



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

Week 56: The Trumpet Judgements, Part 8

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Review:

- A. In our last lesson, we began to study the 6th Trumpet Judgment which is described in **Revelation 9:13-21**. It is known as the “*second woe*” from the angel’s announcement in **Revelation 8:13**.
 1. In this 6th Trumpet Judgment, four powerful and evil angels are released to kill 1/3 of mankind.
 - B. Like the 5th Trumpet Judgment before it, this one is rather cryptic as well, and it shares a few other similarities besides:
 1. For example, it concerns the release of evil angels upon The Tribulation world in a sovereign and very prescriptive judgment by God.
 2. As before, these angels are released from a location here on earth. (Before, it was the Abyss or the bottomless pit, here it is the Euphrates River).
 3. Both locations are described as being a specific location on this planet. That might be hard for us to wrap our minds around, but it is what the Bible says.
 4. In both cases, the evil angels are in some way restrained by God before their release.
 - a. In the 5th Trumpet Judgment, they are incarcerated in the Abyss.
 - b. In the 6th Trumpet Judgment, they are “bound” at some location along the Euphrates River (The Greek term used here seems to describe a more dramatic form of restraint which is also the same as Satan’s fate during the Millennial Kingdom).
 - C. We also noted how in the prior 5th Trumpet Judgment, “*men would seek death but not find it.*” They would desire to die, but for some reason and in some way, they are prevented from getting what they want.
 - D. In this 6th Trumpet Judgment, we are told “*a third of mankind will be killed.*” So, death, as a core theme, emerges as a pivotal issue in both the 5th and 6th Trumpet Judgements.
 - E. We noted the “*voice from the altar,*” and we also explored how the horns of the altar, historically and typically associated with a display of mercy, will become a sign or representation of judgement at this future point.
- I. Now, we need to continue to unpack some of the details of this 6th Trumpet Judgment. There is more for us to learn about it, and we’ll take a running start from **vs. 15** and read through **vs. 19**.
- A. The Army of 200 million (“mounted troops”)
 1. First, it is, by John’s assessment, a countless number.
 - a. The Greek terms can be basically interpreted to mean “*two myriads of myriads.*”

- b. It's a very similar term that is also used in **Revelation 5:11** where the angels surrounding God's throne in heaven are described as being "*myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands.*"
- c. So again, the essential point here is the "innumerable nature of this army" we read about in **vs. 16**.
- d. It's better to think of this number not as specifically denoting *two hundred million*, but rather as a vast, essentially numberless host.
- e. Yes, John mentions that he "*hears their number,*" but again, he's hearing a term that is used to describe an innumerable figure, and John uses a Greek phrase to then communicate the same thing.
- f. We just miss "that nuance" in our English translations, and that is why some commentators fixate on the specific figure when it's more accurate for them to consider what John is trying to say.

B. Secondly, this is not likely human forces.

- 1. Many prophecy teachers feel this army is human and comes from the east, perhaps from China. Again, this comes from their fixation on the number 200 million.
- 2. However, this conclusion does not acknowledge the fuller intent and information of the text.
- 3. It is easy to err if we are not careful:
 - a. We need to permit the Bible to interpret itself and not impose our limited knowledge or understandings upon it.
 - b. Remember, Rule #1 for proper Biblical interpretation is: "discern the meaning in the original language."
 - c. We also need to avoid forcing any text to mean 'what we WANT to see' in it. (Note: Many pastors and teachers are guilty of this, perhaps in no greater display than forcing every text to somehow be about the Gospel or about Jesus. That is VERY popular to do these days, largely because of the influence of The Gospel Coalition).
 - d. Here's an extreme example of 'forcing' a Bible passage to communicate something it is not divinely inspired to: **Cf. Ecclesiastes 10:2** – "*A wise man's heart directs him towards the right, but the foolish man's heart directs him toward the left.*" (This has nothing to do with politics).
- 4. Back to the issue of "China" specifically, which seems likely if we are considering a source for eastern human forces; they are coming later.....
 - a. **(Cf. Revelation 16:12)** In preparing the armies for Armageddon, the passage makes this objective clear
 - b. There, the Euphrates is dried up to permit physical passage. This is necessary for humans, but it is not necessary for spiritual entities
 - c. It probably alludes to a limited ability to transport troops due to: sheer numbers and various environmental / economic concerns, making ground mobilization is going to be best.

