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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets: Satan's Hordes Unleashed

Revelation 9:1-21

Many people wonder constantly why the world is as bad as it is... the level of human suffering in an average day is incalculable; the hospitals are full of emergencies and terminal patients; the nursing homes contain countless lonely people living out their final days in isolation and misery; every day, CNN and other news outlets report terrorist bombings or beheadings; along with the saber-rattling actions of rogue states like North Korea; several times a year, a natural disaster (perhaps an earthquake or a hurricane or a tidal wave or a flood) rocks some part of the globe with death and destruction...

Beyond this, we are aware of millions of normal people utterly miserable with their private struggles – addictions to drugs and alcohol, marriages foundering on the rocks of adultery and abuse, teens wandering off into rebellion in recognizable patterns; not to mention hundreds of millions of people living below the poverty line simply trying not to starve to death while they eke out a wretched living on the equivalent of several dollars a day

Biblically trained and spiritually perceptive people are aware that, behind all this human misery and suffering is a deeply malevolent force – personal, devious, powerful, invisible – his name is Satan, the devil, that ancient dragon, the serpent, the King of Darkness, the “god of this age”, the “prince of the power of the air”... whose invisible empire dominates the human story in ways we can hardly calculate or accurately appraise

Satan and his organized demons roam freely throughout this world, alluring people toward sin, deceiving people, moving people to do utterly despicable things... he is a liar and a murderer, masquerading as an angel of light

Several key passages in the Book of Daniel imply that Satan is actually ruling the minds of non-Christian heads of state around the world... he was the secret power behind the throne of the Persian Empire, and by extension,

since he claims to Christ that all the kingdoms of the world have been given to him, he rules every nation with a dark invisible power

His dark hatred for the human race is immeasurable... his implacable desire is to see every last human being, all of us created in the image of God, suffering infinite torment

His commitment to the misery and destruction of the human race is unshakable, greater than we can possibly imagine.

SO, since this is true, we begin to realize the real question about this present age is not "WHY ARE THINGS AS BAD AS THEY ARE?" but actually "WHY AREN'T THINGS INFINITELY WORSE THAN THEY ARE?" Why do the average human beings around the world on an average day enjoy so much happiness, laughter, pleasure... the joy of natural beauty, the daily beauty of the sunrises and sunsets, the soothing breeze on the face, the refreshing rains in season that water the crops and guarantee another year of food; the delights of family life – of children born healthy, of family gatherings, of cultural celebrations with festive songs... why are there so many happy times? Why is there so little war? Why do the overwhelming majority of people go through the overwhelming majority of their days without experience crime or bodily harm? Why are relatively so few people murdered or tortured? Why is there so little pain and suffering... if Satan is so powerful and his hatred is so great?

It cannot be because Satan is showing us some kind of mercy... that he somehow feels sorry for the human race and is letting up a little bit; nor that his power is waning, that he is losing his grip... NOT AT ALL

The answer that comes from the Bible is powerful: Almighty God is sovereign over all things in the universe... including Satan's powers to inflict harm on the human race... God is RESTRAINING Satan and his demons from doing all that he could... not just to the godly people:

Many verses speak of God limiting Satan's power toward the righteous

Job 1:10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has?"

1 Corinthians 10:13 God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.

But we will see very clearly in this chapter of Revelation that God has been restraining Satan from doing all the wickedness he would even toward unbelievers and rebels... God is holding Satan back, and reserving the full disclosure of Satan's power for the end of the world

God does this out of mercy even to the rebels that are actively serving Satan and are called “sons of the devil” ... God does this so that some of them may eventually repent of their evil deeds and come to Christ; God restrains Satan and his demons from all the violence they would do

Now throughout history, God has occasionally allowed Satan and his demons more freedom to roam and devour than usual... we can definitely see this when the Nazi’s led by Adolph Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, led by Joseph Stalin... two of the most wicked rulers in history led vast armies of almost universally unconverted soldiers to slaughter each other by the millions... we have to imagine that those two evil empires were incited by hidden demonic powers to inflict levels of suffering, destruction, and death such as had never been seen in human history... neither side motivated by the glory of God or the love of Christ... both of them dark and evil, moved by invisible demonic forces

