

Woe to Those Who Dwell On the Earth

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[0 : 00] It's my joy to preach God's Word to you this morning. If you are new and you don't know me, my name is Sean. I'm one of the pastors from Trinity Cambridge Church. And we are in a series in the book of Revelation.

Revelation is a difficult book. We're not one of those churches that are overly fascinated with the end times in the book of Revelation.

It just happens to be the book that we are going through. And all of Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for us. And so we're in Revelation 8, verse 13, the very last verse of chapter 8.

And we're going to go all the way through the end of chapter 9. So if you don't have a Bible, please raise your hand. We'd love to bring a copy over to you that you could use and you could have. Revelation is the last book in the Bible.

Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Father, we come to you recognizing how much we fall short of your glory.

[1 : 20] And we thank you for the opportunity you give us for repentance and faith and salvation. Lord, I pray for those who do not yet know you, who have not truly repented of their sins here in this room.

Would you bring them to godly sorrow that leads to true repentance? And Lord, I pray for those who have repented, your people, those who are sealed with the Spirit of God who are here this morning.

Would you encourage them and assure them of your protection, your, of how they have their identity in you so that they need not fear the great tribulation and the judgments that you will bring.

And remind us, Lord, most of all, of Christ and the work that he has done for us to save us from these dire judgments that we will read about today.

Speak to us as you always do, God, from your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please stand for the reading of God's Word from Revelation.

[2 : 50] Starting in chapter 8, verse 13. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Then I looked and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead. Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow.

And the fifth angel blew his trumpet and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.

Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

They were allowed to torment them for five months but not to kill them. And their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. And in those days people will seek death and will not find it.

[4 : 05] They will long to die but death will flee from them. In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold.

Their faces were like human faces. Their hair like woman's hair. And their teeth like lion's teeth. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron. And the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle.

They have tails and stings like scorpions. And their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails. They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon.

And in Greek he is called Apollyon. The first woe has passed. Behold, two woes are still to come. Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.

So the four angels who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of mounted troops was twice 10,000 times 10,000.

[5 : 20] I heard their number and this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them. They wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur and the heads of the horses were like lion's heads and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths.

By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. For the power of the horses in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads and by means of them they wound.

The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood which cannot see or hear or walk nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated this time. In his famous Sermon on the Mount Jesus gives us a list of beatitudes or the series of blessed statements.

Blessed are they or happy are they who are poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of them. Happy are those who mourn for they will be comforted. Happy are the meek for they will inherit the earth.

[6 : 44] Happy are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled. Happy are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. Happy are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy are you when they revile you. Others revile you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me for in the same way they treated the prophets who were before you.

but sometimes as we live in this world Christians have a hard time believing that these beatitudes are actually true. Sometimes it seems happier in this sinful world to be rich and proud in spirit rather than poor in spirit.

To laugh rather than to mourn. To be pushy rather than meek. To be full and self-righteous rather than hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

To be fighters rather than peacemakers. To be praised and admired rather than to be reviled and persecuted for Jesus' sake. Have you ever felt that way before?

[7 : 52] And if you've been tempted to think in these ways before that temptation is from our enemy Satan who lies and hides the true spiritual reality of things.

We know from 2 Corinthians 11 11 and 14 that even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light which is where we get the name Lucifer which means bearer of light.

It also comes from Isaiah 14 12 which says that the day star which is a reference to an angel was fallen. But he's only a counterfeit. He's not the true day star.

He's not the true morning star. He's not the true angel of light. Revelation 9 says in Revelation 22 16 rather that Jesus is the true bright morning star.

So Satan is only a counterfeit in imitation a cheap imitation that seeks to deceive people and lead them astray. Revelation 9 the passage we're in today unmask the hideous reality the evil reality behind Satan and his lies and his temptations with the purpose of showing deleting sinners showing sinners the true reality of things so that they would repent of their worship of demons and idols.

[9 : 09] And so the main point of this passage is this in light of God's judgments on those who worship demons we should repent of our idolatry and worship the true God. That's the main point of our passage.

