***The Sun Scorches Men with Fire

RV203-01***

Our subject is "The Seven Bowls," and this is segment number eight in Revelation 16:1-21.

**The Rapture of the Church**

The next event that will take place in God's plan of future events is the rapture of the church. The church, which in the Word of God, is called the Body of Christ, includes only believers who are born-again between the resurrection of Christ and the rapture of the church in the future. This event of the church being caught up from the earth is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. On that occasion, at the rapture of the church, all Christians living or dead are removed from the earth to meet Jesus Christ in outer space, to be taken into heaven by Him. At that point in human history, the seven-year tribulation period will begin, which ends at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to the earth.

**The Second Coming of Jesus Christ**

So, I stress to you again, there are two phases to the return of Christ. One is to the air, where He meets the church and takes them back to heaven. He doesn't touch down on the earth. The second is what we call the Second Coming of Christ, where He actually touches down on the Mount of Olives, which splits in two, and He brings to an end the confrontation on the field of Armageddon.

The book of the Revelation reveals what will take place on earth during the seven-year tribulation period. At that time, world government will be fully achieved under the reign of the antichrist. This union of all nations will in fact be a revival of the ancient Roman Empire as a world power. When Daniel was told the complete future history of humanity, he was told that there would be five world empires that would now come on the scene, and that's all – no more than five. He was living, he was told, in the first one: the Babylonian. This would be followed by the Medo-Persian, which is exactly what happened; which would be conquered by the Greeks, which is what happened; and, finally the Greeks would be conquered by the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire fragmented into many nations, and it will come back together again under the antichrist as the emperor in the tribulation period. The fifth world empire will be that of Jesus Christ reigning in the Millennial Kingdom.

So, there will be this one world government and the revival of the Roman Empire during the tribulation. There will also be a universal religion which will be led by the false prophet which worships the antichrist as God. All the world at that time will operate on the economic system of socialism, and it will be controlled completely by government regulations, so that you cannot do business unless you have government approval. You can't even buy things without the government's approval. You can't sell things without the government's approval.

**Fascism**

This is a system which we call today fascism. A lot of people don't know what fascism is. Those of us who grew up during years of World War II, and who were in high school before World War II, were well-versed in what fascism meant, over against capitalism. Fascism will be instituted once more during the tribulation period. Fascism is where businesses and corporations and people are permitted to keep their means of productivity and income, but the government regulates what you do with it. They tell you how much you can have; how you can operate with it; and, what you will do with it. Enormous bureaucracies are set up with government regulations so that the government controls business, in effect. This was the system devised by Mussolini, and then followed and imitated by Hitler. It was seemingly letting people keep running their lives, but really they weren't. The government was completely in charge of all their financial situation and their financial well-being.

The government of the antichrist in exchange for that, as fascism does, and as National Socialism did under Nazism, is that the government provides for the needs of the people. The government does this, of course, in exchange for individual freedom. You give up your freedom, and the government takes care of you.

Those who refuse to worship the antichrist and to take this mark will be persecuted, and many will be martyred. The government of the antichrist will control all access to all livelihood so they can simply starve a person, and indeed, this is what they will try to do with the Jews. People will reject and hate Jesus Christ, and they will believe themselves to be potential gods, which is blasphemy. Some believers, of course, we're told, will be protected from death by God to proclaim the gospel of grace salvation to tribulation humanity, to give people a chance to the very end to change their minds.

The United States, as I've indicated to you, it seems, will probably be destroyed as a world power during the tribulation. It's not on the scene, so the center of power is not here. It is completely in Western Europe and the antichrist's world. I think that probably the destruction of the United States as a world power will be due to economic fascism, which is the enormous government regulations and controls that are coming on in this country. Certainly, this includes the abortion murders that have soaked our land with innocent blood and, of course, the moral abominations that have taken place.