But that was a mere dress rehearsal... for Revelation 9 depicts the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets, unleashing a level of demonic terror and destruction and death that we can scarcely imagine in our deepest, darkest nightmares

Context:

The Book of Revelation is called so because it UNVEILS things hidden from our eyes... the invisible spiritual realms that surround us all the time – the realm of God on his throne, of Christ at the right hand of God, of the Holy Spirit active throughout the world; also of angels and godly people surrounding the throne in constant worship... it also reveals the hidden power of Satan and his demons, so we can see their reality and wicked actions and plans

But beyond all this, the Book of Revelation unveils the mystery of the FUTURE, of what is still to come in human history:

The Apostle John was in exile in the Island of Patmos, and he was invited on an amazing spiritual journey, to ascend by the power of the Spirit up through a doorway into the throneroom of God... but it was specifically so that he could learn the FUTURE:

Revelation 4:1-2 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

The scene in heaven is essential to everything that follows... Revelation 4 depicts constant worship given to God the Creator

Then in Revelation 5, there is depicted the taking of a scroll from the right hand of Almighty God... this scroll is sealed with seven seals, and no one in the universe is worthy to take the scroll and open its seals... until Jesus Christ, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah comes... he appears as a Lamb who had been slain... he has the right to take the scroll and break open its seals

So, Revelation 5 depicts the constant worship given in heaven to Christ the Redeemer, who bought with his blood people from every tribe and tongue and people and language

Then in Revelation 6, the Lamb (Jesus Christ) breaks open the first six seals... unleashing the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and the beginning of judgments from heaven on the earth

Revelation 7 depicts the redeemed from every nation on earth surrounding the throne, wearing white robes and worshiping God and the Lamb for their salvation

Revelation 8: the prayers of the saints for justice against their human tormenters has been rising before the throne of God; and a mighty angel takes fire from the altar in a golden censer and hurls it to the earth, showing that what's about to happen is a direct response to the prayers of the saints for justice and vengeance...

the seventh seal is broken, and seven angels with seven trumpets prepare to sound them... the first four angels sound their trumpets, and stunning judgments flow from heaven to earth ripping apart the natural order... judgments on one third of the trees and growing plants and the grass; judgments on the sea, resulting in a third of the living creatures in the sea dying; judgments on the fresh water of rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, turning one third of them into poison; judgments even on the celestial lights – the sun, the moon, and the stars, greatly reducing the light they give by one third

The "one third" language of these four trumpets reveals the restraint God is showing toward wicked humanity; as God said to Pharaoh,

Exodus 9:15 For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth.

At the end of the chapter, after the first four trumpets have sounded, we have this awesome event:

Revelation 8:13 As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

Today, we will learn what that angel meant, at least about the first two of those WOE's!!

Today we will see the effects of the fifth and sixth trumpets being sounded

I. The Fifth Trumpet: Demonic Hell on Earth (vs. 1-12)

A. Satan Unlocks the Pit (vs. 1-2)

Revelation 9:1-2 The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. ² When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.

1. The Fifth Angel Sounds His Trumpet: Heaven always holds the initiative!
 - a. Everything that happens in judgment on earth starts with a signal or command from heaven
 - b. The suffering about to be unleashed is a display of the just wrath of God against humanity for their sins
2. The Star that Had Fallen
 - a. Many interpretations of this mystery
 - b. Some commentators don't try to determine what this star is
 - c. However... the star clearly has intelligent, personal features
 - i) The unlocking of a lock with a specific purpose in mind shows this is a personal, intelligent being
 - d. The "star" symbol often refers to angels... as in the Book of Job when God speaks of creation, and the laying of the foundation of the earth:

Job 38:7 while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

- e. But this "star" is depicted as HAVING FALLEN from the sky to the earth... the Greek verb tense is perfect, meaning a completed action in the past
- f. And this "star" unlocks the pit to the Abyss, allowing a demonic horde to billow out, ravaging the earth

g. AND Satan is called (in Isaiah 14), the “morning star, the Son of the Dawn”

