

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 10:2:2004

Reading: Rev 9:1-21

EXPLORING THE FUTURE

15. AN INVASION FROM HELL

We have seen echoes of it before, an entire nation of peace-loving people of all walks of life Students, shopkeepers, farmers, teachers, bankers is whipped into an emotional fervour by the harangues of a demagogue, induced to take up gun and uniform and march blindly into the fires of all out war. The 13th century Mongols followed Genghis Khan throughout China, India, the Middle East, and Europe, leaving more than 40 million dead. The French followed Napoleon on a binge of conquest that killed 5 million and Kept Europe in turmoil for two decades. In our own century, the German people followed a strange little man with a Charlie Chaplin moustache to unimaginable depths of butchery and inhumanity.

Today, when you look at newsreel footage of Adolf Hitler giving one of his frenzied speeches before the German throngs, it is hard to imagine that anyone would truly believe what he said and followed his deluded dreams of conquest. Yet it seems the fate of people to forever allow such wicked leaders to goad them into destroying millions of lives while themselves marching into the blast-furnace of history. And my the worst that humanity is capable of has not yet been seen. All the bloody wars of history are just a fore-gleam of the final outcome to come.

A day is coming when a great leader will rise up and draw millions to a fiery doom. This leader will be the crowning desecration in a long line of bloody conquerors more terrible by far than Khan or Napoleon or Hitler or Hussein. The doom that was prophesied by the angel's scream, "*Woe to those who make their home on earth,*" will at last fall upon the human race. And all hell will break loose. Now last time we looked at the first four trumpet judgments that fell on the earth. Now the last three trumpet judgments are marked off from the other four by identification with the three woes. (8:13 9:12 11:14) J. Vernon McGee writes: "*These woes mark the deepest darkness and most painful intensity of the Great Tribulation. This is generally associated with the last part, the last three*

and a half years, the blackest days in human history." My in this period things will become Bad, Worse, and the Worst. Indeed here in (Ch 9) we see An Invasion from Hell. Notice:

(1) THE UNPRECEDENTED PUNISHMENT

Now there are two armies in this chapter. The first army is an Army from the Pit. (9:1-12) the second is an Army is from the East. (9:13-21) Now I have called this (1) because what is happening here has been unheard of. Here is a demon host released from the bottomless pit, sent upon the earth to torment mankind. Now the world is already being prepared for what is to come. We live in an age of scientific enlightenment, men are educated, pragmatic and materialistic, and yet at the same time millions are turning to the occult for entertainment, enlightenment and eventual enslavement. Every year, hundreds of new books are published dealing with demonism, witchcraft, magic, spiritism, and ghosts. Soothsayers, prophets, astrologers, fortune tellers are given avid hearing by millions.

The groundwork is being laid for an increase in demon activity soon to burst upon the world. My what will happen under the blowing of the 5th trumpet will be made all the easier because men have been preconditioned to reject biblical truth and to accept the doctrine of demons. You see I am sure that these locusts here are not literal, natural locusts, but rather hordes of demons that are loosed upon the earth. You see in the O.T. natural locusts were a greatly feared plague because they could strip the country of every green leaf. The destructive power of locusts is seen in many O.T. passages. (Deut 28:38 Ps 105:34) My is this scene not reminiscent of the locust plague in Egypt ?

(Exod 10:4-5) but far worse. The imagery of the smoke is an apt description of a locust plague, since millions of these grasshopper-like insects swarm so thickly that they can darken the sky and blot out the sun, turning the day into night. You see, locust swarms can be unimaginably huge (Ps 105:34) one swarm over the Red Sea in 1889 was reported to have covered 2,000 square miles. The destruction they can cause to crops and other vegetation is staggering. (2 Chron 7:13)

John Philips writes, "*The worst locust plague in modern times struck the Middle East in 1951-52 when in Iran, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia every green and growing thing was devoured across hundreds of thousands of square miles. Locusts eat grain, leaf, and stalk right down to the bare ground. When a swarm arises and flies on its way, the green field is left a desert, barrenness and desolation stretches as far as the eye can see.*"