**"If I were the Devil**

I have often thought to myself, "If I were the devil, how would I go from point A to point B point: from Point A where we are now, to point B, where he controls the world, and controls all humanity? Well, as some of you know, Paul Harvey had the same idea. Yesterday he did something on his radio commentary that he has never done before. For the third time, through popular demand, he repeated again an article he wrote entitled, "If I Were the Devil, I Would." Again, he has put his finger so exactly on the social scene today, and where we are, what is happening. And I'm having trouble drumming it into the heads of Christians to take seriously that this is a different era than ever before in American history, and that tremendous evils have been turned loose and are set foot, and that these are all part of the devil's plan to go from where he is now to where he actually is a world ruler being worshiped through the Christ. I'd like to read his article:

**Paul Harvey**

March 18: "If I were the prince of darkness, I would want to engulf the whole world in darkness. I'd have a third of its real estate, and four-fifths of its population, but I would not be happy until I had seized the ripest apples on the tree. So, I would set about, however necessary, to take over the United States. I'd subvert the churches first. I would begin with a campaign of whispers. With the wisdom of a serpent, I would whisper to you as I whispered to Eve, 'Do as you please.' To the young, I would whisper that the Bible is a myth. I would convince them that man created God instead of the other way around. I'd confide that what's bad is good, and what good is square. And the old I would teach to pray after me, 'Our father, which art in Washington.'

"Then I’d get organized. I'd educate authors on how to make lurid literature exciting so that anything else would appear dull and uninteresting. I'd threatened TV with dirtier movies and vice versa. I'd peddle narcotics to whom I could. I'd sell alcohol to ladies and gentlemen of distinction. I'd tranquilize the rest with pills.

"If I were the devil, I would soon have families at war with themselves; churches at war with themselves; and, nation at war with themselves, until each in turn was consumed. And with promises of higher ratings, I'd have mesmerizing media fanning the flames.

"If I was the devil, I would encourage schools to teach young intellects, but neglect to discipline emotions. Just let those run wild, until before you knew it, you'd have to have drug-sniffing dogs and metal detectors at every schoolhouse door. Within a decade, I'd have prisons overflowing, and judges promoting pornography? Soon I could evict God from the courthouse, and the schoolhouse, and then from the houses of Congress. And in his own churches, I would substitute psychology for religion, and deify science. I'd lure priests and pastors into misusing boys and girls, and church money.

"If I were the devil, I'd make the symbol of Easter an egg and the symbol of Christmas a bottle.

"If I were the devil, I'd take from those who have, and give to those who wanted, until I killed the incentive of the ambitious. What would you bet that I couldn't get folks to promote gambling as the way to get rich? I would caution against extremes in hard work; in patriotism; and, in moral conduct. I'd convince the young that marriage is old-fashioned, and that swinging is more fun; that what you see on TV is the way to be; and, that I could undress you in public, and lure you into bed with diseases for which there is no cure.

"In other words, if I were the devil, I just keep right on doing what he's doing. Paul Harvey. Good day."

I think that well put. It's right on target. That's exactly the issue we face, and Paul Harvey has put it in perspective. That is what we're up against – a world that Satan has full control of. That's why the Bible calls him "the prince of the power of the air." It calls him the god of this world. He is systematically moving ahead from where we are now to preparing for the antichrist.

During the seven-year tribulation period, God will send a series of increasingly severe judgments on mankind. These will be not so severe at first, and then He'll ratchet them up to become more severe. These judgments are revealed in the book of the Revelation under the image of a series of seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls. You should understand that these run sequentially. The seven seals are executed, and out of the seventh seal come seven trumpets. They are executed, and then out of the seventh trumpets come the seven bowls, which we are now studying. They come one after another.

Mankind, under these images, is struck by devastating plagues, which, during the first half of the tribulation period (the first three-and-a-half years) results in the death of half the world's population. There is on the face of the earth now six billion people. We are saying that when this begin, within three-and-a-half years, three billion people will be dead as a result of the plagues just in the first three-and-a-half years. The grace of God only gradually steps up with severity of the judgments, in order to give people a chance to repent, and to turn to Jesus Christ to escape the lake of fire. The seven bowl judgments themselves are so devastating that they can only be executed in the last few weeks of the tribulation period, because it's not possible, after they have taken place, for human life to continue on the earth very long.

However, after the bowls have been completed, there will be no more opportunity to believe the truth, as Jesus Christ will then return to the earth, with the church, His bride, the body of Christ, to set up His kingdom on earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

All this that I told you thus far is true because it's revealed in the Bible. Therefore, you must have the courage to believe the truth. Whatever else you may think about it, this is the voice of God.

