

11a REV

This is the 21st of October, 2005. We continue tonight our study in the book of Revelation, picking up in chapter 9 and moving into chapter 10. Let's take a moment at the outset to prepare our souls and our hearts by going to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we are thankful that we have the opportunity to live in these days, to see the groundwork being laid for the consummation of human history and the fulfillment of your plan and purpose. It is exciting to learn the details of the final days as we see them revealed in the books that we are studying, both Ezekiel and Revelation, as we will soon see in Daniel. We ask your blessing on us as we seek to understand rightly what your word teaches.

We pray that not only can we recognize and understand the symbolic language in these passages, but that we will also find in them fruitful understanding in terms of our application and the encouragement to our faith and our hope and our love for one another. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ who has delivered us from the wrath to come and has set our feet on solid rock. We wait expectantly for his return and the next phase of your plan.

We pray that our study will help us be ready for that day. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

We have seen in this section of the Revelation, which is defined by the trumpet blasts of the angels, that the viewpoint has shifted. The seals looked at the latter days, the latter portion of the 70th week of Daniel, the tribulation period, the last half of which is called the Great Tribulation. But the seals looked at it from the standpoint of man.

Seals on scrolls, horses, riders and so forth, famine, hunger, pestilence, death. All of these things are ground level episodes. We have a ground level view of those from John.

After the seals, we have the trumpets. And in the trumpet judgments, we have an intermediate level viewpoint. Now we are up above the earth.

The angels are blowing trumpets. Things are coming from the celestial realms down to the earth. You have angels holding back winds.

You have some sort of flaming objects from the sky crashing down and causing havoc on the land and in the sea. And most recently, we have in chapter 9, this fifth angel sounding, blowing the trumpet, and the star falling from heaven to the earth. To him is given the key to the bottomless pit.

He opens the bottomless pit and smoke arises out of it, like the smoke of a great furnace. The sun and the air are darkened because of the smoke of the pit. Out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth.

To them is given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They are commanded not to harm the grass of the earth or any green thing or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months.

Torment is like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. So, twice we are told here that their power is to hurt men for five months. Twice we are told that they are compared to scorpions.

They are not actual locusts because real locusts are destructive to green vegetation. These locusts don't care anything about any green thing or any tree, only men. And only a certain subset of the men on the earth, the majority of men on the earth, those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

So, right away we know that this is not an actual insect horde. It is a representative plague. I did some reading on locusts this week.

It is surprisingly difficult to find out a lot about locusts, because you tend to get diverted off into cicadas and things that are called locusts and are not. I learned a lot about cicadas, the 17-year cycle and so forth on those. But if you do find actual information about locusts, it is very interesting.

I did not realize this, but the Rocky Mountain locust, which is the one that was written about by Little House on the Prairie, Laura Ingalls Wilder. You can see how I have to tie information together to get to it in my head. Laura Ingalls wrote about their experiences on the plains in the late 1800s with this huge locust swarm.

There was a swarm of these locusts in 1875 in this country that was the largest congregation of animal life in recorded history. The number of the insects was approximately 3.5 trillion. They formed a swarm that was 1800 miles long and 110 miles wide.

Each of these insects can eat in a day its own body weight, which is a couple of grams. There were about as many locusts in this swarm as there are cells in your body, just to give you an idea. The 150,000 odd settlers who were out there nearly all died because there wasn't a shred of green vegetation anywhere to feed themselves or their animals.

They were left basically on the brink of starvation after this great swarm in 1875. What is interesting to me about locusts is that particular variety of locust, the Rocky Mountain locust, within 30 years of that great swarm in 1875, that locust went extinct. There is not a single one alive in America today.

Just goes to show you, just because there is a lot of something doesn't mean it is going to last a long time. The last living specimen was collected in 1902. Remember, 3.5 trillion in 1875? The last living Rocky Mountain locust was collected in 1902.

