***“Loose the Four Angels”

RV140-02***

If there is any portion of the Word of God that staggers the human imagination, it is this portion that deals with the seven trumpets and the judgments which they release upon the seven-year tribulation era in the future, coming upon this earth after God has removed all Christians from the earth in the event of the rapture.

**The First Five Trumpets**

We have seen that the apostle John sees seven angels lined up with trumpets to announce and to release a new set of plagues from God on mankind. These take place in the last part of the tribulation era – in the last three-and-a-half years of that seven-year period. We have already looked at the first trumpet which released the hailstorm on the face of the earth, which was mixed with fire and blood, and it destroyed one-third of the grass and the trees on the earth. The second trumpet sounded, and a burning meteoroid from outer space came charging into the earth's atmosphere, and struck the saltwater areas, causing them to turn into blood, and causing enormous shipwreck. The third trumpet sounded, and a burning star from space came to the earth, and it poisoned one-third of all the freshwater areas on the surface of the earth. All of these things obviously create a great deal of havoc, and an enormous amount of death in the process.

The fourth trumpet is sounded and the sun, the moon, and the stars decrease in their illumination by one-third of the normal span of the time when they are illuminating the earth. The fifth trumpet is sounded, and Satan releases a group of demons who have been kept in special imprisonment in the pit of the abyss. They are released upon the earth for a period of five months to torment mankind. The torment is so great that people want to die, but no one is allowed to die. They continue suffering, but they can't die.

Satan now is in a frustrated rage against the power of God. He has thought that with the removal of the Christians, the New Age movement society could be inaugurated on the face of the earth, and it has. Mankind has been promised the great lie of becoming God Himself. Satan has organized society for a millennium without God under the guidance of the antichrist, whom he empowers. Now everything is coming apart at the seams. So, Satan (struggling to bring order out of this chaos that God has imposed on his new aid society) is getting really out of sorts and enraged.

Furthermore, he's having trouble keeping people loyal to the antichrist and to the false religion of the antichrist, because people of intelligence and consideration, and who think about these things, are beginning to question the ability and the claimed deity of the antichrist. So, he has to step up the persecution; the state police; and, the enforcement program, to make people conform to his society.

So, while mankind is reeling from what the Bible calls the first woe of the five months of pain of the fifth trumpet, suffering now is stepped up as the sixth angel blows his trumpet, and unbelievers are hit with a worst woe.

As we read this particular portion, I want to remind you that this is part of that Scripture which the reconstruction theologians (the Dominion theologians) claim has already been historically fulfilled in the year 70 A.D. As we read, you keep that in mind, and you will see how indeed there is no way you can read this part of the Bible and say that these things have already historically been fulfilled (all these things took place), without changing the meaning of the words. You will have to distort (symbolize) the words that are used in this passage. You cannot, at this point, treat the Bible as a literal declaration of truth from God.

We operate on the premise that the Bible is a book for us to understand. It is a communication from God, and it is presented in language that we can understand, and we must begin by taking it at its literal face value. That's how we will approach it, and indeed, it is staggering to read.

**The Sixth Trumpet**

So, beginning at Revelation 9:13, John says, "And the sixth angel sounded." He is referring here again to one of the elect angels of God – a messenger from God. The word "sounded" refers once more to the fact that the angel has picked up his trumpet, and upon the signal from God, has blown that trumpet at a certain point in time. At that point, John hears the sound of the trumpet being blown, and then he hears another voice coming from an altar which is in heaven.

**God's Throne Room**

Please remember that John is in God's throne room. God's throne room is laid out in a certain way. It's laid out in exactly the way the tabernacle and temple on earth were laid out. The tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple in Jerusalem were a replica of what God throne room looks like, and they were laid out to represent what is up there in heaven. So, John, because of his acquaintance with the layout of the furniture and the rooms of the temple, understands what he is seeing here in heaven.

**The Brazen Altar**

As he looks upon the layout which is before him, he sees something indeed which answers to the brazen altar which was in front of the tabernacle, where the sacrifices of animals and the shedding of blood was carried on. He is aware of the fact that there is also before him, in this arrangement of the tabernacle, the altar of sacrifice. It's called the brass altar (the brazen altar).

