

Satan's Battle Plan

Revelation 9:13-21 Part 2

Introduction

"Not wanting to be dead isn't necessarily the same as being glad to be alive"

One woe is past. A demonic army has plagued mankind for five months. Now the sixth trumpet is ready to sound. Judgment has come on the rebellious people of planet earth. With each trumpet comes a more severe judgment. "Long ago Isaiah had prophesied that "when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness"

(Isaiah 26:9). No doubt therefore, each succeeding judgment will uncover a few reluctant learners, but those that remain uncovered are still more stubborn and thus each visitation must increase in severity" (Henry Morris p.165).

The sixth trumpet. Explosive judgment. Mankind seems bent on self-destruction. You would think with the severity and intensity of judgment, the earth would experience global revival, not global rebellion. But sin perverts, it distorts, it infects before it destroys. Sin and selfishness hardens the heart. When you reject grace, you of necessity embrace sin.

"God never expected to convert the world through judgment. His plan is to save mankind through grace. But His judgment has the effect of causing us to think soberly and seriously. It causes us to listen to grace. It makes us attentive to the way of escape that God has offered. In a time of judgment, we see the power, the majesty, and the utter inescapability of God. It forces us to ask, "What can I do to be saved? Is there no way out? What can I do?" (Ray Stedman p.197).

Heb 2:3 "how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him".

How can we harden our hearts? How can we neglect so great a salvation?

God judged Jesus on the cross of calvary so we would not have to be judged! If people reject God's love, if people reject his grace, his mercy His Son, there really is only judgment left.

Verse 13: **John** again hears the voice from behind the altar. Earlier we saw the relationship between judgment and the prayers of the saints (Rev.8:3-5). The voice now comes from the four horns of the altar, at the four corners. The earthly altar was a representation of the heavenly altar. In the OT, the four corners of the altar were continuously touched by the priest with blood, with his finger as he burned fat on the altar (see Lev. 4:17,18). On the altar itself, inside the altar, a perpetual fire burned (Lev. 5:12,13). The blood and the fire, was a kind of symbol of the fact that sin be judged by fire and redeemed by blood. "If innocent blood is not shed in atonement for sin, then the blood of the guilty must be shed in a fiery judgment on sin" (Henry Morris). Earth is about to experience the greatest single spilling of blood in the history of human kind. It

the OT times men would cling to the horns to obtain mercy.

The horns may refer to the sovereignty and judicial government of God (Walvoord).

FOUR DEMON GENERALS OF THE EUPHRATES

Verse 14:

1. The angels with the trumpets stand before the presence of God. It may be safe to assume that they take orders only from God.
2. Four demon generals are bound by the river Euphrates. Euphrates was the dividing line between East and West. "They are bound" which means somehow they are not free to do what they want to do. I do not know how you bind a disembodied spirit or how they can be bound by a "flowing river". The Euphrates flows through modern Iran and Iraq. Good angels are never "bound" in the scriptures so it is safe to assume these are demons.

There may be another explanation. Perhaps the "Euphrates" mentioned here is in fact the ancient river that flowed through the original Eden. "It is barely possible that deep in the earth, remains the underground storage chamber which controlled the primeval flow into the garden of Eden. These demons seem to be in charge of a large number of demon hoardes. As soon as they are released they are able to put together a huge army.

3. **Peter and Jude** both speak of beings that are "bound", imprisoned by God (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

Verse 15: These demons are bound for a purpose and prepared for judgment.

The previous plague lasted five months, and this one will last a little over 13 months. "The" seems to mean, this has been established for some time. It is an answer to the earlier prayer of "how long?" These imprisoned spirits seem to know, they will have an opportunity to reek havoc on the earth. Like Jonah's whale (or sea creature) these demonic beings are still under the divine control of God.

Before men sought death and could not find it, now there is no way to avoid it. One third of all people on the planet will be wiped out in a 13 month period. The 5th and 6th trumpet periods will occupy a total of 18 months (are we in the middle of the tribulation period at this point?)

The time schedule belongs to God. One third of the earth's population is destroyed. In an earlier judgment one fourth is already killed (in the fourth seal) (half the world's

population is gone)

Verse 16:

1. The number is too great to count, so the angel repeats the number 200 million. Are these demons or humans? Perhaps they are humans possessed by demons! The descriptions that follow can hardly be called human.
2. Some have speculated that these are armies of the east. From India, China, Japan etc. Some believe that the Euphrates forms some sort of spiritual barrier which prevents the east from invading the west. It is interesting there are **four angels released**. Are these the governing angels that motivated the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman Empires? Four is the number of worldwide human government. (also the four directions, the four points on the compass etc). Some suggest this means the army comes from all directions.

World powers in Scripture are often associated with the Euphrates and Babylon.

Today it seems impossible that any single group could field such an army. If we use the Gulf war as a frame of reference; the combined NATO armies was about 1 million people from 39 countries. The former Soviet Union had a combined army of about 3 million, followed by China with 2.3 million and India with 1.1 million.

Is this the same battle mentioned in Rev.16:12-16? That is the battle of Armageddon. Here there is no reference to the Kings of the East or Armageddon.