But these were not ordinary locusts, but demons who, like locusts, bring swarming destruction. Its interesting that these creatures don't devour the green vegetation in fact they are prohibited from doing so. (9:4) Now this is something that literal locusts don't do. Look at (9:11) Now real locusts don't have a king. (Prov 30:27) You see these demons are like locusts. In the Middle East the locusts will cover the earth in great clouds. Swarming billions of them cross the face of the earth, actually darkening the skies. In just the same way these hellish, diabolical fiendish beings will be loose to invade the earth. There will be this (1) Now look for a moment at:

(a) *THE DELIVERER OF THESE DEMONS:*

- (9:1) Now there are two questions here that need to be answered. Who is this star ? Where are these demons ? Do you recall that at the end of the Book of Revelation Christ says, "*I am the bright and morning star.*"
- (22:16) Of course we have already noted in the opening chapters that Christ holds the seven stars in His right hand. These stars are the messengers of the church. You see even in English the word star has different meanings. If I were to tell you that I am going to Hollywood to see the stars you would know that I was not going to see something in the sky. The word "*star,*" here refers to an intelligent personality. A.T. "*I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth.*"
- (12:7-9) The fallen star is Satan and this army from the pit are his demons. Now the phrase "*the bottomless pit,*" is an interesting one. It literally means, "*the pit of the abyss.*" Luke makes it clear that this pit is the abode of demons. (Lk 8:31) The "*deep,*" referred to here is really the abyss. So Satan is given the authority to open the abyss where these demons are and liberate them.
- (For unchained demons see Lk 4:34 Matt 8:29 for chained demons see 2 Pet 2:4 Jude 6) My the imagination cannot picture what this earth will be like when the church is removed from this scene and when society having completely corrupted itself is handed over to the malignant attention of the most horrible fiends of hell. These wicked spirits, long mercifully chained by God, are now let loose on the earth. My can you imagine what the world would be like this if we were to open the doors of all the prisons of the world and set free the world's most vicious and violent criminals giving them full free reign to practice their crimes on mankind ? Can you picture what it would be like ? Well, something far worse than that lies in store for the world. You see when Satan opens the pit, smoke ascends as the smoke of a great furnace. Notice the occurrence of the words as and like in this chapter. John is finding it difficult to describe the scene which he sees. Indeed so dense was the smoke that the sun and air

were darkened. But what are these demons doing on earth ? Well look at:

(b) THE DESIGN OF THESE DEMONS:

- (9:3-5) Did you know that the pain from the sting of a scorpion is the most intense that any animal can inflict on the human body ? My the sting of these demon locusts will produce anguish of mind and spirit almost beyond endurance. The effect of this torment is to drive men to suicide but they'll not be able to die. Can you imagine a world in which men court death, attempt suicide, only to find that death will not be possible !
- (Matt 17:15) Bodies will not sink and drown: poisons and pills will have no effect and somehow even bullets and knives will not do their intended job. This is Hell on Earth. Some years ago a coloured believer from a tribe that worshipped the devil, spoke of his brother who was a missionary for that tribe. Before he could go out and serve the devil he had to pass a test. The tribe put him in a tent and for three weeks he got nothing to eat and during that time he was to endeavour to give every bit of his body to the devil. The day came when he was to be tested. A fire which was 10 feet wide was lit and it was burning furiously. The test for this man was that he had to lie naked in the midst of the fire. The moment came and he opened the tent door ran out naked and lay in the midst of the fire. Do you what his brother's testimony was ? He was not even blistered ! My if the devil got the hold of some of you would not know what would happen ! (Job) Bless God, even in the midst of this Invasion from Hell God is still in control, for did you notice:

(c) THE DURATION OF THESE DEMONS:

Look at (9:5) The normal lifespan of the locust is about 5 months from May to September, and this is the length of time that this judgment will last. God has the time marked off for even in the Great Tribulation God never relinquishes His sovereignty. Now from (9:7) onwards we have:

(d) THE DESCRIPTION OF THESE DEMONS:

Look at how John describes them. They are:

(1) IRRESISTIBLE:

" *And the shapes battle.*" (9:7) Like a steed charging over the ground they'll stop at nothing. No-one will be able to resist them as they go marching on. Satan's evil forces, streaming out of their vile pit will cover the land with pain.

