



Blowing the Trumpets (part 2)

Revelation 9

Trumpet #5. Locusts that Torment (verses 1-12)

Trumpet #6. Angels that Kill (verses 13-21)

Whenever you read the Scriptures, it is of great importance to understand the literary genre that you are reading. It makes a difference how you read it. You read the law of Moses differently than you read the Psalms. You read the prophets differently than you read Paul's epistles. You read the history of the book of Acts differently than you read the book of Job. I think we understand this. For instance, if you are following along on the "1 Year Daily Audio Bible" reading schedule, as many of you are, then this past week you were reading from Solomon's wisdom literature: Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. The Song of Solomon is a love poem, and it is to be taken as poetry. For instance, consider the beginning of chapter 4. "Behold, you are beautiful, my love, behold, you are beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats leaping down the slopes of Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins, and not one among them has lost its young. Your lips are like a scarlet thread, and your mouth is lovely. Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil. Your neck is like the tower of David, built in rows of stone; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors" (Song of Solomon 4:1-4). It would be wrong for you to take these words literally, as if we are to understand the eyes of the beloved as literal doves. as if we are to understand her teeth to be like little lambs coming to the water. or as if we are to understand her neck to be made of stone, like the tower of David. No, this is poetic way of talking about the beauty of the beloved. Her eyes and her teeth are gorgeous! She is strong and mighty! We understand this. Now, it's not that we are refusing to take the Scripture literally. We take it literally, as a poem is to be taken! with all of its similes and metaphors as pictures of love!

Likewise, with the book of Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiastes is book of philosophy that often overstates the case. It begins in the second verse in the book with these words: Ecclesiastes 1:2 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity! This is hyperbole, the Preacher states it far stronger than it is. For in the book, he mentions some things that aren't vanity. Like loving your wife (Ecclesiastes 9:9), and being satisfied with the good things in life (Ecclesiastes 5:18-20). This is the way of wisdom (Ecclesiastes 8:5). Not pursuing the world and its pleasures, but properly enjoying the world and its pleasures, remembering the Creator in the days of our youth. And without such wisdom, all will be vanity. Now, it's not that we are denying the literal interpretation of the Bible, but we are understanding these books as they were to be written to be understood. Of course, as it pertains to us this morning, we are coming, once again, to the book of Revelation. a book written in the apocalyptic style.

In the book of Revelation, we see visions and dreams of cataclysmic events. We see vivid images that are other-worldly. We see strange things, like creatures with six wings, full of eyes, all around and within, day and night proclaiming the holiness of God (Revelation 4). In Revelation, we see lions that look like lambs that have been slaughtered (Revelation 5); robes washed white in blood; beasts with ten horns and seven-heads (Revelation 13:1); people marked on their foreheads with the name of God (Revelation 14:1); dragons that are thrown down to earth (Revelation 12:9) wanting to kill; seals and trumpets and bowls that when opened and blown and poured out, bring great harm to the earth. We see things that cannot be explained, like the sun being darkened and the stars falling from the sky. Like bottomless pits and mortal wounds that are healed. Like a woman, "clothed with the sun" (Revelation 12:1); like a lake of fire. Like the new Jerusalem that is 1,000 miles high! And nowhere is the imagery of Revelation more vivid than in the ninth chapter, that we have come to this morning.

So, if you haven't done so already, I invite you to open in your Bibles to Revelation, chapter 9. The title of my message this morning is, "Blowing the Trumpets (part 2)." Part 1 was last week, when we looked at the blowing of the first four trumpets, which came in Revelation, chapter 8. This week, we will be looking at the 5th and 6th trumpets, which are blown in chapter 9. Now, before we read from chapter 9, let's just recap chapter 8. The chapter began with silence in heaven for half an hour (verse 1). This was a moment of silence because of the solemnity of what was about to take place. In our secular society, when someone famous passes away, we will have "moments of silence" at big sporting events to show honor and remember the one who is deceased. It helps us to focus our attention upon the seriousness of life. And that's what's happening here. There is a moment of silence. But here it isn't after the fact. It's before the fact. It's before the world begins to be destroyed, which comes as the trumpets are blown.

