***The Tribulation Period, No. 3

RV47-01***

In Revelation 3:7-13, we have the letter written by Jesus Christ to a group of saints who are operating in the city of Philadelphia in Asia Minor. This is segment number 15 of that series of our studies.

God, in sovereign grace, you will remember, selected a gentile by the name of Abraham to be the progenitor of a special branch of the human race. Abraham became the first Jew. He was living in a place called Ur of the Chaldees on the Euphrates River in the midst of the ancient culture of Babylon. Abraham's descendants, the nation of Israel, were to become the human line through which Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel and Savior of mankind, was to be born. However, the Jews as a nation rebelled against God, who had sovereignly and graciously selected them out of all the people of the earth. In fact, they were instrumental in bringing about the murder of their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because the Jews rejected the Messiah, Jesus Christ, God destroyed Jerusalem and its temple worship, and He scattered the Jewish people over the whole earth. During Israel's period of dispersion. God has been gathering out from the total of humanity another special people for the Savior, and that special people is called the church. The church is made up of Jews and gentiles who trust in Jesus Christ to save them from eternal death in the lake of fire, which, of course, is Satan's destiny, and all those who follow him will share that destiny. This body of believers, the church, is joined to Jesus Christ by the baptism of God the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation. When you trust in Christ as Savior, you are eternally united to Jesus Christ by this baptism. This makes you part of what the Bible calls the body of Christ. In the future, you will be related to Him as His bride.

No other group of people have experienced this privilege. This is not true of the Jewish people. They did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit that joined them in this way to Jesus Christ. Only those of the Jewish race in this age who trust in Christ as Savior become part of that body. But the Jewish nation, as such, does not have this special privilege. The Jewish people, while a special people of God, are not in the same category of the special people that you (believers in Jesus Christ) enjoy.

Before the Jews recognize their huge mistake in rejecting Jesus Christ, they are destined to experience one final period of enormous human suffering. It is suffering and pain which is compared to the pain of losing a loved one. Zachariah 12:10-11 describe this terrible time in which the Jewish people are yet to suffer: "And I will pour upon the house of David," God says, "and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication. And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first born. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the Valley of Megiddon." So, it describes here the fact that, at some point in time, the Jews as a whole are going to realize that they made a terrible mistake in rejecting Jesus Christ as Savior. They will realize that they have put to death the very One that God sent them, and they will mourn for themselves in that day when they realize what they have done.

**The Tribulation Period**

The suffering that they will yet experience is described in the Bible as a period of seven years, which was revealed to Daniel the Prophet. The Bible calls it a period of tribulation. So, in prophetic discussions, we refer to as the tribulation period. It is a time of divine judgments upon unbelieving rejecters of Jesus Christ. It is yet an era in the future. The tribulation is a time, in fact, when what we call liberalism today achieves all of its goals worldwide in the fulfillment of its religion of secular humanism. Always remember that secular humanism is now the religion of the United States. Secular humanism is now the religion of the nations of this world. Always remember that liberalism is the political expression of secular humanism.

The problems that we face today in the fulfillment of the goals of liberalism are going to be expressed in such things as the fact that world government under computer control will be worldwide. Internationalism will predominate over nationalism. There will be full government control of the economy as socialism predominates everywhere. There will be the dictatorship of planning the lifestyle of individuals everywhere. There will be the total rejection of the authority of the Bible, and consequently, of biblical morality. There will be the rejection of God and the deification of man. There will be the ecumenical religion in place of Christianity. All of the things that secular humanism stands for, and which liberalism so avidly pursues, will be realized in the tribulation. I stress that again so that you understand that the terrible things we're going to look at now are the direct result of the political forces and of the philosophies which predominate in the world today.