**The Laver**

He's also aware that he sees here a thing which is a laver. It is a body (a container) of water which in which the priest symbolically washed his hands and washed his feet before he entered into the tabernacle to minister before God. That washing of his hands and his feet represented what we call the confession of known sins in 1 John 1:9. The priest was God's man. He was headed for eternal life in heaven. But he was also a sinner who picked up contamination in this world. And that symbolically was washed away here at the laver, as we wash it away to maintain fellowship with God with the confession of sin.

**The Holy Place**

Within the holy place, the larger portion of the tabernacle itself, there was on one side a table with 12 loaves upon it, which was called the table of shewbread, piled up, six in a pile, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. On the other side, there was the lamp stand with the seven lights lit by a special oil – God's special mixture that He directed. That was the only illumination in this part of the tabernacle. That lamp stand represented, of course, Jesus Christ as the light of the world.

**The Golden Altar of Incense**

There was one other thing, and this is what catches John's eye. There was a square altar-like object. It was square and twice as high as it was square. This was the place where they burned the incense. It was called the golden altar (for it was covered with gold) of incense. You remember that we have already studied how the incense represented the prayers of God's people.

**The Holy of Holies**

So, as John looks upon this scene, he also sees the Holy of Holies.

**The Ark of the Covenant**

Here is where there was only one object of furniture, and that was the Ark of the Covenant containing a pot of manna; Arron's budded rod; and, the broken tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written.

**The Mercy Seat**

There was an angel at each end, leaning over what was called this, the mercy seat on which the blood was sprinkled once a year symbolically for the cleansing of the nation and the sins of the people. The angels looked down upon that blood through the broken law, representing man's violation of the nature of God.

What we are interested in is this altar of incense. As John looked across, he saw something that looked like a square altar with decorative sides, and with horns coming out upward from the four corners of that altar. And when this was moved in the wilderness, it had loops and staves by which the priests would carry these objects of furniture to the next campsite.

So, as John hears this trumpet blow, he looks at the altar of incense. It catches his attention because he hears a voice speaking from the midst of this altar. It's described as coming from the horns of this golden altar, which is before God. It is before God because it stands at the back of the holy place, in front of the veil. On the other side of the veil is the very presence of God as represented by the Ark of the Covenant.

This golden altar ties back to something we've already read in Revelation 8:3-5, to orient us to it. There, we read, "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer \*(a shovel), and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne." This altar of incense (or the golden altar) is before God's throne in heaven. Here, John sees an angel come with a golden shovel, and he needs that shovel in order to go outside and to take coals off of the altar of sacrifice (that is, outside of the holy place). And it is those hot coals that he brings in and places upon this altar on which to burn the incense. So, the smoke and fragrance rises up to God. You cannot just use any kind of fire. It must be from the coals that have already been cleansed symbolically by the shed blood of the animal representing the future shedding of the blood of Christ.

Verse 4 says, "And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar (that is, the altar of sacrifice outside), and cast it upon the earth, and there were voices and thunderclaps, lightnings, and earthquake. So, what goes on with this altar is the burning of incense, and it is associated here symbolically with the prayers of God's people rising up to God.

In Revelation 9:13, you again have reference to this same altar with its four horns, and it again is made out of gold.

Verse 12 has told us that with the fifth trumpet, one of the three final woes that God is bringing upon the tribulation world, has passed. The second row now comes with this sixth trumpet. As you read what is happening to humanity in the tribulation world, you are aware of the fact that each trumpet is worse than the one before. Here, when you come to these final three woes, we see that the last woe is the seventh trumpet out of which come the seven bowls of wrath, which are right down at the very end, where it's like God holding a sledgehammer in his hand, and pounding away with one thing after another upon the earth. So, humanity is just shattered and completely demoralized. Here is the second woe, and it is worse than the one before it.