Isaiah 14:12 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!

h. AND Revelation 12 depicts him as a dragon who was thrown to the earth

Revelation 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down-- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

i. AND Jesus said,

Luke 10:18 "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

3. Satan unlocks the pit

a. This “star” is given the key to unlock the SHAFT to the ABYSS

b. The word “abyss” literally means “bottomless”... a pit so deep it has no bottom at all; this word is used seven times in Revelation as the PRISON of demons

c. The word “shaft” conjures a narrow neck coming up from this pit, like a deep mine shaft

d. This prison for demons is a place where especially corrupt demons are punished before the end of the world; unlike other demons, they are thrown into that pit and are unable to roam freely on the earth

i) Jesus confronted the demon-possessed man of the Gadarenes

Matthew 8:29 "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

Luke 8:30-31 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹ And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

ii) Peter speaks of demons cast into a place in the Greek called “Tartarus”... in Greek mythology a place of exquisite torment

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment

iii) This perhaps refers to some demons who refused to keep their place but ventured out in aggressive rebellion and did especially wicked things on earth; God punished them by throwing them into this pit

4. BUT NOW, when the fifth trumpet is sounded, Satan unlocks this deep pit and out billows like a cloud of black smoke the worst demons there have ever been to wreak havoc on the earth
5. The effect of this terrifying black cloud of demons is to darken the sunlight in the sky

Imagine if some particularly evil warlord unlocked all the prisons in the U.S. and set free every prisoner to roam the streets of every town and city in America... serial murderers, rapists, thieves, arsonists, utterly lawless and godless, roaming free at last to do whatever they found to do

If you heard that had happened, what would you do? Where would you run to for safety? There are presently 2.2 million people behind bars... 1.5 million for violent crimes

But they are merely human beings... demons are supernatural, able to do far more damage than we can imagine.. and these demons were locked up in a pit for thousands of years – they are particularly vicious; now unleashed with freedom to roam and bring unspeakable misery to planet earth

B. The Demons Compared to Locusts and to Scorpions (vs. 3)

Revelation 9:3 And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth.

1. The whole book of Joel describes a locust invasion unlike any in human history
2. The description of this locust invasion was like a mighty, numberless army riding in tremendous order, row upon row, not swerving to the right or the left
3. Locusts are grasshoppers; usually solitary, under the right circumstances they can become overwhelmingly gregarious—grouping together with thousands, hundreds of thousands of other grasshoppers and swarm, traveling over long distances; the basic issue, they eat green things—every green thing they can find... leaving behind a desert waste, completely stripped of all vegetation

Joel 1:4 What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten.

Joel 1:6-7 A nation has invaded my land, powerful and without number; it has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness. ⁷ It has laid waste my vines and ruined my fig trees. It has stripped off their bark and thrown it away, leaving their branches white.

Joel 2:2-10 *Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come. ³ Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste-- nothing escapes them. ⁴ They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry. ⁵ With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle. ⁶ At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. ⁷ They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. ⁸ They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. ⁹ They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows. ¹⁰ Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine.*

4. Revelation 9 gives a similar image...only now, it's not grasshoppers, but demons
5. So John reaches for a second image... that of SCORPIONS... the deadly desert predator with a curved tail, having a poisonous stinger which can kill humans—but usually only causes immense pain and suffering

C. The Demons Roaming But Still Restricted

1. Even during this final era of human history, God still limits the demons in terms of the damage they are permitted to do

Revelation 9:4-5 *They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man.*

2. First, unlike the locusts of Amos, these demons are forbidden from harming green and growing things... they are coming after human beings... notice also that the green grass has recovered from the first trumpet plague in Revelation 8:7—all the green grass was burned up then, but like grass does all over the earth, it grew back
3. Secondly, these demons are restricted in WHAT PEOPLE they can attack... they are not allowed to harm the elect, those marked with the seal of God on their foreheads... this harkens back to the image in Ezekiel 9:4 of an angel sent throughout the city of Jerusalem to mark the godly remnant and protect them from the coming judgment... this mark is ultimately the SEAL of the HOLY SPIRIT, given to all true believers... it is a direct contrast with those who receive the mark of the beast later in Revelation 13... this is the power God has to protect the righteous while he judges the wicked