(2) INVINCIBLE:

" *And on their heads gold.*" (9:7) They will conquer all in their path. No doubt scientists will work around the clock seeking some wonder drug which will restore some semblance of sanity to men who are delirious with torment, but everything will fail. Notice they are:

(3) INTELLIGENT:

" *And their faces men.*" (9:7) You see, these are not literal, ordinary locusts. They are intelligent beings with a very cunning plan.

(4) INSIDIOUS:

" *And they had hair lions.*" (9:8) The Bible says that a woman's hair is given to her for her glory. I wonder have you heard about the wife that asked her husband one night, " *John when my hair has turned to silver will you love me just the same ?* He said, " *Well, I have loved you when it was ginger, black, blonde so another colour thrown in won't make any difference.*" A women's hair is a beautiful thing given by God as a crown to women. But these demons are going to use that as a trap. They will appear to be very alluring, but they will have teeth like lions, ready to shred and devour those they come upon. Notice they're

(5) INSENSITIVE:

" *And they of iron.*" (9:9) That is, they are heartless. Not matter how much people shriek and groan these demons will not be moved from their course of action.

(6) INESCAPABLE:

" *And the sound battle.*" (9:9) They will be everywhere. There will be no escape. No-one will outrun them, there will be no place to hide. They are:

(7) INJURIOUS:

" *And they had months.*" When folk follow the devil, they are chasing after one who only wants to Hurt them, but when they follow the Lord, they are following one who only wants to Help them. My the devil and his demons will hurt everyone on the earth except the 144,000, indeed it is

likely that all who know the Lord will be sealed in some special way. (Eph 1:13)

(8) INDIVISIBLE:

" And they Apollyon." (9:11) All of these demons will be organised and they will know precisely what to do. Their leaders name, translated is " *DESTROYER.*"

He organises them to destroy mankind that is those who do not have the seal of God on their forehead. What a day this is going to be ! What do you think the United Kingdom would be like if every prison cell were thrown open and every criminal turned loose in the streets ? What if there was no police force to hold them back, and they were organised to make war on the ordinary citizens ? My as awful as that sounds, it cannot compare to the millions of demons that will be let loose when the fifth trumpet sounds. This will (1)

(2) THE UNRESTRAINED POWER

Now I did say that there were two armies in this chapter. An army from the Pit and an army from the east, for here we notice that an army of two hundred million appears. By normal standards this mighty army would occupy a territory one mile wide and eighty seven miles long. Is this an army of men or of demons ? Possibly this is an army of men driven by demons ! Notice for example that:

(a) THE SPIRIT POWERS:

Are involved. (6:14) Peter and Jude both tell of angels who are at present, kept imprisoned by God.

(2 Pet 2:4 Jude 6) And four of these fallen angels are now loosed to carry out a predetermined plan. The mention of the River Euphrates gives us a clue as to who these angels might be. Let me take you to the Book of Daniel. (Dan 10:10-13) Now this passage throws light upon the problem of seemingly unanswered prayer. The Bible makes it clear that our prayers may be ineffectual because of Sinfulness, (Ps 66:18) Selfishness, (James 4:3) Stinginess, (Prov 21:13) Strife, (1 Pet 3:7) But none of those things was the problem here. Look at (10:10-13)