God's technique is to crank up the suffering by ratcheting up the judgment of God against those who are in rebellion against Him. He does not do this out of vindictiveness, but out of the hope that people will learn to change their minds. God does this to us today. When we will not listen to Him, and we begin moving in a negative direction, He brings judgment upon us. The Bible tells you, as a Christian, that if you would at that point judge yourself, and back off from the evil that you are contemplating or that you are in the process of doing, God forgives. And in most cases, the punishment bypasses, and you are restored to fellowship. If, after your confession, your punishment continues, as sometimes it does, because you have done something such that you cannot wipe out the consequence, then that punishment becomes blessing. It is no more cursing. While you are resisting, it is cursing. You admit, "I played the fool. I violated Your moral code. I stepped out of line of the will of the God. And now I'm ready to walk with you, and let your grace demonstrate to me how I may bear the consequences of my act." Then it is a teaching situation. The suffering changes to a blessing.

In Isaiah 26:9, this principle of learning from suffering is laid out as a technique that God uses. Isaiah says, "With my soul I have desired You in the night. Yea, with my spirit within me, I will seek the early in the morning. For when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." When God's judgments are coming down upon people who are in negative attitudes toward Him and His Word, then God's judgments are teaching people to do right. That's what is actually happening here in the book of the Revelation. This is not a vengeful God acting and running amuck like a loose cannon on the deck. This is a God who understands exactly what is happening. He is characterized (by His very nature – at the core of his being) by love. He is seeking to bring whatever people in the tribulation will listen to Him, to their senses. That is the purpose of this second woe, which is worse than the one before. God is stepping up the suffering on rebelling humanity as they have rebelled against His code, with the intention that they may change their ways.

That is exactly what is happening with the AIDS plague today. It is getting worse. The medical profession does not want to tell you too much about it. One of the recent reports of the studies by two well-known medical people made the statement that the medical world just didn't want to hear. And even the surgeon general said, "That's wrong – what they're telling you." That is, because they found, from their experiments, that they have discovered AIDS viruses which stay alive outside of the body for an amazing period of time: on a plate that someone has given you; on a fork that you're going to put in your mouth; or, on a hand that you're going to touch. So, suddenly the whole picture changes.

Secondly, they have now discovered that this virus has a peculiarity of changing its form and its characteristic. It is chameleon-like. About the time they feel they're closing in on it, this sucker switches gears and becomes a totally new thing. So, they have to start all over again. Are you wondering why they're telling you that they'll not find a cure likely before the end of the century? And you're saying, "Boy, that is a long time. This thing must be tough." It's tough because God is bringing down the ratchet and tightening up the consequences. Some people would not listen to Him, against His warnings of the gross, debased immorality of the homosexual and lesbian practices. He is teaching people to do right in a different way. Those who insist on doing wrong today are getting exactly the same results, and exactly the same consequences as these people in the tribulation. The result is death, and they cannot stop it. They can do nothing about it.

So, those who will not learn from one woe will be subjected to a worse one. The burning of incense on this altar in the tabernacle took place in the morning and in the evening, and it represented the prayers of God's people ascending to Him. The altar of incense corresponds to the one which John sees in heaven before the throne of God. The voice from the center of the top of this altar (from amidst the horns of the altar) is not identified, but it is probably the voice of God.

**Prayer**

Under the heavenly altar of incense, John has already previously seen the souls of saints who have been martyred by the antichrist. These horns that are on the altar symbolize the power and the authority of God. Here, they are in reference, specifically, to God's capacity to handle our prayers – God's capacity and His practice of listening and responding to prayer.

How trite it is to say that we haven't done a very good job of praying. How shall we inspire ourselves to do better? The first step is to sit down and to realize that God is out there. He is really there; He is just as much a person as anybody; He really does run the show; and, He is really capable, as the horns of this alter indicate. He has full authority and full power to bring about the response to your prayers that you need. Once you decide to live your day with that kind of an awareness of the presence of God, and that is the occupational hazard, probably above all else, of the Christian life – that we keep slipping up on the reality of the presence of God. Once you take hold of that, it is amazing how real He becomes.

I will not tell you two of the things that have happened in desperation this past week. I thought when one came, as the result of our intercession, in the financial need of caring and functioning and keeping and Christian Academy operational, that that was astounding. It blew me out of the water. Then, when the same thing happened again yesterday, I'm beginning to believe in prayer. I'm beginning to believe that there is someone out there listening. I'm beginning to believe that this person really does have the horns of authority and power to make things happen.

