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(Revelation 9:13-21)

**Intro.** Is there a topic or two which really grabs your interest? For some people a historical figure gets their attention, like Jesse James, Abraham Lincoln, JFK, Alexander the Great, Dracula. Other people like certain events, like the Civil War, WWII, the World Series, the Masters, the Super Bowl. When it comes to biblical topics & end-times events, one of the top subjects is the Battle of Armageddon. Today in our series on “Battle Trumpets,” we are going to look at the last half of Revelation 9 & “The Battle of Armageddon.”

Theme: Tribulation/judgment of God

Background: In the book of Revelation, Jesus Christ reveals a series of visions to John the Apostle, most of which concerns end-times events. Chapters 6 & following cover the Tribulation & much of chapters 8 & following cover the last 3.5 years or what is called the Great Tribulation.

- Because there is so much symbolism here, let me offer an explanation of this passage & then give a couple of areas of application

### Explanation of the Text:

- I. **John heard God answering the prayers of His people by preparing for the final battle (9:13-16)**—the sounding of the trumpet of the 6<sup>th</sup> angel begins with what John hears & then moves to what he sees (9:17-19)
  - The 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet is the climactic moment of afflictions on earth, for the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet pictures heaven (in much the same way, the 6<sup>th</sup> seal & the 6<sup>th</sup> bowl are also climactic)—this is the last limited judgment (all the rest affect all the earth) & the last warning blast (the 7<sup>th</sup> one brings the end)
  - The four horns of the golden altar before God (9:13) refers to the altar of incense in the Most Holy Place (overlaid with gold, Exodus 30:1-6) & the voice here is God answering the prayers of His people, who have been asking for Him to avenge their lives (cf. 6:9-11; 8:3-5)
  - God speaks to the 6<sup>th</sup> angel to carry a message to 4 angels bound at the Euphrates River (9:14)—the fact they are bound points to them as fallen angels, or demons (cf. Jude 6)
  - In Revelation the #4 refers to God’s creation, the earth—thus, this judgment, though only 1/3 will die, it will impact the entire earth
  - The Euphrates was the eastern edge of the ancient Roman empire & the boundary of the Promised Land, realized only under King Solomon (1 Kings 4:21)—it is a border in the Messianic kingdom in Psalms 72:8; in a figurative sense, it served as the boundary between good & evil—between God’s people & the pagan lands
  - These demons had been held in check for this very hour to kill 1/3 of mankind (9:15)—while some scholars believe their attack will only be directed against unbelievers, I believe this attack comes against believers & unbelievers
  - I think this is the initial stages of the Battle of Armageddon, because the reference to the 6<sup>th</sup> bowl in 16:12-16 concerns the Euphrates & calls on kings from the east to assemble together at Armageddon, the mountain of Meggido—like some of you, I’ve stood on that mountain & looked out over the plains of northern & central Israel & tens of millions of people could gather there (show picture from Mt. Meggido)
  - John, unable to count the number of troops, heard the number of 200 million (9:16)—while no single country boasts so large an army today (contrary to what some have said about China), it is no stretch to place two or three or four large armies together to comprise this number—after all, chapter 16 mentions “kings of the east” (plural—maybe China, India & other nations east of Israel or simply a unification of the Muslim countries of the Middle East & Southeast Asia—I’ll say more about ancient Gog & Magog in future message from Revelation)

## **II. John saw a vast army with advanced weaponry to kill 1/3 of mankind (9:17-21)**

- John then saw in a vision people riding horses with breastplates of fire (red), sapphire (blue smoke) & sulfur (yellow)—possibly the paint colors on the outside of armored tanks
- Heads of the horses like lions' heads—fierce & strong (like armored military vehicles)
- Fire, smoke & sulfur coming out of their mouths—may refer to missiles & various shots fired from the front, resulting in fire explosions, smoke trails & reigning sulfur-like conditions (also called brimstone in Genesis 19:24)
- That 1/3 of mankind was killed by these things probably points to nuclear warheads being used
- The power of such weapons come from the horses' mouths but also their tails—may simply point to warcraft with the ability to fire from the front & the back, inflicting wounds like a snake head

### **Application of the Text:**

#### **I. Trust the sovereignty of God who is in total control (9:15)**

- The Lord bound the demons at the Euphrates for an appointed hour, day, month & year—while God is not the author of evil Himself, nothing happens which He hasn't permitted for an appointed season

Illus: When I play basketball with my kids, I'm always on Luke's team, my 7 year old. The other team may be bigger & have greater numbers & I allow them to do a lot of things like pass & dribble & rebound & block his shots. But at the appointed moment in the game, I take over to make sure we win & Luke loves it. He always wants to be on Dad's team. How much more should we love being on our heavenly Father's team who is in control of all things?!

#### **II. Repent from your sins before it's too late (9:20-21)**

- God uses war as an instrument to get people to repent & yet many still refuse
- A variety of sins are listed here, beginning with various forms of idolatry (9:20)—worshipping demons (either Satanic influence, the Occult) or demons masquerading as gods (the multitude of false religions in the world)
- Some false religions like Buddhism & Hinduism worship idols—gold, silver, bronze, stone, wood
- These idols cannot see or hear or walk—it is absolutely pitiful for people to worship such things
- While most Americans don't worship idols of old, we have our own idols—some worship the sun & spend much of their time tanning; others worship video games & various handheld gadgets which they cannot live without; some worship relationships or the mighty dollar—you must repent from that & count the Lord as your greatest worth
- Other sins include murder (intentionally taking the lives of others—not only are people murdered in the streets of America, but the numbers for aborted & euthanized lives continue to grow each year)
- The word for sorceries is the root for our word pharmacy & not only refers to witchcraft but drugs which give you a high to make you think you are seeing or hearing things—thus, it speaks to drug addicts today
- Sexual immorality is a general term for all different types of sexual sins, including adultery, fornication (premarital sex), homosexuality, pornography & more
- Thefts is stealing what belongs to someone else—we Christians think we have this one under control but God says failing to give Him tithes is stealing from Him (Malachi 3:8) & most Christians don't give 10% of their income to their local church

**Conc.** As a father of 4, soon-to-be 5, let me give you younger parents a bit of advice—don't count to 10 & don't count to 3 in your warnings to your disobedient children. Give them one warning & call them to adjust immediately or discipline comes. And when you threaten with discipline, follow through with it or you are simply teaching them to do whatever they want & not respect your empty threats. God gives multiple warnings in Scripture & especially in Revelation, but He always follows through with judgment. These smaller series of judgments simply serve to warn of the Final Judgment. Don't wait for "The Battle of Armageddon" to take place before you get right with God, because you will be so hardened to sin then that you won't repent. Trust Christ today.