Now, again, I want to remind you of the backbone imagery of the book of Revelation: the seals, trumpets and bowls. The seals are in chapter 6. The trumpets are in chapters 8 and 9. The bowls are in chapter 16. There are seven seals, and seven trumpets, and seven bowls. The big question of Revelation is this: How do these judgments relate? Are they consecutive? The seals happening first, And then the trumpets. And then the bowls? Or, to they concurrent, telling the story of judgment again? Not that the seals, trumpets and bowls correspond to each other. Rather, that they tell the story of the judgment again. We don't know. Good men are on either side of this debate. I don't think it's something that we should be dogmatic about. I encourage you to deal with others in grace as they seek to interpret Revelation.

OK, so that puts the trumpets in context. The first four trumpets were blown in chapter 8. When the first trumpet was blown, a third of the earth was burned up. When the second trumpet was blown, a third of the sea creatures died. When the second trumpet was blown, a third of the waters were made bitter. When the second trumpet was blown, a third of heaven's lights are dimmed. I have no reason to doubt the literal destruction of what these images describe will come upon the earth. Do you remember what Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3? 2 Peter is a letter to churches! It's not poetic or apocalyptic. We should take it as face value. "The earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished" (2 Peter 3:7). But by the same word the

heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly" (2 Peter 3:5-6). Genesis 1 tells of the watery world that the Lord created! Genesis 6 tells of how it was all destroyed in the flood! And here in Revelation, we are told of the fire that will come upon the earth to destroy it once again, at the day of judgment and the destruction of the ungodly. And now, we read of the 5th and 6th trumpets being blown. Revelation, chapter 9, Actually, we must begin in chapter 8 and verse 13, "Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

John looked up and heard this eagle crying out the woes that are coming upon the earth. The fifth trumpet brings a woe (verse 12). The sixth trumpet brings a woe (Revelation 11:14). The seventh trumpet finishes the woes! At which point, we read, Revelation 11:15, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever!"

So, lets read of these woes as the fifth and sixth trumpet blow!

Revelation 9:1-10

And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them. In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails. They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon. The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come. Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound. The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

By way of outline this morning, we are looking at two trumpets. I have two points. Let's look at the first point (which is actually the fifth trumpet).

Trumpet #5. Locusts that Torment (verses 1-12)

The locusts are dominant focus in the first 12 verses. They are given power to "torment" people (verse 5). There is a lot of apocalyptic imagery going on in this chapter. We see it in verse 1,

Revelation 9:1

And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.

We begin with the star falling from heaven. This is a theme of these trumpets. In the first three trumpets, large objects were being cast to the earth, to bring about great destruction on the earth. And here, we see a star falling, except, this is no star! It's a star with hands and abilities! So, when the book of Revelation talks about stars falling from the sky, be careful! It may not be talking about literal stars! It may be representative of people or demons. Job speaks about the time when "the morning stars sang together" (Job 38:7). "From heaven the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera" (Judges 5:20). I throw these things out there for you to be careful in your interpretation of Revelation. Hold the details loosely, but grab and hold onto the big picture.

Here in Revelation 9, the big picture is the judgment coming upon the earth to destroy the ungodly. One person that was caught up in the detail of Revelation 9 was Charles Spurgeon, the prince of preachers. As a boy, he was raised by his grandfather, as his father was too poor to support him. Spurgeon writes this in his autobiography,

"When I was a very small boy, I was allowed to read the Scriptures at family prayer. Once upon a time, when reading the passage in Revelation which mentions the bottomless pit, I paused, and said, 'Grandpa, what can this mean?' The answer was kind, but unsatisfactory, 'Pooh, pooh, child, go on.' The child, however, intended to have an explanation, and therefore selected the same chapter morning after morning, and always halted at the same verse to repeat the enquiry, hoping that by repetition he would importune the good old gentleman into a reply. The process was successful, for it is by no means the most edifying things in the world to hear the history of the Mother of Harlots, and the beast with seven heads, every morning of the week, Sunday included, with no sort of alternation either of Psalm or Gospel; the venerable patriarch of the household therefore capitulated at discretion, with 'Well, dear, what is it that puzzles you?' Now 'the child' had often seen baskets with but very frail bottoms, which in course of wear became bottomless, and allowed the fruit placed therein to drop

upon the ground; here, then, was the puzzle--if the pit aforesaid had no bottom, where would all those people fall to who dropped out at its lower end? A puzzle which rather startled the propriety of family worship, and had to be laid aside for explanation at some more convenient season."^[1]

Spurgeon's grandfather would have done well to talk about apocalyptic literature! the mysteries of the pictures! not to be puzzled out! but to be seen as something horrible! And a bottomless pit defies explanation! But the focus of the bottomless pit isn't upon the falling in, it's about the coming out.

