

07.19.20

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) Part II

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.

If I were to ask most of you what your favorite passage was, it probably wouldn't be this. I can't help but recall a particular passage as I was sitting over there thinking, God has given me a stewardship and really has given every pastor that stewardship. And the stewardship is to proclaim the Word of God. The Scripture says, all

Scripture is "*theopneustos*," God breathed, and it's profitable for correction, for reproof, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, prepared for every good work. The passage is telling us that means all Scripture, so that you don't just take the ones that you feel like talking about. And as we went through the Book of Jeremiah in the first service and then find ourselves in the Book of Lamentations, the initial thought is, "Can't we just dodge a little bit of the pain for just a little while?" And the Spirit of God says, "No. I've written this for a reason." And as I've gone through it, and there's always some trepidation; people can only hear about pain and sorrow so long. But the Lord says, "I'm going to encourage people through this." And I just thank the Lord for the great encouragement that He gives us when we're just obedient to do what He tells us to do. And it's one of the reasons why we teach through books, we go through books, rather than me coming on in particular interesting, fanciful story time and entertaining you, that the Word of God is purging us and it's making us more like Him, transforming us into the image of God.

The passage in Acts 20, you don't need to necessarily turn there, but it's when Paul is calling together the elders at Ephesus. And I've oftentimes thought about, what would you do towards the end of your life? Of course, 2 Timothy really reveals the end of Paul's life as he's writing to Timothy, and he's telling him, "You need to do this, son, as I get ready to go." As his statement is in 2 Timothy 4, "The time of my departure has come." But in this particular passage in Acts 20, he's saying goodbye to the church at Ephesus. He's saying goodbye to the church. He's not saying goodbye to the pastor, but he's saying goodbye to the church. And he calls the elders together and he says, "I just want you to know that you're probably not going to see my face anymore." He says, "But I want you to know this..." And I just want to read a couple of verses that he declares.

"I just need you to know this..."

(Acts 20:20) "how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house."

And then he goes on, and says, about 7 verses down,

(Acts 20:27) “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.”

Isn't that great? You begin to realize, and as long as I've been in the ministry now, some 35, 36 years, however long, I'm getting old, who's getting old with me? But as long as I've been in the ministry, I realized that the word of God is sufficient, and if I just get it straight, God's going to talk to the hearts. I don't have to know what's going on in your lives, and quite frankly, I'm not sure I want to know. But I do know that God loves you, and He has exactly what you and I need at the time that we need it. And it's just His grace that does that in His Word.

So, as we come to this passage in Revelation, it is revealing, and it is revealing many things. And as we've been talking about from day one, as we've opened the Book of Revelation, that the name itself means “*apokaluptó*,” which means to unveil or to reveal to us things that have been hidden. And so, we began to see the things that the world cannot see, but clearly that had been orchestrated for the church to see. The way that He shows us the things of the heavens and the way that God

sees things is not necessarily Him showing us the heavenly. And I know I'm probably going to be misquoted on this. But it's Him using the physical pictures that we have on earth to describe the heavens, because that's the only point of reference that we have. So, I know some people say, "Well, I read Revelation. I hope the heavens aren't like that." Well, He's giving you pictures that you can identify with so you can comprehend the incomprehensible. Because the fact of the matter is, that there's a lot of stuff up there that we've never seen before. So, if you just kind of mention it, we'd go, "What?" So, it's His graciousness that does that.

Just to kind of give you an example of this, if you look with me in John 3, which the same guy was authoring that Book through the power of the Spirit of God. So, John writes both Revelation and the Gospel of John. But if you look with me in John 3, remember He's talking to Nicodemus, and Nicodemus comes to Him at night. I call it "Nick at night". So, Nicodemus is coming to Jesus in the nighttime. And as he comes to Him, he begins to question Him about things. And of course, Jesus knows what it's all

about, because Nicodemus is trying to get real, but it's very hard for the scholarly mind to get into the realm of the Spirit of God. And Jesus says, "Nicodemus, you've got to be born again because you're not even close. You're thinking that all the books and all the studying got you there, but you're not close. You have to be born again. You have to be born of the Spirit of God. And the Spirit of God reveals these things to you." And Nicodemus goes, "Okay, so I'm going to get back in my mother's womb? Is that what I'm going to do?" And He goes, "Okay, so obviously you're not getting it." And His point is, and Jesus makes this point, He says, "Now, you're a teacher of the law, but you don't understand the things of God? There's something wrong here." So, it's kind of like a gentle insult in which He causes Nicodemus to come to terms with.

