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Revelation

Chapter 9 - Revealing the Forces of the Heavens

The Powers of the Air (7 Trumpets)

The 5th Calling Out - The Indictment Against Pain

(vs. 1-11)

Revelation 9:1-11: Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. And in those days men will

seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them. The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months. They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

This is one of those passages where it's hard to know where to start. And to me, one of the passages that I don't necessarily want to spend a long time in, and yet, we know that it's in Scripture for a reason. And it is to strengthen you, to build you up, to point you to God, and

to help you see things that you hadn't seen before. Thus, the word “Revelation,” “*apokalyptō*,” making reference to the fact that God is unveiling for us things that have been hidden. As we look at this passage, there are a lot of things that probably should remain hidden and obviously are going to be revealed in that day.

When we come to Revelation, what we're talking about is that unveiling, and God is revealing to us why the church needs to be that pillar and support of the truth, why we need to be the light in this world, because left to itself, the world will ultimately go into chaos and destruction. We understand that within us is the Spirit of the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of lawfulness. As Christ would say, “Don't think that I came to destroy the Law, I came to fulfill the Law.” That He is the lawful One. Now, when we're talking about law, we're talking about God's laws, because man has invented a lot of laws that are really destructive and hurtful. But what we're talking about are the laws of God that bring healing and bring life to man. In fact, one of the statements of Moses is, “God gives you these laws that you might have

life. So, you have before you life and death. Choose life.” So, all the way through, we see the wonderful proclamation of these things. But what would happen if, in fact, lawfulness and the desire to do the right thing was taken out of the world? What would things look like? And as we begin to go into this realm and the day that will happen, and what a wonderful day it'll be when the saints are taken up to be with the Lord. *“When we all get to heaven,”* as the song goes, *“what a day of rejoicing that will be... When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory...”* So, it'll be a great, great day to be with Him.

And as Thessalonians 4 says that the dead in Christ will rise first, the cemetery, we're going to actually see some people popping up. And then “we who are alive and remain will be caught up” to meet the Lord in the air, “and so shall we ever be with the Lord”. Therefore, it actually goes on and says, comfort one another with these words. And it really is comforting, because there are just certain days I'm going, “I'm out of here.” And it's the Lord just calling us home. You know, it makes you sick of this home, and it makes you realize that this is not our

home. And the day is coming when we'll finally be home. It's one of the reasons why Peter says we are strangers and aliens. So, we're the aliens. There are aliens out there. It's us, and we don't belong here. But the Lord is going to take us home where we do belong. So, I'm looking forward to that day.

When we come into the Book of Revelation and in this particular setting, he begins with the trumpets in Chapter 8, and it is the indictment of the angelic forces that are bringing judgment upon the world. Once again, whether it's in Galatians or Hebrews 2, or I can give you multiple passages, but the fact of the matter is that God had ordained the angels to oversee the Law. So that if, in fact, as Hebrews 2 says in the Old Testament, the Law was broken, every happening of the breaking of the Law was met with just recompense by angelic forces. And so, you see some horrific things and terrible things going on in the Old Testament because of that.

Jesus comes on the scene in John 3, as you read, and His statement is, "Do not think that I came to judge the world." Of course, we're in love with John 3:16, "For God

so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life.” The very next verse we oftentimes forget, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

So, what Scripture is telling us, I don't want to spend too much time on this because we have a big chapter ahead of us, but if you look in John 12, Jesus makes a statement within the text, and makes a reference in particular to the one that is in the world and is going to bring judgment into the world. And so, His statement is that, of course, Satan has come into to the world, and judgment is actually already upon this world.

If you look with me in John 12:30,

“Jesus answered and said, “This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.”

Verse 31, the phrase starts off with the word, “now”. You see the word there, “now,” which means like now?

So, it says,

(John 12:31) “Now judgment is upon this world...”