4. Third limitation, the demons cannot KILL the people, but only torment them with the scorpion stings... intense PAIN on earth

D. The Terrible Effect: People Longing for Death, But Cannot Die (vs. 6)

Revelation 9:6 During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

1. Here is why some commentators have likened this to “hell on earth”... in hell, no one suffering the torment can ever escape because they never die

Mark 9:47-48 hell, ⁴⁸ where "'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'

2. At the time of the fifth trumpet, when these demons are swarming all over the earth, stinging the unrighteous with poisonous stingers, the agony of the people will be immeasurable, probably the greatest level of suffering the human race has ever undergone
3. People will LONG to die, but they will be unable to find that relief... they will not be permitted to commit suicide, and medical science will be unable to give them any relief from their suffering

E. The Demons Described (vs. 7-10)

Revelation 9:7-10 The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. ⁸ Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. ⁹ They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months.

1. There is a limit to language... Paul says we “see through a glass darkly”
2. John has done the best he can do to describe the appearance of these demonic warriors, but the description is visionary... so John says they “LOOKED LIKE” or had “SOMETHING LIKE” or “RESEMBLED” or had “HAIR LIKE”... or “BREASTPLATES LIKE”... it was really impossible to describe perfectly what these demons were like
3. Horses: very powerful, mighty, bold, ready to charge into battle
4. Crowns: representing their power and authority, invincible, all-conquering
5. Faces like humans: they were rational, intelligent, devising plans... not animals
6. Hair like women: an alluring beauty to them, for Satan masquerades as an angel of light... so these demons were in some sense seductive or attractive

7. Teeth like lions: ready to rid and shred flesh
8. Breastplates like iron: impenetrable by any human weapon
9. Thundering wings: deafening, mobile, able to fly quickly anywhere they wished; THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPE from them... nowhere to run to, or to hide
10. Tails and stings like scorpions: already mentioned; their sole purpose is to inflict torment on sinful humanity
11. Tormenting people for five months: the length of time restricted by God's command... as it is NOW so it will be THEN... the demons are always on a leash by the sovereign power of God

F. Satan's Power Revealed (vs. 11-12)

Revelation 9:11 They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.

1. Their ruler is unveiled, given three titles: the "angel of the Abyss", Abaddon, Apollyon
2. Satan is invisible... the prince of the power of the AIR... he prefers to do his work in a hidden way
3. But this text reveals his power and his nature: he is ruler over all demons; he is thrown into the Abyss himself in Revelation 20 beginning the millennium; and he is a destroyer...the two words mean the same thing

G. A Terrifying Warning of What is to Come (vs. 12)

Revelation 9:12 The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.

II. The Sixth Trumpet: Satan's Armies Slaughter Billions (vs. 13-19)

A. The Demons Released (vs 13-14)

Revelation 9:13-14 The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. ¹⁴ It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

1. The sixth angel blows his trumpet and the next woe comes on the earth
2. The altar in heaven stands continually before God; the physical altar in the tabernacle was made by Moses according to a pattern he had seen of the heavenly one

3. Remember that this altar was the focus of all the prayers of believers in history, prayers for vengeance as we saw in Revelation 8:3; it was also the place of refuge for the martyrs depicted in the fifth seal... this sixth trumpet judgment, then, should be seen as more unfolding of the wrath of God on earth as a punishment for their sins and their treatment of God's people
4. The voice from the altar gives the heavenly command to release four angels who have been BOUND (restrained, chained) at the great river Euphrates
 - a. Again, demons are fallen angels... Jesus said that hell was made "for the devil and his angels"
 - b. Since these four angels have been BOUND, they are like the demons that came up out of the pit... they are chained up for this exact moment
 - c. The great river Euphrates was the northern boundary of the Promised Land, and the source of all the northern invasions that came as a judgment on the people of God, including the Assyrians and the Babylonians
 - d. So, this is an unleashing of a terrifying INVASION by an army of 200 million warriors

