

Revelation 8.6 – 9.21

“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”

Sunday, July 8, 1741 > 1 of Greatest Sermons in History Preached > Enfield, CT
 Pastor from Massachusetts > America’s Greatest Theologian > Jonathan Edwards
 NOT America’s Most DYNAMIC Communicator > Dry, Academic, Philosophical
 “As Edwards preached, he used no gestures but stood motionless. His left elbow
 leaned on the pulpit, and his left hand held his notes.”

Title: “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”

Text: Deuteronomy 32:35 “Their foot shall slide in due time, their day of disaster
 is near and their doom rushes upon them.””

Theme: "God holds you over the pit of Hell > as one holds a spider over a fire"

A special service had been called for by a group of ministers with Edwards as the
 speaker for the afternoon session. During the previous night godly women had
 prayed for a spiritual visitation. As the ministers entered the meeting place, they
 were shocked by the levity of the congregation. They appeared thoughtless and
 vain, and hardly conducted themselves with common decency. As Edwards
 preached strong men held onto their seats, feeling they were sliding into hell! Men
 shook, some losing their reason. His words would so grip the audience that they
 felt, should he cease speaking, the doom he pronounced would immediately come
 upon them. With calm tones he flashed before the people the fiery prospects of
 eternal damnation, as hell was a living reality to him. So vivid was his imagination
 that he could graphically picture the eternal torments of the lost. Men and women
 stood up and rolled on the floor, their cries once drowning out the voice of the
 preacher. Some are said to have laid hold on the pillars and braces of the church,
 apparently feeling that at that very moment their feet were sliding, that they were
 being precipitated into Hell.

Through the night, Enfield was like a beleaguered city. In almost every house, men
 and women could be heard crying out for God to save them. Before it was all over
 500 were saved in the community that day. Someone has said about that sermon,
 "New England might forgive it, but she could never forget it." Edwards became the
 spiritual father of the "first great awakening," for New England is where it started.
 New England's population was about 300,000 and it is estimated some 60,000 were
 saved during this period, a half of these being previously unconverted church
 members. Heavenly power swept to 150 towns and cities. For 20 years the revival
 fires blazed and from them sprang 120 new churches!

1. The Message 2. The Meaning

1. The Message: 6 Trumpets

“seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them” Revelation 8.7
7 trumpets > Sense of Expectancy > 2nd Major Series of Calamities Begins

"The great day of the LORD is near-- near and coming quickly. Listen!..a day of trumpet and battle cry”
Zephaniah 1.14,16

a. Punishment

Souls of those slain because of the Word of God: "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you *judge the inhabitants of the earth* and avenge our blood?"
Revelation 6.10

“the *prayers of the saints*, went up before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with *fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth*”
Revelation 8.3-5

First Parents: “To Adam he (God) said, "*Cursed is the ground because of you*”
Genesis 3.17

“the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it...*the whole creation has been groaning* as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time”
Romans 8.20,22

Global Hazards > Fluorocarbons, Carbon Monoxide, Nuclear Waste, Bulldozers, Strip Mining, and Arsonists > GREATEST Environmental THREAT > SIN!!

“The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire”
2 Peter 3.10

1) Inescapable > 4 Trumpets Sound

“*The first angel* sounded his trumpet and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth”
Revelation 8.7

7th Egyptian plague: “The LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground...It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation.”
Exodus 9.23

“The second angel sounded his trumpet and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea.” Revelation 8.8

20 years before John wrote > Vesuvius Erupted & Destroyed Pompeii
Eschatological Judgment > goes Beyond any explanation of Natural Phenomena

Jeremiah saw Fall of Babylon: "I am against you, *O destroying mountain, you who destroy the whole earth,*" declares the LORD. "I will stretch out my hand against you, roll you off the cliffs, and make you a burned-out mountain...Blow the trumpet among the nations!" Jeremiah 51.25,27

2nd Trumpet Prefigures > Fall of Babylon John details in Revelation 17 & 18

“The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water--the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.” Revelation 8.10,11

Falling Stars > Rebellion against God > Defies Created Order

“How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!” Isaiah 14.12

OT > Wormwood = Bitterness & Sorrow > Symbol of Judgment

"I will make them eat bitter food and drink poisoned water... ungodliness has spread throughout the land." Jeremiah 23.15

“The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.” Revelation 8.12

“the day of the LORD is coming --a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger-- to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.” Isaiah 13.9-11

Nowhere to HIDE > NO ESCAPE > All the Earth > Seas > Rivers > Under Sun

“The vision reminds us that we live in a seriously flawed creation... We live in a creation that has been infected by rebellion and manifests the destructiveness of turning away from God.” M. Robert Mulholland, Jr

2) Intense > 2 More Trumpets Sound > 5 and 6

4 Plagues > Called forth by Angels > Now by Bird of Prey Overhead
 As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice:
 "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts
 about to be sounded by the other three angels!" Revelation 8.13

1st 4 trumpets > Sources of Life > Last 3 Fall on People Themselves
 Like the Plagues on Egypt > Grew Worse > as Pharaoh got More STUBBORN
 "***The fifth angel*** sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky
 to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss." Revelation 9.1