But if you look with me in verse 10,

(John 3:10) "Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?"

(John 3:11) Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.

John 3:12) If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

It is not unusual for Jesus to use parables. It is not unusual for Him to use pictures to convey the incomprehensible. And so much of the Book of Revelation are these pictures that are there. And as we've oftentimes made reference to, that one of the purposes of pictures is to stimulate a passion. And the ultimate goal of the Book of Revelation is to encourage the church or strengthen the church or actually empower the church to proclaim, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" So, you take these pictures, and you intensify them and you begin to see, "Wow, is that what it looks like? Is that what it looks like?" And God goes, "That's what it looks like." You go, "You need to come quick." And that's the end of the Book of Revelation. So, the very end of the book says, the bride says, "Come, get us out of here." So, the purpose is to the church to see

things the way that they really are. And of course, He gives these interesting pictures.

As you come to the beginning of the book in Revelation 1, He wants you to see that He's intimately acquainted and involved with the church, and it's the church that is the source of the light of the world through Him. So, He walks among the candle stands. See, that's the picture. Now, if you go to heaven and you're looking for the church to look like candle stands, you're going to be grossly disappointed. But the point is, that is what we've been called to do. Matthew 5, you are the light of the world. So, he says, "You want us to be like a city set on a hill. Let your light so shine before men that they might see your good works and glorify God in heaven."

Of course, Ephesians 5 makes mention of the fact you once were darkness, but now you are light. So, God has called us for this work as a church to proclaim the hope, i.e. light, the message of truth, i.e. light, and the transparency of genuineness of heart to the world. We are the light of the world.

As he goes through the seven churches of Asia Minor, you begin to see that there are a lot of things that are coming in that would in some way obscure or cause the light to be hid under a bushel. And of course, we won't go through all of these, but the church at Ephesus demonstrates a kind of legalism, and He says, "You can't fight evil with evil. You've got to fight evil with good. You're not going to win. You fight evil by bringing light. You don't fight evil by bringing in darkness." So, as He goes to the different churches, He talks to Smyrna and He goes, "You can't be afraid. There's no light in fear." Perfect love always casts out fear, and the love of God is really the light that we proclaim to the world. So, as He goes through, whether it's Pergamum or Thyatira or Sardis, you know, Sardis is so concerned about building a name for themselves. They want their name in lights. They want everybody to know; they have their name on all the writings and all the emails and all that. So, they want their name out there, and He says, "Will you stop it? You have a name, but you're nothing because you're not trying to please Me." And of course, you go to the church at Laodicea, and their perception is that the wealth of this

world is the same thing as the wealth of heaven, and God goes, "It's nothing alike. You say that you're rich and you have need of nothing, and I say you're naked and blind and poor." So, all these things are detracting. Of course, the church of Pergamum, the whole thing of compromise and tolerance had come into the church, and of course, "We're going to be like the world in all these areas," and God says, "Okay, but that snuffs out the light. There's no evidence of the light." So, the picture that He gives you is that you're a lamp, and of course, the paths of the church are like the stars, and they shine brightly, and God has so ordained that the church be the light of the world. It's a great picture.

As you go through the apocalyptic horses that are being conveyed, you see that we're kind of going through time, i.e. horses, and you begin to realize that different powers have come into play. And those powers have, in many ways, brought destruction in the world. And we see the destruction of man upon the world by virtue of the things that he's pursued. What is made clearest is the picture of what is supreme, is the power of the heavens. And you

scratch your head when you first see it, because who is the one who would take the title deed of all creation into His hand? Well, it says, "We looked around, there was nobody worthy to do it. And then finally, a Lamb, as if slain." So, we have this diminutive, this little, little lamb, and then it looks like it's had its throat slit, and it's sort of dangling, and blood's coming all over the place, and that's the One that grabs the title deeds. And we go, "Okay, I didn't see that one coming." See, that's a picture to let you know, because we know what a little lamb looks like, we know how weak that little lamb looks, and we know how tremendously impotent, a little lamb that had its throat slit would look. So, we can grasp this. And God goes, "That's the power of the universe. That's the power that controls everything." And so, it's the Lamb that begins to break the seals. And we go, "What do you mean this power?" Greater love has no one than this, and one lay down his life for his friends. The greatest power is love. And God is declaring this, and this is what rules the heavens. And we go, "Okay, so the Lamb is going to destroy the beast?" "Yep." Why does He need the church to see this? Because the church, in many respects, is

trying to fight the evil the way that the world fights evil. And He says, "You need to be willing to give your life, and you need to be willing to be selfless, and you need to be willing to forgive because that's where the power is." So, He's given you this graphic picture.