Now who is the speaker here ? Well an angel is speaking possibly Gabriel. (Dan 8:16 9:21) But who was this prince of the Kingdom of Persia ? (10:13) Well, whoever he was he was Powerful for he single-handedly blocked one of heavens mightiest angels for 21 days. You see while the

Persian Empire was ruled by a Human Prince, Cyrus (10:1) in the unseen world it was ruled by a fallen Angelic Prince. There was one assigned by Satan to look after the nation of Persia and the nation of Greece. (10:20) But there are four angels mentioned in (Rev 9:15) and that corresponds to the other two kingdoms we have not mentioned. Babylon and Rome ! Do you recall the order in Daniel ? Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome. Now all of these great kingdom were cradled in this area of the world so its natural to assume that Satan would put four fallen angelic princes in control of the area ! My these fallen angels who are now released might be the very ones who in times past controlled the four world powers. But look we are not only told about (a) we are told about:

(b) *THE SPECIAL PLACE:*

(9:14) " *The great river Euphrates.* "

(Deut 1:7 Josh 1:4) This river rises from sources near Mount Ararat in Turkey, and flows more than 1700 miles before emptying into the Persian Gulf. It is the longest and most important river in the Middle East and figures prominently in the Old Testament. Do you recall that it was this river that flowed out of the Garden of Eden at the beginning of time ? (Gen 2:14) It was near the Euphrates that sin began, the first lie was told. It was in that vicinity that Cain killed Abel ! It was in this area that Nimrod began his kingdom, leading to the tower of Babel. You see the river Euphrates is the dividing line between the East and the West. God gave to Abraham the Promised Land extending as far as the Euphrates, (Gen 15:18 Exod 23:31 Deut 11:24) and Israel's influence extended to the Euphrates during the reigns of David and Solomon. (1 Chron 18:3

2 Chron 9:26) The region near the Euphrates was the central location of three world powers that oppressed Israel, Assyria, Babylon and Medo-Persia. Do you recall that it was on the banks of the Euphrates that Israel endured seventy long bitter, wearisome years of captivity. (Ps 137:1-4) The other side of the river is considered the Far East. Archaeologists consider it the birthplace of civilization. In more recent times, the Euphrates River was strategically important during the 1991 Gulf War which liberated Kuwait. " *Stormin Norman,* " as they called him, was the top dog, he was the man in charge of Operation Desert Storm.

During the one hundred hour ground campaign of that conflict, the US Army's 24th Mechanised and 101st Airborne Divisions trapped the elite Republican Guard of Iraq with its back against the Euphrates River. They were unable to escape, they had nowhere to hide and so they were decimated in one of the most lopsided military victories of all time. This

is a Special Place and the Lord will use this place at the end of time when the enemies of God will cross to engage in the battle of Armageddon. (16:12-16) (a) (b)

(c) *THE SPECIFIC PERIOD:*

For the angels are let loose for "*an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.*" (9:15) Now I don't think this means that this Invasion is for 13 months, but rather they will be loosed at a particular time. A.T. puts it like this, "*which were prepared for THE hour, and day, and month, and year.*" That is, the exact moment of this terrible visitation is foreknown to God and appointed by Him. "*Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.*" (Acts 15:18) Is it not wonderful to know that in this day when a world will have gone mad, nothing will be happening by chance ? There is no panic in heaven only Plans. All events are under His control, and nothing happens without His approval. Do you need to grasp this afresh this ... ?

God is still in control, God is still running the show, Internationally, Nationally and Personally. My not a speck of dust moves, not a blade of grass stirs, not an army can move, not a shot can be fired with God knowing all about it and granting His permission.

