

Angels and Demons

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[0 : 00] But if we could, this evening, for a short while, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, Revelation chapter 9.

Revelation chapter 9, and if we read again, and verse 12. Revelation 9 at verse 12. The first woe has passed.

Behold, two woes are still to come. Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.

So the four angels who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand.

I heard their number. And so on. As you know, it's been a number of weeks since we last looked at this passage, and I don't know about you, but it's hard for me to remember where we were and what was happening in our study of the book of Revelation.

[1 : 23] But as you know, and as I've said, and as we've studied through this book, as you know, the book of Revelation, it's one long revelation, and it's all about Jesus. It's a revelation from Jesus Christ, about Jesus Christ, and it's for us as the church of Jesus Christ.

And it's important to us. It's important to us as the church of Jesus Christ because this revelation, it's gradually and gloriously revealing to us Jesus Christ as the one who is this risen, ruling, and reigning king who promises that he's going to return.

And Jesus, as you know, he's been gradually and gloriously revealed through all these sevens. We've seen the number seven appear time and time again because seven is the number of perfection.

It's the number of completion. We've seen seven lampstands, seven stars, seven churches, seven spirits, seven torches, seven horns, seven eyes, seven seals.

And now in this section that we're in, we're seeing seven angels and seven trumpets. And through all the sevens, Jesus has been revealed to us in this revelation.

[2 : 29] He's been gradually and gloriously revealed again and again. But as we saw back in chapter 8, we saw that when the seventh seal on the sovereign scroll was opened, there was that silence, silence in heaven for half an hour.

And the silence was that stunned and solemn silence which was to reveal God's divine and God's definite judgment that was going to be announced.

And it was going to be announced by these seven angels with seven trumpets. And we saw the first four of these seven angels, angels of the apocalypse, we'll call them.

The first four, they were grouped together just like the first four seals were grouped together to reveal the four horsemen of the apocalypse. And the four horsemen of the apocalypse, as we said before, they were a scene of triumph.

The opposite was true of the first four angels of the apocalypse. They were a scene of terror. They were a scene of terror. That's what we saw in chapter 8. Because there was this scene of terror where each angel blew their trumpet and they warned of more and more terror coming upon the earth.

[3 : 43] Then after the first four angels of the apocalypse, after they announced their word of warning, we're told that the next three angels of the apocalypse, they're going to announce a word of woe. They're going to announce a word of woe.

We're told they are at the end of chapter 8, verse 13. Then I looked and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead. Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth at the

blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow.

And then last time, a month ago, we were considering the first half of chapter 9, where the fifth angel blew his trumpet and announced his first woe.

Chapter 9, verse 1. The fifth angel blew his trumpet and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.

As we said, John there, he sees Satan. He sees Satan as the fallen star from the bottomless pit.

And Satan is described to us, as we know in Scripture, as our adversary, the devil.

[4 : 48] He's the Diabolos, the divider. He's the accuser of the brethren, the father of lies, the antichrist, the prince of darkness. And as we read there earlier, there it is in verse 10 of chapter 9.

He's described as, first of all, in Hebrew as Abaddon, then Greek, he's called Apollyon. He's the destroyer. The destroyer. Or what he hopes to do is destroy the church, the Christian.

He's also known as the day star, the sun of the morning. He's the one who appears before us as an angel of light. So John, with his fifth angel blowing his trumpet, he sees Satan.

And the first woe is announced. And so this evening we come to the second woe, with the sixth angel. And the thing about this section, and the second woe, which is what we're seeing from verse 13 onwards, what we're seeing is that this section is much longer.

It's a much longer section than usual because this section, it extends from chapter 9, verse 13, where it says, Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet. And it goes all the way through chapter 10, as you see if you've got your Bible and you've got different headings.

[6 : 04] And it goes through, all the way through chapter 10, into chapter 11, all the way down to verse 14, which reads there, at the end of verse 14, or verse 14 itself, The second woe has passed.

Behold, the third woe is soon to come. And then you see the title, verse 15, The Seventh Trumpet.

And so because this section about the second woe is so long, you'd be thankful I'm not going to go through it all tonight, or we'd be here until next Wednesday.

But there's so much in it, so I want us to break it down into three parts. And I want us to look at part one this evening, which is the second half of chapter 9. And what this part, part one of the second woe, it sets before us angels and demons.