Who's judging the world? Well, we know Jesus already said it, “I didn't come to judge the world.” So, it's not Jesus. There are angelic forces that are bringing judgment upon the world. And the ruler of this world shall ultimately be cast out. So, where is this judgment coming from? By the time we read in Revelation, it was coming from the forces that had subjected themselves to the rule of this world. Those who had not are not under the judgment of this world. And it's one of the reasons why God has taken out the saints is because we're not under the judgment of this world. Why? Well, Romans 8:1, There's “therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”

He then says in verse 32,

(John 12:32) “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”

His point is, “If you lift Me up, then you're lifting up no condemnation, and that draws men to Me.” In other words, when men begin to hear the message, you can have forgiveness and there's no condemnation. There's

an allurements there, especially even the man next to Him on the cross. Really? "I would like to be with You today in paradise." He goes, "Today, you'll be there with Me." So, God is revealing to us that He did not come to judge, but He came to seek and to save that which is lost. But there is a god of this world that is judging us. Now, here's the point, and I know that people say, "Well, why would he be judging me?" Because you're sinners, and it doesn't matter if you're Job, it doesn't matter if you're Joshua the high priest, in Zechariah 3, Satan has every right to accuse you. And so, you see the high priest in Zechariah 3 being accused by Satan himself. And Scripture tells us that his garment was stained. Now, this is the high priest. That would be the highest priest. So, by the works of the flesh, no man will be justified before God, right? So, he has every right to declare judgment against us. Our sins and our trespasses are judgments against us. But Christ removed those, and that's why it's important to come to Christ to remove, because only He can do that. I mean, can any man be pure before God? There's none righteous, no, not one. There's not even anyone that really truly seeks for God. And so, there's a reason why Scripture

reveals to us the extremities of Job and the extremities of the high priest, to show us that it doesn't matter how good you think you are, you're not anywhere close. And of course, whether it's Isaiah or Job that stands before God, they both realize, "Okay, wow, You're a lot holier than I thought." And so, that day is coming. So, the point is, that he has every right to bring judgment upon the world. And so, as the saints are taken out, of course, that judgment is released. Because the ones who had no condemnation on themselves were taken out of the world, we're actually that which sustains and keeps back the judgment upon the world. You take us out, and now judgment begins to be sounded. So, every one of the trumpets is really the angelic, and you'll see in the text, it's the angels that are coming with the judgment. So, you have the seven trumpets that are blown.

And as we've looked through, and once again, I don't want to be over-redundant in this, but he starts off with the fact that there's an indictment against us because we've wasted the resources that God has given us. We've actually invested in the transient rather than the eternal.

And that's the great indictment against us. So, we've misused, and of course, the judgment against us is being released upon the world. And the second one was obviously the indictment against the seas, which was us resisting the boundaries and the limitations that God has given us. We have rejected the goodness of God. As you look in the third indictment against the rivers and the springs, one of the great passages in Isaiah 8:6-7, you've rejected the gentle, flowing waters of Shiloah. Now, Shiloah really is an interesting word, not only kind of referencing to a peaceful place, but more specifically, it is the word "sent". It would be actually the same word if you were to bring it into the Greek as "apostle," because an apostle is one sent. How's an apostle like a penny? So, he's one "cent," and so, it was my aunt that put that in my head. Sorry, you just can't get some of those things out. But it is that which reveals God's graciousness to send you good.

But if you read on in Isaiah 8:6-7, it goes on and says, "But you wanted the rivers of Euphrates because it had abundant waters." In other words, you went for more

rather than gentle. And this was the indictment. So, if you look in the third one, it's the indictment against the rivers and the springs.

The 4th one is an indictment against the celestial lights. Of course, obviously, men love darkness rather than light and more specifically, making reference to the fact that man obscures the light that God gives them and misuses them. I mean, God gave man this moon and he worships the moon instead of seeing it as “God gave us this moon to tell us when to plant so that we might reap crops and give Him the glory.” See? Every good gift comes from above. So, God gives us a sun to demonstrate His faithfulness is new and His love for us is new and wonderful every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness. But what do we do with the sun? I mean, the Egyptians said, “Oh, Ra. Oh, great Ra.” Well, we’re not supposed to. They worship the creation rather than the Creator, as Romans 1 says, Who is blessed forever. So, there's a misrepresentation, a mis-allegation, there's a misuse of the things that God has given us, whether it's the resources, whether it's the boundaries of rejecting that,

whether it's the goodness of God, or whether it's the light that God has bestowed upon us. I told Connie, one of the passages in Jude says that false teachers are like wandering stars. And wasn't it the grace of God, when you think about it, to take a wandering star and lead the wise men to the Christ? I always thought that was interesting, because it literally says that the star led them to Him, and then ultimately settled over Bethlehem. And where did they come from? Well, they came from the region of Babylon. They came from the east. So, these are wise men, the stargazers from Babylon. And they confuse things, and they have a tendency to watch the wandering stars, not the ones that you can depend on. And God goes, "Well, we'll use that to bring you to Me." So, it's the grace of God that uses these things. But nevertheless, the indictment is against them.

