

Rev 26-02-04a

Greetings fellow members of Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 4th of February 2026. Time does march on.

We're in the book of Revelation. We're in chapter 9. We are looking at the trumpet judgments and seeing how important it is to understand the context here as it pertains to angels. What happens in the air where these trumpets are blown.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and we'll begin. Father, what an opportunity we have to live in this age at this time to see human history rapidly approaching its culmination, the climax of the revelation of your grace and your love in the Lord Jesus Christ, the time being at hand for the fulfillment of the hopes and aspirations of Old Testament saints who, like Abraham, waited for a city whose founder and builder is you. We pray that as we spend this time together looking at your word, that God the Holy Spirit will help us to see clearly not only what it means and what it portends, but the effect it should have on us as we expend the opportunities of each day, as we spend the capital that you give us in terms of redeeming our time, knowing that the days left to themselves are evil.

We pray that in all things, the Lord Jesus will be glorified. We ask it in his name. Amen.

Let's read our passage. We saw these trumpets unfold. We'll go back to the beginning of chapter 9. We saw that the third and fourth trumpets were especially destructive.

At the end of chapter 8, we took a detailed look at Wormwood last time. My personal belief is that this falling star represents Satan. He's going to reappear in chapter 9, represented in a different way symbolically.

When the fourth angel sounded, a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. And this cosmological effect of that fourth trumpet, four out of a set of four, is significant because it's more than physical. It's more than cosmological in the sense we understand the sun and moon and stars, that they won't be as bright.

That would be relatively minor compared to other things. But we know from the book of Genesis and the dream of Joseph, both he sees the sheaves bowing down to his sheaf in the field. He sees the sun and the moon and stars bowing down to him.

And that is more than just his family. That harks forward or anticipates many things that Joseph represents as foreshadowing the Lord Jesus Christ. And stars are commonly associated with angels in both Old Testament and New.

So we understand that when there is darkness in the skies, they talk about the storm clouds gathering for war. If you've seen the winds of war and war and remembrance screen depictions

of these books, I believe they were by Herman Woke, but the winds bringing storm clouds gathering, darkness approaching, and there is going to be war in heaven. We will see it a few chapters hence.

And so this, I think, anticipates that fact and shows us that this is at God's time of choosing. It is God's place that he has chosen for these to take place. Well, that brings us to chapter nine.

And of course, if there's war in heaven and darkness in heaven, it is going to be even worse for the inhabitants of the earth because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet. So in chapter nine, the fifth angel sounded, I saw a star fallen from heaven. We will see later on in Revelation that there is an angel who descends to the earth to open the bottomless pit.

You can check that out in Revelation chapter 20. But this one who has fallen from heaven is given the key and he opened the bottomless pit. Smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace.

This is the source of darkness. The sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. You think about the obfuscation of the truth in our day.

It has ever been thus. I am fascinated to read accounts from 100 years ago, 125 years ago, having rehearsed another biography of one of my favorite historical figures, Theodore Roosevelt, and seeing the machinations of machine politics and corrupt individuals, the trusts, the rich who were endeavoring to create and maintain monopolies and sweatshops. And there was a lot of evil in that day that we don't think of nearly as clearly as we do what we see around us today.

But it has ever been this way. The fallen nature that we all possess can manifest itself in great, great darkness. You look at the happenings in communist countries in the last century and the number of dead as a result because of greedy and manipulative people who will aggrandize themselves at the expense of, and often at the cost of the lives of thousands of other people.

It has ever been thus. It is that way now. But this smoke of the darkness that arises from the pit tells us something because there are some things we know about the pit.

And this is the Abusan or the Abusas, and is the bottomless pit in the King James. And once you see this, you'll never think that these upcoming locusts or helicopters or whatever some more fanciful interpretations have been in days past about what is emerging from the pit. The Abyss is the home of demons.

And when I say home, I would say more like residence, and not all of them. But there are a number of demons who are incarcerated there. There are other demons who do not want to go there.

I'm using the term demon and fallen angel interchangeably. There are some who distinguish those two. I don't think the distinction is worth trying to figure out.

They are minions of Satan. They are imps of darkness, etc. So these individuals are of two or three different sorts.