Angels and demons. And there are two headings this evening. Angels and demons. So first of all, angels. We see there in verse 13, it says, Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.

Now, this isn't the first time that we've been told that there's a golden altar in heaven. Of course, the reason there's a golden altar in heaven at all is because heaven, as you know, and as we've seen in the Revelation, it's a place of worship.

[7 : 39] Everyone is worshipping the one who is seated on the throne. But back in chapter 6, we saw that when the fifth seal of the sovereign scroll was opened, John said there, I saw under the altar, this golden altar, the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

So John saw under the golden altar in heaven the souls of the suffering saints. Suffering saints who had been persecuted and put to death for their faith in Jesus Christ.

But there's more because when we came to chapter 8, as the revelation progresses, we saw there in chapter 8 that when there was silence in heaven for half an hour, we're told that another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer.

And he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints of the golden altar before the throne. So this is chapter 8, verse 3. And then verse 4, And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints rose before God from the hand of the angel.

Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth and so on. And at the golden altar in heaven, so there we're told that in chapter 6 we're told that there's the souls of the suffering saints and then in chapter 8 there's the supplications of the suffering saints.

[9 : 10] And we've been reminded that it's there that Jesus who's our angel, he's revealed there as the angel in chapter 8, he's our messenger, our intercessor, our advocate with the Father, our mediator, our great high priest.

As Myrdo was saying, he ever lives to make intercession for us. He's the one who carries the golden censer from off the golden altar of incense containing the precious prayers, our precious prayers, the prayers of all the saints and he presents them before the throne of God the Father as a

sweet smelling fragrance.

And you know, I don't know about you but I always find it so beautiful when we think about the intercession of Jesus Christ. And especially like for the men who come to the prayer meeting on a Wednesday night.

The amazing thing is we always come here, myself included, I always remember coming to the prayer meeting on a Wednesday night. You come with trepidation and you think, what on earth am I going to say if I'm called to pray tonight?

And yet the wonderful thing is what we're reminded here is that our great high priest takes our sinful and selfish and stained and stuttering and stammering prayers and he mixes them and he mingles them with his intercessory incense so that they are made acceptable, that they're made appreciated before the throne of grace in heaven.

[10:40] So men, every time you come to the prayer meeting and you have to be asked to stand to pray, remember your selfish and stained and stuttering and stammering prayers, they are going to be mixed and mingled by Jesus and presented before the throne of heaven.

So always remember that even though you might feel your prayers are rubbish and they're not going anywhere, the Lord is using them for his own glory. I know this is what was to be an encouragement to the early church and it's also to be an encouragement to every Christian and everybody who gathers for the prayer meeting because it's to remind us always and to reassure us that in the midst of opposition which we often face in a working week or even the obstacles that we come across in our day we are as we're told again and again in the book of Revelation to stop looking inwards and start looking upwards and I hope that by the time we finish this book whenever we'll finish it we'll always come to the book of Revelation and that phrase will be in our mind stop looking inwards start looking upwards we're to lift our eyes heavenward that's what the book is all about lift your eyes heavenward so that you live life with an eternal perspective remain focused remain faithful to Jesus Christ because he is our great high priest whoever lives to make intercession for us and so when the sixth angel blew this sixth trumpet to announce the second woe the voice that we're told there the voice that John heard verse 13

I heard a voice the voice that John heard from the four horns of the golden altar before God it was the voice of the souls and the supplications of these suffering saints it was the voice of the souls and the supplications of these suffering saints and it's their voice that's heard because throughout all the punishment and all the persecution of the early church especially during the Rome the rule of the Roman Empire but also during the centuries that followed the souls and supplications of the suffering saints they're calling and they're crying out for justice and judgment the souls and supplications of the suffering saints they're calling and they're crying out for vindication and victory over their enemies they're calling and crying out for the end for the end of the world to come and with the sound of the sixth trumpet from the sixth angel of the apocalypse it comes this announcement the announcement of these souls the announcement from the supplications of these suffering saints and what do they say verse 14 release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates that's their prayer release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates now it's interesting that the river Euphrates is mentioned here that's why the picture is on the screen because as you can see from the map the word Euphrates is standing out there in orange today you can see that the river Euphrates it flows through the countries of Turkey then Syria and Iraq and it then joins the river Tigris which is not mentioned but you can see the other line and they join just before they reach the Persian Gulf which is off the screen and this river the river Euphrates it's 1700 miles long it's one of the longest and one of the most historically important rivers in Western Asia that's because it's often mentioned in the Bible it's first mentioned right at the beginning of our Bible in the book of beginnings in Genesis in Genesis chapter 2 following the creation account where the river Euphrates it's one of those four rivers that are mentioned that flows out from the Garden of Eden but the river Euphrates is also important historically and biblically because it was considered to be one of or one of the original boundary markers of the promised land and this is something