As He begins to release, as the final seal is broken and the trumpets begin to sound, you begin to see the spiritual forces, i.e. the wind of the trumpets, the spiritual forces and the influences that have influenced the world, and the things that are in the world that we have misappropriated, all of creation. So, as you look at the very beginning in Chapter 8, you see the trumpets blowing and the misappropriation of everything. And if you just go through it with me real quick, we have in Chapter 8 through verse 11, the first calling out, the indictment against the earth, which we find ourself investing in the transient things rather than... Why did God create the earth? Why did He create everything good? Well, Scripture tells us in Psalm 19 that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows forth His handiwork. So, first of all, it's that you

might recognize the glory of God. Now, man goes, "Okay, I know why space is out there. It's for us to find aliens or water or..." I don't know what else they're looking for, "But something. We're going to boldly go where no man has gone before, and we're going to become like gods." And God says, "That's not why I put that deep space out there. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so are My ways higher than yours. So, just to give you a visual, you know how much higher My ways are than yours?" "No, how high?" "Okay, just how far can you see?" "I haven't seen the end yet." "Keep on." So, there's a reason for creation. Lamentations 3 says that there's a reason why that sun comes up at the time that it does, and it's so dependable. Lamentations 3 says, "Great is Thy faithfulness. Your mercies are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness." See? So that through everything that God has implanted, I mean, Proverbs 8 says that creation displays the wisdom of God. As you go through the Book of Proverbs, you see all of the wise sayings of God. He says, "You want to see how wise God is? Just start looking at creation." "Wow, is He smart." Yeah. So, it's like He's smarter than me.

John 1 ultimately will come to the declaration that all of creation is an act of God's love. And then He takes His word of creation, and He brings it to earth, and He says, "This is My Son." No man at any time has seen God. The only begotten from the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

(John 1:1) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

(John 1:2) He was in the beginning with God.

(John 1:3) All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

(John 1:4) In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

(John 1:5) The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

The whole point of John 1 is to reveal that all of creation was an act of God's love, and then He sends His Son to display that love will die for you. So, what was the purpose of creation, see?

So, as you look at the indictments of the trumpets, the angelic forces are coming and they're saying, "There's an indictment. You've misused the earth." What's the purpose of creation? Well, we've said that the purpose of creation is for us to embrace the transient and the superficial and we hold on to the temporary. And God goes, "Okay, that's not the reason why I created that." We might get so comfortable in those things. The same thing is true with God places boundaries of the seas. "Why do I have the boundaries of the seas?" "To give you limitations." "I thought it was so that I could go beyond my boundaries." So, in almost every case, whether it's the transientness or the boundaries or the fact that I'm embracing the powerful rather than the peaceful, God says, "Why are you going to the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris when you could have the peaceful rivers of Shiloah?" But it's the nature of man to go after the wrong things and to misread the things that God has given him. So, that man, even when you consider the host of the heavens, has loved darkness rather than light because his deeds are evil. And he even distorts the light that's in the

air. So. as we've gone through, we've seen all of the indictments.

The end of Chapter 8 is the worst is yet to come, or the greatest indictment is yet to come. And the indictment that He gives in Chapter 9 is that your heart is so wicked that you wouldn't recognize it unless I gave you pictures. So, people often wonder, “What is hell like?” Okay, so, we're going to open up hell in Chapter 9 and we're going to see what it's like. Now, the point of this is this, that hell is full of who man is. See? And what's very revealing is that it's fueled by man's passion for greed and more, and it's that passion that creates a hostility.

I'm going to try to get past my introduction. If you look with me in Romans 1, what you'll see in this particular passage is, once again, a misappropriation of God's creation.

(Romans 1:18) “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

Now, you see creation, you go, “God is good.” And man says, “No, He's mean.” Okay, so, you've suppressed the truth.

(Romans 1:19) “Because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.”

So, not only has He made it evident externally, but He's also made it internally. You have a conscience, and of course He'll talk about that in Romans 2.