I can see two pretty clearly in scripture. One are those who with Satan roam the earth seeking whom they may devour. They can possess, they can indwell, they can influence events, they can oppress human thinking.

They are loose in the world. There are others that are incarcerated. And these incarcerated demons are going to be released at this time.

We know that the Abyss is the location for many demons from passages such as Luke 8, verse 31, when you think of the legion that Jesus is going to cast out of the Gerasene or Gadarene demoniac. And they beg him that he would not command them to go out into the Abyss, that they remain free to indwell other physicalities on the earth. They do not want to be commanded into the Abyss.

And if Jesus had commanded that, they would in fact have gone and be with these entities that are under lock and key in the Abyss that we see in our chapter. We're going to see this again in Revelation 11, verse 7, at the end or close of the ministry of the two witnesses. They will finish their testimony in Revelation 11, 7. The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.

So whether you see the falling star as emblematic, whether you see the release from the pit that we're about to view, a verse or two hence, I think this is Satan. And he is going to ascend out of the bottomless pit to make war against the witnesses. He will overcome them and kill them.

And he's going to believe that he's won a great victory. I wonder if he doesn't have a copy of Revelation or he doesn't believe it. Revelation 17, verse 8, the beast that you saw was and is not and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition.

Again, this is 17, 8 of Revelation. He's the beast. Notice the Lord Jesus is He who is, who was, and who is to come.

This Satan and his representative beast, this is the beast that was and is not and will ascend. Again, when he's in the pit, it is as though he is not. He's off the scene, out of action, invisible, powerless.

But he will ascend and go to perdition. Those who dwell on the earth will marvel whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world when they see the beast that was and is not and yet is. He is not and yet he is.

Thought he was gone. He's back. Revelation 20, verse 1 and verse 3, this is what I alluded to earlier when an angel who comes down from heaven having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand is going to bind Satan and cast him into the abyss.

In verse 3, will shut him up and set a seal on him so that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are finished. After these things, he must be released for a little while. Notice this angel in verse 3 doesn't fall from heaven.

He descends. He's in controlled flight, as it were. In Romans chapter 10, verse 7, who will go into heaven to bring Christ down or who will ascend into the abyss, that is to bring Christ up from the dead.

And the dead here, whether it is Sheol or those who sleep, is put for those who were and are not and yet they are. They seem to be gone and gone for good. The materialists and the secular humanists and the atheists and most of your agnostics believe that when you die, they get the unto dust thou shalt return, but they don't have any belief in those who will be resurrected and who will return and what kind of resurrection will apply to various individuals based on the decisions, the choices that we make in this life.

But it's translated there who will descend into the deep or the abyss. Satan is going to be confined there, as I said, Revelation 20, verse 3. This is Satan. He is going to the place of demon incarceration and he is going to release those who are incarcerated there.

This greatly simplifies the following verses. It becomes trivial to understand what's going on with what is released from the abyss by paying attention to this context. So we keep reading.

He opens the bottom of the pit. Smoke arises. This is darkness.

This is the darkness that men love when they don't come to the light. They don't love the are not drawn to the light. They don't want to ask a reason for the hope that is in us.

They love darkness because their deeds are evil, their thoughts, their intentions, their nature is evil, and they are unrepentant. So this darkness has a demonic source in this context. When they are released, darkness comes with them.

Darkness precedes them. Darkness is their signature. When the Lord Jesus comes, He comes in light and glory.

Behold, He cometh with clouds. The Lord Jesus doesn't come with smoke. It would be a whole different kind of hallelujah, wouldn't it, if we were singing, Behold, He comes with thick black smoke.

Not something to look forward to, but that's what accompanies these entities and precedes them. The sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. There is a deleterious effect not only on the earth by the release of these demons, but also in the heavens.

It isn't a trivial thing, the conflict, the war between those who are loyal to God, the unfallen angels, and the rebellious fallen angels led by Satan. Satan and the fallen angels are capable of

waging war. They are capable of doing great damage.

They have to be opposed by unfallen angels. You see this among other places in the book of Daniel. So out of the smoke, locusts came upon the earth, and to them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power.

They are given power. It does not say by whom. I think this is similar to the power that is granted to Satan in the first couple of chapters of Job.