**The First Four Bowls of Wrath**

The first bowl causes a plague of malignant force on everyone who is on the face of the earth who carries the mark of the beast. These are running, horrible, malignant infestations. The second bowl judgment causes of seawater to turn the blood – the coagulated blood of a dead person. The third bowl judgment, we have seen, causes all freshwater areas (rivers, fountains, and spring) to turn to coagulated blood. And the fourth bowl, which we are now looking at, is poured out upon the sun, resulting in an enormous, intense increase in the heat of the sun, so that there is great agony on this earth as a result of this heat.

From the time of the rebel Nimrod at the Tower of Babel, the Sun, we have pointed out, has been worshiped as a god. God in the tribulation uses the sun-god to bring misery to its worshipers. That's ironic justice. But people from the time of Nimrod have worshiped the sun as a God. Those of us who lived through World War II, and who faced the empire of Japan, understood why it was called the Empire of the Rising Sun (the Empire of the Sun). That's why they have the round ball on their flag. The red sun is the symbol of the Japanese. Their emperor was considered a god because he was considered a descendant of the sun-god. That's why they did not look upon him, and they did not listen to his voice. When the emperor came on the radio to announce to the people that Japan must endure the unendurable: they must accept surrender to the allied forces, and that they could not continue, many had never heard his voice, and it was a shocking, traumatic experience to hear the voice of their god.

So, this is not something way back in distant history. It is because the Japanese soldiers really believed there emperor was a god, and he had told them to die in battle, that they were so willing to do so. This is the same lie that fate promulgates through Islam: To die in a holy Jihad is to immediately go into paradise. That's why the Japanese soldier with such a fanatical opponent in combat. He had nothing to lose by dying except to go to paradise. Therefore, it made him very tenacious, and therefore, it was necessary for the Marines and the Army in the South Pacific to kill practically every one of them on the field of battle before they were able to control the particular island that they were on.

**The Sun-God**

The sun, of course, ultimately, is a symbol for Satan, and it is Satan who is being worshiped as the sun-god. Now, the sun-god was worshiped in Canaan under the name of Baal that you all are acquainted with. Baal was a fairly cult. It was a sex cult, and the worship of that fertility was by every kind of illicit and perverted sexual act. This was done on various groves, in little places that they would build where the sex rites were performed, as well as temples.

**An Abomination**

Remember that God called it an abomination. I told you last week that abomination is something that is hard to define. But you can get the feeling if you can imagine yourself using a delightful, delicious soufflé, and you're popping one spoonful after another into your mouth, and suddenly you take a spoonful, and out of the corner of your eye, you see what looks like a wing and a leg, and you pop it into your mouth, and you realize that you've just eaten a cockroach. Now the feeling you had just then is abomination. That is the loathing disgust that God has for sun worship.

**Ahab and Jezebel**

This was practiced even by Israel, and the classic example is Ahab and Jezebel. Jezebel was a feminist type woman who promoted the mother goddess worship, which was common among the Canaanites, which had been begun by Nimrod. And it was another expression of sun worship. Ahab, her husband, was a very weak ruler, easily manipulated by his wife Jezebel, and he tolerated her false religion, such that he actually built a temple to Baal.

Now, you may remember that when Ahab could not buy the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, Jezebel said, "I'll take care of it for you, big boy." And she used government agencies to manipulate perjury and murder. You can read about this in 1 Kings 21:1-16. So, she just simply removed Naboth as a factor, and confiscated, by governmental edict, the vineyard for Ahab. This was a forceful feminist who let nothing stand in the way of her humanist objectives.

**Elijah**

The government of Israel actually rejected God's prophet Elijah. Elijah often was scared stiff for his very life, and at the same time, the government of Israel, with tax money, supported 450 prophets of the male god Baal, and 400 prophets of the female goddess Asherah. You may read about that in 1 Kings 18:19. So, this is the picture that you have. Baal worship, and his consort Asherah, were an extremely perverted, corrupt system of worship.

God had warned Israel that worship of the sun was an abomination to Him, and if they persisted in it, it would lead to national destruction. In Deuteronomy 4:19 and Deuteronomy 17:4, God is explicitly clear that if they worshiped the stellar bodies (the worship of the sun-god was the worship of Satan), that this would lead to their national destruction.