5. Here, in **Revelation 9:16-19**, this passage is most likely about demonic and / or fallen angelic forces. Three reasons why:

- a. First, there is the arrangement of the text itself (It is not only 'what' the Bible says, but there is also the 'how' element to consider).
 - The flow of **vss 14-16** suggest the four angels are the ones responsible for the killing, and the 200 million are their means of doing so
 - There is made a direct connection between leadership and their forces here in this text.
 - As we understand the leadership (high ranking), so we understand those they lead (lower ranking). This conforms to the Biblical doctrine of angels.

NOTE: Moreover, we should not be deterred by the large supernatural forces mentioned here.

- **(Cf. 2 Kings 6:17)** – Elisha prayed that his servant would see all the hills around full of fiery chariots and horses – angelic warriors
 - **Mentioned earlier: (Cf. Revelation 5:11)**, innumerable angelic forces around the throne of God.
 - So, we should not be surprised at the number suggested here – it is consistent with other Scriptural passages and their information.
- b. Second, we need to consider the description. The description of the riders and horses is very strange as it reminds us of the descriptors given in the 5th Trumpet Judgment. The result being it is not likely to be modern military personnel and equipment.

NOTE: There are two factors to observe here: 'riders' and 'horses.'

- **Riders** ("I heard their number, 200 million...") – again, this should be regarded as being an 'innumerable number.'
- But, especially at this future point in time when the population of the world is being decimated, I think it is a stretch to limit this number to a human consideration.
- Description of riders is very brief, but in the information very dramatic and colorful (**Cf. part of vs. 17**) – NOTE: The colors are not for any known modern army.
- **Horses** (In this passage, John focuses more on the horses than on the riders – **Cf. vss. 17-19**: "Heads or Tails"). Some figurative language seen here (not natural horses, just like locusts in the previous judgement were not natural locusts).

NOTE: Are the horses and riders separate beings? (My opinion is I think these demonic or fallen entities take on a horse-like form with what appears to be riders on them).

NOTE: Seldom are demonic forces presented as very pretty or attractive. Even Satan himself MASQUERADES {tries to appear as} as an 'angel of light' in **2 Corinthians. 11:14**, implying this is not His true or natural form).

- c. And lastly, there is the functional element to consider:
 - Three specific plagues emerge from the mouths of these 'horses,' and it is these three plagues which result in the death of mankind (Fire, Smoke, Sulfur or brimstone).

NOTE: Their tails are described as inflicting injury as opposed to death, which is what the mouths produce. A distinction is made between the 'heads' and the 'tails.'

- We can only imagine what these death processes are like, as we are not told. (One commentator suggests incineration and asphyxiation, however we cannot be sure).
 - However, terminology and context, once again, does not suggest a human army with modern military resources. This is another factor to consider here if we are assuming a wrong interpretation.
- C. Another basic fact to weigh concerning this army, and that is their prescriptive slaughter.
1. We are back to 1/3 of a given quantity (**as we saw in Trumpet Judgments #1 - #4**).
 - a. Earlier thirds were upon earth (i.e. sea, vegetation, light sources, etc.). This third is upon mankind.
 2. This is the first time the **Revelation** Judgments have prescribed a widespread killing of humanity (Again, the Fourth Seal Judgment was NOT the same thing (**Cf. Revelation 6:7-8**: One fourth of the earth was GIVEN POWER or AUTHORITY to kill)).
 - a. This 6th Trumpet Judgment prescribes a third of humanity being killed. This is apart from the martyred group described in the 5th Seal Judgement.
 - b. By today's population standards, those two judgments could wipe out approx. 3 billion people. (+/-)
 - c. Perhaps close to 50% of the unregenerate have already died. Remember, we are moving towards the millennial kingdom, and God is ridding the earth of those who will never receive Him as personal Savior. Such people will not populate the Millennial Kingdom. Only a limited number of righteous go into that.
 3. INTERESTING FACT TO CONSIDER: Only the unsaved and unrepentant are killed by this 6th Trumpet Judgment (**Cf. vs. 20**).
 - a. Implied that it is those who have rejected Christ. As it is not clearly stated, but quite easily assumed, since they remain unrepentant.
 - b. Purpose of this judgment, like the previous Trumpet Judgment, is to further compel and to rid the world of the irredeemable and incurable people who are hopeless and depraved in their choices.
 4. The Condition of the Human Heart:
 - a. We cannot adequately understand its tendency towards evil, and its affection of depravity.