B. A Satanic Horde Unleashes a Tidal Wave of Slaughter (vs. 15-19)

Revelation 9:15-19 And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶ The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number. ¹⁷ The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. ¹⁸ A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. ¹⁹ The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

C. What Does this Army Represent?

1. Unlike the previous black cloud of demons, this army of 200 million DOES have power to KILL... the carnage is immense—a third of mankind dies in the slaughter
2. This could be seen as a human army under demonic control... the number FOUR some commentators link to the four world empires predicted in the Book of Daniel—the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman... but this time, they are not named, so just a vast army sweeping the earth and bringing warfare and death to billions of people; other commentators argue that this is, like the last plague, a DEMONIC army

3. The description of the mounted troops is again, like the demons earlier in the chapter, a visionary one—colorful (fiery red, dark blue, yellow as sulfur)... which seem to represent the very suffering of hell itself—fire and sulfur
 - a. Heads like lions but able to breathe fire from their mouths
 - b. Tails like snakes
 - c. Terrifying warriors, unspeakable carnage

III. The Tragic Outcome: Suffering and Death, But No Repentance (vs. 20-21)

A. The Plagues Are Cumulative

Revelation 9:20 The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues

1. One of the worst aspects of these chapters is the sense of these plagues being cumulative... that comes from the words “THESE PLAGUES”...
2. The seven seals led into the seven trumpets, and planet earth has experienced it all in sequence, one plague after another
 - a. The plague on the trees, vegetation, and grass;
 - b. The plague on the oceans, killing 1/3rd of all the sea creatures
 - c. The plague on the fresh water, turning it poisonous and killing everyone who tried to drink it
 - d. The plague on the sun, moon, and stars, greatly reducing the light they gave
 - e. The plague of demons coming up from the Abyss, stinging people and making them suffer but not die
 - f. The plague of death from 200 million warriors, killing literally billions of people
3. The level of suffering this will bring on planet earth is incalculable... and clearly supernatural
4. One would think it would be the greatest inducement possible to repent and seek forgiveness of the God of heaven

B. The Staggering Hardness of Human Hearts

1. Instead, this chapter reveals the staggering determination and stubbornness of people to continue to sin the same ways they were sinning before

Revelation 9:20-21 The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood-- idols that cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹ Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

2. They DID NOT repent... they did not turn away from the WORKS of their hands
 - a. This is a general description of their evil deeds... or it may refer directly to the idols they crafted to worship
 - b. The worship of idols here is directly called the WORSHIP of demons
 - c. With such an overt attack by demons in this chapter, one could understand how a religion of fear would take over... they would seek to propitiate the demons that are directly attacking and killing them by making idols that represent them
 - d. But the general attack on idolatry here uses language familiar to old testament prophets... as in Daniel 5

Daniel 5:23 you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. ... You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways.

Psalms 115:4-8 their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. ⁵ They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; ⁶ they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; ⁷ they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. ⁸ Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.

3. The sins that flow from this idolatry is the same list we always see: murders, magic arts, sexual immorality, thefts
4. This lifestyle of sin SHOULD HAVE STOPPED under such a direct display of the wrath of God

C. Repentance is a Gift of Grace

1. But this shows that, no matter how clear the evidence of God's existence and his power, people will never repent unless God WORKS IT IN THEM by his grace
2. Isaiah was given a mission to preach to the hardened Jewish nation, but was told ahead of time that they would never listen

Isaiah 6:9-10 *"Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving." ¹⁰ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."*

3. This exact passage was used to explain why the river of miracles done by Jesus Christ, displaying the amazing GRACE of God to sinners still did not produce faith and repentance among those who saw him

John 12:37-41 *Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. ³⁸ This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" ³⁹ For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: ⁴⁰ "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn-- and I would heal them." ⁴¹ Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.*

