



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 9:1-21

"Infernal Locusts and Supernatural Cavalry"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] As those of you who have been coming regularly know, we have been expounding the apocalypse, the Book of Revelation, and we have reached chapter 9 in our exposition. In case you are a visitor, to come to an exposition of the Book of Revelation chapter without any advance warning can be a bit intimidating. You might even find that there are things, here in this chapter that are startling. And the context is perhaps lost to you. Let me just say that the apocalypse is not a difficult book; it is really a very easy book. There are many things in it that are hard to be understood in the sense that they are beyond our experience, but as far as a book of holy Scripture is concerned, it is beautifully outlined. Its plan and purpose is clear. The beginnings, the continuings, the climax of the purpose of God are clearly seen. In that sense, it is easy. So if you are a reader of Scripture and you read it a few times, you will find that it is a book that you can follow along in very easily.

In the sections that we have looked at so far, we looked at the vision of our Lord which John had in the first chapter. We sought to expound the letters to the seven churches that the Lord Jesus gave the apostle in chapters 2 and 3. Then in chapters 4 and 5, John saw the vision of the throne in heaven. The one who is seated upon the throne is not specifically named, but in the light of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity we are safe

in saying the one who sat upon the throne is the Father. We saw a little book in his right hand, sealed with seven seals.

An ancient would understand that to be a will or a testament, and in the light of the things that follow it appears to be a testamentary disposition of God, whereby he communicates the authority and wisdom to carry out his purpose and plan to the individual who has the capability of taking the book from his hand and opening the seals. John, of course, was disturbed when he saw that no one could come and take the little book out of the hand of the one sitting upon the throne, began to weep. He was told by angelic beings to stop his weeping that the Lion of the tribe of Judah had prevailed to open the book.

Now his prevailing, the book makes very plain, is his saving satisfaction which he offered when he bled and died on Calvary's cross. So, having that capability, the lion of the tribe of Judah came. John looked to see the Lion. He saw a lamb as it had been slain, and the lamb took the book and there was great rejoicing all through heaven and through the angelic orders.

Then beginning in chapter 6, the seals are opened and so we have seen in the exposition, the opening of the six seals. And when the sixth seal was opened, then following that there was an intermission in the seventh chapter. And at the opening of the seventh seal, for this is a seven-sealed book, there was silence in heaven. There was an indication of prayers being offered for the accomplishment of the will of God. And then the angels begin to blow the trumpets. It turns out that the seventh seal is composed of seven trumpets, and later on we shall see when the seventh trumpet is sounded that that itself is seen to be seven bowl judgments. So, we have three series of judgments of God upon the earth, sealed judgments, trumpet judgments, bowl judgments. We are in the midst of the trumpet judgments.

Last Sunday we looked at chapter 8 and the first four of the trumpet judgments. Now in chapter 9, we have the fifth and the sixth angels who sound their trumpets. Two further more extensive judgments are described by the apostle.

So, I am going to read beginning at verse 1 now that you have a very simple understanding of the progress of the thought of this book. The apostle writes,

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. (That's the abyss.) And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. (Chapter 7 describes the one hundred and forty-four thousand out of the tribes of Israel who have the seal of God. So, those who do not are others.) And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he (that is the scorpion) striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is

Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter."

You may remember at the end of chapter 8 in verse 13, after the four angels had sounded their trumpets the writer states, "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the," I'm sorry I'm reading the Authorized Version. It does have an angel, but we went on to say that the correct reading is eagle, and probably eagle as a vulture. "I beheld and heard a culture flying through midst of the heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" So, when we read in verse 12 of chapter 9 one woe is past, then of course the fifth angel has sounded his trumpet. Now in verse 13 we read,

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. (It is so obvious that the apocalypse, like most apocalypses, is a book in which the affairs of men stand under the sovereign power of God. And in fact things happen according to a specific plan. As he says, these angels "were prepared for an hour, a day, a month, and a year to carry out their work.") And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand (Two hundred million, a vast number): and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone."

Let me just say one thing, the horses and their riders, as well as the locusts proceeding, these are John's symbols given him to express certain specific things. They are symbolic. John has told us in the book, in the beginning of the book that he is

writing a book that is filled with symbols. And so we are not to look at these as the kinds of locusts that we have, like those grasshoppers and locusts and scorpions that you know about, but they are the symbols of things that are very terrifying in the eternal plan of God.