I didn't realise until looking at this passage in Genesis chapter 15 we're told that the Lord made a covenant with Abraham about the land the promised land the land of promise and the Lord said to Abraham to your offspring I give this land from the river of Egypt which is the border of Israel and Africa as it says there in the picture all the way to the great river the river Euphrates and that's how the river Euphrates is mentioned again and again in the Bible it's always said to be the great river

the river Euphrates every time the river Euphrates is mentioned it's always known as the great river the river Euphrates and it's called the great river because the river Euphrates marked the original boundary line for the promised land it was the original boundary line of course the river Euphrates it's not the boundary line of the promised land today it's a lot smaller we see that because over the years with different armies invading and infiltrating the promised land the boundary lines have all moved which is actually why the river Euphrates is mentioned here in the book of

[16:14] Revelation the river Euphrates is mentioned not in the positive sense of the land that was promised to Abraham and all his descendants after him the river Euphrates is mentioned here in Revelation in the sense of the punishment that would come from those who were out with the boundary lines of the promised land as we said today you see there that the river Euphrates it runs through Turkey, Syria and Asia sorry Turkey, Syria and Iraq but in ancient times Iraq wasn't referred to as Iraq it was known as Babylon or an area of Iraq which was under the rule and reign of the Babylonian Empire now I'm going to try and change this I don't know if you can zoom in on this but if you can see Babylon in the green just there that's Iraq today and as you know Babylon is mentioned throughout the Bible as God's message and God's means of judgment more than that the city of Babylon it's mentioned throughout the book of Revelation so as we carry on in this book we see that Babylon is the great enemy of God and his people

Babylon the Great it's described later on in chapters that are coming it's the city of immorality the city of fury the city of violence Babylon is known as the mother of prostitution the mother of abomination more than that which is really interesting Babylon was known as the dwelling place for demons Babylon was known and it's described later in the book as the dwelling place for demons and that's what we're to understand from this image and illustration that with the sound of the sixth trumpet from the sixth angel of the apocalypse the request here the voice of the souls and supplications of all these suffering saints where they say release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates these four angels weren't actually angels why would you bind an angel? the four angels were four demons from Babylon the dwelling place for demons the four angels the four angels were four demons from Babylon and Babylon was known as the dwelling place for demons so that brings us to consider secondly the demons so angels and then secondly demons we read there in verse 15 so the four angels or the four demons who had been prepared for the hour the day the month and the year were released to kill a third of mankind the number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand I heard their number now if you're familiar with the American author Dan Brown you'll know that one of his books was entitled Angels and Demons what's fascinating which I always find I always like looking up what the background of authors and like many people Dan Brown was brought up going to church you'd never think it he was brought up going to church and although he moved away from the church in his youth and became more attracted by the modern notion of science and evolution and yet the more he studied later laterally in his life

Dan Brown has said the more he has studied science and evolution the more he is convinced that there is a creator behind it all in fact it was reading Dan Brown's bestseller The Da Vinci Code this is something I've never actually said in my testimony it was when reading The Da Vinci Code in hospital with pneumonia that's what caused me to start questioning about Christianity I was reading the book thinking this isn't true I need to read the Bible to confirm that it's not true and that's what started reading the Bible and you probably know that Dan Brown's books they've been made into films starring Tom Hanks Angels and Demons and also The Da Vinci Code and other ones but Dan Brown's Angels and Demons they are nothing in comparison to the angels and demons in the book of Revelation because when the sixth angel blew the sixth trumpet to announce the second woe the voice that John heard from the four horns of the altar before God was the voice of the souls and the supplications of these suffering saints they made a request for the four angels or the four demons to be released from Babylon the dwelling place of demons and then we read verse 15 so the four angels or four demons who had been prepared for the hour the day the month and the year were released to kill a third of mankind at the request of the suffering saints who wanted victory and vindication who wanted their enemies to be destroyed at the request of the suffering saints the four demons are released but the key word in verse 15 and I always want to point out key words it's so important the key word in verse 15 is the word prepared the word prepared it says there so the four angels who had been prepared for the hour the day the month and the year were released to kill a third of mankind that word prepared it's a key word because it links to everything

