The trumpet judgments

(Part 2---Revelation 9)

We are in the middle of a series on the Book of Revelation—How The World as We Know It Will End. Two weeks ago we looked at the first four Trumpet Judgments found in Revelation 8.

(Comments on slide RE: 7 Years and placement of three series here)

Often, people will comment that *“a God of love would never do the things we see in Revelation.*” But listen to what Dr. Chuck Swindoll says in response to such a comment:

God’s harsh judgments have a holy purpose. As people He created, we can choose to listen to God’s warnings or we can harden our hearts. Regardless, God will not relent—He will not give up—until His purposes are accomplished.

And as we saw last time, C. S. Lewis (in *The Problem of Pain*) put it this way:

*“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience,
but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”*

One of God’s purposes behind this future seven-year period of trouble will be to wake unbelieving and atheistic people up to the truth of eternal judgment, in other words, hell. Right now, people are not listening. God is drawing humanity to Himself, but humanity is pushing Him away. It will not listen. Therefore, because God LOVES mankind (and wants to save mankind), there will come a time when God will “turn up the thermostat” as it were. He will bring a period of seven years of unprecedented trouble on mankind in order to get as many people to listen to Him (and be saved) as possible. And as I said last time, the judgments increase in intensity across the seven-year timespan.

When people refuse to listen to God, God will do all He can to wake them up before it is too late.

Let’s do a quick review of Revelation 8 so that we can find our place as we look at chapter 9 this morning. The first four Trumpet Judgments found in Revelation 8 bring difficulties upon mankind through earth’s eco-system:

#1: Earth’s vegetation is scorched
#2: Earth’s oceans are struck and many sea creatures as well as humans die

#3: The water of earth’s rivers becomes toxic and many people die as a result

#4: The sun, moon, and stars are darkened bringing with it catastrophic results

Let’s look now at the last verse of Revelation 8 (= v.13):

Revelation 8:13 And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven [the sky], saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

There are very few times in Scripture that a word is repeated three times in a row. Whenever God repeats Himself three times, He is really trying to get His point across to us (like when a parent says to a child: “No, no, no!!!!!”).

The next three Trumpet Judgments (5, 6, & 7) are called the “Three Woes.” Why? Because the first four Trumpet Judgments targeted earth’s **environment**, but the next three judgments will target earth’s **inhabitants**—

“Woe, woe, woe *to the* ***inhabitants*** of the earth…”

Revelation 9:1-6 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth.

Most commentators agree that this is a reference to one of the angels which rebelled with Satan.

To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. [= Hades, or hell—in the center of the earth]

 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power,
as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

Notice, these creatures are not to harm unbelievers by damaging the environment, but directly.

 5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was **like** the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

These creatures will inflict humanity with pain that like a scorpion sting. But as we shall see, the pain they bring will not go away in a matter of days—it will last five months! And that is why v. 6 tells us:

 6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

Apparently, the sting of these creatures will affect a person in such a way that they feel pain, but will be unable to do anything about it (like being paralyzed).

Now in verses 7-11 we are given a description of these creatures. Remember that the key word here is the word **like.** In the vision the Apostle John is having, he is doing his best to describe what he sees and to make comparisons the best way he knows how (with the Holy Spirit’s help, of course).

7 The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. 8 They had hair like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ teeth. 9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. 10 They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. 11 And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

Now, you may be saying, “Ok. What in the world are these things?” Well, seeing that they originate from the bottomless pit, and have a mighty angel as their overseer, I would like to suggest that these creatures are most likely demons.

**5. Trumpet 5---demons loosed**

The reason that John calls these creatures “locusts” may be that,
like an army of locusts, these demons from the bottomless pit will cover the earth to wreak havoc, not on vegetation, but on unbelieving sinners.

[Questions?]

Revelation 9:12 One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

[NOTE: if short on time, go to APPLICATION #2 RE: Satan/spiritual warfare]

Verse 13:

Revelation 9:13-19 Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is 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 and day and month and year, were released to kill **a third of mankind**.

Notice, the demons in the last Trumpet Judgment were not permitted to kill. But the result of this judgment is the loss of life of a third of mankind!

And like the last judgment, John’s vision here is **HIGHLY** symbolical:

16 Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. 18 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed -- by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

**6. Trumpet 6---mankind decimated**

This judgment is during the first 3.5 years and is probably at the very end of the first half of the Tribulation. Mankind has heard God’s Two Witnesses **predict** His coming judgments and **bring them to pass**, and yet mankind continues to resist and reject God.

There is no way of knowing exactly how this judgment will be fulfilled. But it is entirely possible that this will be a micro-organism of some kind. We are aware of the declining effectiveness of antibiotics, even against organisms that we thought we had conquered, and now we are hearing about new organisms.

(BTW, thankfully, the micro-organism you see on the screen is only at the bottom of the ocean near hydrothermal vents.)

Could an air-borne organism result in a plague that could decimate the population of the world? It’s very possible. This is grim stuff but this is what lies ahead for humanity. One-third of mankind will lose their lives.

Now the last two verses of chap. 9:

Revelation 9:20-21 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.
21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Incredible! A third of mankind is decimated by divine judgment. But do people repent so that God’s wrath might stop falling? No. They harden their hearts and continue in rebellion against God.

**Application**

First, are you resisting God in any way in your life? (Comments)

Second, the Apostle Peter said:

**1 Peter 5:8**-----8 Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. (NLT)

We are in a spiritual war. We are not wrestling against flesh and blood (people), but Satan whose desire is to devour us. We are sheep and he prowls like a roaring lion.

1 Peter 5:9 tells us to “Resist him, firm in your faith…” Resist Satan by standing up for what you know to be true—the truth of God’s Word!

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 n WWI, British vice-admiral David Beatty commanded a fleet of battleships at the Battle of
 Jutland. As the battle began, British and German ships engaged each other long- range.
The first British ship, the *Lion,* was hit by German artillery and sunk.
Next, the *Indefatigable’s* gun-powder magazine was hit and the ship was blown to pieces.
Then the battleship *Queen Mary* was sunk, taking a crew of 1,200 sailors straight to the bottom.

 How did this happen? The hulls (on the outside of the ship) were heavily armored, but their decks were made of wood and the Germans simply dropped artillery shells from above. The Germans hit them where they were weak.

What are your weak spots? What spiritual armor are you missing? (See Eph 6).