Star > Person? ANALOGY of Scripture POINTS to Satan >
 Jesus to 72: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Luke 10.18

"Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light" 2 Corinthians 11.14

"The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan,
 who leads the whole world astray." Revelation 12.9

A Keyholder > but NOT THE Keyholder > Key to some Broom Closet in Hell
 v. 1 "was given the key" > Has not Earned It > Does not Deserve It

ONLY Jesus: "I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and
 ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." Revelation 1.18

ONLY JESUS HAS LIFE > Satan is the Door Keeper of Death > Thief who Kills
 "him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil" Hebrews 2.14

OPENS DOOR to AGONY > "When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like
 the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke
 from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were
 given power like that of scorpions of the earth... They were not given power to kill
 them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was
 like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. During those days men
 will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.
 The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore
 something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. Their hair
 was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. They had breastplates

like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.” Revelation 9.2-11

“It is unnecessary to try and ‘spiritualize’ these symbols, or to interpret them in the light of modern means of warfare. John is heaping image upon image to force us to feel the horror of this judgment.” Warren Wiersbe

“The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.” Revelation 9.12

1st Woe > Horde of Demonic Locusts from the Abyss
2nd Woe > Demonic Cavalry Sweeps over the Land

“*The sixth angel* sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number. The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.” Revelation 9.13-19

Euphrates River > Place of Destruction and Defeat for Jews and Romans

722 BC > Assyrians > 10 Tribes of Israel into Captivity across River > No Return

587 BC > Babylonians > 2 Tribes of Judah > God’s Judgment on Unholy People

1st time History > Roman Legion defeated & Standards Captured by Enemy

“The fifth trumpet gives a stark picture of the nature and torment of sin. Sin almost always presents itself to us as something alluring... The first time we succumb to the temptation, we are in control. Often the experience is pleasant. We feel strong, powerful, in charge of our life. The sin, whatever it is, is merely something for us to have and use as we see fit...the second time... the third...but somewhere down this road we cross an invisible line...we are no longer in control. The sin has taken

control of us. At first we don't notice the difference. Nothing seems to have changed. Gradually, however, we begin to realize that we are trapped...the 'sting' of sin is in its tail...The more we struggle against the sin, the stronger it becomes...We wish we could die to its insidious control over our life, but that death eludes us...We are experiencing the 'first Woe.'" M. Robert Mulholland, Jr

b. Protection Church doesn't Suffer Final Judgments > Escapes Demonic Assault

Last 3 Trumpets > all who Belong to this World > Terrible Predicament

"They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only *those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.*" Revelation 9.4

"put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." Revelation 7.3

"The LORD says to Pharaoh: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. If you do not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies...the houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies, and even the ground where they are. "But *I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that I, the LORD, am in this land. I will make a distinction between my people and your people.*" Exodus 8.20-23

Believer > Death leads to Eternal Blessing

Unbeliever > It is "Escape" from Torment on Earth to Torture in the Lake of Fire!

2. The Meaning: 6 Truths

"It is unwise to conjecture some specific meaning for each detail of the vision. It is better to allow the text to speak for itself. Usually visions of this sort have cumulative, overall effect, so that the parts make up the whole, which has meaning, but they themselves do not carry specific meaning. While the Apocalypse uses metaphorical and figurative language with great freedom, it is not an allegory that must be decoded before it will yield its meaning. The experience itself is often 'what it means.'" Robert H. Mounce

a. Repetition

If you're thinking "HEY, I have HEARD THIS BEFORE!" You're Wide Awake!
Revelation like SPIRAL STAIRCASE > Climb Higher and Around > God's Glory

“All three series – seals, bowls, and trumpets - cover the travail of human history brought to its consummation...they cover the same period of time...The major point is that the intensity of the plagues increases in each series...John is a guide in an art gallery whose students stand back to absorb a general impression (the sevenfold visions) and then move up to study the details (the unnumbered visions)...”
 Robert H. Mounce

Bible calls us SHEEP > Because we are Cute, Cuddly AND often CLUELESS
 If Rolls onto Back > CANNOT REMEMBER How to get BACK onto its FEET

One Basic Message: God Saves Sinners > History, Poetry, Proverbs, Prophecies

Four Different Gospels > Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

Pharaoh same Dreams TWICE > 7 years of Abundance, 7 years of Famine

Paul tells Philippian Church to REJOICE > 4 times in just 4 Chapters

Chronicles ESSENTIALLY REPEATS Kingdom Histories of Samuel & Kings

Before ‘Pepsi Generation’ entered Promised Land > Moses gives LAW Again!