“Because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

(Romans 1:20) For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

(Romans 1:21) For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

(Romans 1:22) Professing to be wise, they became fools,

(Romans 1:23) and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

(Romans 1:24) Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

(Romans 1:25) For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature..."

Which is misappropriation of creation.

"... rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

(Romans 1:26) For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural."

Of course, homosexuality goes into the picture.

And if you go a little bit further, it says in verse 28,

(Romans 1:28) "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

(Romans 1:29) being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness...

The very first word that will describe unrighteousness and wickedness is what? “Greed”. Yeah, the desire for more. And this whole thing of discontentment is a thing that fuels the fire or the flame of hell itself. It says basically in Proverbs, this cannot ever be satisfied, Sheol. It can never be satisfied because it just burns more and more, and it's a place where people are never content, never satisfied. It goes on, it says, if you look,

“... greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,

(Romans 1:30) slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents.”

I mean, almost everything imaginable that is evil. This is the picture of Revelation 9. The pit is opened. The indictment is no longer about the misuse of creation. The indictment is the heart of man, and what fuels the flame in hell. Scripture tells us the reason men go to hell is

because they reject the love of the truth so as to be saved, 2 Thessalonians 1. So that within this particular text, He's revealing to us, as the one comes from the heavens, is cast out of the heavens, and he opens up the pit, all hell breaks loose, so to speak. Now, what is that? Well, whether it's the bottomless pit, which really reveals the fact of never being able to be satisfied. As we looked at it last week, I don't want to rehash over a lot of the stuff that we went through last week. It talks about the great smoke, which obscures. Once again, once you go into the realm of greed, you don't see things clearly. Smoke gets in your eyes. "You do know you have some loved ones here that want to be with you?" "I never saw them." "Why didn't you see them?" "I was too busy working. Too busy going after this or too busy going after that." Why can't you see clearly? See?

I'm still in introduction, but if you look with me in Matthew 6,

(Matthew 6:19) "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal."

(Matthew 6:20) But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

(Matthew 6:21) for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

(Matthew 6:22) The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

(Matthew 6:23) But if your eye is bad..."

"Ponēros," actually translated "greedy".

"... your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

(Matthew 6:24) No one can serve two masters..."

And then it talks about God and mammon. That's greed. Greed or God. So, the passage is revealing to us, what does it do? Well, this is why when he opens the pit, the bottomless pit's never satisfied. Smoke is coming out, and it's fueled by passionate fire that longs for more.

It's sort of like the indictment against Lucifer in Ezekiel 28:16, which reads this way, as God gives the indictment against Lucifer or brings the charge against Lucifer.

He says,

(Ezekiel 28:16) “By the abundance of your trade
You were internally filled with violence...”

We'll put it another way, “By your wanting more and never being satisfied, you were internally filled with violence.” Now, the fundamental point here is that dissatisfaction and discontentment always will bring hate. You need to understand that. That's why in Titus 3 it says they're hateful, hating one another. We used to be that way too. The point is, what makes people so hateful? And the answer is discontentment. That's where it begins. And as they begin to go down the road of discontentment and always looking for more somewhere, whether it's in drugs or finances or something, always looking for more, they become more hateful and more hostile. And that's the picture that you see coming out of the pit. It's an interesting description. So, now your question probably to me is, “Is this actually going to happen?” I would say, yeah, it's actually going to happen. But what's going to happen, is the pictures of who man is, is going to become tangible. Just like the pictures of who God is, is going to

become tangible to us in heaven. It's one of the reasons why I look forward to being in heaven. Because when God is become physical, and I get to touch, love, peace, joy; all those things of God I get to embrace and actually partake in. But the pit is a place in which the spiritual desires for evil things actually have tangibility. And here's another point- God has placed pictures on this earth for us to understand that evil as well as to understand His grace. For instance, Scripture says that if you meditate on the word of God, you'll be like a tree firmly planted by the water, yields its fruit in a season, whatever you do will prosper. Now, Scripture has given us a picture of the success that comes and the stability that comes when we put our trust in God. And you can go out and look at a tree, plant it by the water, and you go, "Wow, that's pretty cool." The same thing is true for evil. So, God has placed things like locusts on the earth, and He goes, "You want Me to show you what it looks like to have an insatiable desire?" Or Paul will say in Philippians 3, "Whose god is their appetite, never satisfied." "You want Me to show you what it looks like?" So, He just sends locusts. You want to see insatiable desire? Locusts, wow.