And as a matter of fact, in this chapter particularly, they are things that have to do with demonic powers. But John is given visions in which what we know, locusts, and horsemen, and horses are used as symbols. Someone has said the Book of Revelation is written in the language of our cartoons.

Now we of course, when we look at our newspapers, and we see a cartoon, with a man who's dressed in an American flag and has a top hat, and he's called Sam, we know that is a reference to the United States of America. If we see on the side a bear, we know that's Russia, and if we see a lion, we might have a good idea that that is the United Kingdom or Great Britain. And so in the cartoon language, cartoon type of language of the Book of Revelation, we are to remember that we are dealing with symbols and should not be surprised that these horses are horses that breathe out smoke, brimstone, and fire, and are not necessarily the kinds of horses with which we are acquainted.

But let me also underline this, John is not talking about things that do not happen. He's talking about things that do happen. It's highly unlikely, in my opinion, that there is an army of two hundred million people. In fact, there are Christian men, Christian generals, even such as General William K. Harrison who insisted that this is impossible logistically. But nevertheless, the facts are that these great judgments are to happen, and further more there is nothing in this chapter that says that an army or vast armies might not be part of the consummation of the divine program. So, we have to read the Book of Revelation in the kind of language in which it is written.

Now I hope as we go through it you'll realize that when we talk about this as illustrative of demonic hosts, that we are talking about the vision and the symbols, and what probably John meant by them. We also have to say probably, because my

interpretation is not infallible. I'm sure that communicated no message to you, you already knew that. But at any rate, let me finish verse 18.

"By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: (It's rather interesting to me that he does not say, "Which neither can see, nor hear, nor talk, nor walk. Nor talk is omitted, and if you'll think on in the Book of Revelation to chapter 13 we do have an image of the beast which is given the breath by which in a supernatural way, evidently, that image can talk. So, perhaps there's some point in that omission. I cannot speak with absolute certainty.) Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let's bow in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are indeed grateful to Thee for this great apocalypse which so marvelously sets forth for us the things which shall come to pass after these days. We thank Thee for the hope that it gives us. We thank Thee for the assurance that everything is optimistic. As long as we are here we know that thou hast a purpose for us as well, each one of us. And we pray that through the ministry of this great book we may be more fitted to serve Thee and serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

We praise Thee for the redemption that we have. We pray for the whole church. We especially pray Lord for those who have requested our prayers, and we remember each one of them and their names and their problems and their illnesses. Lord, minister to them and give healing in accordance with Thy will.

Be with us in this our, and now as we sing together, may we sing as unto Thee through the Holy Spirit to the glory of Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Our topic for today is, "Infernal Locusts and Supernatural Cavalry." The Bible makes the startling claim that the god of this age is not the Father in heaven that is in those terms, but Satan. And the reason, evidently, that he is called the god of this age is that he gained dominion over man in the Garden of Eden. It is the Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 in verse 4 who speaks of him as the god of this world. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." It's not only Paul who speaks this way among the apostles.

The Apostle John, as you may know, speaks of Satan as the evil one in whom the whole world lies, in his first epistle. He records words of our Lord, in which our Lord refers to Satan as the prince or the ruler of this world. And our Lord himself speaks of the remarkable influence and power of Satan in his own language, and in his own words when he spoke to the Jews and said, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth because there is no truth." So the Bible sets forth Satan as the peculiar god of this age, as the one in whose hands men are naturally, by virtue of their sin.

If you analyze human history, there is reason to suggest that human history supports that claim. Look at human history and many contend, who even are knowledgeable in the academic areas of modern history, that our history is explainable only by demonic influence. There is an incident in G.H. Lang's book on world chaos in which he speaks, in the last war, of having a conversation in Britain with a soldier and the

soldier expressed to him that this affair in which we are involved is so universal and vast that it seems to be beyond human power to have caused it.

And Mr. Lang went on to say that General Holder, one of the important members of Hitler's staff, a senior military officer, said later of Hitler, "I never found genius in him, only the diabolical." And putting that together with Hitler's statements that he believed that he had been chosen by fate to lead Germany as its messiah. One can see in our history evidence of the demonic and of the demonic control of things, permitted by God in the carrying out of his eternal purpose.