These are the very things that are being pressed upon mankind everywhere. The United States is going through a kind of an odd period where suddenly the United States seems, as a whole, to have turned against this philosophy. The United States suddenly has, in the expression of its last election, turned against all the consequences of secular humanism, and all of the consequences of liberal thinking. But from Scripture, we know that this is short-lived. Do not raise your hopes on high. You will not see the kind of a turnaround that you are hoping for, and that you and I would like to see in our nation – a return to greatness; and, in our people, as individuals, a return to where we again find that we have people here and there within our society that we can truly point to and say, "There's a great man," and "There is a great woman." This is because they are functioning on the orientation of the Word of God, and thus bear influence that creates monumental divine good production. That's a thing, by and large, of the past. What we are going to see is the full fruits of secular humanism and of liberalism.

**Death**

The tribulation era then, is the final great human holocaust. Death will be a daily experience. Now, death only touches most people once in a great while, and in an offhand way, and it passes by very quickly. Most people do not know what it is to live with death as a daily experience; as a daily threat; as a daily sight; and, as a daily thing they have to handle. People who work in the medical profession have some contact with that. People who have occasion to be in combat and military situations on an extended period get to know what it is to live under the constant expectation of death. They get to know what it is to live in the constant visual presence of death. But, by and large, people don't know what that is. That is going to be a shock. That tears a human being to shreds. A person who is not equipped and prepared to live with death on an extensive scale simply collapses internally. That is going to be the key feature of the tribulation era.

Revelation 3:10, that we have been reading, points out to us that because the Philadelphia type believer, who is the fundamentalist spiritual maturity structure type of believer moving on to the super grace level of living, has kept the word of Jesus Christ, and has kept the patience of Jesus Christ in pursuing the things of the Word of God, and in pursuing the lifestyle of the Word of God, in spite of the fact that this is an outcast church, that Jesus Christ is going to keep this kind of believer, which represents the universal church here, from the hour of temptation. And the hour of temptation here refers to that seven-year period of tribulation, because the translation there is really "the hour of tribulation." It is referring to the seven last years of Daniel's prophetic timetable of 490 years. 483 years can be accounted for historically, but the last seven years have never been fulfilled relative to the Jewish nations.

**The Rapture of the Church**

The church itself is going to therefore be removed before this climactic period of the human holocaust. This church, the church body, is going to be removed from the earth before that period begins. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 describe exactly how that's going to take place.

After the rapture, the earth is populated only with a group of humanity which is described as "them that dwell upon the earth." That is a technical term for unbelievers. This is the person who has the humanist viewpoint about man – all the unbelievers who populate the earth. When the rapture takes place, every believer is gone. There are no Christians left. Everybody left on the earth is an unbeliever.

The tribulation period will very quickly, through one means and another, produce a new crop of believers. I want to stress that. That seemed to be a point of confusion in some minds of a few people last time. The tribulation period will very quickly produce a new crop of believers. They will be back on Old Testament ground, however. They will not be part of the body of Christ. That unique company will be gone and will be completed. They will not be part of the royal family of God, the church. The tribulation judgments from which the church is preserved are described for us in Revelation under a series of symbols of seals, trumpets, and bowls. We have already looked at part of the expression of that period in the seal judgments, and we'll briefly run through those.

**The Seven Seals**

1. **The First Seal**

When seal number one is broken by Jesus Christ, the antichrist brings a Cold War peace to the world with his conquest of the Western Confederacy. When that first seal is broken, the antichrist comes to the forefront of power. He conquers three nations out of the revival of the Roman Empire of ten nations. The other seven decide to join him. He now becomes the predominant ruler of that part of the world. The Bible makes it very clear that it is Western Europe which is going to be the focal point of world power – not this side of the Atlantic, but the other side of the Atlantic. So, that gives you some clue as to where the United States is going to be in the picture. Wherever the United States is, it's going to be very secondary. It is not going to be the primary power that it is today. That's another reason that we know that the trend and the mood of the country today cannot continue. We know from Scripture that the encouraging trends today must again be reversed. We must again reverse to the principles of Fabian socialism. We must again return to the principles of liberalism. We must again return to all of the goals of secular humanism so that this nation can continue on the downgrade that it has been on since the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and its gradual destruction as a world force.