Now, to study them, a guy was trying to figure out what happened. They were so numerous and seemingly unconquerable, and yet they were completely wiped out within three decades of this huge swarm in 1875. What happened to them? Well, to find out and to do the forensic work, they had to go find the dead locusts and see what they are like.

A guy wanted to collect some of them, so he went to a glacier up north and found some that had been frozen into the ice years and years ago. Then they could dissect them well. National Geographic made a special about this, which I would love to see.

I think it is called the Perfect Swarm. This guy named Dr. Jeffrey Lockwood, he is a professor of natural sciences at the University of Wyoming. He is the guy that went on the trail to figure out what happened to these locusts and solved this mystery, but you have to watch the National Geographic special to find out.

I don't know the answer to that question. But one of the things that you find out in the course of this study on locusts is, guess what the typical lifespan of a locust is, whether it is the Rocky Mountain locust or they have desert locusts over in the Middle East. These locusts, by the way, they can travel 500 miles in a day.

If there is a favorable wind, they ride on the wind. Most of their locomotion and distance is by just staying aloft in good winds. But they can travel 500 miles a day.

They had a big swarm of desert locusts in West Africa many years ago. That swarm traveled 5,000 miles in 10 days and showed up in the Caribbean and ate every living thing in the Caribbean islands. They stayed aloft for 10 days, crossed the Atlantic Ocean from Africa, and obliterated everything in the Caribbean.

500 miles a day is the average speed for that swarm. It is just incredible. They can lay their eggs depending on the kind of locust.

Some of them will make a slit in a tree twig and lay their eggs in that. Others, the desert locusts, lay their eggs in the sand. And when they are not under stress and they are not too crowded, they lay more eggs.

When they are under stress, they lay fewer eggs. Because stress is caused by them being very numerous. But the other thing that stress does, they are just like ordinary grasshoppers most of the time.

But if they get too crowded and there are too many of them, they undergo a physical change. It is like a program in their DNA kicks off. And when they reach a certain level of multitude, they physically change.

They get darker, their wings get longer, and they all get angry. And they start swarming. They do this swarming behavior.

Of course, evolutionary science can't figure out how this works. Just like they can't figure out the 17-year cicada. But I will tell you that story another time.

Think about it. A 17-year life cycle, and they pretty much all hit on the same years. There are only, of American cicadas that aren't as 17, they call them, I can't think of the term, they call them bands, I think.

But there are only 13 bands of 17-year cicadas. And so there are some years where none of them pop out of the ground at all. Whatever year they pop out of the ground on their 17-year cycle, that is what band they are from.

They started clocking them like in 1892 or something and labeled each succeeding year. And so every 17 years there will be a huge horde of them. Other years there will be a very minor horde.

And so they will say, well, band 12 is a big band and band 7 is a tiny band or whatever. But evolutionary science cannot explain how they produce this behavior. That's another story.

But locusts, we are talking about locusts. You know what the life cycle is, the average life span of a locust is? Take a wild guess. Five months.

The life span of a locust, on average, is five months. They spend a couple of weeks as a little crawly deal coming out of their eggs. And then they turn into a hopper and then they turn into a flyer.

But the life cycle is five months. This is interesting in terms of our study because it says that this horde, this swarm of locusts, has the power to hurt men for five months. There is a single swarm of locusts that comes out of the bottomless pit.

And they last for the life cycle of a locust. It's a one-time thing. They don't reproduce and make more.

It's not continuous. It's an inherent function. They're on the clock.

Whatever they're going to do, they've got to do within their life span because they're only allotted. God determines the life span of animals. He determines the life span of dogs, cats, people, and locusts.

And when this swarm comes out, they don't reproduce. They don't lay eggs. It's a one-time thing.

They come out and they've got their allotted time. And I think that's what this five months alludes to. This was well known in the ancient world, by the way, how long the lifespan of locusts is.