Those guys will eat far more than their weight every single day for up to how long? Five months, according to the text, and according to the experts. They agree with the Bible. That's pretty interesting. But the passage begins to reveal that and reveals that God has given us a picture of what insatiable looks like. So, these demonic forces that are coming out have the persona of locusts, and He begins to describe. So, every part of the description is a description of what it looks like for you to have greed, and God has given the picture. And He says, "And someday, you'll see it in tangible form. It's actually going to happen."

So, as it talks about,

(Revelation 9:4) "They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree..."

Why? Because their main goal is to hurt man because man is the one that the indictment is against. And once again, the misappropriation in this text is a misappropriation of pain. That God has so ordained pain that it might be an act of displaying love, but man uses it to torture and to acquire more things. It really, to him, is a

goal, if he can oppress people or inflict pain upon people, then he can control them and get more stuff for himself. And so, his insatiable appetite does that. But God had literally created pain for the purpose of demonstrating a depth of love. For instance, when we marry, we say something like this, “For better, for worse, in sickness and health, till death do us part.” Now, if you just take out part of that and you say, “For better, in health, for life,” where's the depth of love? But if you say, “I'll stay with you in sickness, I'll stay with you in difficult times, in hardship, during the worst of times, even to death, I'll stay with you.” Where's the depth of love? So, God has purposed things. God has things for a purpose. But man has so distorted them, and his greed has now demonstrated this inflicting of hate upon man, and that hate is just about causing misery to people so that he can get what he wants.

So, the picture is, and here again, we won't repeat much of what we looked at last week,

(Revelation 9:5) “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."

Expert on this, Dr. Boyer, speaks of the scorpion's sting, and I'm just going to quote what he says. He says, "The scorpion's sting locks the pain nerve in the on position bringing extreme pain, which gets worse and worse." So, you can imagine what it's like. But what takes you back even more is the fact that there would be a bent to bring that kind of pain on people. As one of the things that we're looking at in Lamentations, God inflicts you with pain, but it's for the purpose of giving you good. And look, darkness and pain and suffering may come for a short time, but "joy comes in the morning." And this kind of pain just gets worse and worse. And that's why Paul writes in Corinthians, he goes, "Look, there is a sorrow that leads to repentance, which is good, but there is a sorrow of the world which leads to death. The problem of the world's sorrow is it just gets worse and worse until finally they kill themselves. There's a difference of the two.

So, as the passage goes on, it says,

(Revelation 9:6) “And in those days men will seek death...”

Which once again would be the only answer man can come up with. See, that's the problem, isn't it? That's the only answer he can come up with, “Maybe I'll find some relief in death.” Do you have any idea where these guys came from? Read it again. The bottomless pit was open, verse 1, verse 2. And so, you're going to die and get away from this? Where do you think this is? But of course, man's answer is to run to a place that is just more tormenting.

And it says,

“... they will long to die, and death flees from them.”

(Revelation 9:7) The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle...”

We talked a little bit about this last week with the description of Job and how the horses prepare for battle. They just long to hear the blast of the trumpet, and you can't stop them. Even though a man may jump off his horse, the horse will still go into the battle. They have

trained them so well that the horse will bite, will kick, will fight with the warriors. So, there is this frenzy that begins to kick in, and that's the picture that the passage wanted to say, that there's a frenzy like the locusts of frenzy. Once again, the grasshoppers kind of by themselves are very tranquil and no problem. You start getting them together and they start pulling together, and they get in an eating frenzy, and they'll do that for five months and they'll eat everything in sight. I heard that this great famine that's come into the region of Ethiopia by locusts is now going into India and this is in our day. What an amazing thing. And if you just want to see the immense damage, literally millions upon millions of people are going to starve to death because of this. We're not talking about COVID-19. We're talking about something serious. So, how horrible that is, and we see it in our day. So, who would have thought that these little insects could do so much damage? Who would think that? But God says, "You want to see a picture? This is what it looks like." And this is man in his frenzy of acquiring more. And you get enough of these people together, and they begin to devour each other. And that's why Galatians says, "Be

careful that you don't use your freedom as an opportunity for you to get what you want, because you're going to end up devouring each other.”

So, anyway,

“The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle...”

Of course, if you look at a head of a locust or a grasshopper, it has the same head of a horse.

“... and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold...”