1. **The Second Seal**

The second seal is broken and the Cold War peace is shown to be very unstable as wars break out around the world, and the United Nations, in a frap, tries to engage in various peace-keeping missions. It is very frustrating, and the world is still shown to be a very unstable place.

1. **The Third Seal**

When seal number three is broken. We see that economic socialism predominates everywhere. As always, socialism brings famine, and it brings poverty. This time we're talking about worldwide famine and worldwide poverty. Most Americans do not realize how many people in the world today go to bed hungry every night. Most people do not realize how quickly food supplies can be dissipated even in a nation like the United States. It does not take much to happen in natural forces to destroy the food supply, so that within a short period of time, the food is gone. When the food is gone in a civilized and a complicated technological society like ours, it's gone. Only those of you who have the knack and who have the time and the interest such that you run little gardens of your own in your backyard have got anything to fall back upon. The rest of you are straight down the line Safeway buddies, and that's it. When they are out of business, you're out of business. That's the kind of a world that we're living in, and this business of famine is not so distant from all of us as it might on the surface appear. That's why some people take what may prove to be a short-range solution, but they do take the precautions of trying to have some supplies of freeze-dried foods at home. That's why that's become so popular – because of people who realize how food supplies work, and how the stuff actually gets on the shelves when you go to buy it, and how absolutely, practically overnight, those shelves could be stripped clean. When those trucks stop coming into the cities with supplies, those shelves will go bear in a short time. So, the problems of famine and poverty are going to be everywhere.

1. **The Fourth Seal**

When seal number four is broken, death hits the world. All of this is within the first three-and-a-half years of this seven-year tribulation period. One-fourth of the world's population dies by various means. The means are not described in detail, but once something breaks out, the history of the world is replete with plagues that have hit human society at certain times where you couldn't do anything but die; and, masses of people die from one kind of plague or disease and another. When you hit something for which there is no cure, then only a few survive. So death suddenly becomes so extensive that one-fourth of the total population of the earth dies.

1. **The Fifth Seal**

When seal number five is broken, we see how many people, through one means and another, have become believers during the tribulation period. There is no voice initially left to preach the gospel after the rapture has taken place, but there are books; there are tapes; and, there are various means left behind for the Word of God to be explained. In time, and very quickly, as a matter of fact, God raises up witnesses, and He soon has 144,000 thousand Jewish evangelists alone who are preaching the Word of God, let alone the fantastic ministry that we looked at last week of the two witnesses. All of this testimony goes forth. People who believe are born again. I stress to you again that people are born again in the tribulation period. They are not part of the church. They're back on Old Testament ground. But these people, by and large, are martyred. Because of their trust in Christ, they pay for that with their lives. That makes it pretty hard to become a Christian. That makes it pretty hard to realize that if I take Christ as my Savior, I'm going to pay for it with my life.

Here and there in the world today, there are a few societies where that is true. It is certainly true that it's very costly in some societies. If you live in a Moslem society, for you to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior means you're going to pay for it economically; you're going to pay for it socially; and, you may even pay for it with your life. That's what it's going to be like in the tribulation. So, the fifth seal gives us the view of all these people in heaven who have died in the tribulation, who are crying out to God for justice for their lives having been taken. And the Lord comforts them, and says, "That's exactly what's going to happen," and they are to be patient a while longer.

1. **The Sixth Seal**

When seal number six is broken, there is tremendous havoc set loose by the forces of nature: earthquakes; the sun darkened; the moon turned to the appearance of blood; and, meteorite showers. The sky is rolled back so that apparently there's a vision inside of heaven itself. The mountains and the islands of the earth move as the earth's crust goes through monumental gyrations and convulsions. So, people are living on an earth that is filled with terror. That seal right there (that sixth seal) is probably one of the worst. This is a mounting effect. Somehow with these other seals, you could sort of survive, and you could sort of hang in there. But the sixth seal, when the forces of nature break loose, is powerful. That is fearful. If you're caught in a situation where you can't do anything about it, then it is sheer unadulterated terror. That's what the earth is going to experience. In the tribulation, the key word is going to be "terror."