**Elijah**

Well, Ahab and Jezebel were in the forefront of carrying on that system. Israel was finally shown who the true God was by that confrontation of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. And that brought down that system finally by God's prophet who had a demonstration that the truth should be believed, and he had the truth.

**Scorch Men with Fire**

In Revelation 16:8, we have the beginning of this fourth bowl document: "The whole thing poured out his bowl upon the sun" – this god, whom humanity for centuries, right down to the Japanese of our day, have worshiped as deity. Then, we read, "And it was given to it to scorch men with fire:" "It was given to it (referring to the sun – not to the angel) to scorch." The word "scorch" is the Greek word "kaumatizo." "Kaumatizo" simply means "to burn." At the pouring of the fourth bowl, the sun is beginning to burn up what is on the earth. This is in the infinitive mood, which indicates that this is God's purpose. God intends for this to happen.

What it burns up is men. This is the Greek word "anthropos" for humanity in general rather than any reference to gender. And He burns it up with "pur" (fire). This refers to the burning rays of the sun. You may remember that under the fourth trumpet department, only one-third of the sun, moon, and stars were affected, causing an increased darkness. There, the light was reduced of the sun, moon, and stars, causing a one-third loss of daylight, and increase of darkness. But now, under the fourth bowl, God is ratcheting up the pressure, and the whole sun is affected, so that the heat radiation increases greatly toward the earth. Solar radiation pours upon the earth in great ways, then, as scorching heat.

This event, interestingly enough, is actually noted in the Old Testament in Malachi 4:1. Here's an actual reference of the act of God: "'For, behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, and all the arrogance, and every evildoer will be chaff, and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,' says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch." Malachi moves through these revelations of the Spirit of God, that God was going to bring this kind of judgment in time upon humanity that has rejected the authority of God and His Word.

We also find this Isaiah 24:4-6, where Isaiah refers to this event: "The earth dries up and withers, the land dries out and withers, and the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants for they transgressed, violated statues, and broke the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left."

**The Light of the Moon will be like the Light of the Sun**

Also in Isaiah 34:26, the Prophet leaps forward to this event: "And the light of the moon will be as the light of the, sun and the light of the sun will be seven times brighter." There you have some indication of how much increase of heat there will be – seven times: "Like the light of seven days, on the day the Lord binds up the fracture of His people, and heals the bruise that He has afflicted," on the day when He turns to pick up the people of Israel once more as His own people.

**God's Judgment is Associated with Fire**

So, the angel, with what he pours upon the sun, is going to be able to intensify its heat level tremendously. Several places, in the Bible indicate that divine judgment is associated with fire. This is SOP with God (Standard Operating Procedure). His judgments are regularly associated with fire. Deuteronomy 28:22, 1 Corinthians 3:13, and Peter 3:7 give you insights that God's judgments are associated with fire, and certainly the judgment of all judgments (hell itself, the lake of fire) is associated with fire.

How is this to be done? We don't know exactly. We know some things about the sun now. We know that the sun, our star, normally pours a continuous stream of high energy particles toward the earth. These particles at the speed of three million miles a minute. That's pretty fast. The planet earth itself is surrounded by a field of radiation, and a field called a magnetosphere. These protect the earth from the full impact of the deadly radiation that actually does come from the sun. Solar radiation, however, that does penetrates the magnetosphere is trapped by what we have discovered which is called the Van Allen Belt which surrounds the earth, and it is a high intensity radiation zone, capturing the stuff that may come through in radiation.

So, God has placed this in a very precise balance such that you don't hear too much deadly radiation from the sun. You get enough to keep things growing, and to keep people healthy with the vitamin factors that they need to get from the sun, and the functioning of the atmosphere, and the meteorological factors. All that is very precisely balanced.

However, on occasion, huge tongues of flame leap out from the surface of the sun. When most of us were in school, we referred to these as sunspots. These spew out hot solar plasma a million miles out into space. But this also projects at the same time an enormous amount of X-rays, radio waves, light waves, electronic clouds, and high-energy protons toward the earth. These cause magnetic storms on the earth, which could disrupt communication systems, and all kinds of electronic devices. So, the sun is a powerful factor, and when it goes berserk, it causes a lot of trouble.

