



## Sermon Series Notes

### “Plagued, Yet Still Pagan” (Revelation 8 & 9)

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Intro: Revelation 2&3 contain messages for every church throughout the church age. Revelation 4 John is caught up to heaven (raptured), sees the Father on His throne. Then in Revelation 5 the Father has a seven sealed scroll in his right hand. A mighty angel asks “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” John weeps long and hard because no one is found worthy. This scroll contains events that bring about the ultimate redemption of all creation, and John somehow knows this. Then John is told to stop weeping, that the Lion of the tribe of Judah has triumphed and is able to open the scroll. John turns to see the Lion but instead sees a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain. Then a heavenly chorus declares the worthiness of the Lion who is the Lamb, the Lamb who is the Lion.

Revelation 6 opens with Lamb opening the first seal, a rider on a white horse who is bent on conquest. This is the antichrist. Daniel 7:23 says that he will rule a future kingdom that will “devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.” The second seal brings world war unlike anything the world has ever known. The third seal is famine, a natural result of this world war. When the fourth seal is opened, one fourth of the population perishes. The fifth seal are martyrs who have been killed solely for their faith, and they ask how long before the Sovereign Lord brings justice upon the earth and avenges their blood. They are told a little while longer, until their fellow servants were to be killed as they had been was completed. The sixth seal brings about the shaking of the heavens and the earth. The end is near. Things are so bad that men hide in caves and among the rocks, calling for the rocks and mountains to hide them from him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

This is the big panorama picture, and following chapters give us more detailed snapshots.

Heaven and earth are now shaken. The end is near. But before the end the entire nation of Israel is saved, as well as a multitude of Gentiles from every nation, tribe, people and language. John 3:16.

#### Revelation 8

v.1 This silence is the greatest silence before the greatest storm in all of history.

Mark 13:19-20 “...those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning when God created the world, until now – and never to be equaled again. If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.”

v.2 We are not given the names of these angels, but they seem to be God's top generals in the angelic rankings. Two names that are likely among "the seven" could be:

#### Gabriel

- See Daniel 8:16-19; 9:21-27

- Luke 1: 18 Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." 19 The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.

- Luke 1: 26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

#### Michael

- Daniel 10: 13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

- Daniel 12:1 At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people--everyone whose name is found written in the book--will be delivered. 2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

- Jude 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

- Rev.12: 7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.

vv.3-5 This is when all of the prayers of all the saints of all time will be answered. This is when all wrongs will be made right, and all the righteous who have suffered for their faith will rejoice, because the day of complete redemption has finally come!

v.6 It appears that these trumpets are blown in close succession, one after the other. As each trumpet sounds, the calamities on earth increase & intensify.

In the O.T. there were three main purposes for the blowing of trumpets in Israel:

1. A call to public assembly (Num.10:1-8)

2. To announce special occasions such as the religious feasts, etc. (Num.10:10).

3. To call to war (Num.10:9)

- Here, the final war between heaven and hell, good and evil, light and darkness, God and Satan begins, and ends. And what an ending it will be!

v.7 At this point the judgments being unleashed upon the earth come vertically as well as horizontally. This sounds to me like it is connected to nuclear weapons being used at this time (hail and fire mixed with blood; "black rain").

vv.8-9 Is this a massive meteorite?

Meteorites are bits of the solar system that have fallen to the earth. Most come from asteroids, which are minor planets. Larger asteroids are called planetoids.

Over 120 meteor "impact craters" have been identified on earth. The largest meteorite ever discovered on earth is the Hoba Meteorite in Namibia (SW Africa).

Wabar Craters of Saudi Arabia; Ries Crater in Germany is 15 miles wide; Meteor Crater is about 37 miles east of Flagstaff Arizona, and is about 3900 feet wide and 570 feet deep.

An asteroid burst above the earth's atmosphere over Tunguska, Siberia in 1908 and destroyed some 80 million trees over 830 square miles. Observers reported "deafening bangs" and a fiery cloud on the horizon. People 40 miles away were thrown to the ground and some knocked unconscious. Some reindeer herders were asleep in their tents 20 miles away. They were blown into the air and knocked unconscious. One man was killed when he was blown into a tree.

70 tons of fragments from a meteorite were found in Siberia after a meteorite hit the ground there in 1947.

August 10, 1972 a meteor that became known as the "1972 Great Daylight Fireball" was witnessed by people from the southwest of central U.S. all the way to Canada. A tourist at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming filmed it with an 8mm movie camera. It moved north over the Rocky Mountains, and if it had hit, it would have been like a nuclear blast. Luckily it grazed the earth's atmosphere then skipped back into orbit.

Oct.9, 1992 a fireball was seen streaking across the sky all the way from Kentucky to New York. A 27 pound meteorite from this fireball fell in Peekskill, NY & punched a hole in the rear of a car parked in a driveway. In the dark morning hours of January 18, 2000, a fireball exploded 16 miles above the city of Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory of Canada. 500 fragments were discovered on the frozen Tagish Lake below. The explosion released 1.7 kilotons of energy

On June 9 2006 a meteorite slammed into the side of a mountain in Norway, and some people compared it to the Hiroshima bomb; On Sept.15 2007 a small meteor crashed in Peru, causing many people in the area to get sick from the noxious gases dispersed after impact; On Nov.21 2009 a fireball was sighted by police and traffic cameras over South Africa; Feb.15 2013 an asteroid entered earth's atmosphere over Russia as a fireball and exploded some 20-30 miles above the city of Chelyabinsk (SW Russia). About 1500 people were injured, mostly by broken glass from shock waves, 7200 buildings in 6 cities across the region were damaged, and it caused over 30 million dollars' worth of damage.