**The False Prophet**

These seals are mostly expressing things that happen in the first three-and-a-half years of the tribulation. As we pointed out, at this point in the tribulation period, Russia and her allies decide to attack Israel. They are destroyed by God, so that only one-sixth of the Russian military force survives to limp back to Russia. The antichrist then moves in and becomes the world dictator because Russia has been eliminated, and he can now take charge of the whole world. At that point, he is the predominant ruler over all nations on the earth. The antichrist, up to this point, has been protecting the Jewish state of Israel, and now he doesn't need them anymore. He turns against the Jews. The ecumenical church religion, which he has been tolerating up to that point, the harlot church that is described in Revelation, is now destroyed. He turns against that, and he sets up his own religious system under a man that is his prophet – a false prophet, and this man directs worship toward the antichrist.

Revelation 13:11-18 describe for us how the scene now is a world ruler that everyone must worship: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke like a dragon. And he exercised all the power of the first beast before him and caused the earth, and those who dwell on it, to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed." The second beast here is the false prophet. The first is the antichrist. "And he did great wonders (miracles) so that he made fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceived them that dwell on earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast."

Notice that phrase. I often wonder what charismatics think when they read this Scripture, because the Scripture is telling us very definitely that Satan is able to empower human beings to perform genuine miracles. But they are not miracles from God. They are miracles from his majesty the devil. There are still some people that simply have not been able to learn that. They simply have not caught on to the fact that miracles are not something only that God can do, but they are something that Satan has the power to do, because of the nature of the kind of a creature he is – the supernatural powers that he has as an angelic being.

**The Mark of the Beast**

So, here is this human being, the false prophet, whom Satan enables to perform these miracles: "And to do these wonders in the sight of the beast; saying to them to dwell on the earth (there's that phrase again to unbelievers) that they should make an image of the beast that had the wound by a sword and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast (that is, to give it the appearance of breathing and being alive), that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Here's where these martyrs are coming from: "And he causes all, both great and small, rich and poor, free and enslaved, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell except that he had the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that has understanding count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man whose number is 666."

**The Midpoint of the Tribulation**

So, the ecumenical church is out; the antichrist with his false prophet is in; and, a new religious system that centers around the antichrist himself has now been established. We're halfway through the tribulation period, and the image of this creature (this antichrist) is placed in the place of worship now of the Jews' temple, and all worship is directed toward him. Secular humanism has reached the zenith of its power. Secular humanism and the concepts of liberalism have reached the epitome of all their goals and expectations, and man is worshiped as God.

There is a real God (a true God) in heaven who is watching all this, and who is letting the time go by, and whose program is inexorably moving forward. Satan and his angels decide that this is the time for them to make their move. Satan realizes that he must dethrone God. He must push God off His throne. So, Satan gathers up the demon angels and they go out for an all-out ... attack upon Michael, the current archangel, and the angels which have remained faithful to God. Revelation 12:7-12 describe that great battle which is yet to take place in the future in outer space:

"And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought, and his angels." The dragon, of course, refers to Satan: "And prevailed not, neither was their place found anymore in heaven." I don't know what Satan must feel like when he reads that verse 8, because it's very uncomfortable to be reading a preview of a battle you're about to enter, and you know the end of it already. I mean, that's very discouraging when you're going to go fight a battle where you know you're going to lose. This happened so often that Israel was used to this. Israel would turn to God and say, "What's going to happen?" And God would say, "You're going to win," or God would say, "You're going to lose." This was Saul's case. Remember when Saul was on the eve of facing the Philistines, and he wanted to know, "What can I do?" Samuel was dead, and there was no one to turn to. So, he went to the witch at Endor, and decided to get a séance to try to get through to Samuel to say, "Samuel, what's going to happen the next day?" Of course, in this case, God permitted Samuel to come back to speak, and the news was all bad, because Saul was told, "You're going to go into battle; you're going to lose it; you're going to be killed; and, all of your sons, including that splendid son, Jonathan, are going to be killed. The whole house of Saul will be destroyed." Yet Saul had to fight the battle.