As we look now in the fifth trumpet, we kind of had a break. As you look at the end of Chapter 8 in verse 13, the break is the worst is yet to come. So, you have the four trumpets, you have seven altogether, the three last ones are the worst. Now, I personally believe the reason why

this is true is because there seems to be a transition from the external influences, i.e. the earth, the seas, the rivers, the things that we've misused and abused and the skies, the stars and everything. It now seems to focus on the heart of man. Because of this, Scripture is revealing that the greater judgment is coming from the heart of man. Jeremiah 17 says, "The heart of man is deceitful, desperately sick. Who can know it?" Well, the question would be, what does the heart of man look like? And God says, "Well, let Me open up the pit, and I'll show you what it looks like." You see, in many respects, and when Scripture talks about Sheol, it talks about Abaddon, in particular, it's going to actually make reference to this in Proverbs 27:20, but it basically says Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied. And if you look at the passage in Chapter 9, as you'll see repeated over and over again, "the pit," it'll use the word "bottomless pit". And in the place where it doesn't use the word "bottomless pit," it uses the word "abyss," which is actually the same word, "bottomless pit". So, the point is that it gives this sense of it's never, ever satisfied. Well, all you have to do is read Ecclesiastes 2 and understand that's the heart of man.

And what's also interesting is that it's referred to as like a cavern or a cave, or what will sometimes be used is the word “bosom” because it's basically the same word. It's like this great cave in which something is held onto. So, it's a picture of what man embraces in his bosom, if you understand that. So, that when John 1 tells us, we beheld the glory of God, the glory is of the only begotten, full of grace and truth, who was in the bosom of the Father. So, the question that we would have is, what's in God's bosom? And God goes, “I'll show you what's in Me.” And He sent His Son. Now, the next question is, what's in ours? And God goes, “I'll show you what's in you.” And he opens up the pit. So, the picture of this passage is really what's in the heart of man and you're going to see that as we go through. So, you say, “Is this actually going to happen?” Yes, it's actually going to happen. But it's also revealing what's in the heart of man. The spiritual things of our life are becoming tangible in the last days. What's going to be wonderful about heaven is spiritual, wonderful things are going to take on tangible physicality. So, you're going to go to heaven, and you're going to eat fruit of life. And there's going to be joy and peace and all

these things, and you're going to see that. You're going to see it. Isn't that going to be wonderful? You're going to see things like love and care and warmth, and these things are all going to be personified, because God says these are reality. See, your faith is reality. Your love for one another is reality. Things here aren't reality, they're all going to be burned up, but the things that are eternal will last. So, water coming from the throne of God is the refreshment of God in physical form. It's going to be an amazing thing. The problem with that is, as you come to the end days, when He opens up the pit, in physical form are the things that man has embraced and has loved, and it's going to take on physical form.

Now, these passages have been dealt with by many a people. And I know that people like to write books and sell them and make money off the Bible. I'm not going to get into that. But here's the bottom line in this. Scripture says what it says. Don't try to invent something. I've had people come to me, "Oh, these are helicopters with guns shooting out, and that's what these are coming..." I said, "It's coming out of the pit." "Well, the pit is United

Nations or something like that.” So, people will have their own rendition of it. It doesn't say that. Let's just deal with what it says. But what it's revealing is the heart of man. It's revealing what is in the pit.

And so, we're going to begin the passage, as it starts off, (Revelation 9:1) “Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth...”

Now, once again, that picture of the star falling from heaven is seen as well in Revelation 12, in which we see Satan literally being cast down, and a third of the angels being cast down with Him. It's a picture of rebellion, but more than that, it's a picture of man's, or we would even say in this context, of this angelic overthrow and rebellious heart, in which, as you read in Ezekiel, that Satan within himself had a desire for more. Now, it would only make sense that God would give him a place where more is never satisfied. So, once again, go back to the Proverbs text. You know, as it says in Proverbs 27:20, Abaddon and Sheol are never satisfied. So, where do you send somebody that's never satisfied? A place that they're never satisfied. Because that's what greed is;

that's what a desire for more is all about. There's not a desire for love. There's not a desire for relationship. There's not a desire for the important things. You know, godliness actually is a means of great contentment, see? When accompanied by this thing called contentment. So, this contentment brings about this kind of peace within our heart.

