***Blasphemy against God  
  
RV204-02***

We are studying "The Seven Bowls" in Revelation 16:1-21. This is segment number 11.

**The Fifth Bowl**

The fifth bowl judgment is poured out on the governmental headquarters of the antichrist, and suddenly the earth is covered with an impenetrable darkness. The headquarters of the antichrist will probably be located in the reconstructed city of Babylon on the Euphrates River. In the ancient world, the Tigris-Euphrates Valley was a very important place. ...

**Babylon**

The city of Babylon is where all false religion and all government tyranny was born. The religion of Babylon was based upon the worship of a mother goddess and her son. In Roman Catholicism, this has been converted into the adoration (and, in effect, worship) of Mary and the infant child Jesus. The religion of Babylon promises godhood to its devotees, and that religion has been carried into our time through Hinduism, and, in its modern expression, through the new age religion.

**The Antichrist**

The antichrist will in fact be simply the last of a long line of false Christs that Jesus warned us would show up on the scene of human history, and that would mindlessly follow people (these false Christs) to their own death and destruction. The wacko at Waco has been one of the latest examples of this mindless pursuit of one who claims to be the Christ. The amazing thing about this is that this audacity will go on right down to the very end, including the era of the tribulation. It was specifically in reference to that seven-year period that Jesus, on one occasion, cautioned His disciples and, of course, the people living in that time, against false Christs. Well, it would be a prime time indeed, because people who are believers at that time know that Jesus is returning. They know that the true Christ is going to show up. Therefore, it is even more important that people be cautious about being carried away with some charismatic character that pops up in the tribulation when these believers are under intense pressure and suffering, and that they rally to someone who is indeed a false Christ.

**False Christs**

So, we find in Matthew 24:4-5: "Jesus answered and said to them, 'See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.'"

Then in verses 23-27, Jesus said. "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'there He is,' do not believe him. For false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." Isn't it interesting that this is a key feature of the charismatic movement today? And it is a satanic movement – make no mistake about that. They love to center on signs and wonders and miracles to confirm what they are doing. And that the very thing about which Jesus said, "Don't let these people fool you because they can perform miracles, because that's the devil's ace card. That is what he's going to use to cause many people to rally to those who are false Christs.

Verse 25 says, "Behold, I have told you in advance. If, therefore, they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth; or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the east, and clashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."

What Jesus meant by that was that when He appears, it will be clear. It will be evident. There won't be any question about it. It will be as a bolt of lightning across the sky, and nobody has to tell you that there's been a bolt of lightning. It'll be very clear and very evident.

So, the false Christ price problem is going to be something that carries humanity right down into the tribulation and, of course, the principles about false Christs equally apply to the era of the church, the time in which we live, here before the tribulation, because those false Christs are constantly popping up on human history in a steady stream. The last terrible example of that was the Gideon cult down at Mount Carmel, which actually, finally, led to: who knows? Was it suicide, or was it just as likely the sin unto death being execution by a God who will not tolerate blasphemy beyond a certain point? David Koresh said that he was a special messiah Christ, but not that he was Jesus Christ. He wasn't claiming to be Jesus Christ, but just *a* Christ – a Christ to finish the job of the first Christ. That is constantly going to come on the scene. How is it that people can believe such a thing?

Well, it's because these people come as sources of great enlightenment. In 2 Corinthians 11:14, Paul says that that's the way the devil disguises himself. He speaks about the deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. Then he says, "And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an agent of light. Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness whose end shall be according to their deeds."

These people come on the scene as the good guys. They don't come on the scene as the vile and corrupt elements. They come on as the good guys. And they who follow these false Christs are going to be so devoted that they will be ready to die for him. They will stick with him to the bitter end, because they will be so convinced that this is the true voice of God.

How can such a thing happen? Well, Hosea 4:6 warned the people of Israel that they could fall into the same trap of following false leadership: "My people were destroyed for lack of knowledge." If you don't know doctrine, so that you have no frame of reference, then you can be conned: "Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being my priest." He is saying, "Since you have forgotten the law of your God (doctrine), I will also forget your children." The consequences are terrible to anyone who does not know the doctrines of Scripture, or who forgets or ignores them. That is what is happening to people today. The time comes when you must take your stand. You must act upon the information you have, and you must resist the false prophets and the false voices.