One of the men under whom I studied, used to like to say with reference to Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy's book *Science and Health with a Key to the Scriptures*, that one could begin at the beginning and read it through to the end, or begin at the end and read it through to the beginning, or to begin in the middle and read it both ways at once and it made equally good nonsense either way.

Well, when one compares that kind of teaching with the teaching in the word of God you cannot help but think in the light of the fact that so many people find that of significance for them, that the demonic influence is surely with us today. Satan is a liar and the father of it, so the Lord Jesus has said. So, we should not be surprised that false religions in the light of the teaching of the word of God are classified by our Lord and by the apostles as lies. That is, they are contrary to the divine revelation found in the word of God.

The Apostle Paul makes another interesting statement in 2 Thessalonians. He says with reference to his day, now many centuries ago, that the "mystery of lawlessness is already at work." Now he said that in the context of the revelation concerning the man of sin, who in the last days would arise and carry out certain scripturally announced plans and purposes of God. The mystery of lawlessness is already at work.

Now we are many centuries after the time of the Apostle Paul, and we find anticipations of the climax and encouragements in the history of the civilization that we



know, and in the light of the word of God to believe that the mystery of lawlessness has been at work down through the centuries. God is in control of things. We are not in doubt about that, but never-the-less, the world in which we live, and of which we are a part, is a world in which there is not only influence of the triune God, but influence also from the God of this age, Satan. How important it is that we pay attention to the revelation of God in the word of God.

Now as I mentioned in the reading of the Scripture and the exposition that went along with it, we are in that part of the Book of Revelation in which we are seeing as the chapters unfold, the contents of that little book that was in the right hand of the one who sat upon the throne. The contents of which are the plans and purposes of the triune God by which he will secure the rule over this universe by his son, the Lion of Judah, the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Now the series of judgments, the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls, are an important unfolding of the ways by which God will carry out his will upon a rebellious creation.

Now we have reached the stage of the fifth trumpet being sounded by the fifth angel and the sixth angel sounding the sixth trumpet. We have already seen four of the trumpet judgments, they are primarily against the physical world, but in the fifth and sixth of these trumpet judgments, the demonic forces from the underworld are loosed against man.

I'm just going to read through the verses, make a few comments as we go along, stop here and there to say a word about something that may need a little bit more explanation. We read in the first verse of the ninth chapter, "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit." It might be worthwhile to stop here, to give you some idea of how one is to read the Book of Revelation. We read in chapter 8, verse 10, "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp."

Now we said that that was a physical star, and the facts of the context bare that out, but when we turn to the ninth chapter in verse 1 and read, "and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth," we are justified in taking that as a reference to something personal, because the next words read, "and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit." So, we then assume that John, when he uses the word star in chapter 8 refers to a physical star, whereas in chapter 9 verse 1 he refers to a personal being, probably in the light of the context, an angelic being. So, it is an angelic being to whom is given a key.

"And he opens the bottomless pit," we read. "And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. The bottomless pit, incidentally, was in scriptural language, an intermediate place, that is not the final place of the unbelieving, that is the lake of fire, but angelic beings and others may be held in the abyss awaiting final judgment.

In fact, you'll remember our Lord's encounter with the demon called Legion. And the demon called Legion in his little conversation with our Lord asked him that he not be sent away into the deep or into the abyss or the pit, which was the place, which was where he would be held until final judgment. So it is a kind of intermediate place of detention and obviously contains many demons. "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

Now it's clear since these locusts are locusts that do not hurt the grass or the green things or the trees, that these are not the literal types of locusts of which we have knowledge. Some of you know, of course, that in certain parts of our world locusts at a certain time often descend upon entire countries and denude them. That is the one thing that they do do, they consume all of the green things. There is an instance of one about a

hundred years ago, and I believe it was in Algiers, in which the locust that had the origin in the desserts came up into the green part of the country and completely destroyed all of the greenery throughout the land, and many thousands of people perished by a famine as a result; so locusts can be, if the numbers are sufficient, in certain places very, very dangerous.

But these are demonic locusts, what they should look like, I don't know. John is seeing a vision. What they shall be ultimately, we do not know, he is seeing a vision, this is what he saw in his vision. And you can be sure of this, that it will be at least as terrible as John saw in his vision. They were malicious, they are mysterious, they are malignant and evidently embodied spirits, what we might call infernal cherubim in the form of supernatural locusts to torment for five months.