First we're going to talk about woe number one the demonic tormenting locusts and secondly we're going to talk about woe number two the demonic killing cavalry. After the first four trumpets which we looked at last week we get a brief intermission here in verse 13 like the seven seals which were grouped into four and three the four horsemen of the apocalypse and then the three last seals here there's an arrangement of four plus three pattern again the four judgment trumpets that affect the creation it's showing kind of the creation of the world and then the last three woes that affect people more directly and then this structure is intended to show the escalation it sets apart the last three to show that there's a greater severity to them so these three woes are going to be worse than the four trumpets that we saw last week it says in verse 13 then I looked and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead woe woe woe to those who dwell on the earth at the blast of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow an eagle flying overhead is a picture of a predator hovering over its prey immediately before it dives in for the kill later in revelation 19 the birds that fly directly overhead are those who will eat the flesh of kings who have rebelled against christ and so this is a majestic yet foreboding picture and this eagle pronounces a threefold woe when you rebel against and sin and refuse to repent toward a god who is thrice holy that we saw in revelation 4 holy holy holy the only fate that is fitting for you is a threefold woe woe woe woe a more modern translation would have it doom doom doom but before I jump into the woes

I want to add a bit more context and structure to what I shared with you last week going through the first four trumpets I suggested to you both the literal and symbolic meanings possible meanings of the trumpet judgments and shared my preference for the symbolic meaning but also told you that I might be wrong about that it's possible that the more literal meaning of the four trumpets are in view and if that's the case then the trumpet judgments clearly haven't happened yet and in that case while the seven seals deal with the entire church age the seven seals the first seven seals we saw in chapter 6 deal with the entire church age from the first coming of Christ to the second coming of Christ the seven trumpets and the seven bowls then would deal more narrowly with the end of the end times toward the what would be the sixth and the seventh seals I hope you guys follow what I'm saying if you guys are just coming in for the first sermon this probably doesn't make any sense to you I'm sorry about that and this would fit in well with the fact that the trumpet judgments were God's answer to the martyred Christian's prayer for vindication of God's judgment in the fifth seal and then you saw the final climactic judgments in the sixth and seventh seals and so it's possible that all seven trumpets and all seven bowls line up with those two last seals if these are meant to be fulfilled more literally this would also fit well with the fact that the seven trumpets and the seven bowls line up almost exactly they're very parallel the first trumpet and the first bowl both affect the earth the second trumpet and the second bowl both affect the sea the third trumpet and the third bowl both affect the rivers and the springs the fourth trumpet and the fourth bowl both affect the sky or the sun and the heavenly bodies and then the fifth trumpet and the fifth bowl both involve demons who cause anguish or torment and then the sixth trumpet and the sixth bowl both involve demonic forces that originate from the Euphrates.

So if they're all parallel and they're all referring to the end of the end, it's possible that these things are going to happen in the future. And if it's happening in the future and it's not already happening or has already happened, then the literal interpretation is more plausible in that case.

So it's possible. Honestly, there's so many different views points on this, but I think these two that I'm presenting to you are probably the most likely.

[14 : 00] I encourage you not to search on YouTube or Internet for the meaning of the book of Revelation because I think maybe 90% or more of the stuff you're going to find is really not very helpful and not very biblical.

And so I would caution you against that. It seems like almost everybody has an opinion about it. And they think that they should publish their opinion online. And I would encourage you to just search the scriptures carefully.

Read the book of Revelation over and over again. Look at the Old Testament prophecies that are referenced in the book of Revelation again and again. And that's the best way you're going to arrive at the right understanding of this book.

So if it's possible that the fifth trumpet and sixth trumpet are stuff that's going to happen in the future or it's something that's going to happen. Or the fifth trumpet at least is something that's happening already.

I'll preach with both of those things in mind. Let's jump into the woes. We'll cover only the first two woes today because the last woe doesn't take place until later.

[15 : 05] But just keep in mind that there's three woes total, which are the last three of the trumpets, of the seven trumpets. The first woe is the fifth trumpet. And when it's blown, John sees a star fallen from heaven to earth.

I mentioned to you last week that a fallen star likely represents a fallen angel. In chapter 8, verse 10. Moreover, we saw in Revelation 1.20 that the seven stars that Jesus holds in his right hand, we were told explicitly that they represent seven angels.

And in Luke 10.18, due to the proclamation of the kingdom of God by his disciples, Jesus says that I saw Satan fall like lightning from the sky. So it's this idea of a star, something like a star falling from heaven to represent demonic spirits where Satan is not uncommon.

That's why Satan is called a fallen angel. Here in Revelation 9, the connection between a fallen star and a fallen angel is even more clear and certain because it says in verse 1, right after telling us that a star fell from heaven, and he, personal pronoun, he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.

So this star is no mere self-luminous celestial body of gas. This star has personal agency. This star receives the key and then opens the shaft of the bottomless pit in verse 2.

[16 : 39] In fact, this star that has the key to the bottomless pit is explicitly described in verse 11, a few verses down, as the angel of the bottomless pit, who is king over the demonic locusts that we'll read about in a minute.

And this angel, like Wormwood, has a name. This one is called Abaddon in Hebrew, and Apollyon in Greek. They both mean destruction or destroyer.