And so when it says they have the power to hurt men five months, what does this tell us? This phenomenon is going to run its course. It's going to be like a lot of the fads and a lot of the, you know, back in the 70s, they had streaking. For a while there was all streaking going on.

We had campus protests that took place. We had certain fads in terms of, you know, the afro came and went. You don't see anybody wearing an afro much anymore.

And you can think of fads, you know, long pointy collars on shirts. I was glad to see that one go. Buckles on men's shoes, you know, walking around with Paul Revere and the Raiders outfits on like they had back in the 70s.

I mean, that was a fad and thankfully that went away. Double net, polyester, lots of fads come and go. Well, this is going to be some sort of a phenomenon that runs over a set period of time.

It's going to start and it's going to end. It's going to run its course. And it's sort of unprecedented.

There's never been a swarm like this before and there won't be after. What do the locusts represent? Well, they do not attack vegetation. They attack men and only men who are unsaved.

The idea of the heads and the tails has been looked at by many interpreters as suggesting that this is a demonically inspired or induced phenomenon and that it involves the doctrine of demons. You can go to places like in Isaiah where a tail is associated with the idea of teachers. If you study, we don't have time, I wish we did, to study all the places where head is used in Scripture and tail is used in Scripture.

You know, God promises Israel you will be the head and not the tail. But the idea being that this is a war of ideas. That this is going to be something that takes place in the soul and in the heart and in the mind.

And this is why the people who have God's seal on them are not affected. Is it a brainwashing? Is it an inducement? Is it a strong form of pressure because you have enrolled and registered in the system that allows you to buy and sell. Now they have you on the hook.

It's sort of like you have to get a social security card in order to work in this country. But once you have that card, there are some other attendant things that come with it that you may not really have bargained for. Like being tracked everywhere you go by that number.

And now you have a number associated with you. And some people used to think that the social security number was the mark of the beast and they didn't want to get a social

security number and so on. Well, that kind of thing seems to be what is in view.

Something is going to be released and it seems to be of a set duration. It is something that ends up being a torment or a torture. And it is like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

There are two things about a scorpion sting that are salient, that are prominent. One is it's localized and very painful. When you get a scorpion sting, you don't break out in boils all over your body.

It's not like getting attacked by a swarm of mosquitoes. You have one sting and that one thing is very, very painful. Secondly, scorpions are not powerful.

They're sneaky. And they're not really looking for you. They're not predatory toward humans.

A human being will move a rock or pick up a bucket or move something that's been sitting a while. And the scorpion underneath, they attack by surprise. It's a surprise to the scorpion, it's a surprise to the person.

And the scorpion reacts by stinging the person and you've got this awful aching wound. But it's unexpected. Nobody standing there seeing a scorpion is going to be stung by it.

You're never stung by the scorpion that you see. You're stung by the scorpion that you don't see. You surprise it.

It takes you unawares. You're doing something and, oh, it got me. It's like the adder that came out of the fire when Paul was gathering wood after the shipwreck.

It's a surprise. I think the nature of the scorpion sting here indicates that it's very painful and it's very unexpected. People didn't see it coming.

Even if you see a swarm of locusts, you don't expect to get a scorpion sting out of it. You think, well, they're going to go eat my crops. And instead, you wind up with a wound on your hand or on your foot.

And it's very painful and you say, boy, I totally didn't see that coming. That's what people would say today. Totally.

I totally didn't see it coming. It's a complete wrong use of an adverb. Anyway, they are commanded not to harm the grass of the earth or any green thing or any tree.

Only those men who do not have the seal. They are not killing anyone, but they torment them for five months. There is a set duration.

In these days, men will seek death and will not find it. They will desire to die and death

will flee from them. Now, our question becomes, why would you be seeking death and be unable to find it? And we've had some good thoughts and discussion about that at times other than during class about what might be going on.

It's sort of a lot of people wish they were dead, but don't have the ability to. In other words, it speaks of Great Depression. It speaks of Great Discouragement.