One of our Berean Youth Club ladies was telling me this past week that a girl that is now in the first year of high school, who was with us through Berean Academy, and in the Berean Youth Clubs, found herself one day last week in class where a film was being shown. The normal teacher in the class was absent that day, so a substitute teacher showed the film. The film was about cults, but it was really about Christianity, and the concept that there was only one God. So, she wrote a note, and put it on the teacher's desk, and left the room. The note indicated that she was a Christian (a believer), and that she did not approve of what was being shown that was degrading of the concept of one God, and of Christianity being portrayed as a false religious system.

The next day, the regular teacher was back. The film had apparently been shown only halfway through, so the regular teacher was going to show the rest of the film. The teacher had the note that the girl had left the previous day. The teacher said, "We're going to show the second part of the film, and one of the people in our class does not approve of the film and of the content.

There was a hippie-like girl in the back row, with a scraggly hair – the kind of a kid you want to take home and put in your dishwasher. She had been on drugs, and had given the school authorities a lot of problems. She stormed down there and walked up to our little girl from Berean Youth Clubs, and stood up, and faced her, and sounded off to her about how ignorant it is to think that there is only one God in the world, and that Christianity would believe such a stupid thing. And our little girl, in a very calm voice, said, "Well, I believe the Word of God. I am a Christian, and I believe in that one God. And I don't have to stand here and take this." And she just walked out. The teacher followed around and stopped her and said, in effect, "I want to commend you for your courage. I've never seen anyone who could take that kind of abuse so calmly and with such dignity." And if you know this kid, that was an act of God. We had had this girl with us for years. And if anything is not true about her, it's that she's calm, collected, and restrained. She tends to be a little hotheaded and to go over the edge. They witnessed an act of God.

The thing about that is that all of this came to us because our lady in the Berean Youth Club (our leader) was out on the jogging trail, and she met the mother. And the mother was telling her about this. She was so pleased. She said, "And I attribute it all to the fact that she was at Berean Christian Academy and Berean Youth Clubs all those years. She was given an understanding of the knowledge of the truth. So, she knew how to be confronted with this kind of an insult to not only her, but to our society, and to our country, based upon the Word of God, and upon the living single God.

Now, if that will happen now, and this can be done in a public institution today, can you imagine what it's going to be like for these believers in the tribulation who are constantly under the gun, and how tempting it will be for them to want to see the Messiah Savior there, and how tempting it will be to rally to someone who they hope will be the answer to all of their problems. It is important to have knowledge. And when you have the knowledge of doctrine, the time comes when you have to be gutsy and stand up.

I can assure you that no one knows more about taking the flak. You'd be surprised from how many sources (close, and at a distance) from which I get the pressure to: "Stop telling people about homosexuality. Stop talking about abortion. Stop alerting people to all these things that are making even the highest echelons of our government look disgraceful."

Do you know what's happening in Washington, D.C. today? There is a huge rally (a parade) of homosexuals. And incidentally, folks, they are not 10% of our population, but barely 2%. That's how minuscule an amount of our population is pushing the rest of us around. But they are rallying there, calling upon the government to find a cure for AIDS now. And just from the scenes yesterday, I would be embarrassed to describe them to you. I'm surprised that the newsmen even showed it, because it again reminds you of what homosexuals do to each other. And they're carrying on right there for the television cameras.

It is interesting that they wanted President Clinton to march with them. As one of the commentators reporting it said, "But suddenly, he had an appointment that he had to attend out of town," and he even added the words: "which was hurriedly arranged for him." I'll bet. I wish he had been there. It would have put everything in focus for Americans. Nevertheless, that's the truth. Anybody who says that, and anybody who calls attention to that, you can be sure that he is going to be put under pressure: "We're not going to attend your church. We're not going to sit here listening to you. We're not going to give you financial aid. We're going to strip away. We're going to sock away. We're going to badmouth you." You should hear what's been said about Berean Academy by some of our expatriates.

I have the most refined intelligence system in the world. I know what some of you were doing yesterday afternoon. People come and tell me. They're always telling me. I have a whole system that records it. (No, I don't do that.) But you cannot believe how much stuff comes to me that people tell me. Somebody says something in a home, and it comes to me, and it's adverse. They say, "We just want you to know that this is what these people are saying. We want you to know that this is really their mental frame of reference." And it's always against some righteousness – something that is right, and about which they're wrong.

