

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

INEVITABLE & UNESCAPABLE HORROR

REVELATION 9: THE FIFTH & SIXTH TRUMPETS

THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS

- ▶ The first four trumpet blasts detail the judgment of God on the environment that supports human life; the result of these “acts of God” is catastrophic ecological and economic disaster.
- ▶ The fifth and sixth trumpet blasts will be so horrifying that it necessitates a warning to the inhabitants of earth of the woe and terror which they are about to experience—

Then I looked, and I heard a single eagle crying loudly as it flew through the air, “Terror, terror, terror to all who belong to this world because of what will happen when the last three angels blow their trumpets.”

UNREAL SPIRITUAL REALITIES

- ▶ The fifth and sixth trumpet blasts unveil the realities of the spiritual realm and reveal the horrifying consequences of satanic deception and the “wages of sin”. These coming judgments are the result of humanity obstinately choosing delusion and deception:

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. (2 THESSALONIANS 2.10b-11)

- ▶ The “natural disasters” of the first four trumpets will be superseded by the appearance on earth of supernatural, tormenting creatures from the spirit world from which there is no escape.

IT'S WHAT YOU DON'T SEE THAT REALLY MATTERS!

Do you know where the gates of death are located?

Have you seen the gates of utter gloom? (JOB 38.17)

- ▶ The reality of the spiritual realm and its control of the physical world is thoroughly documented throughout Scripture. These realities were brought to the forefront through the ministry of Jesus who declared that "God is spirit" (John 4.24) and confronted the legions of demons who begged him as the "Son of the Most High God" not to be sent out of the area, or worse, to the Abyss (Mark 5.9-10; Luke 8.31).

The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 JOHN 3.8)

THE “OTHER” REALITY

Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen to earth from the sky, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.

- ▶ Jesus made a key statement when addressing the issue of marriage: *“But it was not this way from the beginning”* (Matthew 19.8). The judgments experienced now on earth are the result of events that began long before. Jesus said to his disciples: *“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven”* (Luke 10.18).
- ▶ The Word of God clearly presents things “as they were at the beginning” and how it came to be what is now being manifested.

- ▶ Lucifer, together with all the angels, existed as the highest and most glorious of all of God's creation, a "mighty angelic guardian" who had access to the holy mountain of God (Ezekiel 28.12-14).
- ▶ However, when in pride, he aspired to usurp and displace the One who had created him (Isaiah 14.13-14) and led a rebellion involving one-third of all of the angels, the resulting war sealed his destiny and that of those who joined his ill-fated attempt (Revelation 12.7-9).

*"How you are fallen from heaven,
O shining star, son of the morning!
You have been thrown down to the earth,
you who destroyed the nations of the world. (ISAIAH 14.12)*

- ▶ Some of those angels became the demonic spirits which Jesus encountered in his ministry to “destroy the works of the devil.” They exist as *“evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world . . . mighty powers in this dark world . . . evil spirits in the heavenly places”* (Ephesians 6.12), assisting Satan in his quest to—
 - ▶ displace God, dominate the world, and control the mindsets of people (Ephesians 2.2),
 - ▶ perpetrate deception (2 Thessalonians 2.10; 1 Timothy 4.1),
 - ▶ hinder prayer (Daniel 10.12-13),
 - ▶ distort the revelation of God (2 Corinthians 4.4),
 - ▶ promote idolatry and sensual behavior (1 Corinthians 10.6-8, 20),
 - ▶ influence the destiny of nations (Daniel 10. 20; Revelation 18.23).

- Others were condemned to the Abyss, incarcerated in a place of unreal darkness and torment—

And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment. (JUDE 6)

For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell, in gloomy pits of darkness, where they are being held until the day of judgment. (2 PETER 2.4)

—held in abeyance until the sounding of these trumpets.

And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. (REVELATION 9.15)

The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss . . . locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. (9.1-3)

THE DEMONIC LOCUSTS OF THE FIFTH TRUMPET

- ▶ Sin distorts and perverts God's original design in which His glory was reflected. These demonic locusts, once angels of glory, now resemble grotesque caricatures of the four Zoa (cf. 4.6-8).
- ▶ Unlike natural locusts, these supernatural "locusts" do not consume vegetation; instead they sting like scorpions, inflicting such horrible agony that people attempt suicide to escape the pain—but they are not allowed to die (vss. 4-6).
- ▶ As Adam and Eve discovered, this is the true face of sin: behind its offer of self-realization and fulfillment, are the painful "wages of sin".

THE VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice speaking from the four horns of the gold altar that stands in the presence of God. And the voice said to the sixth angel who held the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great Euphrates River.”

- ▶ The “horns” on the corners of the altar are not mere ornamental attachments. In the Old Testament, “horn” is equated with strength and on the Day of Atonement, blood from the sacrifice was smeared on the horns of the altar of incense— “for this is the Lord’s most holy altar” (Exodus 30.10). This heavenly altar before God’s throne now speaks: humanity has rejected God’s gracious atonement for their sin; now there is only inevitable judgment.

THE DEMONIC HORSEMEN OF THE SIXTH TRUMPET

One-third of all the people on earth were killed by these three plagues—by the fire and smoke and burning sulfur that came from the mouths of the horses. Their power was in their mouths and in their tails. For their tails had heads like snakes, with the power to injure people.

- ▶ With this judgment, four fallen angels, bound at the scene of original sin, are released to unleash an unstoppable demonic horde of two hundred million! They have both the ability to injure and to kill; one in every three living on earth will die from this demonic army. The judgments reserved for the devil and his angels become the inevitable destiny of all who likewise rebel against God (Matthew 25.41) and reject His provision for forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 10.26-27; 2 Peter 3.7).

AN ASTOUNDING OUTCOME!

- ▶ The judgments of the fifth and sixth trumpets are hideous beyond imagination, but the outcome is truly astounding—

But the people who did not die in these plagues still refused to repent of their evil deeds and turn to God. They continued to worship demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood—idols that can neither see nor hear nor walk! And they did not repent of their murders or their witchcraft or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

- ▶ When we determinedly persist in our own thinking and behavior, we lose the capacity to respond to both the grace of God and the discipline of God. Like Esau, we may one day find ourselves unable to bring about any change of mind (Hebrews 12.17).

WHAT DO WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND?

- ▶ God's timing, repeatedly dismissed, results in inevitable exposure to the coming judgment.

“If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.” (LUKE 19.42-44)

There is an appointed time for judgment and an appointed time for mercy: *“Today when you hear His voice, don't harden your hearts.”*
Our response today determines our tomorrow.

- ▶ God's grace, repeatedly ignored, results in one's heart becoming "hardened" beyond the point of change.

Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. (HEBREWS 3.12-13)

- ▶ We must live with an acute awareness that God will judge sin.

Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. Don't participate in the things these people do. . . . Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness . . . (EPHESIANS 5.6-7, 10-11)

- ▶ We must intentionally pursue a life that rejects any accommodation of self (our sinful human nature) and pursue a life that is deeply connected to Christ and his identity.

So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.

Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. . . . Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. (COLOSSIANS 3.5-6, 10,16-17)