Jesus said in his last sermon the word prepared here links to everything Jesus said in his last sermon in Matthew chapter 24 and 25 and Jesus' last sermon as you know it was all about his second coming and the day of judgment but you know Jesus' last sermon what's amazing about his last sermon it wasn't a sermon preached to the unconvinced and the unconverted no Jesus' last sermon was preached to the church it was proclaimed to the disciples the disciples had asked Jesus what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the world and of course in his last sermon Jesus when you read through chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew Jesus uses all these images and all these illustrations to emphasize and explain his point the first image is Noah he says as in the days of Noah so will it be for the coming of the son of man in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking marrying and giving and marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away so will it be says Jesus with the coming of the son of man and Jesus goes on he uses another image and illustration he says stay awake because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming but know this if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming he would have stayed awake he would not have let his house be broken into therefore you also

[23 : 37] Christian must be ready for the son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect but in his last sermon that's such a powerful sermon Jesus he not only preached using images and illustrations he also used parables and parallels he used the parables of the ten virgins how there was five wise and five foolish five with oil five without oil five who were ready five who were not then he talks about the talents those who buried their talent and those who invested their talent but Jesus also used the parallel of the sheep and the goats and when he speaks about the sheep and the goats he says when the son of man comes in his glory and all the angels with him then he will sit on his glorious throne before him will be gathered all the nations he will separate them one from another how as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats he will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left then the king will say and this is where the key word comes in then the king will say to those on his right come you who are blessed by my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world then he will say to those on his left depart from me you cursed into the eternal fire prepared prepared for who for who says Jesus for the devil beginning of chapter 9 and his angels prepared for the devil and his angels and as we said that's the key word here in verse 15 so the angels who have been prepared the devil's angels who have been prepared for the hour of the day the month and the year were released to kill a third of mankind and you see here the four angels or the four demons of the devil they have been prepared prepared to do what this is where it's really solemn they are prepared to take unrepentant sinners to hell that's what they're prepared to do they are prepared to take unrepentant sinners to hell and that's at God's order and notice these four demons of the devil they have been prepared for a specific hour day month and year the hour day month and year that God the Father had appointed which is what

Jesus says in his last sermon he says that to the Christian he says it to the disciple he says in his last sermon concerning that day and hour no one knows not even the angels of heaven nor the Son but the Father only it's a solemn passage but you know what's highlighted here is that these demons of the devil they will be used by God to influence and implement the end of the world which is exactly what Jesus said would happen in his last sermon because like it is here Jesus mentioned the destruction and devastation of war Jesus says in the sermon his last sermon you will hear of wars and rumours of war see that you're not alarmed this must take place but the end is not yet nation will rise against nation kingdom against kingdom there will be famines and earthquakes in various places all these says Jesus are but the beginning of the birth pains and now look at verse 16 the number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand

I heard their number and this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them they wore breastplates the colour of fire and of sapphire and of sulphur or brimstone and the heads of the horses were like lion's heads and the fire and smoke and brimstone came out of their mouths by these three plagues a third of mankind was killed by the fire and smoke and sulphur coming out of their mouths you know every commentator I read on this passage and when you're looking at Revelation you have to look at commentaries because you'd never understand it otherwise but every commentator confirms that these verses about the sixth angel of the apocalypse and this second woe they describe the destruction and the devastation of war not one particular war but all wars past, present and future and that's emphasised there as you see there in verse 16 the number