So, if you look at the passage, it's going to start off that a star falls from heaven. The context is, fell from heaven because of discontentment, wanting more, more specifically.

“... which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.”

Of course, that just makes sense to them.

It then reads,

(Revelation 9:2) “He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.”

Now, once again, “bottomless pit,” “bottomless pit,” “pit,” and “pit” are mentioned at least four times within the text, making reference to something that is unending, never satisfied. The other thing that begins to be revealed is when it's opened, the smoke. And it's also seemingly attached to, if you look in the text, a furnace. Is that the way yours read? So, you've got smoke coming up out of a furnace. So, what's that about? Then it goes on and tells us that the smoke obscures the light and, strangely enough, darkens the air. So, there's darkness coming in. The emphasis, of course, obviously is that the pit is portraying a place of discontentment. Now, let me just stop myself here. This is all going to happen. But what I'm showing you is why it's going to happen. In other words, people murder somebody, but it's because in their heart they're murderous. So, it's revealing a heart, and it's revealing that there is a place where the discontent go. And there is a place when you open that discontentment and you live within that discontentment that it brings about, and it gives this interesting picture, a furnace. It may not surprise you, but “passion” is another word for being red with ardor. In other words, it's like your face

gets red, you become passionate with something. Well, passion usually comes out of the realm of a desire for something, and this insatiable desire that you have. Have you ever heard the phrase, burns with passion? So, the picture is that there's a burning, and out of that burning comes smoke. Now, the smoke obscures the light as well as the air, which is basically saying you're going to have trouble breathing, life, and you won't be able to see. What Scripture is telling us is that your passions obscure clarity of light and life for you. It's the very thing that takes away. The thought is, "My passions will get me what I want," but the only thing it does is it obscures light and sucks out life. It's the only thing it really does. Out of this is going to come the misery. See, Scripture says, "Can you take fire, put it in your bosom, and not catch your clothes on fire?" Well, it's a very simple phrase that it's given, but it's saying it's impossible for you to have these kinds of passion and them not be destructive. People say, "It's just my passions." Oh no, the devil's in that one. And it's not only going to affect you, it's going to affect the things that you do, and all around you, it's going to obscure the light, and it's going to obscure life. You wonder why people are

so depressed? Well, it kind of starts off with they're surrounded by depressed people many times. But then they connect themselves to more, "I just got to have more. I just got to have more." And just a word from our sponsor, this is the reason why I keep telling parents, "Do not give kids what they want." "Oh, if I give my kids everything they want, they're just going to love me." They're going to hate you, they're going to want more, they're never going to be satisfied. It's a bottomless pit. Teach them how to love, which means to sacrifice and to give to other people, and they'll be very happy. But this whole thing of, "I'm going to give my kids everything I never had," is just ridiculous. So, what you want to do is you want to teach them the love of God. God so loved He gave, and we're to follow Christ, right? And the goal of our instruction is love, we're to teach them how to love. So, very clear within the passage. But what is produced is coming out of the pit.

So, right away what Scripture is wanting you to know is that discontentment always brings obscurity. Always. And Paul will say that the god of this world has blinded the

eyes of the heart and mind, he somehow puts in there as well, of man, that you might not see the glorious light of God. And that's exactly what discontentment does. It literally sucks truth out of the room, and life out of the room. So, the interesting picture is that that's what happened.

Now, if you look in verse 3,

(Revelation 9:3) “Then out of the smoke...”

So, it's directly tying the smoke to now these creatures that are coming. I'm going to keep looking at my watch because it's a long text.

“Then out of the smoke came locusts...”