It speaks of, I have no future hope. I can't imagine how I'm going to go on. But the shape of the locus gives us a clue.

The shape of the locus is like horses prepared for battle. What is the shape of a horse prepared for battle? Compared to a horse that's not prepared for battle, what's the difference? A horse prepared for battle has what? Armor, has shielding, has stuff draped over it. So this comes with a covering that makes it invulnerable.

They have breastplates like breastplates of iron. And they have this great sound and they have teeth like lion's teeth. The teeth like lion's teeth speaks of being devoured.

You're chewed up by something. People didn't stand there and say, bring on the lions so I can handle them. Lions are an unmanageable threat that chews you up and you can't stop it.

If you get mangled by a lion, there are people that get very seriously injured and they lose their will to live. You get very seriously burned. You have some other horrible malady strike you and you say, finish me off.

I don't want to try to work through this and recover. It's too painful. It's too much.

And this is the level of discomfort and the level of torment that people are going to undergo. This is like being chewed up by a lion but you don't die. And this is something that is irresistible.

A horse prepared for battle, when it comes running towards you, you can't stand there and deflect it or stop it as a human being. It's a horse. It's got more power.

That's why we measure engines in horsepower. And it comes and it's got a breastplate. You can't stop it.

You can't kill it. You can't deflect it. It's going to come and do what it's going to do for this cycle of time, this period of time until it runs its course.

The sound of the wings is like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. It's deafening. You can't think.

This is like standing outside on the tarmac at an airport. If you've ever been at a military base or at an airport, outside when they have one of those puddle jumpers and you don't

get to walk down the ramp, you have to go outside and go up the little stairway like they used to do a long time ago in the 1950s. I've ridden some of those not too long ago.

It's really loud at an airport. And you really can't think when that level of noise is surrounding you. And the idea of this is it's just mind-numbing.

Tails like scorpions, stings in their tails, the power is to hurt men five months. This is repetitive. We've already had this information up above.

And repetition is for emphasis. It's unexpected and it's going to run its course. During the time that it's running, you can't stop it.

It puts us in mind of the captivity in Babylon. God said you are going to be in captivity for 70 years. Just get used to it.

I'm not going to listen to your prayers. You're not going to get out of it. You're going to go through it.

It has to run its course. It has a set time and you've got to find a way to cope with it. You will not be delivered out of it.

The most you can hope for is to survive it, to live through it. That's what this experience is like. There is no deliverance from it.

It cannot be stopped. It cannot be prepared for. You can't avoid it by being watchful.

It's like a scorpion sting. It hits you and then you just have to suffer. Once you get a scorpion sting, in the ancient world there was no balm, there was no medicine, there was no painkiller.

You just had to wait until that sting healed up and ran its course. And people say, Oh, I see you've got a scorpion sting there. Well, you're in for it for the next couple of weeks.

That thing is not going to give you any relief for a week and a half or two weeks before you even start to feel better. And that's the nature of this. It gets people and they're just trapped in it.

Trapped in it to the point that they want to die, but they can't die. It's just the worst imaginable kind of suffering that you can't get any relief for. You can't avoid it.

You can't see it coming. They had a king over them, the angel of the bottomless pit. This is another difference from locusts.

In fact, if you go to the Old Testament, Solomon talks about the fact that locusts have no king. He makes that statement outright, doesn't he? And yet here, these locusts have a king. And this king is the angel of the bottomless pit.

This is the angel who unlocked these and let them out in the first place. And these are directed. This is according to a plan.

Locusts have no plan. The ones in West Africa didn't say, Hey, let's go to the Caribbean. I've never been there.

Let's go see what it's like. Let's go to Jamaica, man. They can't think.

Who would have thought that they would blow out to sea and go 5,000 miles? But these scorpions have a leader. And they have human faces. They know what they're doing.

