

# REVELATION – THE FINAL VICTORY

## (Lesson 4)

### **Intro: What's the purpose of providing various "snapshots" of what will happen before Christ's return?**

- alerts Christians to the signs of the end and the dangers that exist for their faith - to despair, lose spiritual sensitivity; also to encourage believers that though these things happen, Christ is still in control and will conquer all

### **- The Third Vision: The Seven Trumpets**

#### **1. The Seventh Seal: The Seven Angels with the Seven Trumpets (8:1-5)**

- What's the purpose of a deliberately long pause? *it's a deliberately long pause to get attention, Jesus wants believers to know the seventh seal revelation is very important; greater significance than other seals*
- What does the incense signify which makes the prayers of the saints acceptable to God? *trumpets used to announce impending danger; incense altar which stood before Holy of Holies - priest offered incense; here the prayers of God's people go up with the incense - the atoning merit of Christ's sacrifice for sins, through him we can approach God in freedom and confidence*
- How can the same incense cause harm to the earth? - *prayers of God's people are acceptable but unbelievers can only expect God's wrath and punishment for their sins (thunder, lightning)*

#### **2. The First Four Trumpets (8:6-13)**

- Do you notice any similarities to the plagues of Egypt? - *seventh plague of Egypt was hail and fire on land - destroying crops (1st trumpet); first plague of Egypt turned water/sea into blood (2nd trumpet); result of first plague in Egypt was that the water was undrinkable (3rd trumpet - wormwood is a very bitter herb); ninth plague in Egypt - darkness for 3 days (4<sup>th</sup> trumpet)*
- What predictions of Jesus were not covered by the seven seals? (compare Matthew 24:4-14 & Revelation 6: 1-17) - *not covered were false Christs, apostasy- turn away from faith, false prophets, love of most growing cold; these four signs represent false teaching and ungodly living*
- What interpretation should we give to the trumpets? Which of the following better fits the danger these trumpets announce? - *references to Egyptian plagues reminds us that just as God's people then were delivered through these plagues so we too will be delivered, though the rest will experience much suffering*
- Symbolic foreshadows of physical calamities - *serve as repeats of the calamities announced by the seals - earthquakes, famines, diseases, bloodshed - wars etc.*
- Symbols of various false religions or heresies - *preferred is reference to false doctrines which is a punishment from God for a rejection of the truth; 2 Thess 2:10 - God sends them delusions because they refuse to love the truth so that they will believe the lie and be condemned*
- Is there any significance of the effect on the one-third? - *difficult to discover, all we can say is that the false teaching will not totally destroy the truth- obscure the light of God's truth (sun); make bitter waters of life (turning to blood, wormwood); rob people of spiritual nourishment (destroy earth, trees, grass)*

#### **3. The Fifth Trumpet: The Locusts out of Hell (9:1-11)**

- Who is the star that was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss? (see also verse 11) - *Woe! – eagle announces three remaining trumpets are worse; Abyss is "bottomless" - deepest depths of hell; Satan is the fallen star given power to unleash evils on the world; obscures the light of Christ*
- What are the locusts sent to do? How does this support the interpretation of the trumpets? (cf Matthew 24 :24) - *given power to harm those without the seal of God; false doctrines unleashed by devil - torment people robbed of forgiveness and salvation in Christ (no torment like a bad conscience)*

- Identify the details given about the locusts themselves: (5 months? - real locusts plagues often last for 5 months; 5 in Revelation, only used here, no other significance; a 5 month period possibly reminds us that false teachings are around for a while and then flyaway)
  - Like horses prepared for battle: zeal that many false prophets have in search of converts
  - Wore something like crowns: successful efforts, word for crown is one given in reward of victory, yet they are only like crowns of gold, not the crown which Christ wears
  - Resembled human faces, women's hair, lion's teeth: Jesus said false teachers like wolves in sheep's clothing, human appearance is harmless, effeminate but have lion's teeth (from devil)
  - Breastplate of iron, thundering horses, rushing chariots: fighting spirit of these false teachers
  - Tails and stings like scorpions: the pain they cause like sting of scorpion - no peace, no hope

#### **4. The Sixth Trumpet: The Army from the Euphrates (9:12-21)**

- What did the sixth angel announce with his trumpet? - unleashing of the four angels not same as angels in chapter seven, here they are bound, cause destruction before end of world; four horns of altar was place where Gods' people could flee if accused unjustly, seek refuge and God's mercy
- Why is the Euphrates river used as the boundary for the four angels? (O.T. history) - all great enemies of God's people came from this area - Assyria, Babylon, Persia located between Tigris and Euphrates rivers; forces of evil assemble in region of the Euphrates
- What are some of the heresies that these evil forces proclaim? - two visions similar - swarm of locusts are false doctrines emerging from hell to lead people astray; here these heresies arise from the earth - the sinful world is our great enemy -false ideas and philosophies (humanism, communism, hedonism, etc.)
- Why are there so many troops (two hundred million)? - great number and diversity of false teachings, large force in the world, various philosophies and errors all the same - false, against the truth
- What does the reference to fire, smoke and sulfur remind us? - symbols of hell, fiery red and yellow of sulfur when burned is a pale blue (etymology uncertain whether sapphire or aquamarine); lion's heads - lion-like character of Satan; 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet is heresies within the church, 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet- open enemies of God
- Compare how these forces destroy with what took place in the Garden of Eden. - the power in mouths, the plagues coming out of their mouths - false doctrines they spread (smoke, sulfur - teachings of hell), tails like snakes, all reminiscent of devil's temptation, speaking to Eve, to lead her to sin
- What is God's purpose in sending out these destructive forces? - cause or insure harm, spiritual harm - god of this age blinded people, they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4)
- How do unbelievers indicate that they have rejected God? - God sends, allows plague of locusts (false prophets claim to be from God) and the army from Euphrates (worldly heresies) to call people to repentance, forsake false teaching, evil ways - false teaching leads to idolatry, gods that are nothing
- When one's relationship with God is not right what inevitably happens? - when one's relationship with God is gone, one's relationship with his neighbor also suffers - leads to murder of innocent babies, practice of sorcery, witchcraft, sexual immorality - living together, homosexuality; theft - unjust lawsuits (cf Romans 1:18-32 - God's wrath is poured out- gives them over to all sorts of sins)

#### **Conclusion: How effective is the devil through the "plagues" he sends against God's people?**

- he may be effective in leading people to get caught up in false teaching, which only harms and weakens their faith, but he cannot completely destroy the faith of the elect of God; John 10:27,28 - "my sheep listen to my voice, I know them and they follow me, and they shall never perish, no one can snatch them out of my hand"