4. In Revelation 9, at the end of the world, the sinners will have an OPPOSITE display of the power of God, one of his wrath and hatred of sin; opposite from the river of tender mercy and kindness shown in Christ... but just as SUPERNATURAL... and YET, they still will not repent

5. Bottom line: repentance is a GIFT of SOVEREIGN GRACE

2 Timothy 2:25-26 *in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.*

Repentance is a form of FAITH, the eyesight of the soul, by which you are convicted by things not seen, convicted of the holiness of God and of our own guilt before his holy throne... even in those final days, the people on earth will not see God on his throne – only the ravages of planet earth in direct fulfillment of the Word of God; they will not see themselves properly as DESERVING such torments... so the miseries will only harden them further

Romans 9:15-18 *"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." ¹⁶ It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." ¹⁸ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.*

D. Hell Will Produce No Converts

1. Therefore, we can venture forth to say that hell itself, the ultimate and final display of God's wrath against sin will produce NO CONVERTS
2. God will not grant them repentance, but they will only gnash their teeth at him forever
3. Our penal system's institutions are rightly given hopeful names like "Reform School" or "Correctional Facility" and "Penitentiary"... meaning you should be reformed, correction, rehabilitated, and made repentant by the time you serve there
4. But hell will not be called by those names
5. Rather, it is a place where people who hated God will forever seethe in their sense of his INJUSTICE and UNRIGHTEOUSNESS in sending them there
6. That is a large part of their GNASHING OF TEETH
7. Recent authors like Rob Bell have an unbiblical view of hell that it will be a place where people come to their senses at last and come to God in love and repentance... forgetting that those things are GIFTS from the SOVEREIGN GOD

IV. Applications

A. Flee to Christ While You Can!

1. The terrors of this chapter are only INK ON A PAGE right now
2. Therefore, they can be read by sinners now with FAITH and with appropriate FEAR and TREMBLING... now is the time of faith; this is the DAY OF SALVATION
3. Christ came to suffer and die the torments we deserve for the sins we have committed
4. He suffered under God's wrath so that we could receive God's mercy
5. See your sins in light of God's law... his ten commandments and two commandments
 - a. Repent of sexual immorality... "Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming"
 - b. Repent of hatred, bitterness and rage... the way you have killed others in your heart

- c. Repent of idolatry, of living for material things—greed, money, earthly pleasures
- d. Repent of godlessness... of living every day as though God didn't matter
- e. Repent now BY FAITH
- f. Turn away from sin and TO CHRIST

B. Understand Satan's Present Limitations... and Thank God for Those Limitations!

1. I began this sermon by talking about how we marvel that things are as bad as they are... suffering, misery, pain, death
2. I talked about evil people, like terrorists and rogue nations like North Korea, who threaten to kill thousands, even millions, with weapons of mass destruction
3. I said biblically, we should marvel that things are not WORSE than they are, given how powerful demons are, and how much Satan would like to do far worse
4. God is RESTRAINING EVIL from running roughshod over every square inch of planet earth and over every human body and soul
 - a. We can't imagine the devastation that would be wreaked by Satan and his demons through evil people every day
 - b. We see the power of God in the chains he puts on Satan and the demons
 - c. Remember the clear terror the demoniac of the Gadarenes had of Jesus, terrified that Christ had come there to torment the demons before the appointed time by throwing them into the Abyss
5. This is the immense kindness of God... that God has carved out of this sin-cursed world a daily peacefulness that gives the gospel an opportunity to flourish without terror and anarchy every day

C. Use The Coming Terror to Proclaim the Gospel

1. On the other hand, this chapter teaches that a terrifying time is coming to planet Earth, a time in which the demons will be unleashed to run wild and cause untold suffering
2. I am not at all advocating that we warn people of that... most non-Christians would think we were bizarre proponents of a cult

3. But there is something FAR WORSE than the fifth and sixth trumpet coming—and that is the terror of Judgment Day and hell... where people will long to die and be unable to, not just for five months, but for eternity
4. We should WARN PEOPLE to FLEE the coming wrath! As John the Baptist did:

Matthew 3:7 Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

5. And to point to Christ:

1 Thessalonians 1:10 Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.