Well, the people of the tribulation (like we) are going to have to learn to stand up. It may be this decade. One of the best scholars of prophecy is talking about 1993 as the anchor point, with a small distance off for the Lord's return. Boy, when he marshals his arguments, it's impressive. This is the decade of destiny. This is the decade to start stuffing your treasures in heaven with both fists, left and right. This is the time to get ready for your departure. And you should be aware (and some of you are, because you know how to put two and two together) that the devil is trying to silence us. He's trying to silence us in a variety of ways. We will be silent, through human or demonic agency, or we will refuse. But when you refuse, you better know that you have heated up a combat, and that you're going to have to be ready for whatever comes. You're got to have to be ready to take the hits when the devil is permitted to do that by the sovereignty of God.

So, this fifth bowl judgment comes down upon the people of the tribulation. I suspect that God will take care of the believers in some way, such that, even with the darkness covering the earth, they will be protected. They will be cared for in some way, as when the plague of darkness was upon Israel. The homes of all the Jews had light in them. Can you imagine the impression that must have made on the Egyptians looking over in Goshen land? They probably said, "Look at that. They have brilliant light in all their houses. We have nothing but darkness. It's light over there in Goshen land, but we're in darkness. That should have scared them. That should have alerted them immediately that they were dealing with a real God, not just with some stupid animal that they put together, and made an idol out of.

The fifth bowl judgment of darkness is explicitly used to humiliate the antichrist in his claim that he is deity, and that he is a source of spiritual enlightenment. The world which is ruled by the antichrist is thrown into this impenetrable darkness by God. The worshipers of the antichrist are in great spiritual darkness. So, to symbolize their darkness, God symbolically puts them into impenetrable external darkness.

**Blasphemy**

This blackout, remember, is added to the suffering from the previous four bowls, so that the pain becomes maddening. It is mentally destabilizing to be trapped in darkness as it is. If you're trapped in a dark room, or some area that you can't get out of, and you can't see anything, that becomes mentally destabilizing. But when you've already have all this other suffering: the water changed to blood; and, the sores that are oozing on your body, and now you are groping around in darkness, this becomes horrific. In their physical and psychological pain, the followers of the antichrist, we're told, begin chewing on their tongues as some sort of relief. How odd that the tongues which have been used to express their rebellion against god; who used His name in curse words; and, who blasphemed Him, are now driven to bite their tongues as their pain mounts.

**The Response to Judgment**

In Revelation 16:11, we have the response. How are people going to respond to this terrible judgment? Verse 11 says, "And they blasphemed the God of heaven." The word "blasphemed," we have pointed out, means to claim that you're deity, or to speak impiously about God – to speak contemptuously of Him. They are making remarks that are directed at God's truth. They are poking fun at doctrine. That's an act of blasphemy. Do you know that? I have heard many people do that. Then people refuse to believe the truth, whether it's spiritual or any other kind of truth, they attack the communicator of that truth. And when you attack the communicator of doctrine (when you attack the communicator of the Word of God) because you want to resist the truth, you are ultimately, of course, attacking God and His Words, the Bible. Those who go negative to the truth of Scripture are eventually handed over by God to believe a lie.

I don't think a lot of people have yet learned that principle. That is one scary doctrinal principle to me. When you refuse to believe what God thinks, He will then direct your mind to believe what is false. Do you understand that? Those who go negative to the truth of Scripture are eventually handed over by God to believe what is the lie. If you will not take the truth, we'll give you the lie. And the lie of the antichrist in the tribulation is going to be readily accepted because God is going to let these people believe the lie. And the big lie then will be that you can be a God. And the result after you have believed the lie is that you will be punished. That's the other part of it. It isn't just, "O, gee, I missed the truth." You will also pay for having missed it.

That principle as laid out in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12: "And then the lawless one will be revealed (the antichrist), whom the Lord (the Lord Jesus) will slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming (at the Second Coming of Christ). That is the one who is coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders." Satan has made the antichrist and the false prophet to be miracle workers: "And with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved." These are people who did not love the truth of God: "For this reason, God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false."

Do you understand how horrible this is to have a mind that cannot believe the truth? This happens to Christians all the time. If you go far enough, God says, "Fine. Now I'm going to put a little twist to your mind, and from here on, you're going to be in reversionism, and you're going to believe the lie. You're going to believe what is backwards from the truth. If that's what you want, that's what you'll get: "In order that they all will be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness." Why does God give you the twist to believe the lie? So that He can judge you for it. That's the worst part.