So, here is Satan in the same position. He's going to make this all-out attack, and yet somehow, how's he going to deal with verse 8? What's he going to tell himself? How is he going to rationalize this? How is the brilliant mentality of Satan going to escape facing the consequences to himself of the fact that the end of the battle is already written, and that he's going to go down in defeat?

Verse 9 says, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." So, now Satan and the demon angels have access to heaven. As the book of Job very clearly portrays, Satan has access to reporting to God and speaking with God. Now, at this point in time in the future, they are cast out. They have no further contact with God. They have no further access into the presence of God.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven: "Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down who accused them before our God day and night." So, this tells us what Satan is doing now. Every time you and I are guilty of sin, the devil accuses us to God the Father. Every time you and I are guilty of either overt or mental sins, we are immediately fingered by the devil and his angels. He marks us to God, trying to ridicule God because we are the supposed Christians. It is at this point that the Lord Jesus Christ comes in and, as 1 John teaches us, acts as our advocate, our lawyer, and our defender. It is because of that that 1 John 1:9 works – that you can confess sins and reestablish temporal fellowship. That temporal fellowship is fractured at the point that Satan accuses you before the Father when you and I are guilty of some point of evil. He doesn't let up. He does it day and night.

Verse 11 says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives until the death. Therefore, rejoice, you heavens, and you that dwell in them." That's us folks – on the other side. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil has come down to you having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time." What this force is telling us is that the devil finds, sure enough, that these words he has read in Revelation are executed. They do come to pass. He loses the battle. He and his demon angels are cast out of God's presence completely, and it turns him into a raging beast.

Therefore, when there is no possibility of victory, there are only two directions that you can take. When you know the battle is lost, there are only two directions you can take. One direction is that you surrender; you sue for peace; and, you salvage what you can. The second direction is that you go all out, and you destroy everything and bring it all down in flames around you.

During World War II, Hitler was faced with this. Once the Remagen bridge episode took place, and the mighty Rhine (the last natural barrier defending the Third Reich) was breached when they failed to blow up the bridge at Remagen, and Patton and his troops were able to storm across, and the Americans secured a foothold on the other side, everything was lost. Everything was gone. Then Hitler had to make the decision. His generals said, "Let's sue for peace. Let's save the rest. They'll destroy us completely if we go any further. Let's stop it now." But Hitler refused. He decided to bring it ... down in flames around his head. When he went down, he was going to take it all with him. Where did he get that idea? He got it from the person who was guiding him: Satan himself.

Satan is going to do exactly that. And when he comes down to this earth, he is going to be mad. He's mad at God. He's enraged because he considers God to be the problem. He considers God as the one who has frustrated all of the efforts of secular humanism. He is enraged because he considers God the meddler who has followed up all the glories of liberalism. Liberals always think that their systems work.

I still remember with shock, to this day, hearing what Senator Hubert Humphrey said one time after hearing somebody outline the consequences of programs that his liberal point of view had sponsored, and the terrible things that were happening under those programs. He said to the person that was interviewing him, "There is nothing wrong with these programs that a little fixing up won't straighten out." You'll wonder that somebody with half a brain could look you in the eye and say that. And it's enraging to discover that your little fixing up is only making things worse.

**The Great Tribulation**

So, the earth at this point is in the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation. Satan is mad, but, unfortunately, God is angry. God's anger has been held back. Now, that's the end of the line. Satan is doing his worst on earth, and God is pulling all the stops of the organ up in heaven. He's going out full-volume: fortissimo fortissimo. Satan and his angels have mounted their attack, and they have lost.