On November 1st, 1960, the earth was hit by an enormous sun flare at 2:37 PM. A cloud of solar hydrogen gas 20 million miles across the earth at 4,000 miles per second. The result was a week-long disturbance with huge electrical and magnetic storms hitting the earth. Compass needles waved around erratically it. It was tough to fly with just a regular compass. Blackouts occurred, and the northern lights above the Arctic Circle flared majestically.

Yet, as awesome as that interruption of the normal functioning of the sun was, it was a mere ripple in the steady flow of energy from the sun. The fourth bowl is going to be much worse. Astronomers tell us that they rate the sun as a second-generation star made up of cosmic dust and gas. It has been radiating for a comparatively short time, as space and time is reckoned. The hydrogen content of the sun, therefore, is only moderately depleted. The way the sun is put together, we're told, is that it is made up of an intense core of helium, and that it is surrounded by an outer surface of hydrogen. This is the basic structure of the sun as it radiates out. What is happening at the surface of the helium level is that the helium and hydrogen are interacting in an atomic fusion which causes, in effect, an atomic explosion that produce the heat and the radiation and everything that comes from the sun. This is all taking place in the interchange between hydrogen and helium.

So, eventually, the hydrogen will be depleted. When that happens, the helium core will expand larger and larger. It will increase temperature tremendously until it will become a giant red spot up in the sky, radiating exorbitant amounts of heat and radioactive material to the earth. Maybe that's how it'll happen. Maybe God will speed up the process. We don't know what natural or supernatural process He will use to disrupt the earth with intensified heat, but God has power over His creation, while the antichrist has only the power that God permits him to have.

So, the antichrist, who claims to be God, is going to be humiliated because the primary symbol that represents him and Satan that all the world is worshiping is now going to bring intense, withering heat down upon them, and they can't do a thing about it. The theme song during this period of the fourth bowl judgment will be "There's Going to be a Hot Time in the old Town Tonight." And Vice President Al Gore will finally be proven right, in spite of the fact that the majority of scientists and meteorologists now disagree with him on earth warming. He will finally be proven right that there is such a thing as earth warming. When you hang around long enough, you get proven right. And the radical environmentalists are going to freak out, yelling, "We told you so." There really is a big heat warning coming on this earth.

Well, obviously, this kind of intense heat from the sun is going to devastate its inhabitants. The worshipers of the antichrist, who are already covered with these malignant running sores, will have their bodies hit with hot coal-like impact upon them from the sun's rays. Sunburn will be severe, and will take place rapidly, along with sunstroke. Those of you who have ever been in a latitude like Hawaii immediately learn (and they warn you): "This is Hawaii. The sun is different here than at home, even if you come from the south. It is intense, and you find that, in a short time, you can pick up a fast sunburn in Hawaii.

Yet, the sun is going to be seven times more intense than that. Life on earth will become unbearable as fluids evaporate and vegetation is scorched. The heat will decrease but little at night, making it difficult to sleep soundly. Drinking water, such as they'll be able to produce (with most of it turned to blood, will evaporate quickly, creating even a worse shortage to quench thirst. People will try to stay alive, but you can only go about three or four days without water, and that's it. The air conditioning systems will be under intense maximum use, resulting in many mechanical breakdowns and electrical shortages. It'll probably be hard to find repairman who are operational to come and repair your unit. The whole situation on earth, with such a disruption of the sun, will be traumatic and extremely psychologically maddening.

The intensity will cause increased evaporation of the oceans and lakes. This is going to interrupt the cycle of rainfall. Another thing that will happen, depending upon how long this is extended, obviously, with this kind of an increase in the heat, is that the polar cap will melt. And scientists tell us that if they were all melted, that would raise the sea level 200 feet. This would obviously flood vast inland areas, inundating coastal cities like New York, Tokyo, London, Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aries, Amsterdam, St. Petersburg, Rome, Athens, Beirut, Calcutta, Shanghai, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Interestingly enough, all of these cities are major centers of evil, and major centers of great moral corruption.