So, here in the tribulation, it is going to be so important for people to understand the principles of the Word of God, so that they are not fooled by a false Christ who comes along. They're not carried away by somebody that seems to be the answer to all their agonies, but who understands that these people are indeed blaspheming God. Blasphemy, of course, in the tribulation will be an expression of loyalty to the antichrist.

The object of the blasphemy, we're told here in Revelation 16:11, is that they blasphemed the God of heaven. This refers to the third heaven which is God's throne room. And there is a reason why God the Holy Spirit says it this way. He says, "The God that they're blaspheming is the God of heaven. He is stressing exactly who it is that they are expressing their contempt for, and against whom they are directing their blasphemous remarks. It is the one who is in the third heaven. They're directing their remarks of blasphemy against the one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and all that is in them. That's the one that is in that third heaven. They're not attacking some mere non-existent, invented idol god who is empowered by a demon (and idols are empowered by demons). But these are not just some human-invented gods. This is the real Creator God.

These same people previously, we've been told, have directed their rage against the name of God; His character; and, against His reputation. Now they've stepped up the attack, and they're attacking the person of God Himself. They have now lost all fear of God. They've gone into total spiritual insanity, and they are now attacking the person Himself. People do that with other humans too, naturally. First you attack a person's reputation, then you attack his character, and then you step it up. When you're really getting intense, you hit the person himself. You say things about how he looks; how big his nose is; how stupid his voice sounds; and, all kinds of things about him personally. They attack the person. That's the ultimate goal to discredit what that person says.

This darkness from the fifth bowl, as we've indicated, strikes the headquarters of the antichrist and his followers. And now they strike out against the headquarters of the living God. They're striking out against His heaven, and they're striking out against the one who dwell there.

When you persist in sin, sin is like one of those dried-up flowers you can buy at a trick store, and you put it into water, and it just expands and becomes enormous. That's how sin is. Sin doesn't stay on a straight little line. When you persist in what is wrong, and you're told you're mistaken, and that you've got a wrong viewpoint, and that you're misinterpreting, and that this is not the truth, and you persist in it the sin, then it expands.

Genesis 4:3-9 is an example of that: "So, it came about, in the course of time, that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. And Abel, on his part, also brought out of the firstlings his flock, and their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering. But for Cain and for his offering, he had no regard. So, Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell."

Here are the first two sons born to Adam and Eve. One is a farmer, and one is a herdsman. Both these sons have been taught the doctrinal principles relative to worshiping God. They've both been taught that it's necessary to shed blood to indicate that the wages of sin is death, and that ultimately, God will bring His own Lamb in the form of the God-man Jesus Christ, whose blood will be shed, and sin will once-and-for-all be paid for by His death. Cain knew that, and Abel knew that. Abel acted according to the guidelines for worshiping God. Cain pursued it as a religion to worship God because he was an unbeliever. He's been listening to all this stuff that his parents have been telling him. He's been listening to all these things about the Garden of Eden, but he didn't believe it, which is hard for us to believe. But Cain is an unbeliever, and Abel is a believer. So, Cain sees nothing wrong with just bringing some of the fruits of his field. He has a green thumb. It's got a whole green hand. He can grow things. And he thinks that God should be very pleased with the best of his vegetation that he brings to God.

However, God is not pleased with it. So, the sin of Cain, in violating the approach to God, is now blown up more because he doesn't back off and say, "God, I'm sorry. That was not right for me to do" (confession of sin). Had he backed off and said, "That was wrong of me to do. I'll do it the right way," all would have been well. But sin persisted in, if you won't yield, it will begin to expand and engulf, and it will eat you up. What happened here is, we're told, that he became hopping mad. His countenance fell, and he became grim-faced. And then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door in its desire for you, but you must master it." If you do well, you'll have a happy face. But if you don't, sin is just lying there like a snake ready to bite you. And when it gets the chance, it will hit you. It has a desire to destroy you.

What Cain was being told was, "Your sin is going to expand. Get back to where you should be." Get back to your right husband. Get back to your right wife. Get back to your right church. Get back to your right family. Get back to your right orientation politically. Get right to your right social associations. Just get back to where you are right, and stop being wrong. If you stay in it, this thing is going to engulf you.