Now, it's a little scary. Do you realize that you can sit down tomorrow morning; tonight; or, at some other time, and in the quietness of your own circumstance, lay out the situation and the problems that confront you; the hopes of what you don't want to confront you; and, the thing that you would not like to see happening to you, so that you begin interceding and presenting before the God who makes things happen; that He will bring about your circumstances and your situation that you aspire to; and, that He preserves you from the thing that could happen?

It's really sad how much prayer is only reacting to what the devil is already done to us, or what we've let our sin nature do to us. Instead of getting out there ahead of the pack, and ahead of the wolves of Satan's demonic world, and stopping them in their tracks because we really use prayer.

So, this is impressive – that John, up in Heaven, has seen these poor people who have died as martyrs. He's seen them in mass in their souls underneath this altar earlier in the book. Now, he hears this voice coming from the horns of the altar. It is these horn on the altar of incense which the high priest, once a year on the great Day of Atonement, took blood from the altar of sacrifice outside, and he came and rubbed it on these four horns. The reason for that was obvious – that these horns are access to the power and authority of God in behalf of our prayers, is based upon the power and authority that comes through us through the shed blood of Jesus Christ dying for our sins. It is because He has paid for our sins. It is what Hebrews says: that His body is the veil through which we pass into the Holy of Holies (into the very presence of God). It is because of the death of Christ that that veil has been ripped in two, and we can walk up to what the Bible also calls the throne of grace. We have a God who is sitting up in heaven, who is our father. He's sitting there tapping his foot, waiting for you and me to come up and ask. He goes to the trouble to say, "If you don't ask, I can't do it. If you don't ask, I can't execute for you. I really would like to, and I'm ready to. I have the horns of authority and power to do that. But you don't. You have not because you ask not."

So, here are these horns covered by the blood, symbolizing the provision of Christ having made this way into the Holy of Holies, and giving us this access my prayer, therefore – prayer that God must always listen to.

If you are an unbeliever, God does not listen to your prayers. If you are one who rejects Jesus Christ as person Savior, God does not listen to your prayers. If you are a Jew who rejects Jesus Christ, you can pray yourself blue in the face, but God pays no attention to you. If you are a Muslim, you can pray yourself blue in the face, but God pays no attention to you whatsoever. It is only through Christ that you have access to the living God. And once you are in the family of God, and you are in temporal fellowship (your sins are confessed to God the Father), then strangely and amazingly, God has to listen to you. He is obligated by His own justice and holiness to listen to you and to respond. That's why He says, "Whatever you ask in My Son's name, I'll do it." Asking in His Son's name means that God the Holy Spirit has led you to ask for that. Therefore, it is legitimate, and God will do it. He will respond in the right time and under the right conditions so that what He gives you will not prove to be injurious to you. Apart from Jesus Christ, God does not respond to prayer. In putting up these prayers on the altar of incense, it is the blood which is on the horns that makes the prayers those that God will pay attention to.

At this point in the tribulation, God sees the original altar of incense in heaven, but the altar of incense back on earth will already have been desecrated by the antichrist. Therefore, the golden altar of incense in heaven cries out for justice against what the antichrist has done on earth. God responds with these devastating judgments on the antichrist world. The prayer of the martyrs, that John saw at the foot of this altar previously, was for God's kingdom to come on this earth as that kingdom is now in heaven, and that prayer is about to be fulfilled. The fact that the divine command to the four angels comes from the altar of incense indicates that it is in response to the prayers of God's martyrs.

**"Loose the Four Angels"**

What does John hear? Revelation 9:13: "The sixth angel sounded, and John hears a voice from amidst the four horns of the golden altar of incense" (which is before God). Verse 14: "Saying to the sixth angel." This voice is probably the voice of God. It says to the sixth angel: "Loose the four angels." The word "loose" is the Greek word "luo." The word means "to release." This is the aorist tense. At a specific point in time during the tribulation, this order goes out. It is active voice. The angel who is commanded to do this does the releasing. It is imperative mood. It is a command from God's divine authority.

These four angels are not released to do the thing that they have been called to do until God's authority releases it. These four angels are under restraint. The Greek word is the word "deo." This means that they are restricted. They are tied down from freedom of movement. This is in the perfect sense, which tells us that, at some point in the past, these angels did something that tied them down, and their condition of restraint continued up to this point in time. It is active voice. It is the status of these four angels. It is participle – a spiritual principle is being laid forth.