Revelation 9:2

He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.

Out of this bottomless pit, which is opened by the key given to the star, smoke rose up! This wasn't smoke from a forest fire (like first trumpet). This was smoke that formed because of the swarms of locusts that were released!

Revelation 9:3

Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth.

If you know your Bible well, you know that in the Old Testament, God often brought judgment upon people with locusts. The eighth plague in Egypt was a plague of locusts, where God sent locusts to devour everything growing in the fields, bringing a famine upon the land (Exodus 10:13-15). In the book of Joel, locusts are mentioned in connection with the Day of the LORD! The locusts came and destroyed everything, "What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten" (Joel 1:4). And Joel called the people to repent! He said, "Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house LORD of the your God, and cry out to the LORD. Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes" (Joel 1:14-15). The parallels with Revelation are astonishing. "To you, O LORD, I call. For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flame has burned all the trees of the field. Even the beasts of the field pant for you because the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness" (Joel 1:19-20). "Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations" (Joel 2:1-2).

We see fires and trumpets and darkness and gloom, as the locusts from God come upon the earth in his judgment! The message is "repent!" Do you think that you are going to stand against the Almighty God when the angels blow their trumpets! Call upon the LORD! Cry out to him! The promise from the book of Joel is this: "And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Joel 2:32). And this is the application of Revelation 9 for us this morning: repent! God's judgment is coming! Jesus is coming soon! Because, if you are one of those who have repented, and turned to the Lord, then you will be protected from the torment that is coming by these locusts.

Have you ever experienced a plague of locusts like this? On vacation this summer, we were driving through Nevada on our way to California to visit Yvonne's family. Near Elko, Nevada, we stopped at a rest area. And at the rest area, I came upon a giant grasshopper. Here's a picture of the grasshopper against Stephie's shoe. You can't really tell here but it was like 2½, 3 inches long! And pretty soon we saw another, and another, and another. Here's a picture of them crawling on the walls and on the tree in the background. After doing a bit of research, we found out that they were "Mormon Crickets." that have descended upon Nevada. They cover sidewalks and road. They come into houses and hospitals! They are a huge nuisance! And for those in Elko, they can't wait until they die off! It was awful! Needless to say, we did not use the toilets at that rest stop!

I can only imagine what theses locusts in Revelation would be like, coming in such swarms that they darken the sky! Look at verse 4,

Revelation 9:4

They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

Again, this is apocalyptic imagery (even different than the locusts in Joel) because these locusts were told, not to harm the vegetation! But this is what locusts do! They harm the vegetation! But the locusts here are tormenting people! It's a prelude, that these are not mere locusts. I hope that you find encouragement in verse 4. That those whom God has sealed (remember Revelation 7?) will be protected. They will not be tormented by these locusts. This is a picture of God's salvation! When we believe in Jesus, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. and are protected by God, from the wrath that comes from the enemy. And note here the sovereign of God. The devastation that these locusts bring is under the sovereign control of God. He dictates what they harm. He dictates who they harm. He dictates how long they harm them.

Revelation 9:5

They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them,

This lasts upon the earth for 5 months! Reading through Revelation, I have been puzzled by the 5 months. because the times given in Revelation are often in sevens, or in half of sevens! or in thousands! But 5 months! It's a strange. Probably because 5 months is the life span of your average locusts. Anyway, we read a bit about how they torment people in verse 5.

Revelation 9:5

and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone.

I know what this feels like. I'm not sure if you remember, but this past Spring, I was in Arizona visiting (and taking care of) my parents. And the night before we planned to leave, I was getting some good sleep. Until I felt something on my face. It felt like a spider. I brushed it from

my forehead, and felt this sting on my finger! To make a long story short, I was stung by a scorpion. It caused my finger to go numb for a couple of days. It was uncomfortable, but not unbearable. Well, I captured that scorpion. And have him right here in this tube. He's a lot smaller than he was, as he has dehydrated and shriveled up. But I got him. I wanted my father to pin the scorpion on the wall of his home in Arizona, as a deterrent to other scorpions that might enter their house, announcing to them that if you enter into this house, you will be crucified! That night when I was stung by a scorpion, I found out that very few people have ever died from a scorpion sting. But it's not pleasant. To be bitten by one scorpion was bad enough! But a locust-like swarm of scorpions would be terrible! And that's why we read in verse 6,

Revelation 9:6

And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

In other words, this is torture! God in his judgement says locust are going out, and torturing people for five months. Why are people tortured? To get some sort of confession out of them. And what God is doing is torturing them so that they would repent and turn. But they failed to repent and turn. In verse 7, we find out what these locust actually are.