Locusts are very interesting creatures. And here again, for any of us who look a little bit beyond the news of what's affecting our little neighborhood and goes into the world, I suppose most of you know that there's one of the greatest famines that have ever occurred in the world today in Ethiopia. I keep hearing “Black Lives Matter,” but there's a lot of black lives that are dying because there's a great famine over in Ethiopia because of locusts. The

locusts have been so intense that they literally wiped out the crops and they've tried to bring in aid, but because of COVID-19, they cannot get the helicopters in. So, people are dying. I won't get too far, but the ridiculousness of this world that we live in. But what you have is an interesting picture of, with locusts, insatiable desires. A locust can't eat enough. They consume many times their weight far beyond human weight, even, within a day. And when they come in, the masses that they come in, what happens is that the dry weather begins to kill everything for a while, and then all of a sudden a great rain comes in. Just to kind of give you a description of locusts, somehow what locusts do, at first, they're like happy little grasshoppers. That as long as they're not together, they're okay, and they're fine just being separate, really, on the whole. But when things begin to grow, then they start coming together. And in their coming together, their true nature begins to form, and they begin to get intense. They change, they literally morph into a larger size, they begin to morph into a different color, and they begin to get into a frenzy. Once they get into that state of frenzy,

they begin moving in unison as one. And they come out and they just literally devour everything in their path.

There's an interesting picture in the Bible of this in Joel. You ever read the Book of Joel? And if you look with me in the Book of Joel, and once again, we won't spend much time in this. Probably not going to get too far past the locusts today. But in Joel 2, if you'll look with me, judgment was given to the children of Israel because of their rebellion of God, and God says, "I'm going to send out an army." The army that He sends is locusts. Now, He can send any army He wants to, but why would He send locusts? Well, because locusts were an advertisement of who they were. It was a reflection of everything that they were; insatiable in their desires, never having enough. And God goes, "You want to see what that looks like?" So, He sends the locusts. It's impossible not to read this.

So, if you look in Joel 2, He says,

(Joel 2:1) "Blow a trumpet in Zion..."

See how it starts off? That sounds kind of familiar with Revelation, doesn't it?

Then it says,

(Joel 2:2) “A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and thick darkness...”

Have you ever seen locusts? You ever seen what happens? When they come out, the sun darkens. You don't know if it's night or day. I mean, they literally come in such numbers that they darken the sun.

“... As the dawn is spread over the mountains,
So there is a great and mighty people;
There has never been anything like it...”

(Joel 2:3) “A fire consumes before them
And behind them a flame burns...”

Look at verse 4. It's a very interesting description.

(Joel 2:4) “Their appearance is like the appearance of
horses...”

You ever seen the head of a grasshopper? Look at the head of a grasshopper, like a horse.

“... And like war horses, so they run.”

Now, you're going to see the description of Revelation.

But it says,

(Joel 2:5) “With a noise as of chariots

They leap on the tops of the mountains,

Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble,

Like a mighty people arranged for battle.”

Interesting description, isn't it?

Now if you drop on down to verse 24, it reads this way,

(Joel 2:24) “The threshing floors will be full of grain,

And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil.

(Joel 2:25) Then I will make up to you for the years

That the swarming locust has eaten,

The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust,

My great army which I sent among you.”

That's an interesting picture.

If you read that whole Chapter 2, if you understand what Chapter 2 is, it's the locust army that God is sending.

What Scripture is telling us is that God has literally created creatures that reflect your nature. He has literally created things on this earth that display your desires. For

instance, you have fruit trees, but you also have thorn bushes. So, Hebrews says that God who causes the rain to fall on the earth produces some fruit, others thorns; thorns would be taken out and burned. God produces wheat, but in the wheat He produces chaff. He then says in Psalm 1, some of you are like wheat, which benefit other people. Other of you are like chaff, which needs to be blown away and no longer be a part because it takes away from the value of the fruit of the wheat, right? Scripture tells us that there is such a thing as a gentle breeze that gives calm and resolve, and there's a whirlwind that brings confusion and destruction. God reveals to us that there's an ox, there's a serpent, there's a sheep, and there's a locust, there's a dove, and there's a scorpion. And the question is, what's in your heart? See? So, all the way through, in fact, what's interesting in this, as He begins to describe, man could even take an innocuous horse and literally change the makeup of the horse to be a war horse. They say in medieval times, the changing of a horse and making a horse, a war horse, they'd have to pick certain ones. They worked through

their natures, but they would breed them and then they would train them to fight. And these horses were, they say, many times more expensive than any other horse. Their value is incomprehensible, they said. They're very hard to get.

Just to quote some of Job in this, Job 39:19 talks about the war horse in verses 19 through 25, Job 39.

It says, God's asking Job,

(Job 39:19) “Do you give the horse his might? ...”

He is so powerful he leaps like locusts. (Verse 20)

(Job 39:20) “... His majestic snorting is terrible.”