**Four Demon Angels**

The fact that these angels are bound tells us something about their character. These are demon angels. These four angels are not elected angels. These are four demons that are standing by, being held in restraint. This is because every place that you read in the Bible, concerning the angels of God, you will be aware of the fact that they always have total freedom of movement. The angels of God who are compatible with the holiness of God need no restraint. These angels are under restraint because they are not compatible with the holiness of God, because they are demonic spirits. And we are told that, some place in the past they did something. That's that perfect tense that tells us that something happened in the past, and that condition then continues on into the future. These demons are being used by the sovereign God to execute his judgment, just like He used those locust-like demons under the fifth trumpet to execute His judgments upon the earth. These demons have been restrained from acts of destruction on tribulation humanity up to this point in time.

This also makes sense to us by the fact that we know that the eternal destiny of Satan and his demons is that they will be restrained in the lake of fire. They are going to have an eternal restraint placed upon them, for the simple fact that they are incompatible with the integrity of God.

The wickedness of tribulation humanity, then, has reached the limit of what God is going to allow. Therefore, four demons, upon the command of the voice from the altar of incense, are ordered to be turned loose to execute God's divine judgment. God holds back until the right time.

This is the same principle that you will find enunciated in Genesis 15:13-16, where God says something about the Amorites (which is a general term for the pagan culture and the people that were in the Promised Land. God is giving them an opportunity to change their minds. And the Genesis passage tells us that God is going to give them 400 years to fulfill their iniquity. This is God's grace for 400 years. When the iniquity of the Amorites is full, at the right time, God is going to bring down the ax, and that's exactly historically what happened. So, God extends grace, as always, before judgment, and then brings the judgment on those who refuse.

**The Great River Euphrates**

Well, these four demons, we're told, are held in restraint at a certain place on the face of the earth; namely, what is described as, "The great river Euphrates." The word "great" indicates both the size of this river and its fame. This river begins in the Armenian mountains, and it flows through the Mesopotamian Valley. It runs for 1,780 miles, and it empties into the Persian Gulf.

This river is first brought to our attention in Genesis 2:14 in connection with the Garden of Eden. We're told that there was a dramatic river that flowed through the Garden of Eden. And the river that flowed through Eden was fed by four tributary streams, and one of them was the Euphrates River. On this river was the site of some very famous cities of the ancient world cities. These include cities that you have heard of, such as Babylon, Nippur, and Ur.

It was from Ur on the Euphrates that Abraham came. He was probably born there and reared there. That's where he lived when God revealed Himself, and Abraham was born again, and then told what his future would be in a totally different land on the Mediterranean Sea that God would give him and his posterity forever.

It is on this river that the Tower of Babel was built, which then became the center of Nimrod's false mystery religion – the scene of great apostasy, referring to the fountainhead of all false religions, Babylon, the mystery religion. Abraham came to the Promised Land from this kind of a culture – a totally pagan culture here on the Euphrates. It is in fact the most important river in Western Asia.

It formed, and does form the northeastern boundary of the land which was promised to Abraham. Genesis 15:8 identifies the Euphrates as the extent of where the land promised to the Jews would extend, which they have never, to this day, held. So, what shall we say? That God made them a promise, and then reneged? You could say that if God gave them a promise and said, "If you people behave yourselves, I'm going to give you a land that will go all the way up to the Euphrates River." But God did not say that. In fact, He pointedly said, "I will give this to you, and if you don't behave yourself, I'll discipline you, but I will not change My promise of giving you an eternal land with these perimeter's as the extent.

That's why we know that the reconstruction theologians and Dominion theology (with its thesis that God has abandoned the Jewish people, and that He has no future or any further concern or program for dealing with them) are completely wrong. That is because this God has made an irrevocable promise concerning how far the land would go that they would possess, and He has never kept His word. We know that He will. Therefore, it is a future event. The Euphrates River was actually the eastern boundary of the great Roman Empire. The Euphrates River, as a matter of fact, is the dividing line between east and West. All of the culture west of the River Euphrates is totally different from the culture on the east. On the east, you have Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Islam, and the whole Eastern mysticism, because Satan has always operated east of the Euphrates. That has been his headquarters, and Babylon will once again play that kind of a dramatic role. But west of the Euphrates River, you have the Christian culture of the Western nations. There is a great contrast between the two. This river was the site of Daniel's first world empire, Babylon, and it is a great natural barrier for invasion from the east.