This is a directed effort. And you get the idea. Now, let's talk about the number.

There are quite a lot of them, right? This is a huge army of locusts. And as they do their work, it's intelligent. It's intelligently guided.

There's a human face on it. There's human hair, women's hair, which we talked about before. The woman's hair is her glory.

And she's the glory of the man. And this seems to be attractive initially. But it winds up having a sting.

We're going to see something real similar to that coming up when John is offered the little book. And it's sweet at the beginning and bitter later. So this seems to be something by way of a worldwide program that is multiplied infinitely at an individual level.

Even though it has one king and one purpose and a set duration, it has an individual implementation. The reason you've got it represented as locusts and as all these individuals is that it is as though it is personalized. There's an individual attack.

Almost an individually tailored attack. This has the ability to discriminate to see if you have the mark of the beast or the seal of God. And when you have the mark of the beast, then it gets you individually.

It has an individual component. Well, whatever this is, we want to try to draw from our observation an interpretation and an application. We know that as believers, we have the seal of God in this age.

And we come under special attention from unseen forces of darkness. Paul the Apostle says, our warfare is not against flesh and blood. It is against principalities and powers.

Don't kid yourself. Your life and my life has demonic pressure that comes on it. And it's individual.

It's tailored to us. It finds our weak spot. It probes and finds where we are unprotected.

It catches us unaware, like a scorpion sting. And many times when it gets us, we have some enduring after effects. We have to ensure that we are not taken unaware.

The problem with these people is that they don't have the seal of God. If you have the seal of God, this whole plague can't touch you. The difference, when you think about our application, is we sort of step out from behind the shield or stand behind it at our own volition, at our own whim.

And we can leave ourselves exposed and we can leave ourselves unprotected. This picture is given in terms of absolutes. You're either absolutely seal or you're absolutely not.

And there's no middle ground. But we know that we can choose whether to live according to the new man or live according to the old man. Whether to put on the full armor of God or to walk around with it off.

The devil roams the earth like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The lion's teeth are out there to chew us up. The locust swarms are out there for us, by analogy.

And we want to ensure that we are just like these people who are sealed by God in the forehead. That we have the full armor of God on and that we are impervious and that we are not taken unawares. That we don't walk around in the darkness.

That we are not of the night or of the darkness, but we are of the day. Well, that's a nice generalization, but how does it work itself out specifically? Well, this, when you decode the symbolism, actually seems to be something that is almost more in the realm of ideas than it is a physical attack. When you start talking about the face and the hair and the way that this runs its course and the way that it swarms over the earth, we are under attack in the realm of ideas.

A lot of Christians have lost their faith in the Word of God. A lot of Christians no longer believe the Bible can be taken literally. Why? Because of the incessant onslaught of humanism and materialism wrapping itself in the flag of science and saying, well, science shows that evolution took place and God did not create the heavens and the earth and God did not create life on three of the six days of creation before he rested, that natural processes are responsible for what we see around us.

If you want to go to the Bible and get some ethics and some morals, great, but don't take it at face value when it comes to explaining the world around us because science has demonstrated that this is just a bunch of old Hebrew myths. Well, over time, getting it into the schools, I think it's really funny that the evolution crowd and the atheistic crowd says that you're trying to sneak God into the classroom. God was in the classroom all the way until a couple of decades ago when they sneaked him out.

And now they're saying, oh, you're trying to sneak God into the classroom. This is going

to bring down the whole educational system of the United States. We had no problem putting the space program together.

We had no problem building the Industrial Revolution. We had no problem coming up with 95% of the technology, excluding electronic technology, that's in the earth today. You know, steam, power.

I was looking at film of a dam that was built in 1832 up there in Massachusetts. They thought it was going to break with all the rain. The thing is 173 years old and held in the onslaught of this.

That's some great engineering. A wooden dam, biggest test it's ever had. And the thing held fine, didn't give way at all.