God says, you think that if you are given this latitude, this wherewithal, that you will be able to make your case and prove your point and prevail in your plans and purposes? Fine, I will give you the rope to hang yourself, so to speak. So it is given to them. They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth or any green thing or any tree, which tells you right away that these aren't real locusts.

Real locusts, those are their targets. That's exactly what they decimate. You go back to the plague of locusts in Exodus 10.

You go back to Amos and the description. Just look at history and the horrific devastation that giant waves of locusts can perpetrate. Read the Little House on the Prairie books.

They had a locust experience that Laura Ingalls Wilder writes about, and that is an eyewitness account from someone who sat in a house and emerged to find everything edible completely gone. Very graphic. She was a gifted writer.

But these are commanded not to harm the grass of the earth or any green thing or any tree. A real locust would say, what's the point? That's all I eat. But these, of course, are demons.

They are only allowed to harm those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. This requires sentience. This requires the ability to observe the seal of God, which is likely a spiritual seal.

We are told that we are sealed unto the day of redemption. And you look at Ephesians 1, 13 and 14, for example, in him, the Lord Jesus, you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit. We have nothing to fear from demons.

Those who have been sealed in this context, in the earlier chapter, this doesn't touch them. You could imagine that they might have loved ones. There might be those over whom they would grieve and suffer heartache because of their unbelief, refusal to repent.

And these are some of the tears that will be shed in advance of reaching the place where there are no more tears, no more sorrows. But you see this also in 2 Timothy 2, verse 19, the solid foundation of God stands having this seal. The Lord knows those who are his.

So let everyone who names his name, the name of Christ, depart from iniquity. If we have the

seal, we ought to act like it. We ought to be visible.

Even if the seal is invisible, our status as those who love the Lord Jesus ought to be easily discernible by those around us. The green vegetables were eaten in Exodus chapter 10, verses 12 through 20 by the literal locusts. Same thing in Joel chapter 1, verses 4 through 7. The chewing locust, what the chewing locust left, the swarming locust ate.

What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten. And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten. The chewing, the swarming, the crawling locusts have come and there's nothing left.

Awake you drunkards and weep and wail all you drinkers of wine because of the new wine for it has been cut off from your mouth, et cetera. And we see that this locust plague has primarily spiritual application to those who are drunk with wine wherein is excess rather than filled with the spirit in our day, for example. So they have here the power to torment men five months.

This five month period is, if you will notice, repeated twice. So in verse five, they were not given authority to kill men, but to torment them for five months. Their torment is like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

In those days, men will seek death and will not find it. They will desire to die and death will flee from them. And if you look down at verse 10, it says once again, their power was to hurt men five months.

The only equivalent period of time that comes to mind in scripture of five months, which in a 30 day month would be 150 days, is the flood of Noah. Once again, a judgment on the unrepentant. And you can go back and check that out in Genesis six through eight.

But five months, 150 days, they are allowed to hurt, but not to kill. So this requires sentence. Once again, it points to locusts.

Let me offer you some thoughts about demonic oppression, because again, this is a prediction of what's going to happen in the time of Jacob's trouble on the earth to those who, when they are of faith, will be heirs of the Old Testament covenant promises. We are the church. We will be in heaven.

There's not going to be a mixed multitude and some are Israel and some are church. And God is not the author of confusion. We will be in heaven.

And we think, well, then I've got nothing to worry about. This is written for our instruction. So what should we learn from it? First of all, notice these characteristics.

The shape of the locusts in verse seven is like horses prepared for battle. On their heads are crowns of something like gold. Their faces are like the faces of men.

They have hair like women's hair. Their teeth are like lion's teeth. They have breastplates like

breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings is like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle.

They have tails like scorpions, and there are stings in their tails. Their power is to hurt men for five months. They have as their king, the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon.

In Greek, he has the name Apollyon. So this is serious stuff. I want to go ahead and read the sixth trumpet because all of this trumpet judgment is from the angelic perspective.

And we're going to see some pertinent context. In verse 13, the six angel sounds, I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God saying to the six 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 and the day and the month and the year were released to kill a third of mankind.

The number of the army of the horsemen was 200 million. I heard the number of them. This is not a symbolic number.