(Job 39:21) He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength;

He goes out to meet the weapons.”

(Job 39:24) “With shaking and rage he races...”

(Job 39:25) “... And he scents the battle from afar...”

He laughs at fear. He does not turn back from the sword. He is literally trained, and from my understanding, they literally trained the horses, not only when they heard the battle cry, but also to long to go into the battle, but they

trained the horses that when they were in the battle, that they would fight as well. And so, the horse was trained to bite, the horse was trained to kick, the horse was trained to trample, the horse was fighting in the battle as much as the man was fighting the battle. Scripture is telling us that man can take anything and bring it into that which, I mean, he takes the garden, and he makes it a horrible place to be because he disobeys God and misuses the things God has given. So, the indictment is, at this stage, the man's heart and God is opening the pit and He goes, "Look what's in there." And you go, "What?"

Discontentment. And what is that bringing? It's bringing obscurity. And what is that bringing? Well, it's bringing an insatiable desire because once you and I are discontent and once we block out the light, then the only thing we have left is feeding our desires. And what does that look like? The locusts.

So, kind of a long way around that one. But if you go back to Revelation 9, you see that there's a great description that kind of adds to the description. In other words, it starts off with locusts, now it's got scorpions, then they're

like horses. So, there's a conglomeration, and it's demonstrating the crazy morphing of our lives and how it just all started with discontentment. I mean, Satan comes to the woman in the garden,

and He says, "You know, you could have more."

She goes, "More?"

He goes, "Yeah. Like, here's something you don't have, evil. You don't have evil. You don't know what it's like to have evil. Evil is pretty cool."

So, once again, what is the word "evil"? Calamity, pain, sorrow, heartache, torture. "You don't have none of that."

"Well, torture, that sounds nice. What is that like?"

"Oh, man, you'll love it. It's a wonderful thing." So, man forgoes his relationship so that he might embrace pain, and his thought is, he'll have more. All the way through man's life, he then takes pain, and he uses it to get what he wants. You ever heard of the word "intimidation"? You ever heard of the word "oppression"? You ever heard of the word "thievery"? That's man using pain to feed his

insatiable desires. That's what he does. So, the picture of the pit, you're seeing these forces come out.

And if you look, it says,

(Revelation 9:3) “Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them...”

Underline the word “power,” you're going to see that several times; the Greek word “*exousia*,” which makes reference to a freedom to do whatever they want. Now, what you're going to see is that, I mean, if you had freedom to do anything you wanted, what would you do? Well, if these creatures could do anything they want, they would devour everything. If they could do anything they want, they would bring pain upon people to get what they want. What would you do? It's a picture of the hell.

So, it says,

“Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power (freedom to act any way that they wanted to) was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.”

Now, He's going to tag onto this and reference pain. So, not only is there insatiable desire, just look at the way

things are going. What do you have to begin with? Well, you have discontentment, you have obscurity, then that obscurity causes an insatiable appetite, and then what does that cause? Pain. Because you don't care who you hurt to get what you want. That's one of the problems with addicts. Once again, I've had parents come to me, "I don't know why my little Jimmy or Bobby or Sue or whatever, I don't know why they... That's not like them to do that." And I go, "An addict can only think of one thing. How can I get my drug?" That's the only thing they're thinking about, and they could care less about you. Now, all around, there's collateral damage and people are suffering, and mom and dad are upset, but they don't care. If they show that they care, it's a ruse. It's a lie. All drug addicts are liars. But they're throwing out anything and everything, and it's almost like they have no sense of conscience. Well, that's true. Because once insatiable desire takes control, there is no sense of conscience anymore, and they don't care who they hurt, and they don't care what they get. It's just more. That's the only thing they want, more. So, what an interesting picture this is.

And so, God gives them a limit, if you look in verse 4, (Revelation 9:4) “They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree...”

The reason why this is being proclaimed is this, that this is a judgment upon men; this is revealing man's heart. And so, God says, “We've already gone through the whole tree thing, the grass. This is not the judgment of this. This is the judgment upon man and his heart. And so, I'm releasing you on this.”

“... but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.”

“And I'm protecting them.” Of course, that was already established at the beginning of Chapter 7.

(Revelation 9:5) “And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months...”