A space shuttle was once scuttled because the computer was off by one twenty-fifth of a second. But God is even closer than that. Everything at the end of time will happen in His time, and you can rest assured it will all be perfect. But why are these four angels being loosed at this time ? What is:

(d) *THE SOLEMN PURPOSE:*

These wicked angels have one very clear purpose, "*to slay the third part of men.*" (9:15) Do you recall that when the fourth seal was opened a quarter of the earth's population was slain ? (6:8) Now one third is killed, (9:18) which means that about one half of the earth's population will have perished during this Great Tribulation. My the world will be one massive graveyard. Death, which had taken a brief holiday under the fifth judgment, now returns with a vengeance. Now let's pause for a moment, in case this just passes over our head. When you add all the numbers together, this means that a minimum of 50% of the world's population have now died. Does that concern you ? Millions and billions of souls into an eternal hell. Would that not motivate you to pull out all the stops to get the gospel out ? Do we not owe it to men and women to warn them to flee from the coming day of God's wrath ?

Now there has been much speculation about this army of 200 million. (9:16) Is this an army of men or of demons ? Could it be an army of men driven by demons. Whatever the figure left John speechless. Do you see what he says ? “ *I heard the number of them.* ”

(9:16) He was dumbfounded, he could not believe what he had just been told. In his day there were probably not two hundred million people living on earth.

We have seen news footage in recent days of mass demonstrations in a variety of global hot spots and some of these have added up to one million people, but when you multiply that by two hundred, it blows the mind. Military records tell us that this number is almost twice as many troops as the Allied powers combined when they were at peak strength in World War 2. Now are there any nations in the world that could muster an army of this size ? Who fits the bill ? Well, China for example has a population approaching 1.3 billion people. Indeed the Red Chinese Army reportedly numbered 200 million during the 1970s. And (16:12) tells us that the river Euphrates is going to be dried up, that the way might be prepared for the Kings of the East. Could this be two different phases of the same operation ?

John gives us a description here of the weapons of war as best he could. His description is simply the best way he could express our modern implements of war ! This was unlike any horse or army John had ever known. Is it a description of some sort of nuclear war ? One thing is sure, by the time this sixth angel sounds the trumpet half of the earth's population will have perished ! In the midst of all this destruction, will the people left on earth fall on their faces in humility before God ? Will they admit their sin and seek God's forgiveness ? No ! For notice finally,

(3) THE UNREPENTANT PEOPLE

(9:20-21) What day this is for after all, the catastrophes and upheavals that have occurred the human race is still unrepentant. You would think by this time that men would be driven to their knees. You would imagine that men would be turning to God in their droves. Well, nothing could be further from the truth. That is the last thing on their mind. For there is:

(a) A LACK OF REPENTANCE GODWARD:

(9:20) Here are people who have fallen under the spell of the powerful delusion Paul mentions in (2 Thes 2:11) Moreover under the reign of the beast, idolatry will become the only legitimate form of worship. (13:4)
(a)

(b) A LACK OF REPENTANCE MANWARD:

(9:21) What a picture of a crime-oriented culture. **Murder.** Killings will be so common that they will not be reported in the national media. Do you see that word "**sorceries**," ? Its the root word from which we get "**pharmacy**." In other words, people will be using drugs at ever increasing levels. This word can also refer to poisons, amulets, charms, séances, witchcraft, incantations, magic spells, contacting mediums, or any object that is tied to pagan idolatry to elicit lust or seduce. People will dive deeper into the satanic trappings of false religion. **Fornication.** (Porneia) this is the root word of the English word "**pornography**," this is a general term describing sexual sin of every variety, fornication, adultery, rape, and homosexuality.

My indescribable sexual perversions will be running rampant in that day. **Theft.** You see, like morality, honesty will be nonexistent as people compete for the increasingly scarce supplies of food, clothing, water, shelter and medicines.

My can't you see that our day is preparing the way for this day ? The world is already being prepared for what is yet to come. Are we not beginning to see this happening all around us in today's world ? We have lost our moral bearings as a nation and we are drifting aimlessly out to sea. Think of the new legislation on transvestism.

I tell you, when these fifth and six trumpets sounds there will be hell on earth. I am glad I won't be here to suffer through it. I will be safe in the arms of Jesus. Will you ? Is He your Saviour ? Is He first in your life and home ?