Verse 8: "And Cain told Abel, his brother." What did he do? He told his brother. Why did he tell him? Because he's mad. He said, "You may think you're pretty good, Abel, but I'm sick of God. He did not appreciate what I brought to Him," and he carried on. That's what it means he told his brother: "And it came about when they were in the field that Cain rose up against his brother and killed him." Finally, the sin expanded to the point of taking the life of his own brother. He wouldn't back off, so the thing engulfed him, and it grew.

We know from the New Testament word which is used to describe this, that the way he killed him, almost ironically, was to take a knife and run it across Abel's throat, as if to say here, "Here, if God wants shed blood for a sacrifice, I'll give Him shed blood." And he jerks the head back of his brother, and runs the knife across his throat. Huts the jugular vein, and Abel dies. There you have the thumb print of Satan, who is always a blood-letter. How could this have expanded to this degree?

"Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel, your brother?" And here the sin expands: "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" We see the excusing of yourself and your sin. This included the original bit way back there when Cain said, "I want to do it my way, and I'm going to worship God the way any rational person would do it." As one man once said to me, "No intelligent person would believe what you and these Christians believe." He was a very sophisticated man of the world. He was greatly educated, and he knew his way around, and he had nothing but contemptuous remarks for the truth of the Word of God.

So, to strike out at the God of heaven is willful rebellion against the truth, and it's going to expand. It's going to get bigger and bigger. You might add, for your own study, Psalm 1:1 and Psalm 19:12-13. These also show how a sin expands and engulfs you until you go where to the extent that you wouldn't believe you could go. Christian don't jump into gross sinful moral acts, if they have any sensitivity and training. They begin a little step (just a little bit), and then it gets bigger and bigger until it engulfs them. Then they look back and say, "How could I have done this?" Back there, you couldn't have. And had you stopped, and had you not rebelled against the truth, and had you not thumbed your nose at God, it would have been brought to an end.

So, this business of sin is very bad. And these people in the tribulation, instead of cursing themselves for their impiety and their evil blasphemy, they curse God for interfering with the right to their privacy of conduct.

I have told you many times about the evil men on that Supreme Court that passed the Roe vs. Wade decision. One of the minority judges (one who is in fact retiring) stressed the fact that there is no ground upon which an unborn child can be declared a non-person. The Supreme Court said, "What is in a mother's womb is a human being, but he is not a person under the 14th Amendment. Therefore, he does not have a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Therefore, the mother has the right to privacy to take his life if she chooses."

So, we have a doctor now who was in the process of an abortion. And the process that he was using was the dissection of the child's body, and he managed to cut her arm off, and then she was born. Now he had to stop because he had a breathing child who had become a person. Now he's being brought under criminal suit because of abuse to a child – a child born with one arm missing. As long as the child was in the womb, it was not a person, and he could hack away at it. But once the child was born, he couldn't hack away at it anymore. Do you want to tell me that the American people have not put madmen in charge of their nation and of their courts? They are madmen because they're disoriented to the Word of God.

Many years ago, we started down that little sinful road of murdering an unborn child, and that evil has now engulfed us to where it is in the White House itself, promoting this sin beyond measure. How can this happen?

Romans 2:4-5 says, "Or do you think lightly of the richness of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" God is waiting, tapping His foot, hoping that you'll get your thinking together right: "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." What's he saying? You argue for you privacy to do as you please, but God says that He's storing up His wrath. He's giving you a chance to change your mind, and to deflect that wrath by your own repentance and confession. But if not, the time will come when you will be judged, and you will pay the price.

So, these people in the tribulation are striking out, not at some dumb idol. Their resistance to the Word of God has now brought them to where they're blaspheming the God who lives in heaven. "The God of heaven" is the term that comes from Daniel 2:44, where we read, "And in the days of those kings;" that is, in the days of the four world empires, and particularly the fourth one: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people. It will crush and put to an end all these kingdoms. But it will itself endure forever." The Roman Empire is being revived today. It is being brought back together, and it includes elements of the Babylonian; the Medo-Persian; and, the Greek empires. The God of heaven is the one that's going to destroy that kingdom which will be the kingdom of the antichrist. It identifies the specific one who will bring the kingdom of man to an end. Satan's humanist kingdom is going to be destroyed by the God whose heaven they're cursing. It's going to be replaced with a final world empire by the Kingdom of God under Jesus Christ in the millennial era.