Locusts incidentally generally had about a five month span of life. And they come under the angel of the abyss, Satan's chief we might call him. They are not to hurt the grass. And in this, John tells us, they are not normal locusts, they are super insects. They are locusts that have complete immunity from any of the insecticides of that particular time. And incidentally, John the Baptist, of course, thought that locusts were delicacies. John would not find these so tasty, you can be sure of that. They are locusts then that represent demonic beings. They have powerful scorpion-like stings.

Our scorpions are somewhat similar. They have the tail, they grasp their pray, and then they suck the juice out of them and then throw them aside. These are larger, more significant, have evidently a vampire-like existence. What they are, I'm sorry I don't know. The Scripture sets them forth as terrible beings. We can surely believe that they have a reality and a terrible reality. It is also stated incidentally that they have a king. That's rather interesting, because in Proverbs chapter 30 in verse 27, in the Proverbs it is stated that locusts do not have a king, but these locusts do have a king. In other words, they are different from the locusts that we know about.

Interesting interpretations have been put upon the locusts. Some have said that they were the Lutherans [laughter], but one would wonder if Luther and the Lutherans were the locusts, then who was their king. Then others have said that they were the Mohammedans, perhaps a likelier interpretation. Nevertheless it does not seem to have any real significance so far as the word of God is concerned. Many other interpretations are put upon them. We don't have to talk about them. Most of them are given by individuals who approach the Book of Revelation as having to do with things that have already taken place, the preterist type of interpretation. But since we are taking the viewpoint that this book is futuristic in its stress, all of these interpretations therefore are impossible. We do know that these are judgments and that they are significant and they represent the way in which God is going to deal with the unbelief of that day.

It might be worthwhile for us to turn to the last two verses at this point, because you might wonder why does that age need such a judgment. And the description of the day is given in verses 20 and 21, where we have this vivid picture of spiritual and moral depravity in the world of the future. The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, one third of them were killed, the remaining two-thirds were characterized in this way, they did not repent of the works of their hands that they should not worship demons and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and of wood which neither can see nor hear nor walk. So you can see they're individuals that are characterized by lack of repentance. They are characterized also by those who worship demons and worship idols. And further, they did not repent of their murders, sorceries, fornication, nor of their thefts; quite an interesting description of the society of that day. They were individuals who worshipped demons.

Now, as we read the Book of Revelation, we always naturally ask the question, "How close are we to these days?" We have no assurance that we are close. We may compare our present day with the things that are set forth in the word of God. And while we cannot be sure that the time at which the consummation of these things is to begin

and to be completed we at least can look at the trends of our day and compare them with the things that are said in the word of God.

Now, we have in our day a great emphasis on modern spiritistic types of things, divination, astrology, necromancy, soothsaying, ancient terms, but we still have the same thing today. Wizardry, we have people who are attracted to things as ridiculous as Ouija Boards and other types of such things. We have individuals today who publicly proclaim that they worship Satan. So, it is not surprising then that some have felt that we are fast approaching the particular times of which the Book of Revelation speaks. It is very difficult however, for us to be prophetic and be able to tell precisely where we are. I think it is unwise for us to do that, because after we have lived for a little while and we discover that the things have not come that we have said were to come, then of course we may not be believed on many other even more important things.

William R. Newell, in one of his books, he said he came to Chicago in 1893, and when he was there he looked in the newspapers at the churches and their advertisements. He said there were two pages in the *Chicago News* or *Sun*, I've forgotten the name of the paper at that time, two pages and many, many advertisements of churches that were true to the word of God and invited an individual to come to their church. And he felt confident from reading the particular advertisements that one would find the word of God proclaimed there.

He said he later came in 1935, where he came and then carried on a ministry out of the city of Chicago for some time and when he arrived in 1935, forty years later, he said on the pages there were six advertisements of churches that advertised their church and one got the impression that they were true to the word of God, but there were seventy-five advertisements of things that were obviously cultic and contrary to the divine word. In other words, for him in the forty years, there had been a tremendous change in the city of Chicago.