John emphasizes, this is an actual literal number. I've got so much to say about these four angels, the timing, the number of them. What I'm interested in is what John sees in verse 17 and following.

I saw the horses in the vision. 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.

Notice this, this is another aspect of what we're seeing in the fifth trumpet. Lion's teeth, lion's heads, out of their mouths come fire, smoke, and brimstone. Notice three things, fire, smoke, and brimstone.

By these three, a third of mankind was killed by the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone, which came out of their mouths. Remember going back to Amos chapter one, there are, was that Amos or Joel? The reference to the chewing locust and the swarming locust and the crawling locust, the three different kinds. You have the same thing here.

Three methods by which, and these, this is an acceleration because men were hurt for five months and explicitly not killed. Here, a third of mankind is killed. And because you can do mathematics, and if you, if you choose to believe that the fourth of the population of the earth that was slain earlier during the seal judgments, if you take away a fourth and then you take away another third of what's left, that constitutes half.

I'm not a great math guy, but take three quarters of something, and let's say you had a hundred and you kill a quarter that leaves you 75. And then if you take a third of that, that's 25, that leaves you with 50 out of the original hundred. Makes sense? So at this point, if those are separate depictions of death judgments, half of the world's population has been slain with this

sixth trumpet.

Notice verse 19, their power is in their mouth and in their tails. Their tails are like serpents having heads and with them they do harm. We saw the tails and the faces in the fifth trumpet judgment.

Their teeth are like lion's teeth. Here, their heads are like lions and their tails in verse 10 are like scorpions. Here, their tails are like serpents having heads and with them they do harm.

And there is a great amount of similarity in the mechanisms by which these depicted creatures perpetrate their harm. At first, they have a scorpion sting, usually not fatal. It accelerates in the sixth trumpet to a serpent's bite, which often was fatal with the poison snakes in the ancient world, the asps, the adders, the cobras, and so on.

So I'm interested in absorbing these details and observing them and figuring them out. So we'll look a little bit together at the description of these demonic entities, because that is what they are. There are two sources of them.

The first, as we've seen, is they're released from the abyss by Satan. Others are bound in the Euphrates. And so you have the four angels prepared for the specific hour and day and month and year in verse 15 that are released specifically to kill a third of mankind, a third of the 75% that's left after the quarter were slain previously.

And where the locusts resemble horses under the fifth trumpet, he says, these are horses and those who sat on them have these breastplates. Now the horsemen seated on the horses are the ones that have the breastplates that are like iron. And these glow fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow.

And their heads of the horses are like the heads of lions. And these three plagues slay people. For us who are interested in making personal application as we go through the anticipatory descriptions here, these prophecies of what will take place after we leave, this is a warning and an education about demon oppression, demonic influence that is in the world today.

Merrill Unger, I've got a book on my shelf called Demons in the World Today. Dave Hunt wrote books about the well-researched and documented effect of demonic activity in recent decades. What does the Bible say about this? Luke 10, verse 19, when Jesus sends his disciples forth to spread the gospel of the kingdom, he says, look, behold, now watch this, Luke 10, 19, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.

Specifically, serpents and scorpions, the minions of the enemy, all the power of the enemy, their scorpion sting, their serpent bite after the pattern of Satan himself. So nothing shall hurt you. This is spiritual protection in the ongoing conflict that is with principalities and the rulers of the darkness of this age that you find in Ephesians chapter 6, verse 12.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood. We're against the rulers, the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness. Notice three different kinds, principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this age, which are the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

That groups those three categories in one lump. The spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places are principalities, powers, and rulers, a three-fold, a three-pronged attack. When they depict Satan with red pajamas and a pitchfork, the pitchfork usually has three prongs, and there's a little something to that, scripturally speaking.

1 Peter 5, 8, I've already alluded to, be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Ephesians 6, 11, this verse preceding the one we just quoted, put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes, the wiles of the devil.

1 John 4, 4, we in the church have this promise, little children, you are of God and have overcome them, these minions, these forces of darkness. We have overcome them in Christ, to the extent that we avail ourselves of our privileges, our opportunities, our resources, our blessings and gifts in Christ, we have overcome them. For he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1 John 5, 18, we know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. We are immune, we are protected, we are sealed. If we voluntarily walk out of the fort, we should not be surprised to find our chest full of arrows.

