this sadness, after all this misery, tasting it, when the full course of somebody like Bruce Jenner runs its course and he tastes the full misery of all this, they still don't repent. They still don't turn and I believe the effect of that is to say don't be surprised by the response of the world. They should see all this darkness, they should wake up and say, "You know what? We've ruined everything that's good. We've ruined everything that's good. Every good thing that we ever had from the Lord, we've ruined. Our sexual morality has crushed us. Our idolatry has ruined us. Our theft is consuming us." But they don't. And I thought today, think of the blessing then of repentance. Is it in place in your life? Think of the blessing of worship. Is it in place in your life? We have to be born again, of course, or else it won't be but do you realize that when you repent of your sins and turn to Jesus by his grace and strength and power, when you confess him and you say, "Lord, I see the wrong path, you're the right path," and you turn to him, and the priority of your life becomes worship, which is what Revelation is showing you, that is manifest power in your life that he's keeping you. That is evidence he's keeping you. That's evidence he's working in you. That's evidence the locusts aren't touching you. Think of the joy of being conveyed out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, into the kingdom of his Son in love. He just promised you he's going to keep you to the end. That's what we should see. He's jealous for Jerusalem. He's jealous for his people. Jesus purchased from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation a number that no man, a multitude no man can number who today are gathering to worship and who in glory will be around his feet worshiping him. You are evidence today. You are evidence today of his care. You're evidence today of his power continuing to work in the earth and that should lead us to praise the Lord and thank him in prayer. Let's do so.

*Heavenly Father, thank you for your wonderful word and thank you for giving us perspective in the midst of all this. We think of the hand of providence by which we've enjoyed so much good blessings and benefits and still do, and who knows, you may again turn things back that way in your time. It's all in your perfect timing. But you just told us, we don't have to fear but we need to understand what's happening in the earth. We need to know what it's like for those who stand in rebellion against you. That is a terrible place to be. And so I suppose then it turns us to say, be merciful again to the inhabitants of those who dwell on the earth as opposed to those who dwell in heaven. Make your gospel to shine. May people believe. May people come. And Lord, may we not be so discouraged when we see these things that we forget Jesus is on the throne. All things are in his control. And just like Job, nothing ultimately can separate us from your love. Nothing. Not even death, nor persecution, nor famine, nor sorrow. Nothing. Thank you for encouraging us with these words today. Give us faith to believe and to trust your wonderful word of grace to us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*