Well, God the Creator, make no mistake about it, is in charge of His creation. And when you have a physical ailment, I have found that that is a source of comfort and support to know that the God who made it in the first place can repair it and put it back together right in the second place. He is in control of His creation, and He is certainly in control of the natural forces of history. Therefore, Psalm 147:17-18 tells us: "He casts forth His ice as fragments. Who can stand before His cold? He sends forth His Word and melts them. He causes His wind to blow and the waters to flow." He is in charge of His creation.

This is also recognized by Job in Job 38:22-23: "Have you entered the storehouse of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, which I have reserved for the times of distress, for the day of war and battle?" Here you see the picture of God with storehouses full of snow and hail – elements that He is going to use in His judgment because He controls the forces of nature.

Then there is Amos 9:5-6, where God the Holy Spirit says, "And the Lord God of hosts, the one who touches the land so that it melts, and all those who dwell on it mourn. And all of it rises up like the Nile, and subsides like the Nile of Egypt. The one who builds His upper chambers in the heavens, and has founded His vaulted dome over the earth, He who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out on the face of the earth. The Lord is His name." Thank God, He is indeed in charge of His natural forces, and he is going to use them in a devastating way, finally, upon the antichrist and the rebels who worship the antichrist.

**What about Believers?**

Well, what about the believers? We Christians don't always escape (very often, we do not escape) the consequences of what our evil society does. When it goes down, we go down with it. When it creates suffering, we suffer with it. This is why it is legitimate and proper that we sound off and complain when that is necessary, for our own self-preservation and well-being. But it seems to be that we may expect that God will protect the believers from the agonies of the sun's intensified heat, because He has done that in the past, when He has brought His plagues upon a society, as He did, for example, in the plagues on Egypt.

In Exodus 10:21-23, we read, "Then the Lord said Moses, 'Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt.' So, Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the sons of Israel had light in their dwelling." That must have been a sight. The Egyptians were groping around in the dark, trying to find what they could burn to get a little light. Most of them just stayed put, for fear of running into something, or falling off of something, with that intense kind of darkness that is so dark that you can feel it, and you cannot see. Have you ever been in something like that?

I woke up one time at night, on an intensely dark night, and walked off into an adjoining room. Maybe I was sleeping. I don't know. But eventually I realized I was in this room, and couldn't find my way out. It was so dark, and I was groping around the wall, trying to find the door. That's weird and eerie. I thought, "I might fall over something." So, I started creeping on the floor to feel my way around until I found the door to work back into the hall.

Psalm 121:5-6: "The Lord is your keeper. The Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun will not smite you by day, nor the moon by night." Now that's almost a promise. It's possible that God will protect His own.

In Revelation 16:9, we have the response of mankind to this divine judgment: "And men were scorched with fierce heat." Here the word "men" is again "anthropos," meaning mankind in general. And the Greek says, "*the* men," indicating the specific body of rebels referred to in verse 2 and verse 8. This suggests again to us, when it says "*the* men" (that specific group of men), that perhaps the believers will not suffer this intense heat: "And they were scorched," we're told, "with a fierce heat." This is done to them by God. They did not do it to themselves. The Greek grammar here, literally says, "They were scorched with a great scorching." That is a grammatical technique (device) to stress the intensity of the burning.

**A Preview of Hell**

Certainly, this plague, if it is anything, is a preview of the lake of fire. In Luke 16:24, we have an historical record given to us of someone who is in the lake of fire. Actually, he is at the way station here in Hades, which will be emptied into the lake of fire, but the conditions are the same. Please remember: do not call this a parable. A parable never gives actual people names. This one does: "Lazarus" and the rich man. In Luke 16:24, this rich man, who finds himself in Hades, cried out and said to Father Abraham that he sees over on the other side in Paradise, "Have mercy on me, and send Lazarus (who is also in Paradise) over, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame." The judgments of God associated with fire, and fire is a great agony.

Notice verse 28: This man says, "I have five brothers, and Lazarus could go back and warn them that they also should not come into the place of torment." Flames are very tormenting.

Believers in the tribulation will indeed find the sun a blessing – not only in the tribulation, but certainly also in the millennium. This is the whole period that the Bible refers to as the day of the Lord. Malachi 4:2 has an interesting expression: "But for you who fear my name (that is, everything that God stands for, and obedience to everything that He has taught), the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings." Here, instead of being a sun of destruction and agony and torment, it is going to be a sun that brings good things – the good things of righteousness, with healing in its wings, and great energy to you: "And you will go forth and skip like the calves from the stall."