So, Satan knows now that the handwriting is on the wall. He knows the timetable of Daniel. He has lost the big battle. He knows that according to the schedule, there are only three-and-a-half years left before Jesus Christ is destined to return. Whatever he can do has to be done quickly to frustrate that return, or that is the end of the line for him. So he moves in with full rage. Satan empowers the antichrist in a maximum way. A false trinity is actually established with Satan taking the role of God the Father; with the antichrist taking the role of God the Son; and, with the false prophet taking the role of God the Holy Spirit. Now, the scene is set for taking the tribulation world into some kind of peace and stability under this false trinity.

The antichrist begins with an all-out attack upon the saints of God. Revelation 12:17 tells us that. He turns in full blasphemy against God. Revelation 13:5-7 describe the great blasphemies that he speaks, and the consequences of the attack on humanity, and the persecutions. The false prophet awes the world with his miracles. The satanic trinity makes its final attempt to make secular humanism work. The world is under internal economic control of the antichrist, requiring his special mark either on your forehead or on the right hand, or you cannot do business. The world of computers makes all that easily possible. People will discover a new kind of famine. People will say to Christians, "We won't sell you anything."

This is what Hitler did in Nazi Germany. Once a person of Jewish descent was marked, they refused to do business with that person. They would not sell him food; they would not sell him the necessities of life; and, he was an absolute outcast. Soviet Russian communism, because it is a beast of Satan, does the same thing today. All the communists have to do to destroy a person is to pull his personal identity card. When they pull your personal identity card, you can't buy anything; you can't do business; you can't travel; and, you can't do anything but sit there and gradually starve to death and die. It's a terrible world to live in with no freedom whatsoever when there are internal economic controls over people.

**The Seventh Seal**

So, we come to the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation period. In Revelation 8, we have the seventh seal broken, and out of the seventh seal come seven trumpets. What is happening here is actually that you have had seal number one through seal number six broken. Now, seal number seven is broken, and number seven explodes into a new seal, which is a seal of seven trumpets. They go on in the same way: trumpet number one through trumpet number seven.

**The Seven Trumpets**

Now, what we're looking at is what is in greater detail under that seventh seal.

1. **The First Trumpet**

The first trumpet blows, and the result, in Revelation 8:7, is that hail; fire; and, consequently, from that, blood covers the earth: "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mixed with blood, and they were cast upon the earth. (Here's the consequence.) A third part of the trees was burnt up, and all the green grass was burned up." So, here you have hail and fire – the same sort of thing that happened in Sodom and Gomorrah. Fire and brimstone (the Bible calls it) was cast upon the earth. Human and animal life struck by this, of course, provide the blood that's involved here. A third of all the trees are burnt up, with all the consequence of that to nature when that sort of vegetation is destroyed, both in terms of that which produces food, and that which controls the effects upon soil erosion, and so on. And all the green grass was burned up.

That's going to be tough to look out into a place where there is no green grass. The Berean Youth Clubs have just gone out to West Texas, and there isn't any green grass out there either. It just is all burnt and brown. They have a lot of dust flying around, but no green grass. It would be awful to see a whole world where there is no green grass, and the life that that would protect and supply. "Death" is the key word in the tribulation. So, here suddenly God turns loose in His anger one judgment.

1. **The Second Trumpet**

The second trumpet is then sounded. Verses 8 and 9 describe what happens then: "The second angel sounded, and as it were, a great mountain, burning with fire was cast into the sea, and a third part of the sea became blood." Here you have described, what is probably a volcano erupting into the sea, and a third of the saltwater area becomes blood: "And a third part of the creatures which were in the sea and had life died, and a third part of the ships were destroyed." It destroys the ships that are upon the water, and it destroys the life that's in the water, as a third of the sea areas turn to literal blood.