“The mind of man is incurably centrifugal, for ever flying off at a tangent. He must be brought back to the great central truths – made, literally, to concentrate. Those truths God outlines for him again and again, sometimes by a pencil sketch, sometimes by a more detailed pen drawing, sometimes by brushfuls of paint... he is doing the same thing in Revelation...we may expect the truth conveyed in this book to be intensive rather than extensive.”
 Michael Wilcock

b. Real? Difficult to Interpret and Understand LITERALLY

“all the green grass was burned up” Revelation 8.7

“They were told not to harm the grass of the earth” Revelation 9.4

“the stars in the sky fell to earth” Revelation 6.13

“a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky” Revelation 8.10

Take FRACTIONS 1/3 & 1/4 Literally > Absurd > Misunderstand Literary Genre

“The horses and riders I saw in *my vision* looked like this...” Revelation 9.17

“We must remember that the objects and events seen in a vision are not physically real. Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones and Peter’s vision of a great sheet let down from heaven were perceived in a trance. Such things seen in a vision are not physically present. So too, in the book of Revelation the descriptions are not descriptions of real occurrences, but of *symbols of the real occurrences.*”

Bruce M. Metzger

c. Restrained Attack on Human Society > Permitted to go Only so Far

12 times phrase ‘ONE THIRD’: “A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up...A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed” Revelation 8.7-9

“men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but *death will elude them.*” Revelation 9.6

“they had power to torment people for *five months*” Revelation 9.10

“One-third! One-third! One-third!...they are not random or circumstantial but the precise judgments of God. Again and again, without realizing it, news commentators report the precision of God’s judgment...reporters speak of ‘luck’ that a major earthquake hit one-hour before rush hour traffic...a forest fire rages out of control and suddenly dies before reaching a town...a hurricane brushes land and then spins off to sea...a tornado touches down and demolishes homes that for ‘some reason’ were vacant!”

Anne Graham Lotz

d. Realized Prophecy > Fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecies

Some seek Meaning of Rev. in Modern Society > 67 million bought “*Left Behind*”

200,000,000 > China once boasted of such a STANDING ARMY

Flying Locusts that Sting > Apache Helicopters?

Red, Yellow, Blue > Conquering Flags of Romania?, Chad?, Colombia?

EXCITING! But becomes QUICKLY DATED > Shallow and even SILLY!

Interpretation > MEANING and BLESSING to ALL PEOPLE of God All Time

“Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.”

Revelation 1.3

Meaning in Ancient Scripture > Plagues in Egypt > Trumpets in Jericho

Plagues > EXIT Egypt > Trumpets > ENTER Promised Land

Day of Atonement of Jubilee Yr > Trumpets > Restoration of Land, Free Captives
7 Trumpets > 1st Entry into Promised Land > God's Action > Sequence of 7's

“The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets...The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!"

Joshua 6.13,16

“The Jericho account confirms what we have seen from the theological background of the Exodus plagues. The trumpets blown by the priests, like the plagues on Egypt, are not warnings at all, but indicate ultimately only judgment, which God has already decided to bring on his enemies.”

G.K. Beale

e. Reveals God's Glory > Terrible Situation > God's Sovereign Plan

“The star *was given* the key to the shaft of the Abyss.”

Revelation 9.1

“locusts came down upon the earth and *were given* power like that of scorpions”

Revelation 9.3

“They were not given power to kill them”

Revelation 9.5

Power behind Revelation: “Lord God Almighty” 4.8

“a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it” Revelation 4.2

GREAT HOPE to Faithful Churches about to EXPERIENCE PERSECUTION
God who Defended Israel against Egypt > God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

“Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.”

Exodus 14.16-18

f. Repentance > Intensity of Judgment Increases > So Does Heart's Hardness

“The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues *still did not repent of the work of their hands*; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold,

silver, bronze, stone and wood--idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.”

Revelation 9.20,21

No Repentance > Preparing for FINAL JUDGMENT > Hard, Bitter, Unforgiven
Ancient Man LIKE Modern Man: IDOLS, MURDER, MAGIC, IMMORALITY

“Idols are tools employed by demons to keep people under the anesthetic effects of spiritual ignorance.” G.K. Beale

“At one point in my life I had the opportunity to minister to a family who had a member dying from lung cancer. He had smoked all his life, even while undergoing cobalt treatments to kill the cancer. He literally screamed out the last days of his life in terrible, unbelievable agony, with the members of his family standing at his bedside. As soon as the burial service was over at the cemetery, every male in the family lit a cigarette! How true John’s vision is: “Those who did not die in these plagues still refused to turn from their evil ways.”

M. Robert Mulholland, Jr

ADVENT MESSAGE?!! > New Believer > Student in HS in California
Church Group sang CHRISTMAS CAROLS on Sidewalk of our Town
Received Smiles and Thanks > UNTIL people Saw Pamphlet we GAVE OUT
Smiles and Thanks QUICKLY TURNED to SCOWLS and THREATS
Pamphlet written by Pastor entitled: “*Christmas is for Sinners Only*”

Text: “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*”
1 Timothy 1.15

Angel’s Message to Joseph > “you are to give him the name Jesus, because *he will save his people from their sins.*”
Matthew 1.21

Angel’s Christmas Greeting to Shepherds: “*Do not be afraid.* I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a *Savior* has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”
Luke 2.10,11

Safety from Judgment > Salvation from Sin > Separation from God’s Just Wrath
ONLY Found in Jesus > Christ of Christmas > Lord of Universe > Hope of World