The false prophet used Satan's power to bring fire down from the sky. Revelation 13:13 told us about that. He did this in order to prove that the antichrist was divine, so that he would be worshiped. Now the Lord God, who created the sun, uses its heat against the antichrist and his worshipers who are absolutely helpless to stop Him.

Now, if you were in that position, what do you think your rational response should be? You're not blind. You're not insensitive. You know that the sun has gone berserk. You see these enormous flames coming out from the sun. The intensity will seemingly be at least seven times greater. At this point, mankind knows who is doing it. They know that God is doing this. Whatever question they had about anybody being up there, and capable of this, they don't have any doubt about it now.

Verse 9 says, "Their response was to blaspheme the name of God." The Greek word is "blasphemeo." What does "blasphemy" mean? "Blasphemy" means basically two things. One is that you say that you're God. You claim deity. That's blasphemy. Or you speak contemptuously and impiously of God. That's blasphemy. And what they spoke against was the name of God – the name representing everything that God stood for. What was the object of their calumny to rage and their obscenity in using God's name in curse words against Him? The rage was the Creator God. They knew that God had made that sun; they knew that God was able to control that sun; and, they know that God has turned up the thermostat that was burning them with such intense agony.

I want to remind you that this blasphemy comes from religious people. These are people who follow the teachings of the false prophet. These are compassionate humanist who believe in some divine force. These are people who are worshipers of the universal powers out there. These suffering worshipers of antichrist will hold on to their belief that Satan will somehow empower antichrist to prevail against God, and to stop this great heat plague. And they blaspheme the name of God who continually has the power. Specifically, that word means the authority over these plagues. It stresses the fact that God is in charge of the forces of nature. People will know that there is a God in heaven who is sending this heat plague against them. And their spiritual insanity, at that point in time, will be demonstrated by their response to this judgment of God.

They will continue to claim personal godhood in spite of their helplessness and their agony. This is the doctrine of the New Age religion. It is inherited from Hinduism: Every man is a potential God. This is the doctrine of Mormonism. Every man and every woman will become a god. They're going to hang on to their belief in their own godhood. Their spiritual insanity will be shown that they will treat the true God, the Creator, with contempt. They'll continue to rebel against His authority. They will not have the sense to take the advice of the angel, which was recorded in Revelation 14:7, when the angel said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. And worship Him who made the heaven and the earth, and sea, and springs of water." Now, that's rationality.

When I tell you that it is possible to go spiritually berserk (to become spiritually insane), that's true. And you should believe it. You should understand it. That's what these people are doing. That's what explains the irrationality of all that they do. And the worst part about it is that they don't think you're crazy. They don't think they're spiritually off-base. This is the doctrine of reversionism. Revisionism inverts everything, so that you no longer have a clear perspective on what is right; what is wrong; what is good; or, what is bad. It all comes out backward, like looking through the lens of a camera. It's upside down.

Yet, God alone controls the plagues. God alone controls the forces of nature. God alone creates all these parts of His creation that He made, and He could bring relief to these people, but they will not turn to Him. Instead, they blaspheme Him, and they reject Him completely.

This kind of madness can only be brought about by somebody who is spiritually insane – out of touch with the reality of the Word of God. It is God's Word that gives you the basis for having an anchor in rationality. Once your mind is anchored to the doctrines of Scripture; your emotions can be brought into stability; and, your will can make the choices that are rational, the result is that you move into the realm of being a stable human being. God has provided, for the humanity of His Son, a system in doctrine, and walking with confessed sin, in the inner circle of spiritual temporal fellowship, for you to be able to survive in the devil's world. That dynamic system of power is what the people of the tribulation will not have, and they won't make it consequently.

Many of us are guilty of not using that power system. Folks, when you do wrong, tell God. Don't fool around. And don't get mad at me when I call this to your attention. Just admit and confess, and get back on track, and get back into spiritual fellowship. Otherwise, God will gradually bring down the pressure of discipline upon you. And it's not worth it. You can be what you are destined to be – the aristocracy of all the saints of all the ages: in the church. You are the royal family of God. Let's live up to our heritage and our calling.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1992

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