A 33 foot wide meteorite has energy of 5 Hiroshima bombs

vv.10-11 The second trumpet was aimed at the oceans (salt water). Now this third trumpet is aimed at the fresh water.

v.12 It is quite interesting to me that God created the heavenly lights on the fourth day, and here he shakes them as the fourth trumpet sounds.

Isaiah 13: 6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. 7 Because of this, all hands will go limp, every man's heart will melt. 8 Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame. 9 See, the day of the LORD is coming --a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger-- to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. 10 The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. 11 I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless.

Mark 13: 24 But in those days, following that distress, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light.

Most likely the sun, moon & stars are obscured by particles in the air.

v.13 As bad as things are, they will get worse. The last three trumpets involve supernatural forces.

## Revelation 9

God tells us about the first four trumpet judgments in six short verses. He devotes an entire chapter to two of the final three trumpets. The additional attention corresponds to the increasing seriousness of the calamities which follow.

In this chapter there are more occurrences of the words "like" and "as" than in any other chapter in the Bible, which tells us how difficult it was for John to describe the scene before him.

The beginning of the Tribulation (chapter 6) the judgments are mainly "horizontal." Later judgments come directly from heaven. Beginning here judgment comes from below (from hell itself!).

v.1 What is the Abyss? Rev.11:7 tells us that the one who kills God's two witnesses is "the beast that comes up from the Abyss; See Rev.17:8; 20:1-3;

Jesus referred to the Abyss in the first biblical case of the deviled ham; Luke 8: 30 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. 31 And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

Jude 6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home – these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

This seems to refer to the Abyss; it is a place where the most fierce, powerful, and disobedient of the devil's angels are presently held, and will be released during The Great Tribulation.

vv.4-6 Normal locusts devour vegetation. These locusts are hungry for men!

vv.7-11 Note: "like" and "resembled"

Prov.30: 27 locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks;

v.12 It's going to get worse!

vv.13-19 John had never seen modern military weapons, and that is no doubt what he is seeing here. See also Joel 2:1-6.

This is a great Middle Eastern blood bath! When the fourth seal was opened, one fourth of the population of the earth perishes (Rev.6:7-8). Here, one third that remain die. These are numbers that are hard to imagine. If it took place in our time we are talking billions of people. I've already mentioned that I believe nuclear weapons will be used in this day. I think that's the only way so many die in such a short amount of time.

The Center for Defense Information estimates that the U.S. alone has an arsenal of over 35,000 nuclear weapons. Each bomb has the equivalent of 460 million tons of TNT. That's 35,000 times greater than the

bomb that killed over 70,000 people at Hiroshima in 1945. Just twenty of Russia's 100 megaton H bombs could destroy 75% of the population of the U.S. in less than one hour.

II Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the **elements** will be **destroyed** by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

John Phillips makes a fascinating commentary on II Peter 3:10. The Greek word for "elements" (stoichea) is defined as "the components into which matter is divided" (or atoms), and the word for "be destroyed" (melt in KJV) means to loose any person or thing tied or bound. Phillips concludes, "Peter described in accurate terms the untying of the atom and the resulting rushing, fiery destruction which follows it."

Even if nuclear warfare is involved in this tribulation period, there still has to come a time when ground troops are sent in because that is the only way to ultimately take over a country. Where are these troops headed?

Countries along the Euphrates (see map PP)

The Euphrates (1780 miles long) is one of the original boundaries of the Garden of Eden (Gen.2:10-14). It is also the eastern boundary of the land God promised to Israel. And it is the ancient boundary of the "kings of the east" (enemies of Israel), as well as the old Roman Empire.

Rev.16: 12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East.<sup>13</sup> Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. <sup>14</sup> They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

Zech.14:2-3 I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations.

Let's not forget how BIG God is. He is the God who performed the plagues on Egypt that delivered Israel from bondage. He is the God who defeated vast armies and powerful nations on Israel's behalf during the travels through the wilderness on their way to The Promised Land, then more armies and nations once they entered The Promised Land. II Chron.20 records God defeating a vast army of Moabites and Ammonites who had come against Israel, and He did it without any Israel ever raising a weapon! All Israel did was pray and have a praise service, and God went to battle! He is the God who can empower one young lad named David to go out and kill a giant named Goliath, then put the whole Philistine army on the run!

vv.20-21 The potential of man's hard-heartedness is pretty incredible! See also Rev.16:8-11. But listen, you don't have to wait to see it in The Great Tribulation. It's happening today.

Did New Orleans change as a result of Katrina? Are areas in Asia where the Tsunamis hit now Christian, or did they go right back to worshipping their idols? Look at all the devastation Haiti has suffered over the years, and the people keep going right back to their old ways.

Anyone remember what it was like for us as a church the weekend after 9/11? The meetings across the street were jammed. But a month or so later it was back to normal. Some people are “foxhole Christians.” Some people genuinely repent and are saved as a result of hard times, tragedy. But then some people harden their hearts no matter what circumstances life throws at them.

## CONCLUSION

Psalm 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.

Prodigal Son “...when he came to his senses...”

Unfortunately many people never come to their senses.

Proverbs 27:22 Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding him like grain with a pestle, you will not remove his folly from him.

Matthew 7:13-14 Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

II Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise...He is patient with you, not wanting **anyone** to perish, but **everyone** to come to repentance.

Read Hebrews 3:7-8a, 15; 4:7b