Marvels of human engineering. All of this was done by people who were brought up with God in the classroom. And it's only been in the last few decades that they have successfully excised God from public life and from the classroom.

And now they're paranoid that God may reappear. Just like they're paranoid that something may happen on the Supreme Court and the very tendentious hold they have on Roe v. Wade may come unglued. They've got these little sacred cows that they can't let go of.

But back to the point. There is a warfare in the world of ideas and it will do us serious harm if we do not maintain our faith. Jesus said to Peter, I have prayed for you.

Satan is coming to sift you like wheat. I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail. You and I need to make sure that us and ours do not fail in the face of this onslaught, this locust horde chewing up all the available vegetation, making it impossible to see the landscape in the world of ideas, to not lose our children, to not lose ourselves, to not lose our faith and our Christian heritage, our Christian ideals, our Christian values.

There's a huge attack on the President. There's a huge attack on all kinds of leadership that unashamedly embraces Christian values. They are assaulted with Michael Mooreism.

I don't even want to get started on that guy. And those of his ilk who will twist and distort and try to darken the landscape and darken the sky and darken the air with sheer numbers. Well, science has concluded.

You can't find a scientist that will talk about creation. I found an interesting survey where they found that well over half of scientists believe in God. Well over half.

Over two-thirds. It's like 80-something percent of scientists. I forget the exact number.

But they did a wide survey, thousands of scientists, and most scientists profess a belief

in God. So my question is, if they believe in God, why do they not believe in Biblical creationism? Well, a lot of them do, but it is professional suicide to say so. Because there is a witch-hunt climate in the scientific community, and if you do anything but, spout the party line.

This is the locust swarm that we live in today. This is the realm of ideas that is attacking humans, attacking the heart, attacking the mind. And we need to be aware that this future picture, remember what the Bible says, the spirit of Antichrist is already at work.

Already at work. It was already at work 2,000 years ago, and it has done nothing but get stronger as the years pass, and it's going to reach its physical manifestation here in the near future. Well, this is the first of three woes.

The first of three woes. We've seen this pattern of sevens in Revelation, and within a seven you have four, and then three. And within that three, you have two, and then one.

So it's almost like a countdown. Four, three, two, one. And Revelation 9, verse 12 says, One woe is past.

Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things. Of these three woes, we've already seen the first four trumpets blow, and we've discussed that in great detail. But of these last three woes, the first woe is this locust swarm.

It's unavoidable. You have no defense. There's no way to avoid it.

It's going to get you when you're not looking. And that's what's happening to Christianity today. That's why you have theistic evolution.

That's why you have all of these weird permutations. That's why, in vast measure, the Christian denominations in this country do not believe in the inerrancy and the infallibility of Scripture. And it's so sad.

We, together, have traveled many verses and many chapters and many books of the Bible together and have seen the integrity down to the word, down to the tense, across all 66 books. The fabric of the Bible is indestructible. It is perfect.

It is symmetrical. It's beautiful. The tapestry that God has woven in His Word is a reflection of Himself.

We have seen that. But that is a sight given to very few. And it's fewer and fewer as the years go by.

Because believers do not take the time. They do not have the confidence in the Scripture. They're afraid if they look at it too closely, it will unravel.

And so they don't look. And they drink the Kool-Aid. They believe the lie.

They accept the propaganda that science has pretty well disproved the Bible. I want to believe it. And so what I must do is just do the hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil thing.

I don't want to look at science and I don't want to look at the Bible either. I'm just going to hold to my faith blindly, lash myself to the mast and pray that Jesus comes back before I lose all hope. Locust swarm.

Sting of the scorpion. Multitudinous. Unavoidable.

That's what we live in today. What is the solution? Who is completely unaffected and could care less about this locust swarm or any sting that might come from it? Those that have the seal of God. The Word of God stands firm having this seal.