Revelation 9:7-10

In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails.

If you look up Revelation 9 imagery you can see an image of the locust this verse describes. With its head with a crown of gold, face like human face, hair long like women's hair, which is probably a sign of strength like Samson or Absalom. Teeth like lion's teeth. Breastplates like the breastplates of iron. Now people have tried to figure this out. Hal Lindsey said, "I have a Christian friend who was a Green Beret in Vietnam. When he first read this chapter he said, 'I know what those are. I've seen hundreds of them in Vietnam. They're Cobra helicopters!' That may be conjecture, but it does give you something to think about! A Cobra helicopter does fit the sound of 'many chariots.' My friend believes that the means of torment will be a kind of nerve gas sprayed from its tail."^[2]

Perhaps? I don't know. I am doubtful because a cobra helicopter kills, and doesn't just mangle or torment for five months. And the number of Cobra helicopters aren't coming out like the locusts. I encourage you think of the first picture. That's how John saw it, so that's how God wants us to see it. It is apocalyptic and how to flushes out we don't exactly know. We see in verse 11 something more strange about these locusts.

Revelation 9:11

They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

Proverbs 30:27 says "Locust have no king." So again, apocalyptic. Locusts just do what they want to do. But these locusts have a king over them, and his name is Abaddon, Apollyon in greek, which means destruction. John Bunyan picked that up in Pilgrims Progress, which is a good book to read if you haven't. Charles Spurgeon and Pilgrims Progress are staples of historic Christian life. But here, the Christian is fighting Apollyon, fighting the devil. The devil is king over them. This is what Satan comes to do. It's bad! But Jesus says in John 10:10 "I came to give life and give it abundantly." So repent, and turn to the one that gives abundant life rather than the one who is trying to kill you. And then we get to verse 12.

Revelation 9:12

The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.

That means that Trumpet #5 is done and we transition to

Trumpet #6. Angels that Kill (verses 13-21)

Revelation 9:13

Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God,

We saw an altar in chapter 6 when the martyrs were under the altar. Ancient Hebrew altars had horns on them kind of like extensions. If someone was in trouble they would go to those four horns as a place of refuge and strength. So this voice comes from this stone altar, and it's apocalyptic.

Revelation 9:14

saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

I do not think you take this literally, as if there are four angels at this river and they are going to go over and there is a jail some place in Euphrates and they're going to let them loose. I don't think that's it. Euphrates is often seen in ancient literature as the edge of the Roman empire and the edge of Solomon's reign. You get over the Euphrates and you go to enemy territory. But the promise land is out there close to Babylon. But we will see Babylon mentioned in Revelation chapter 18 and maybe the idea is that these four angels in Babylon and saw this wicked nation. This raises the question, are these angels or demons? Angels and demons are the same sort of being, but angels are good and demons are bad. Many have said that these are really demons. I've kept my point "Angels that Kill" because it may be angels. Think about the Passover, when it was the angel of the Lord that killed. God doesn't necessarily have to have a demon that does his dirty work. But here, whatever this is, angels or demons, they are going to go. In fact, angels are often called heavenly hosts. And these are the ones that are going to fight for God. And so these angels or demons were bound at the Euphrates and they were to be released. I love verse 15.

Revelation 9:15

So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

Jesus said no one knows the time he is to return except the Father who is in heaven. And here is the Father saying I've got this time out there. We don't know the time these angels are going to come, but God does. He knows the time that these angels or these demons, who seem to be one-time use sorts of angels. It seems like they were created and bound and then stuck there and they are going to be released for this one purpose, this one war, right at the end. And we see the sovereignty of God that they were released to kill a third of mankind. There are boundaries. With the fifth angel, it could only torment those who weren't sealed with the seal of God on their forehead. Here, only kill a third. And I assume that is a third of people who aren't sealed. That is a lot of people to kill a third of mankind. World War I killed about 1 to 2% of the world's population. World War II was worse, pushing 3%. This is 10-times worse than World War II, which was horrific over the world. This is, if you were, another world war. It may be World War III, it may be World War VIII. We don't know. But it's a dominant World War that takes place. It's interesting, it's not that humans are fighting humans. There is a divine element, that God is bringing this and God is going to destroy a third of mankind through the angels. Then we see verse 16.