Verse 17:

1. "in the vision" or in the "sight". Used one other time "in sight" like unto an Emerald (4:3). It may mean unusual sight or vision. Whether sight or vision, the event is "real". Some have speculated these are creatures with special bodies created for this judgment (Morris) or the tank or troop carriers by a host of united armies (Stedman).
2. Breastplates of jacinth (hard gemstone zircon?) "they have the appearance of burning fire and brimstone (usually interpreted sulphur; however its Hebrew root is related to the resin from the gopher wood used in Noah's ark, and the Greek word seems to mean divine in appearance. Are these "fire" breathing creatures? In ancient myth and legend fire breathing dragons abound? Are these special creatures loosed from hell for a specific judgment? Henry Morris writes; "No doubt all this sounds fantastic and impossible, so commentators have invented all sorts of figurative meanings to apply to these deadly horses. But these are not the first firebreathing animals the earth has seen. Ancient nations everywhere describe fire breathing dragons, which formerly existed on the earth, and the Bible describes at least one such creature, called leviathan (Job

41:19-21). There are many indications that these dragons were actually dinosaurs, and the fossil evidence does show structures on at least some dinosaurs that could well have served as mixing chambers for flammable chemicals that could be expelled in the form of fire and smoke. John is merely describing what he actually saw" (Henry Morris p. 170) This fantastic explanation hardly seems plausible.

3. Are these supernatural creatures, or a natural army empowered by demons? Serpents, horses and lions all speak of deadly warfare. (a lion speaks of victorious conquest--see Walvoord).

Verse 18:

1. "third part" has now been used a total of 13 times (in relation to the trumpets). To the earth, trees, fishes, the sea, the ships, the rivers and the waters, the sun, the moon, the stars, and now men. **The picture here is of modern warfare.** "by fire, by smoke by brimstone"

2. If this is not Armageddon, perhaps this is the battle that is referred to in Ezekiel 37&38. When Russia and a coalition of nations invade Israel.

(The following section is adopted from John Phillips p.132-133)

a. Israel must be a nation (it is). The Russian Invasion takes place after Israel becomes a nation but before Armageddon. Armageddon takes place when the Antichrist tears up his treaty obligations with Israel and at a time when a world wide persecution and dispersal of the Jewish people are in force.

b. The Russian invasion(according to Ezek.) involves Libya, Persia, Ethiopia, Gomer Togarmah. The Russian invasion is opposed by certain nations (Tarshish, Sheba, Dedan). Armageddon involves all nations.

c. Ezekiel 38&39 envision and invasion of Israel from "the uttermost parts of the north". Armageddon is triggered by an invasion of nations beyond the Euphrates and is headed by a coalition of Kings of the east.

d. The Russian coalition falls apart, as those nations fight against each other, and God personally destroys the Russian army. The Battle of Armageddon is brought to a close when Jesus returns personally and intervenes on Israel's behalf.

e. The Russian war, may be triggered when these four (demon) angels are released from the Euphrates demon penitentiary. Armageddon is precipitated by three frog demons sent on a mission from Satan, the Beast and the false prophet.

f. When Russia invades Israel, there will be people's and nations that still have some vested interest in the security of Israel as a state. When Armageddon is fought, Israel will be alone and friendless. Indeed, it would seem that Israel will be alone against all the nations when Jesus returns. Russian armies will never make it

to the streets of Jerusalem.

g. At the time of the Russian invasion, Israel will be dwelling in relative peace and safety. This will be in part (perhaps) due to the peace treaty that has been forged by the antichrist. When the Battle of Armageddon is fought, the tribulation will towards the end, and the Jews will have no place to go (with the possible exception of the walled fortress called Petra.

h. The overthrow of Russia will leave Israel with a seven year supply of fuel. It will take the Jews seven months to bury the dead invaders. The dead after the battle of Armageddon will be "eaten" and buried by carion birds.

i. The fall of Russia will make a deep and lasting impression on the nations of the world. Armageddon will be followed by the judgment of the nations by Jesus Christ himself.

j. A number of factors will unite to bring a quick end to the Russian invasion of Israel. The west will protest the invasion and will doubtless make necessary moves to protect its interst in the middle east. There will be an all out war between the various members of the Russian invading force. Few who have a deep love for the Russians themselves. There will be earthquakes and other disasters. There will be possibly a limited nuclear exchange in which Russia is devastated. The other scenario is that God personally judges and destroys the invading army.

Because of these differences, it seems unlikely that they could be the same battle. But if Revelation chapter 9 is a precursor to Armageddon it makes more sense.

Verse 21:

1. Sorceries literally "pharmakia" refering to drug use.

2 Worship of idols never transforms or purifies the heart.

Mankind faces the worst judgment to date. Millions if not billions are dead in the space of a few months. Some will ask the question, what good is judgment if does not produce a change of heart or a change of mind?

We sometimes forget that millions will repent. Remember the passage of scripture which speaks of the "great multitude which no one can number". Some will repent, some will believe, some will receive grace and mercy.

"for every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" or exposed (John 3:20). Rebels walk "in the vanity of their

minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over into lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness"
(Eph. 4:17-19).

Demon worshippers--do not always want to change.