

The Revelation

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Revelation 9:13-21

Vss. 13-15

- This is one of the passages that are very hard to fully grasp.
- No one really knows the identity of the four angels. Who were they and why were they bound specifically at the Euphrates? We know from Genesis 15:18 that the Euphrates was one of the boundaries of the promised land God gave to Abraham. The other side of the great river is Babylon and Assyria, two of Israel's great tormentors. The river's headwaters are in the Armenian Highlands and flows down through eastern Turkey, into Syria, and then Iraq, before emptying into the Persian Gulf.
- Additionally, the Book of Enoch speaks frequently of the Angels of Punishment. So perhaps, as in the books of Jeremiah and Habakkuk, God is using instruments of punishment from the edge of the Euphrates to bring His wrath.
- There were also on the other side, the Parthians, who not even the Romans with all their military might wanted to mess with. The military might of the Parthians was their cavalry. Throughout the Roman world, the Parthian cavalry was thought to be the fiercest warriors in the world.

Vss. 16-19

- The four angels brought with them an army of 200,000,000. An army beyond number, coming from where the torment of God's people has always come, resembling the most terrifying army in the world. They come riding on horses with the heads of lions, breathing fire, with the tails of serpents.

- A third of mankind is killed by the fire, smoke, and brimstone this army brought. The army of locusts of 9:1-12 were only allowed to torment non-believers. This army kills.

Vss. 20-21

- Despite death and slaughter on an unprecedented scale, people would still not repent. Just as people would not repent when they saw the great things of Christ, (the healing of the paralytic in Luke 5 or the raising of Lazarus in John 11), so too now will they not repent when they have seen the wrath of God. “Who has believed our message? Or to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” Isaiah 53:1
- Idolatry, murder, sorceries, immorality, and theft: the things people would rather hang on to than believe in God. Idolatry: that which we create and control (technology?). Murder (abortion, genocide, assisted suicide?). Sorceries: from the Greek “*pharmakon*”, pointing to hallucinogenic drugs. Immorality: from the Greek “*porneia*”, referring to all manner of sexual perversion and sin. Theft (money, food, resources).