We read here that the individuals at the time worship idols of gold. We see that the society is characterized by a high crime rate. They did not repent of their murders. We surely, in our day, have that kind of rising crime rate; characteristic of the society is sorceries. It may be interesting to know that the word sorcery is a term related to our English word pharmacy, pharmacon. So that one finds suggested by this, not simply the fact of the wizardry, of the wizards and the worship of demons, but also in the light of the fact that sorcery in those days was frequently carried out by the use of certain types of drugs, the combination of the two. And so, we have our day, the kinds of things that certainly are parallel to this, with our drugs, with our stimulants, with our pills, with all of the other things that characterize the society that is so evil in our day. We have also the adulteries and fornications and the thefts. Free love, premarital sex, sex, growth, and all of the things that have to do with our society that is so characteristic of it in our day.

Sometime recently I was reading a book on some of the issues of the church today, and in the midst of it a professor and a college president wrote a chapter in this book on some of the sexual practices of our time. The term that is often used is alternative sexual practices. He went on to speak of them. He talked first about casual sex and how common it is and that recent polls had suggested that eighty percent of teenage males and sixty-six percent of teenage females were sexually active, according to a poll. This is a poll made just a few years ago. That sex today is spoken of as recreational sex, that this is an era conducive to venereal disease. When I grew up there were two great venereal diseases that we were warned about, gonorrhea and syphilis. Today there are twenty more venereal diseases of which we must be warned.

It is stated, according to the poll that he was citing, that five million people in the United States now have herpes. That we have really not polygamy, we have sequential polygamy in that one man may have one wife and then another wife and then another wife and still another wife. And so, the kind of polygamy that we have is not what we would know as polygamy, but it is sequential polygamy. He went on to cite that just a

few years ago a seventy-seven year old man remarried. It was his twenty-fourth or twenty-seventh wife, and he was still accumulating them at that age. In one sense you have to admire him, [laughter], but in another and in every other sense, of course, but it is representative of the kind of society in which we are living. Incidentally, he did break the Guinness record with that particular marriage. Adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, characteristic of our day, and so when John describes this day as days of murders, sorceries, fornications, thefts, and the worship of demons, he surely is speaking in ways that are relevant to our society in 1989.

In the spiritual world, we have similar types of things. If you read anything of the writings of modern religious leaders, you cannot help but see things that are so contrary to the word of God that it's really startling. For example, one well known bishop in Britain commented in one of his books, that "God can be known in the interplay of improper human relationships." In other words, we may have improper human relationships, but nevertheless God can be known in such relationships. The church today is living by the assumptions that are common to the sinful culture around us, not the word of God.

We are frequently told when we read the Bible that we must understand the Bible in the light of its culture, and in fact biblical students even speak of cultural interpretation. There is a sense in which that has validity. There are certain facts of certain cultures that are helpful to us in understanding a certain text. But we should remember that if we interpret the word of God by culture, we are interpreting the word of God by a culture that itself is influenced by the sin of men. All culture is a reflection of the sin of men since the fall in the Garden of Eden. Consequently, to interpret the Bible by culture is to interpret the Bible by sinful culture. Let us remember that, that when we look at the word of God, we are looking at a divine revelation, and it is to be interpreted by the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, fundamentally. We do not interpret the Bible by culture, and so consequently, one must be careful in the interpretation of Scripture, not to

read into it things that are true of our culture, which itself is under the effects of the fall in the Garden of Eden.

Now it would be nice at this point to talk about the former ages. The age of Noah, the age of Sodom, the age of Egypt in the time of the children of Israel, the age of Canaan when they went into the land, and to talk about the kings such as Ahab all the way down to Zedekiah because the characteristics of those days are seen in the picture that the apostle presents here from his vision. But we don't have time to do that.

I would like to read now through the last of the trumpet judgments in verses 13 through 21 where he says,

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand (Two hundred million): and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone."

Now if you'll look at these statements that are made by the apostle there you will note that it is not the individuals who are on the horses that are significant. It is the horses themselves. The horses themselves are the death-dealing instruments of the plague. That in itself underlines the fact that we are dealing with the symbols. There are supernatural horses according to the word of God. We remember Elijah's experience in which he was caught up into heaven in such a way. We remember Elisha, when he was at Dothan, and his servant was disturbed and God gave them a vision of things about them, and there they saw supernatural horses representing the angelic hosts who were



standing behind the prophet and his helper. There are such things, but even they of course, were symbolic things.