Luke 4, 18, the Lord Jesus, quoting Isaiah, in the synagogue, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed. This is spiritual oppression, spiritual incarceration, limitation, victimization by the forces of darkness.

You see this many times in the gospel accounts of the Lord Jesus casting out demons, as in Matthew 12, 22, and this demon oppression produced blindness and muteness. The man could not see and he could not speak, and Jesus healed him so that he spoke and saw. This is emblematic of our ability to both perceive and take in wonderful truth and to be blessed by the light and to speak, to communicate, to offer prayer and so on.

We have to take hold of these things. We are to put on that full armor in Ephesians 6, 13. We put it on, it doesn't fall on us from the sky and cling to us like magic.

We are to take it up and put it on so that we can withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm. That's once again out of Ephesians 6. 1 John 4, 1. Do not believe every spirit. Test the spirits to see whether they are from God.

There are many false prophets that have gone out into the world. A large part of this smoke and darkness and oppression and distraction and defeat that comes to the hands of the enemy is through the spoken word and never more so than in this information age in which we live. Remember when the Lord Jesus said in Luke that he had given his disciples authority to tread on the serpents and scorpions.

They returned in Luke 10, 17. The 72 returned with joy saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. Even the demons.

He told them in Matthew 10, 8, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. We have oppression. We have hardship.

You see an example of this in Matthew 15, 22. This Canaanite woman comes from her region and says, have mercy on me. Oh, Lord, son of David, my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.

It is important to remember what we learned in 1 Timothy 4, 1-3. The spirit expressly says that in the latter days, latter times, some will depart from the faith, start out in the faith and depart. I know people of close and personal that to whom this has happened in the latter days, in the latter times ran well.

Who hindered them? Who tripped you? Who caused you to stumble in the race? It's a grief. It's a sorrow. But the spirit expressly says in later times, some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits.

They will listen to and agree, assent, believe, partake, repeat what these deceiving spirits offer. They devote themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons. These teachings come through the insincerity of deceivers whose consciences are seared.

How many times have we noted that we cannot trust the voice of what we consider to be conscience if it isn't enabled and empowered and guided and infused with light by God's Holy Spirit? These people's conscience is seared and they draw weird unbiblical conclusions about marriage or from abstinence from various things. You see whole religious affiliations that are adhered to by millions. I'm talking about the Catholic Church, abstinence from marriage, those who believe that avoiding certain foods is a means of spirituality.

And these things are what God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. That's why we're a Bible Church that endeavors to find and exploit God's truth. We want to know the truth.

We want that truth to set us free as Jesus promised. We can receive with thanksgiving the wonderful blessings that God has given us in human relationships and in physical provision. That's what forbidding marriage and requiring abstinence from foods is a reference to.

These were specific examples in Paul's day of more general oppressions that come from

demonic sources infiltrating the thinking of people who don't have a conscience that functions properly because it has not been enabled and empowered by God's Spirit and informed by God's Word. We have got to pay attention to the Word of God. We have to know and believe the truth so that we are not misled.

We are not deceived into thinking that a way is right when it leads to death. These are demonic principles. This description in Revelation 9 isn't somebody with a big army flying helicopters, shooting missiles from the sky.

This is demonic. The Lord Jesus gave His disciples, His followers, including us, power over serpents and scorpions and all of the forces of the enemy. But like any weapon, we have to know how to pick that weapon up and use it.

We have to know how to implement that power in our lives and to do so always with a view toward living our lives in a way that pleases God. That's the key. This power isn't magical and automatic.

It's not like an alarm system that will go off because somebody turned it on. We pick up the armor of God. We aim this power over the forces of darkness.

We claim it. We go before the throne of grace. We appeal to God for understanding, for wisdom, coming before His throne with our appeals.

So when you read Revelation 9, when you think about the abyss being opened, dark smoke, and creatures like locusts coming forth with all of their powers, and we're going to see when we come back from the break, there is meaning in each of these descriptive observations that John gives us for right now. We'll see it when we come back from the break.