The Lord knows them that are His. Remember that? The Lord knows them that are His. The question is, do them that are His know Him? How many times have we seen it in Ezekiel? Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

Then you shall know that I am the Lord. There's no excuse for you and for me to not know that He is the Lord. There's no excuse for us to not stand firm having this seal.

The Lord knows them that are His. We can look forward and apply what we see in the future in Revelation just the way we look at the Old Testament and apply what has happened in the past. It's just as sure.

It's just as inspired. And it's just as meaningful for us. We have to make sure that we have the seal of God that we actively possess and avail ourselves of the seal of God.

What is the seal of God in your soul and in my soul? It's God the Holy Spirit. Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 2. We are sealed by the Spirit of God unto the day of redemption. We have to avail ourselves of that.

It is going to come. You're going to hear seemingly incontrovertible arguments that say you're doing it wrong. You're missing it.

Your Christianity is messed up. You're not involved enough. You're not working enough.

You're not productive enough. Where is your fruit? Where is your work? People will throw the book of James at you. People will throw science at you.

People will throw philosophy at you. People will throw history at you. People will throw goofball believers at you and say, are you really claiming to be a Christian? Look at these goofy believers.

It's the locust swarm. And we have to stand firm. We have to recognize where the power of God is in our lives.

It's in the Word of God and the Spirit of God. And that is our seal. Well, we go on in Revelation chapter 9 verse 13.

The sixth angel sounded. I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar saying to the sixth angel at the trumpet, Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. Let me read you something.

This is from Dr. Criswell's expository sermons on Revelation. And the four angels who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. Now the number of the army of the horsemen was 200 million.

I heard the number of them. And I saw the horses in the vision, and those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow. And the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone.

By these three, a third of mankind was killed by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. Now, these four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates, I'm going to read you from Dr. Criswell's deal here in a minute. But the Euphrates is a very symbolic river.

It is the river that runs from the mountains of the north down through the Taurus mountain range down into the Mesopotamian valley and eventually empties out. But that valley, that is universally recognized as the cradle of civilization. That's where everything began.

That is the location of the great sin that was committed before the flood. That's where civilization was when God smelled the stench of it coming up in his nostrils. And the imagination of man's heart was only evil all the time.

And when men began to repopulate after the flood, where was the Tower of Babel constructed? That same valley, defined by that same river. So the great river Euphrates, when you think of its symbolic value, not only its location, but what has happened in that spot on the planet. You think about the entire surface of the earth, that location, that's where sin became so egregious that God had to bring the flood.

That's where sin became so egregious that God had to scramble the languages at Babel. It is the river that once ran through the Garden of Eden and essentially was, you want to talk about pollution, it becomes the river that defines an area of sin rather than the area of God's provision and God's perfection. So these four angels who come up out of the river Euphrates, and this also has literal overtones, everything centers on the Middle East in the end times.

It just goes without saying. So these four angels who have been prepared for the hour and day, remember four is the number of completeness on the earth, the four winds, the

four corners of the earth, this is totality on the surface of the earth, four dimensions, four points of the compass, and so on. And they release this army that kills a third of mankind.

The army number is 200 million. When Xerxes went forth and attacked the Greeks, he had one of the biggest armies that had ever been seen on the face of the earth and it was two and a half million. Ancient Greek historians tell us that there were 2.5 million troops, one of the biggest armies that's ever been seen on the face of the earth.

Well, this is vastly greater than that. You get the idea that there is a soldier for each person that's going to be killed at this point. You've already lost a lot of population due to celestial events and a third of this and a fourth of that being wiped out.

But these armies are released to kill a third of mankind and it's going to be widely dispersed. It's almost another version of the locusts. And this is physical destruction rather than this no killing.

The first swarm, the locusts, could only hurt men for five months. They couldn't kill anyone. This army is going to slay a lot of people.

What is this army composed of? What does it mean in the end times? And what is its interpretive and application type value for us? That's what we'll look at when we come back from our break.