What is striking about this last instance, the second of the woes here, and the supernatural cavalry, is the fact that the voice came from the four horns of the golden altar according to verse 13. When Cain slew Abel in the Garden of Eden and God came down to talk to Cain, he said to Cain, that "the voice of thy brother's blood cries to me from the ground." In other words, it is where the murder was committed that there arises the demand for judgment. Now here we have judgment coming from the four horns of the golden altar. That's where the voice comes.

Now the four horns of the golden altar represent ultimately our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the saving work which he accomplished on Calvary's cross. The reason there is a brazen altar where the animals were slain and the golden altar of incense by which prayer is offered to God, the ground of all of that is Christ's suffering on Calvary's cross.

Now if the cry comes from that evidently, the cry for judgment is related to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let me put it very simply. What this suggests is that the judgment is the judgment upon those who have rejected the cross of Christ. In other words, the cry for judgment arising from the altar is the cry produced by the fact that men have rebelled against the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the blood that was shed there for the satisfaction of human sin and the forgiveness of human sin. So, it is sin against God. Just as the sin of Cain was the sin against Abel as well as God, so here it is the sin against God and the sin against his divine purpose for men.

I think its striking that these angels are bound at the great river Euphrates, because it was in that area, remember, where the first sin took place. The Garden of Eden was located there. The Euphrates being one of the rivers mentioned in Genesis chapter 2, in that garden. So the first sin, the first murder, the first apostasy, the great fundamental rebellion against God, located in that area. This is the apocalypse's beautiful way of

reminding us that the things that transpired in the Garden of Eden and the rebellion which has produced all of these years of rebellion against God, ultimately are brought back into harmony by the Lord God and the things that we have wrecked in his universe are being put together gradually by him according to the word of God.

He says by these three plagues, the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone, a third part of men were killed, and one cannot help but be startled that two-thirds can survive such a judgment. If the world's population is three or four billion, as I believe it is, I haven't looked recently to see what it is, but three or four billion you can see how many will die in this judgment. When the children of Israel by the divine providence of God, in the land of Egypt at the time of the Exodus, put the blood on the door posts and when God through the destroying angel came down into Egypt, and there was death in every one of the Egyptian's house. Moses said, "a great cry arose in Egypt." What a tremendous cry this is going to be at that time.

Let me sum it up for our time is up. Apparently, hell and hellfire are not mere fictions according to the word of God. This brief world of which we are a part is only a vestibule to the worlds of eternal moment that are both above and below us. To use the language of Scripture, just above us is the world of God and the angelic world, and the saints who have preceded us into the presence of God. The only thing that separates believers from that world is the present breath that you are drawing, and even that breath is the one in whose hands, that breath is in the hands of the Lord God. And then below us, according to scriptural terminology, there is the world of the demons, and of Satan, and of the lost and rebellious. And we live in this little vestibule between them, separated by a door this way, separated by a door this way, to speak figuratively. How important it is that you and I not refuse the offers of the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord told that little parable of Lazarus and the rich man and in it we find these marvelous words, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." So, we have Moses and the prophets and

further, we have the New Testament. If we do not hear Moses and the prophets and the New Testament, men will not be persuaded though someone should rise from the dead. I've always thought that was a very interesting statement, because there was a man by the name of Lazarus who did rise from the dead, and it is evident that there was not a whole lot of response to his resurrection. It is the resurrection of Christ that is significant.

If you're here today, and you've never believed in our Lord, we remind you that he is the lamb who has offered the atoning sacrifice and you may find eternal life through trust in him, not in joining the church, not in praying through, not your good works, not your culture, not your education. But in the final analyses your destiny and my destiny is found in response to what Christ has done. And if by God's grace you have seen that you are a sinner and therefore you come under the judgment of God, and you realize that Christ has offered a satisfaction in his blood, a satisfaction of God's holiness and righteousness, and now he by virtue of that is free to offer this sacrifice to sinners. If that has come to be your understanding of spiritual truth, and if God through his Spirit has brought you to trust him and what he has done, eternal life is yours.

May God in his marvelous grace touch your heart. May you see your truly lost condition, and may by his grace you give yourself to Jesus Christ who loved sinners and gave himself for them.

Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are indeed grateful to Thee for the word of God which warns us of the future which encourages us through great promises of eternal salvation. Father, if there should be someone in this audience who has not believed in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may at this very moment, they turn and give thanks to him for what he has done, receiving as a free gift, eternal life. Go with us now as we part in Jesus name. Amen.