What these four demons are doing, who have been restrained up to this point, is that they are now going to be turned loose, in fact, to prepare this part of the world for an invasion from the Orient. Never in the history of the world have Oriental nations invaded Western nations on a wide scale. That has never happened. But the Bible says, "The nations of the Orient, east of the Euphrates, are going to team up together during the tribulation, but they've got to get across this natural barrier, the Euphrates River, and they will swoop down upon the antichrist in the land of Palestine – there to come to grips with him, which will be setting the scene for the great battle of Armageddon, at the climax of which Jesus Christ will return, and we shall return with Him at the Second Coming. But this natural barrier is going to be a problem.

It is like in World War II, as the allied armies pressed upon the homeland of Germany, they knew that they were going to be faced with one final great natural barrier: the Rhine River. Those of you who have floated down the Rhine know that it's no small barrier. It's sometimes a half-mile wide or wider at some points. It is a great body of water. It is not something that you can send in to your novelty shop for those long pontoons that you can buy to put on your feet, and then walk on water across the Rhine River.

Wonder of wonders, you can still see to this day the side supports of the Remagen Bridge, which the Germans blew up in their haste to get across. When the Americans got there, the bridge has not collapsed. It had misfired. Some had blown, and the structure was weakened, but they repaired it and reinforced it, and got a whole mass of American troops across that bridge before, something like three days later, it finally collapsed under the strain of the damage already done to it. But Hitler was furious. He knew that, with the crossing of the Rhine, it was all over. Whatever hopes they may have had up to then, once that great natural barrier was crossed, there was no holding back the allied forces.

You're going to have a comparable position here where the antichrist is going to count on the defense of this great Euphrates River. As we shall see later, what God is going to do is use these angels (these four demon angels) to prepare for this invasion. And the way they're going to do it is that they're going to dry up the Euphrates, and these armies will sweep across dry shod without any problem.

All of this is taking place under God's specific order of events. I want you to notice that Revelation 9:14, after having the command to loose these angels which are bound here at the Euphrates, verse 15 says, "And the four angels were loosed who were prepared." This is the word that means they were made ready: "hetoimazo," and it's perfect tense again. God in the past has made this great preparation. He's put all this together. It is passive. God is going to release these angels. They cannot release themselves. It says that this is going to be done for an hour. This doesn't mean that this is going to take place in just an hour's time, because the Greek Bible says, "*The* hour," and then it adds the words: "day;" "month;" and, years." And the way you are to understand this is: "The hour of the appointed day, month, and year." It's the Holy Spirit's way of zeroing in on a specific point in time where all this is going to happen. God has a timetable. When He is ready, He will release these four demons at exactly the right point in the tribulation. God's will is being done in God's time. So, God, God is going to release the four demons, and then His control in history will again be demonstrated. No creature is free to move until God permits him to move. All of God's creatures, including these demons, are His agents, and He will use them.

**The Mission of these Four Demon Angels**

What is the mission of these demonic creatures? We're told that, having been released at that specific and proper point in time, they were prepared for the specific purpose of slaying a large segment of the humanity in the tribulation world. The word for "slay" is the Greek word "apokteino." "Apokteino" means "to put to death." This is present tense, which means that this will be what they will be doing continually. What they will be putting to death, we are told, are men. The Greek word makes it very clear what God means here, because it's a Greek word "anthropos," which is the Greek word for" "mankind;" "humanity;" or, "human beings in general." So, this refers to men and women, and all ages.

What's going to happen? Well, these angels, once they're turned loose, are going to specifically put to death one-third of mankind. This is one-third of mankind which is still left upon the face of the earth. These unbelieving rebels are now irreversibly destined to the lake of fire. So, God is, in mass, going to send them into eternity. One of the purposes, you must remember, of these death-dealing judgments is to clear the earth of all unbelievers in preparation for the millennial kingdom, which is just a couple or three years down the line at this point, so that, at the point that the millennium begins, all unbelievers will basically have been flushed out and removed from the surface of the earth. Those who still remain will, at that point in time, be put to death. When the millennium begins, it's a golden age because everybody is born again.

