

Revelation A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #22

12/20/2006

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath Chapter Nine The Second "Woe Judgment"

Mid-Point of Tribulation Period

The "Woe Judgments," or The Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Trumpet Judgments

In the previous lesson, #21, we listed reasons why this is considered the mid-point in the seven-year "Tribulation Period." One of those reasons is the increased severity and intensity of the judgments, specifically noted by these three "Woe Judgments" which, among other characteristics, tell us that the judgments change from being focused upon nature to being directed toward and focused upon individuals. We saw in Matthew 24:21 where Jesus said that there would be a point in the "Tribulation Period" where it would be identified as the "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall be." Having considered the first of the "Woe Judgments" in 9:1-12, we now consider the second "Woe Judgment." The second "Woe Judgment" is also the sixth "Trumpet Judgment."

As we come to consider this second "Woe Judgment" we come to a passage that has energized many fanciful and wild interpretations. It is helpful for us to think about a statement made by a great Bible scholar, William R. Newell. Newell said concerning this passage, "*Believe, and you scarcely need any comment.*" J. Vernon McGee says, "*The problem with men who come to Revelation and say that it is difficult to understand and impossible to interpret is that they do not believe it. If you simply believe it and read it, it is very clear. Hellish forces will be at work during this period.*"

Revelation 9:13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

Revelation 9:14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

Revelation 9:15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

Revelation 9:16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

Revelation 9:17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

Revelation 9:18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

Revelation 9:19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

Revelation 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

Revelation 9:21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

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This second "Woe Judgment" or "Sixth Trumpet Judgment" involves four participants or groups of participants.

The first participant is the servant of God, the sixth angel who blows his trumpet and activates this judgment.

The second participant or group of participants are "the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates" and "were loosed."

The third group of participants is "the army of horsemen numbering two hundred thousand thousand" (200 million).

The fourth group of participants are the people who are attacked by this army.

The identity and function of the first participant, the "sixth angel who sounds his trumpet" is clear. This participant is God's servant carrying out God's orders.

The second participant or group of participants are the "four angels" which had been "bound in the great river Euphrates and were loosed" by the angel who sounds his trumpet.

Their identification: These "four angels" are obviously evil or they would not have been bound. They are of those who followed Satan in his rebellion against God (Rev. 12:4a) and were cast out of heaven after fighting against Michael and the faithful angels (Rev. 12:7-8) and are elsewhere known as demons. Why they have been confined in some type of prison we are not told, but from 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude six we know that some demons were so vile that God did not allow them to roam free but restricted them in some prison He made for that purpose. The time had now come for God, Who has sovereign authority over all things, both good and evil, to use these most vile demons. They are to be set free to carry out His plans in His judgment upon this wicked earth.

Their preparation: We are told that they had been "prepared for this hour, this day, and this year" indicating to us that what is described in this awesome passage is something God planned long ago, likely even before the creation of this world. Everything that happens is a part of God's plan even as God planned and executed His plan for the redemption of sinful men who would respond to His grace (Ephesians 1:4-12). The word "prepared" is a perfect, passive participle telling us that an action had taken place in the past upon someone (these fallen angels) with the consequences of that action continuing into the present. Therefore, it is clear that God is carrying out plans that He made a long time ago, knowing beforehand exactly what the situation of these wicked Christ-rejectors would be.

Their purpose: The purpose of this action is "to slay the third part of men." Already many, many wicked men have died as a result of God's judgments (Rev. 6:4,8; 8:11). Added to the fact that one out of every four men had been killed in the plague of the "pale horse" in 6:8, plus the others who had been killed, we see that another third of men will be killed in the

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judgment of the sixth trumpet or second woe. When this judgment is completed well over half of the people left on the earth during the "Tribulation Period," or more than 2 billion people, will be dead before this seven-year period is half finished.

Their location: These demons are released from a holding prison in the "great river Euphrates." The reference to this place requires some comment. This is the area of the world where the Garden of Eden had existed. It also was where the Flood began and where the Tower of Babel was located. In this area was located Babylon, the fountainhead of idolatry, where the Israelites were carried for their seventy-year period of captivity. We now see that in this same area is the final surge of sin and spiritual conflict during the Great Tribulation Period.

The third group of participants is the army of 200 million.

The identification of this army: That they are demons is clear from the description of them that we are about to consider. While it is true that demons can inhabit and use the bodies of men (Mark 5:1-16; Acts 16:16; 19:11-16), that is not the case here. It is certainly possible for countries of today such as China, India and the various countries populated by Muslims to put together an army of this size, and as many interpreters have so speculated, that is not what is happening here and the following description of these horsemen makes that clear.

The description of this army: "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt."

Even though demons can possess and use men's bodies what is described here is far more terrible and horrific than any army of men. These descriptions should not be "spiritualized" and diminished to mean something that is known to men today. Some interpreters identify these as some forms of military weapons such as tanks. Others think they are man-made weapons yet to be developed. Such interpretations are fanciful, erroneous and likely designed to sell books and videos, and are the result of a faulty approach to interpreting the Word of God. Though the images presented of these demonic beings are something never before seen by man, they should be taken literally as surely should be the fire, the smoke and the brimstone which are elements of God's judgments as is seen in later passages of Revelation.

Read it. Accept it. Believe it. God said it and it is true. Though it goes beyond the history of anything understood by man or known on this earth and even beyond anything man can imagine, this army of demonic beings will be real and do exactly as God has described.

The purpose of this army of demons: These demonic beings have one purpose, i.e., to kill the wicked. Whereas, with the just completed second "Woe Judgment," men were so afflicted with such pain that they tried to kill themselves only to discover that death fled from them and

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they could not escape their torment even by dying, now one out of three cannot escape death. What they previously sought they now find at the hand of an angry God dispensing His judgment in His way and in His time. In addition, the process of killing one third of the men used by these demonic beings also causes severe suffering. The dying does not happen quickly or painlessly, rather it is accompanied by intense suffering and agonizing pain. God's justice, often foolishly and ignorantly sought by ego-centric sinners is properly and effectively administered.

The results of God's judgment, as administered by the sixth angel sounding his trumpet and in the second "Woe Judgment" is predictable. All down through the ages men have foolishly substituted their own man-made gods in the place of the true and living God. Having rejected God and refusing to glorify Him as God, Paul tells us in Romans 1:21-22 that **"they became vain in their imaginations and that their foolish hearts were darkened and professing themselves to be wise they became fools."** That is, they became illogical, and could not reason logically. Therefore, what God said through Paul in Romans 2:5-6 becomes true: **"Having despised the goodness of God and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God was designed to lead them to repentance,"** they hardened their hearts and stored up God's wrath against themselves for that day when the **"wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God"** would be poured out upon them. Having refused to allow God's goodness to lead them to repentance, they, consistently, now refuse to allow the wrath of God to produce repentance in their hardened hearts. **"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."**

Even though God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" they, having refused to respond to God's grace and offer of salvation by repenting of their sinfulness, continue in their chosen ways of self-destruction. God not only allows them to have what they have chosen. He even assists them in having what they say they want. In 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 God's Word tells us that **"because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved ... for this cause God shall send them strong delusions that they might believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."**

Therefore, they continue to refuse to repent and hasten their own just damnation. The description of what they have chosen to love and serve is nothing less than a description of what happens when men reject Christ, as vile as it seems to be.