You can see why people don't like this book, and why they recoil at believing that this book really means these things are going to take place. They can't believe that these staggering things are literal. They say, "Well, that must mean something symbolic." Just remember that you're having a repeat performance of what Moses went around doing in Egypt. When the Bible says that the waters of the Nile were turned to blood, it was turned to blood. If you don't know what blood is, then go home and nip yourself in the finger. Get one of those terrible things those doctors use when they're going to draw a little sample of blood. They poke a little sharp pin into your finger. Take a look at that and put it on your tongue. That's blood. That's what the Bible is talking about. You've got a third of the ocean areas of the world that are going to be turned to blood. You can imagine the stench of the sea life, and the death that surrounds those who are on board ship and how this affects them and the surroundings in which they find themselves. Perhaps part of the reason will be a storm. Can you imagine being on board ship in a storm on a sea made of blood? That's pretty messy, let alone being terrorizing.

1. **The Third Trumpet**

Trumpet number 3 is sounded beginning in verse 10: "The third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as though it were a lamp. And it fell upon a third part of the rivers (fresh water) and upon the fountains of water." Here, a star falls upon the fresh water supplies of the earth: "And the name of the star is called Wormwood. And a third part of the waters became Wormwood, and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter." What that means is they were made poisonous. So, this affects a third of the fresh water supplies around the earth. We're describing something that is global. A third of the fresh water become poisonous, so people drink these waters, and they die. Now you have a mass of human bodies because everybody drinks water. You can't live more than three days, perhaps, without drinking water. If you don't know that the supply is poison, and you drink it, you die; and, sometimes you even know that it's poisonous. People who are adrift at sea know that that saltwater is going to kill you if you drink it. Yet, in desperation, finally, they'll reach over and they'll drink that saltwater just to get some water. The consequences will be inevitable.

So, people will be drinking poisonous water out of their desperation. And, of course, you can see that the environmentalists are going to go bananas with their fury against God. You talk about fouling up the environment! I mean, they're going to say, "Where's the Environmental Protection Agency? What do we pay those people for? They're supposed to be taking care of all this stuff." They're going to long for all those wonderful days when we had the air full of high octane fuel odors, and all of that wonderful industrial pollution that we had floating around in our rivers. They're going to say, "Boy, I wish I were back in those good old days when we had that kind of stuff." Instead, now, they've got these things that are absolutely impossible to deal with. And their anger, as humanists, is going to be directed against the God that they know is doing this.

1. **The Fourth Trumpet**

Trumpet number 4 blows in Revelation 8:12: "And the fourth angel sounded, and a third part of the sun was smitten, and a third part of the moon, and a third part of the stars, so, a third part of them was darkened, and the day shown not for a third part of it, and the night likewise." The sources of light: the sun; the moon; and, the stars are darkened. This disrupts the cycles of day and night. Of course, it has immense effect upon the earth. When there is less sunlight, the temperatures drop, like out in the desert. When you're out in the desert, you have these huge contrasts in the heat of the day, then to the dropping of temperature in the night when it becomes bitterly cold. To have a third of the sun's heat removed and a third of the light sources removed will affect vegetation, and all the various factors of life, and a lot of things we aren't even aware of because we don't understand. Things are terribly disruptive when these things are interrupted.

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of the heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabiters of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet, of the three angels which are yet to sound." So suddenly here, after the fourth trumpet, God says, "You haven't seen anything yet. The worst is about to begin." This was the warm up. Now, we're getting to the real thing. Of course, people are listening to this. They're hearing this. This is not an angel sounding off something that people don't hear. Take it all literally. That's the way it's written. Of course, the shock is going to reverberate through the human race, and fear is going to mount everywhere. And when people become fearful, then people become self-centered. The world is turned into a jungle just because everybody wants to survive. You will be surprised what people will do to members of their own family when they are desperate to survive, and when they have committed themselves to the concept that they must live. You wouldn't believe what people are capable of doing. This is the kind of a world you're going to have. You talk about having friends under a situation like that? Nobody is your friend. You have only yourself. God says, "This has been terrible, but I'm going to give you a clue. This is only the warm up. Now begins the real horrible features that are designed to make it clear as to who I am and who Satan is."