of troops being twice 10,000 times 10,000 it's the overwhelming image now Stephen will correct me if I'm wrong the image of twice 10,000 times 10,000 200 million soldiers being killed on the battlefields of war and as this revelation suggests the number of people being killed during the destruction devastation of war is a third of mankind so we read there in verse 18 a third of mankind is killed in war as you know that's a lot of bloodshed but what we've been shown here is the depravity of man and the inhumanity of man what we've been shown is how sinful we really are and you know we're aware of this from our history of war we study it in school we learn all about the history of the Holocaust something we'll be remembering even next week as we come to next weekend we gather around war memorials to remember the fallen but we've also watched and witnessed the depravity and the inhumanity of man more recently haven't we with the war in Ukraine we've watched and witnessed the destruction the devastation the death and the displacement that war causes more than that we've heard of the inhumanity of women being treated children the way they've been treated being killed and raped and even in recent weeks we've watched and witnessed the destruction the devastation the death and the displacement that war causes with the war between Israel and Gaza reports of children being kidnapped babies being beheaded it's horrific it's the horrific reality that people are living with even tonight the destruction the devastation the death and displacement that war causes it ought to show us how depraved we really are and how demonic mankind can be without God's grace that's what this is showing us I mean we talk that we say we're Calvinists the first point of tulip is total depravity we are completely depraved we are depraved and if left without God's grace demonic there was the famous preacher at Westminster Chapel in London Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones he said God allowed two world wars in the 20th century because he thought man thought he had things under his control but God had to show him what an animal he really was and what inhumanity he was capable of it's a solemn statement God allowed two world wars in the 20th century because he thought he had things under his control man thought he had things under his control but God had to show him what an animal he really was and what inhumanity he was capable of time has gone you won't mind because you haven't heard me in a month so it's okay but we'll pick this up again in part two next week but you know what we ought to take from this deep and dark and very demonic passage what we ought to take from it all is that as the church of Jesus Christ what are we to do stop looking inwards start looking upwards because the future of this world and that was mentioned in prayer tonight as well the future of this world is not to be found in the White House or in 10 Downing Street or with the Kremlin or with China or North Korea or even in the Middle East know the future of this world the fulfilment of God's word and the finality of all things is still firmly in the hands of our sovereign God who is still seated upon his throne so stop looking inwards keep looking upwards may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray

O Lord our gracious God we marvel at who thou art a God who is sovereign who is supreme and superior above and beyond all our asking and even all our thinking we thank thee tonight that even in the midst of war and heartache and sorrow and all that we see on the TV all that we witness and all that we watch and we see so much pain and so much hurt so much of man's inhumanity to man and yet Lord we need to stop and remember that thou art the one who is enthroned and high where heaven is thy throne and the earth is thy footstool and that every day has been planned according to thy sovereign purpose help us then we pray to pray as thou hast taught us to pray that thy will would be done on earth as it is in heaven that thou wouldst bring everything to its climax and its culmination and even its conclusion according to thine own perfect plan and help us as thy people not to stand in the way but to be stewards in it to be servants of it to be looking ever to Jesus knowing that he is the author he is the finisher he is the perfecter he is the one who is in control [34 : 26] Lord help us we pray as thy people to stop looking inward and to see that there is nothing in us no soundness in us but help us Lord to look upwards to the one who ever lives to make intercession for us and that even our stammering prayers that they are presented before thy throne knowing oh Lord that they are heard in heaven Lord hear us and we pray answer us in accordance with thy will that thou wouldst do us good that thou wouldst have all the glory that Christ thy son would have all the preeminence and that we as thy people all that we would know blessing hear us then we pray go before us take away our iniquity receive us graciously for Jesus sake Amen well we'll conclude this evening we'll sing in Psalm 89 Psalm 89 at verse 13 page 345 in the Scottish Psalter

Psalm 89 verse 13 Psalm 89 Psalm 89 verse 13 thou hast an arm that's full of power thy hand is great in might and thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height justice and judgment of thy throne are made the dwelling place mercy accompanied with truth shall go before thy face and this is us oh greatly blessed the people are the joyful sound that know in brightness of thy face O Lord they ever on shall go we'll sing down to the verse marked 17 of Psalm 89 to God's praise example in ■ ay or the above that's full of poweroni

Thy heart is treated mine, And I might have exceedingly Exalted is in high.

Justice and judgment of thy throne Are made that wearing face.

Mercy accompanied with dirt Shall go before thy face.

[37 : 31] O greatly blessed the people Of the joyful sun that knows.

In brightness of thy face, O Lord, The heaven on shall go.

In thy name shall all the day Rejoice exceedingly, And in thy righteousness Shall they exalted be on high.

Because the glory of their strength Doth only stand in thee, And in thy favour shall the heart And power exalted be.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all, Now and forevermore.

[39 : 27] Amen.