“*Stephanos*” is the word for the crowns there. The point is that their forceful takeover is going to be seen as a victorious act. It's sort of like Alexander the Great taking over nations. Everybody's applauding, “What a wonderful guy.” He was taking over nations. He was killing people. It was an act of greed, but you know he's a hero. He's a hero. So, that's why we call him “great,” huh?

But it says,

“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.”

What is that telling us? What's at the heart of all of this?
Man.

“... their faces were like the faces of men.

(Revelation 9:8) They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions.”

Boy, that'd be an amazing thing to see, wouldn't it? I've seen some movies, but you've not seen anything like this. What's interesting about this is, and it's definitely true at this time, there were Arabian warriors, they call them Saracens, or there were other Arabian warriors that called themselves Hagarenes. And strangely enough, they were identifying with Sarah, Abraham's wife, and Hagar, Abraham's wife, and these warriors, would come in their long hair and take on the clothes of women as well as the names of women in their battle. They were said to have been very treacherous, but it was a horrible picture to see these warriors coming at you. They had an insatiable desire, wouldn't stop at coming at you. What it's demonstrating is a distortion of every conceivable kind, and the passage is revealing that when God gives you over to your degrading passions, things aren't going to get

better. They go under greater degradation. And this is the picture that is being conveyed.

And he says,

(Revelation 9:9) “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.

(Revelation 9:10) They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.

(Revelation 9:11) They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon...”

Which means “destruction”.

“... and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.”

It's where we get the word “Apollo”. So, don't name your dog “Apollo”. But the name “Apollyon,” means “destroyer”. So, in both of those cases, who is coming? The god of destruction. And who has this world embraced? The god of destruction. And you wonder why there's so many problems in homes. So, at this point, God is turning to the church, the seven churches of Asia

Minor, and He's saying, "This is what we're up against." There's the power of insatiable greed that is eating. And of course, you go, "Yeah, that's where I work." But you see it permeating the earth. It's a lot worse than you think. And that antisocial behavior is permeating our society more than ever.

Once again, you think of 2 Timothy 3, what does it say? In the last days, perilous times will come. "Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents." Why does it throw all that stuff in? Because it's basically saying you're going to have an incorrigible world, and it's going to go to the realm of lawlessness, and we're already seeing the spirit of lawlessness, as Paul says, at work within the world today.

Why is Scripture telling us all these things? Look, you need to know what we're up against. Now, Scripture has already told you that the way we fight this is by light. That light will overpower the darkness, see? But you have to understand how the battle is won. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.

And so, how do you defeat evil? By doing good, according to Romans 12, right? So, we're in a battle. You have to know how to fight, and you need to be vigilant in your fight. You need to let your light so shine before men that they might see your good words. Because we are, as it were, at this time, the staying power of all this evil. When the church is taken out, the pit is opened up. But until then, the church is to be that light. Now, if in fact the light is not bright, how great is the darkness? Because we're the only light in the world. So, Scripture is revealing to us, you've got to see how evil evil is. Otherwise, you become complacent with it. You go, "Well, it's just a little discontentment." Do you have any idea where discontentment leads? It will always lead to hate. It will always lead there. And it will go from an insatiable desire to meet whatever you want to the point of just enjoying inflicting pain. You'll literally come to a point of, "I just like making people miserable." It's a psychopath. So, you'll go basically from this point of, "Well, I just wish I had more." See, when Scripture says, "Come to Christ, take on the image of Him," He's saving you, and He's saving all that

you influence. And if you'll be that light, you can rescue so many in this day. Shall we bow our heads?

Closing Prayer:

Father, I want to give You thanks for Your word and for revealing to us Your truth, once again, of things that are unseen but will be revealed in that day. But You have allowed the church to see what this evil looks like and the personification of it, and how horrific and destructive it is. It is Your goodness that has filled us with Your light. And once we were in darkness and once our thinking was twisted and distorted, but You're changing us into Your image and how wonderful that is. May we as a church be vigilant to do what You've called us to do, to walk in Your selflessness and in Your sacrifice rather than pursuing the things of the world. May we not love the world nor the things in the world. For if we do that, there's a realization that the love of the Father is not in us. Lord, change our hearts even today.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm just going to ask you to evaluate the things that you're going after. Revelation is revealing things to us and revealing to the church what God has called us to do. There is something in all of this that just makes us cry out, "Would You come soon? We need You to come soon." Which is a wonderful call, which is a wonderful cry. Nevertheless, may we be faithful until He comes.