Satan is now the full ruler of the world. This is what all this is about. Satan is in full command. He's been cast out of heaven. He's down here on this earth. He runs everything. He has his man in power. His man is a world dictator. Internationalism rules supreme. There isn't anybody he has to ask to do anything he wants to do. Everything is being done the way the devil wants it done. God is going to show the world just what a pathetic creature his majesty the devil is.

1. **The Fifth Trumpet**

Trumpet number five is sounded in Revelation 9:1-12. At that point, a terrible, terrible type of creature is let loose from what is called "the shaft of the abyss," and these swarm out in order to destroy and to afflict humanity in a variety of unbelievable ways: "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth, and to him was given the key of the abyss (the pit of the abyss). He opened the pit of the abyss, and there arose a smoke out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. The sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit." That's literally what's going to happen. Smoke comes out like a dust storm, and the sun is again clouded out of sight.

**Locusts like Stinging Scorpions**

"And there came up out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, and unto them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power." This is a flying insect of a kind that has the capacity to create a sting that a scorpion has: "And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads." Here the devil has been giving his seal. The antichrist has been giving his mark in their foreheads, but those who become believers are also marked. They are identified as being God's people. These creatures are turned loose from the pit of the abyss, which incidentally, is the place where Satan is going to be chained and kept tied up during the millennial period. These creatures (these insects) that are turned loose, are governed by God so that they do not do what insects normally do. They don't hit vegetation. They feed on people. Boy, wouldn't that make a great movie: "And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when he strikes at a man." I don't know whether you've ever been hit by a scorpion, but I can tell you that it's a very shocking experience to get that tail stung into you. And it would be terrible to find that that thing is hitting you repeatedly.

Years ago, when I was at San Marcus Military Academy, I was junior department military commandant for the junior division of the school. We were out in the morning formation one time, going through all the flag raising, and getting ready to march off to breakfast. Suddenly some kid began jumping wild-like, screaming, and hopping up and down. The officer turned up and told him to straighten out. This kid was pulling off his pants. A scorpion had crawled up his leg, and it just ruined his military stature altogether. It's bad enough to have a scorpion in your pants, but in the great tribulation, it would be like having it there all the time, all over you, constantly. And then to have the pain of the poisoning, but not to the point where the person dies. So, it never ends. That's just a little preview of what hell is going to be like.

"And in those days, men shall seek death and shall not find it, and shall desire to die. And death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like horses prepared unto battle. On their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men." Here is a little description of what these locusts will actually look like: "They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were, breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. They had a king over them who is the angel of the bottomless pit whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon; and, in the Greek tongue, his name was Apollyon. One woe is passed, and behold, there come two woes more hereafter."

You can play around with that description, and you can actually take it the way the Bible means for you to take it – as an actual description of a rather strange insect that God has created, which actually looks like this, as you would normally look at this insect. Some good artist ought to draw this up, and I'm sure that somebody probably has, to give you a picture of what this insect looks like, and it's not going to come out as a helicopter. So, don't even bring that up, because that isn't what is described here. This is describing something which is actually a strange insect that God prepares and that God produces as a plague upon humanity. You talk about hell on earth. This is exactly what God is giving people a preview of.

This is really God in grace (acting in monumental grace), telling people, "Folks, this is what it's going to be all the time unless you turn around and accept my grace now." You have a chance now, but if not, this is the kind of a condition where you wish to die, and you won't be able to die. You will be suffering to the point where you think you're going to blow out the tops of your brain cells with the agony, which is what hell is like. But you're not going to be able to die. You're just going to go from one moment to the next in that kind of eternal torment and agony.

So, these scorpions give people a little preview of what is ahead, and the smart ones turn to God.

These, of course, are under demon control. That's the meaning of the Greek name Apollyon. They are under Satan's direction. People are unable to escape, even by the agony of trying to commit suicide.

Trumpet number six, which is next, is a very interesting trumpet. We'll pick that one up next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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