So, under the fourth seal, you will remember that one-fourth of the earth's population was killed. Now, under the sixth trumpet, an additional one-third of what is left is killed. If you add those two figures together, you will discover that that means that from the time that the tribulation began to some place a year or two past the midpoint, one-half of the earth's population has been destroyed. I think that there are six billion people on the face of the earth now. Within a matter of four or five years, three billion people will be killed. You don't even know what that means. You cannot even mentally conceive of what three billion people means. One billion is 1,000 million. The enormity of the figure just staggers us. Here, half of the earth's population has been killed.

How in the world are they dealing with these people? How are they getting them buried? For many of them, they don't. They just lie around and rot away because they cannot keep up with it. It's ironic that all of these divine judgments of death, furthermore, are executed while the religion of man is in full bloom under the false prophet. The false prophet now has a world church. He is directing worship toward the antichrist as the god to whom they all are subject. While that is going on, the real God out there is making them look like fools. They cannot stop the disease; they cannot stop the plagues; they cannot stop the disruption of nature; they cannot stop the role of death across the world; and, they can do nothing but sit there and grit their teeth in anger.

Obviously, no such massive worldwide execution of the human race has been seen since Noah's day. That was the last time there was this kind of a massive execution. These deaths, furthermore, are God's warning from heaven to mankind – that they should reject Satan's man, the antichrist, and they should indeed turn to the living Creator God. The divine message is clear: There is no future for a society which is in rebellion against the Bible, the Word of God. There is only destruction and death for such a society. The fifth trumpet warned with enormous suffering what God was going to do to those who rejected His Word. The sixth trumpet now warns with actual massive deaths what God is going to do.

Anybody who is still breathing at any point of time still has a chance to go back. He still has a chance to change his mind. He still has a chance to turn back to God. Once they die in the condition of spiritual death, they will now permanently be doomed to the second death – eternal separation from God. It is interesting that under the fifth trumpet, you'll remember that the suffering was so great that people wanted to die, but nobody could. Now, under the sixth trumpet, people can scarcely escape death. It's everywhere, all around them. I must confess that I don't know how they're going to handle the volume of human bodies that are going to be piling up as a result of this massive divine judgment.

How long is this going to go on? Well, the judgment of suffering with the locust-like demons went on for five months. Basically, nobody died from it. There was enormous suffering; screaming; agony; and, wishing that they could die. I mean, this is a condition, again, that is hard for us to enter into. It is a person who is an intense pain and who has no way out. All of the excitement and all of the enthusiasm and all of the hopes and glamor of living suddenly is just washed out of the person. And they want to just check out. That's what happened under the fifth trumpet, and that was for five months.

However, under this judgment, this goes on for 13 months. This is 13 months of people piling up dead in the streets, everywhere you look, every day. We will next time see the technique by which God is going to bring about this execution. Can you imagine what nightly TV news is going to be like? Do you think you can guess what the first thing is going to be on the news every night? Well, maybe not. The antichrist may say, "I don't want you talking about these deaths. I do not want you talking about how these people are dying," because, as we shall see in a moment, how they die is hair-raising in itself. You would think that it was a massive Halloween party as you read this in Scripture – the way these people are going to be checked out? I suspect that the antichrist is going to do his best to sit on the news. He will call up Jennings and say, "I don't want you talking about this. He will call Brokaw and you'll say, "I don't want you to be announcing these things." He will call Rather for sure and say, "I want you to lay off, and just ease this stuff off. I don't want you to make any big emphasis on this. They're all going to be told to keep it low.

So, the trumpet has sounded. We find that from the altar of incense come the representation of the prayers of God's martyrs who have been crying out for God's justice against the treatment they have received at the hands of the antichrist. God finally says, "Turn those four demon angels loose. We have kept them bound." Now, they are to go about their destructive work. They are to execute a mission of preparation in the area of the Euphrates River. As they go about that preparation, they are to bring about, for 13 months, an enormous slaughter upon the people who are on the face of the earth. How that slaughter is executed, and the consequence, we will then look at next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1984

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