And you're scratching your head, “Five months, five months, five months....” Well, all you have to do is look in science. The longest that a locust will go is 3 to 5 months. God had established from the beginning of creation limitations of pain. They would only be allowed to do a

work for a certain period. It's the grace of God, right? I mean, you allow those locusts to keep going, everything will be gone. I mean, they leave nothing left. But it's the graciousness of God to say, "I've ordained through the very creation of time, there to be a limitation of the pain and the suffering that is given." So, the five months, obviously, is in accordance with the creation of God.

"... for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man."

I did a little bit of reading about this whole scorpion thing. And of course, I'm kind of interested because we've had a few around our house. But the scorpions over in the Middle East, they say, are so intense that it's unbearable. Although, very strange, it would be very difficult, they say, to die of it. You just are tortured by it. So, that what happens, they say, is it inflicts a tremendous amount of pain, rushes through your body. And they say, unlike most pain, which begins to diminish after a while, it increases. So, the sting of a scorpion begins to increase every moment as time goes by. Can you imagine? The passage is making reference to the fact that there is an evil that

longs to do this. Once again, I just want to remind you, these creatures are allowed to do whatever they want for this period of time, and this is what they want to do. So, you want to know why there's a hell? Because this is what they want. This is what's in the bosom of man.

So, it goes on and says,

“... and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

(Revelation 9:6) And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.”

Now, we're going to have to stop here, but something very interesting in the passage is telling you something, as we've been going through, and that is man has twisted and distorted everything that God has created, right? You know what else he's going to distort? Pain. Evil.

Remember, God created the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God created that. There's a reason for pain. There is actually a reason for it. But man will twist whatever God has created and use it to torture, to get his desires, to bring suffering to other people so that he

might be exalted. But man twists pain. And what pain does is it claims lives and makes them wish for the wrong thing. So, when pain is misused, it causes man to come to the wrong conclusion. And what conclusion does he come up to in the midst of pain? "Death is my friend." That's his conclusion. Now, that's not the purpose of pain. The purpose of pain is to demonstrate the depth of God's love. Greater love has no man than this, than one lay down his life for a friend. In fact, nothing could reveal love more or affection more or value more than somebody willing to suffer for somebody else. You could sit with them all day long and give them gifts, but when somebody sees you suffer for them, they go, "That person really cares for me." Man distorts everything that God gives him, and because of that, it creates all kinds of mayhem and sorrow and torment and his ultimate solution, in his mind, is death.

In fact, as you look earlier where you see the horses and the riding on horses, if you look back with me in Revelation 6, we'll read,

(Revelation 6:7) “When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come.”

(Revelation 6:8) I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword...”

What’s the passage telling us? That once again, the work of the twisted mind is to perceive death as the answer and gives that to men. You think of people killing somebody that they said that they loved so they could have an inheritance? Death is an answer, right? And death is the answer for their life. They're going to seek it, but they will not be able to find it. And that's going to bring even the more towards it, because their thought is that that's the only answer. And this is why the church has to be so clear, and the reason why this is written, because it's telling the church, you have to be so clear about the light. People are going through pain, they're going through suffering, they're going through heartache, and they think that the answer, their friend, is death. You're

going to tell them, “No. The whole reason for pain is that you might see that there is Somebody willing to suffer even more than you for you, and you'll begin to understand the love of God, and He is rescuing you.” Could you have ever seen it like this without going through the suffering? And it gives you 20-20 vision. That's the reason for the pain, to bring you into the relationship that could be far deeper. You're never going to get a deep relationship being in the garden with everything given to you. But you are going to get into a deep relationship when you see the suffering of somebody who cares for you and loves you, and you begin to suffer together. And that's why Paul says, “That I might know Him and the fellowship of His suffering.” There's a camaraderie that is built and a strength that is built, and that's one of the great reasons for pain in all of this. But of course, we're going to see in this particular passage how it's so twisted and how distorted. And we'll move on next week as we go.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for this word as You begin to encourage our hearts, not in the pain and the suffering that we see, but in the message that You've given us, that we might proclaim a salvation and a light that comes out of the very thing that man embraced erroneously, that he loved erroneously, and yet You will use pain and even death to proclaim Your love. How gracious You are to use the very thing that we would long for.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. I'm going to call upon you to make that decision inside your heart. There's a cavity there, a place in which you embrace stuff. If we were to open the cavity, what would it look like? Well, the bosom of the Father looks like the love of God. What does yours look like?