Revelation 9:16

The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number.

Where did these troops come from? We don't know anything about that. And there's this number, 10,000 times 10,000 twice is 200,000,000, but I don't think the point is "count this." I think the point there's this huge army, bigger than any military. And he sees these troops described in verse 17. They are little bit like the locusts, but different.

Revelation 9:17-19

And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound.

A third of mankind was killed, exactly like God said. He said a third of mankind could be killed and that's what they did. This is similar to Job. Remember the conversation that Satan had with the Lord before inflicting Job? He said you can take what's his but don't touch him. So, that's what Satan did when he wiped out his wealth and his family. Then Satan came back another time and told the Lord if I touch his skin he will curse you, and the Lord said touch his skin but don't kill him. So that's what he did. He touched his skin and put him on a sick bed for months. So here in verse 18, a third of mankind was killed by fire and sapphire and sulfur, these three plagues that came out of their mouths. And it says the "power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails." And their tails aren't like scorpions anymore, but serpents with heads. This is destruction coming upon the earth.

The question that rises here in Revelation, is God just in this? Is this fair of God to pour this out among people? We see in verse 20,

Revelation 9:20

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands

They didn't repent. They continued in their ways. We see this same thing in Revelation chapter 16, which is the bowls, when the fourth and fifth bowls are poured out. "The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. They were scorched by fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory" (Revelation 16:8-9). When the bowl is being poured out, and they're being scorched and in pain, they are cursing God as the one responsible for all these things rather than realizing God got great power, I repent and turn from my ways, and I follow him. Or chapter 16 verses 10-11, "The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deed." Is God just in this, when he begins to show his majesty and his power? All God is wanting us to do is cry uncle. To say "God you're God and I'm not." That's what Job did in the midst of everything. "And these people did not give up the works of their hands, nor give up worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk." That's a reflection from Psalm 115 and 135. Those Psalms speak about the idols, and how they have to be picked up and moved around but people still pursue after the vanity of idols. We may not have idols like that, but we have idols like Revelation 9:21.

Revelation 9:21

nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

They didn't repent. They just continued on, even in the midst of seeing this great judgement. And so, here is the opportunity we have today. Are we going to look, to be forewarned is to be forearmed, are we going to look at that and say we need to be ready for that day, if ever that day comes upon us? Now there are plenty who say Christians are going to be taken out of that and that's wonderful, but there's others who say that Christians will be right here and will be protected. To those who originally heard the book, they thought they were in the midst of some tremendous tribulation as John said he was a fellow partaker in the tribulation. They were going through some difficult things and for the next two hundred years the early church went through some difficult things. Not us so much. But regardless of whether we are in this or not, are we going to have the foresight to say that God is the all-powerful God and he's the one that deserves all our homage and all of our praise? He has provided Jesus for us on the cross! Who died for our sins so that we might avert the wrath of God. He took all of this torment for five months. He took this wrath upon himself so that he died in our place and that's the glory's of the gospel.

That's what we celebrate with the Lord's Supper. It's our escape out. It's not just repenting in vacuum, it doesn't speak here about repenting

and believing in Jesus though the whole flavor of the book of Revelation says look at the lamb. Revelation 5 says "who by his blood, ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them to be a kingdom and priest to our God and they shall reign on the earth." This is the lamb who was slain who we look to. It's implied here to repent of your deeds and submit yourself to the Lord Jesus. And that's what we celebrate with the Lord's Supper. It's saying I am submitting to Christ and saying uncle. I am trusting in the blood of Jesus for forgiveness. And that's what we're going to celebrate in a minute. But first, just think about this message of judgement that's coming. Hopefully in a few weeks it won't be quite so hard. But just reflect upon what our sin as a planet deserves, as we have lived in high rebellion against the Lord. Paul tells us to examine ourselves to see whether we are one of those who are sealed by the Holy Spirit, trusting him through faith. And if so, the celebration of the Lord's Supper is for you. But if you're living in rebellion against the Lord just let it pass. For unrepentant sin, the message is to repent. To repent and trust in the Lord.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on September 10, 2023 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] Charles Spurgeon, *Autobiography, Volume 1: The Early Years* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1962), 6.

[2] Hal Lindsey, *There's a New World Coming: A Prophetic Odyssey* (Santa Ana, CA: Vision House Publishers, 1973), 138–139.