The spiritually blind unbeliever simply does not understand who it is he is dealing with when he curses the God of heaven, and what authority he is facing. Can you imagine what it must be like for some of the Supreme Court judges who were on that Warren Court who passed the abortion law, who have since died? Can you imagine how they'd like to scream out and say, "Stop it? Stop it. Every death adds to the wrath of God against us." That is really something when you leave behind something that keeps rolling and piling up the wrath of God because you put in motion something that you cannot stop. And it all goes to your credit. Isn't that interesting? This is just as those of you who invest in the work of God, and you free the work of God to do something in God's service. You go over to the other side in the Lord's presence, and I that good thing you did (like that money you put in) keeps adding to your treasures in heaven. That is a good interest-earning deal, and it goes both ways.

It's inconceivable that any human being would blaspheme God. But it's no more inconceivable than the fact that Judas Iscariot could choose to reject Jesus Christ, and to let Satan indwell him. John 13:27 points that out to us: "After this, Satan then entered into him (into Judas). Therefore, Jesus said to him, 'What you do, do quickly.'" How could he reject Jesus Christ – that tender, manly, terrific God-man, who did nothing but good, and treated others with nothing but the greatest kindness and graciousness? And here, Judas turns against Him.

That's why Psalm 41:9, which is a quotation from Jesus Christ, is so poignant. Psalm 41:9 says, "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." Here it is. Christ is speaking of Judas: "My close friend." Have you had a close friend who has lifted up his heel against you? If you have, it is because that close friend began with being wrong at some point, and that sin of being wrong, and refusing to correct, engulfed that person, and grew bigger and bigger until they were all out of control under the hand of Satan in directing them to lift their heel against their source of blessing.

We Christians are not immune to self-destruction. Why? Because Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick. Who can understand it?" We have a sin nature within us. Even with regenerated minds, we can be just as deceitful and corrupt as any unbeliever. The Word of God indicates that out here in the tribulation, these people will demonstrate that horrible condition where they turn their hand against the God who is really their friend. God has carried them through, and they have seen His power demonstrated in these bowls. But they are now so engulfed in the sin that they started in a small way, that they are beyond the point of return, and they are now in the status of having no remedy. And what they do is they blaspheme the God of heaven.

Why did they do this? Because of their pains and their sores. Because of the effects of the previous judgments that linger on, the level of physical and psychological pain and stress rises daily. They cursed God for their condition rather than their own negative volition to the Word of God. Can you believe that? Do you understand that? They cursed God, as we do for our agonies and for our mental distress, and we blame the wrong person for it. We don't blame the guilty. We blame the innocent. We do that in our society. We are very careful to protect the guilty, and sock it to the innocent, because we have gone that astray from the Word of God. We as individual believers are guilty of things, and we blame someone else, and we tighten the noose around our neck, instead of saying that: "The reason I'm in this agony is because I chose to ignore the truth. I rebelled against what was true, and I insisted on going with what was not true."

So, these people simply thumbed their nose at God, and because of their pains and their agonies, they refused to change their minds. The last part of the verse says, "They did not repent of their deeds." They would not change their minds. Their deeds were sinful, and they were determined to continue to be sinful, and that's what they did. Their wills were unbroken. There was no letup in their evil conduct. They continued to thumb their noses at God. People today are guilty of this same attitude when they reject God and His Scriptures. They treat the Bible with indifference; with arrogance; and, with irritation. They consider what is right, and they think that they are capable of determining what is right. They consider themselves capable of determining what is right and acceptable to God.

Today, what God says is an abomination, like homosexuality and abortion, is being justified and promoted at the highest echelons of the American government and American society. If you ever challenge somebody with the Scriptures on those things, they react with indignation; with contempt; and, with hostility, and they consider you dumb to bring the Bible into the discussion. How can people be so blind and hate God so much? Because the devil is permitted to do his work within them, and to do it well.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God." It is understandable that Satan should be able to blind the unbeliever, but he blinds us Christians. And boy, he is often able to do that. That is pathetic. We are no better than these unrepentant rebels in the tribulation era.

So, let's learn a lesson. Sin begun and persisted in does go to reversionism, and it engulfs you to the point where there is no remedy, and you cannot turn back. And you are on a self-destructive course that takes you all the way. Suddenly, you sit there, whimpering and distraught, and wondering how did all this happen, as everything collapses around your ears? This happens in marriages. It happens in family relationships. It happens in social relationships. It happens between church members. It happens with business associates. It happens because the small thing that's wrong is persisted in, instead of giving up and backing off. The Word of God says, "When you're wrong, back off, because if you don't, God will judge." That's no fun, and we should not do it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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