- b. **(Cf. Jeremiah 17:9)** – “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*” Two insights to consider here:
- First, there is nothing else as bad as the human heart; it is the very worst!
 - Second, we cannot measure our sinful condition, it is beyond all parameters.
- c. It is why we all cannot save ourselves.
- The Bible says, “...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” **(Cf. Romans 3:23)**
- d. It is often argued that man would repent if given a second chance, or greater insight, or the proper experience. This was the basic argument of the rich man in **Luke 16:27-31**, and his premise there was corrected.
- It is important to remember that during The Tribulation, mankind will have unprecedented opportunities to have second chances.
 - They will still stubbornly persist in their unregenerate behavior and in their rejection of Jesus Christ.
 - The text make this clear (**vss 20-21**: “*They did not repent*”)
 - This same unrepentant posture will repeat throughout The Tribulation. We see it again in the 4th Bowl Judgment **(Cf. Revelation 16:9)** where the text once again says, “...they refused to repent.”
 - At the heart of this issue is the dilemma of personal choice. As it is now, so it will be then, mankind makes the choice to STAY in sin.
- e. To repent means ‘to stop’ and ‘to turn away’ from a behavior or conduct **(Cf. vss. 20 and 21)**
- Real repentance always involves legitimate efforts to discontinue bad behavior.
 - Real repentance always involves a choice to turn 180 degrees and go in the opposite direction.
- f. There is given to us a specific list of sins that mankind will refuse to repent from:
- The work of their hands: This is a commentary on the *will* of men which, in turn, motivates their hands.
 - It means: their will is opposed to God and therefore what they produce or set themselves to accomplish by their *hands* does not glorify God. Rather it reflects their own selfishness and sin.
 - Worship of demons: ANY reverence or worship not properly given to God can only be directed in one other trajectory: the worship of demons.
 - The rise of active paganism in our world today is only the smallest taste of what is to come.

- Idolatry: Mankind has a built-in recognition of God and a desire for a proper communion with Him (**Cf. Romans Ch. 1**).
 - Our consciences are supernaturally wired to acknowledge God's "*eternal power and divine nature*."
 - Even Creation, according to **Romans 1:20** bears testimony of the truth of God.
 - The devil uses deceit to capitalize on this and draw affection away from God. That is why unsaved humanity today worships the earth, the climate, the creatures of earth, and so on.
 - We see this all around us today, and it will only get worse.
- Murders: "Human life is cheap wherever the Gospel is not recognized." (Violent murders will be commonplace in The Tribulation).
- Magic arts – sorcery and 'pharmakeia' (The greek term used here is where we get the word 'pharmacy.' It is directly associated with drug use. This also is a natural by-product of depravity and idolatry.
 - There is a direct link between the abuse of drugs (in all forms) and an exposure to the demonic world. (sorceries / magic arts)
 - This is one of the greatest problems we are facing today. Drug use is skyrocketing, and concurrent with that is the self-evident rise of demonic influence and a fascination with the occultic realms.
 - Wherever drug use, starting with so-called 'recreational drugs,' is promoted, one will inevitably witness a rise in spiritual darkness and demonic influence.
 - Drug use is common in association with sorcery and the occult because they place the user into an altered state of consciousness whereby he or she becomes more susceptible to contact with the demonic realm.
 - These things are linked at the hip, and this text calls out this fact.
- Sexual immorality: Sexual promiscuity is rampant in The Tribulation. The further one drifts from God, the more blatant the sexual deviancies. **Cf. Romans**
 - And that is why we are seeing a dramatic surge in sexual deviancies today: homosexuality, transgenderism, and so on.
- Thefts: The best way to think of this is general lawlessness: It is a passionate quest to gain one's desires by any means possible.