Abaddon is often parallel to death or the grave in the Old Testament, and Apollyon is referenced to the destroyer, the thief, that comes only to steal and kill and destroy, as Jesus said to describe the devil in John 10.

They're both an allusion going back all the way to Exodus, Exodus 12.23, when the destroyer, God sends a destroyer to go throughout Egypt during the Passover to kill the firstborn sons or the males of all of the Egyptian households and all Egyptian animals that were not protected by the seal of God, the blood of the Lamb.

And so it's a reference to that destroyer, and that parallel is very suggestive because here, in verse 4, the locusts, the demonic locusts that come out of this, are explicitly forbidden from harming those who have the seal of God on their foreheads.

[18 : 09] So it's reminiscent of the Exodus plague, with the striking down of the firstborns. I think it's likely that this fallen angel is nothing less than Satan himself, the great dragon, the ancient serpent, which we'll see later.

He is thrown down from heaven to earth along with his angels, Revelation 12.9. I think that's what this is depicting in another way. This is confirmed by the fact that he has domain. This is his domain.

He has key and authority over the abyss. It's the bottomless pit. This pit is so low underground, so to speak, that it's bottomless.

It's not like going down into our basements. It's connected by a shaft because it goes down so low by a long pole, and it's called the abyss.

It's the realm of demons. Some people think that this is literally underground.

[19 : 14] I mean, it's not impossible. I don't know how scientists or geophysicists know this, but they do say that if you go down to the, to drill down to the core of the earth, it's like the size of the moon.

It's basically a fireball that's hotter than the surface of the sun, and it's made up mostly of iron or whatever. I mean, I suppose that's possible. It would fit the description, but I think it's just as well.

It could be symbolic, but it's a bad place. You don't want to have anything to do with. And you're not going to find this in your, the English version of the Bibles, because the book of Job in our English translation is taken from the Hebrew version and not the ancient Greek version, but the Greek translation of Job in the Septuagint, Job 41, 23 to 24, this abyss is described as where Leviathan, the Leviathan, the cosmic sea dragon, the serpent, who has the appearance of the morning star, again reminiscent of the language of Lucifer, the day star, who is, quote, king of all in his realm is said to live.

And it's said that this ancient dragon considers the Tartarus of the abyss as his captive. In Greek mythology, Tartarus is the deep dungeon prison for the Titans, in 2 Peter 2, 4, we are told that God took the angels who sinned and cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.

That phrase, cast them into hell, is actually cast them into Tartarus, literally in Greek. This is not the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his minions and all those who follow them in Matthew, that Jesus mentions in Matthew 25, 41.

[21 : 06] It's not the lake of fire that Revelation 20 mentions, which is the final destination of the dragon and the beast and the false prophet and all those who follow him instead of Christ. So this is not that final destination.

Rather, it's the temporary place of incarceration, where the evil spirits who had sinned, or demons, angels who had sinned, transgressed their boundaries, as Jude 1, 6 speaks of, probably alluding to Genesis 6, are imprisoned at the moment.

And in Luke 8, 31, this abyss is mentioned again. This is where you encounter the demon region. A man gathering demoniac is possessed by a demon named legion.

And then when Jesus is about to cast the demon out, he begs Jesus, please don't send me into the abyss. The bottomless pit that even demons fear to go to.

But even here, we see that the ultimate sovereignty lies with our Lord Jesus Christ and not with Satan, who receives this key. Look at the phrasing of verse 1.

[22 : 16] He was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. This is the divine passive construction that indicates that while God is never the direct actor in evil, he is nonetheless completely sovereign over evil.

We were told in Revelation 1, 17 to 18, who ultimately holds this key, remember that? Jesus said, Fear not, I am the first and the last and the living one.

I died, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys. Jesus, Jesus, the Son of God, is the one person in human history who did not have to die, but he died for the sins, for our sins, to save people and to save the world, and so all who repent of their sins and trust in him might be saved.

But because he died and because he was raised from the dead and he was the one person in the history of humanity who has ever defeated death in that way, he is the one who ultimately holds the keys of death and Hades.

Now, he decides when to open and when to close. He decides when he gives life, when he takes life. And so, even though this fearsome demon receives authority, he only receives authority.

[23 : 39] He's given the key from the one who has ultimate dominion, that is Christ. Satan is king over his demonic domain. He is described as a prince of this sinful world.

However, in relation to King Jesus, as you see here, he's nothing but a lackey, a warden, a servant warden.

It's like basically a prison guard here. That's how gloriously powerful and sovereign our Lord Jesus is.

Satan, remember that. Satan is only a counterfeit morning star, a counterfeit king. Jesus is the true and genuine one, the amen, the faithful and true witness.

And yet, so many people in our world are serving this ancient serpent who rules over this bottomless pit instead of serving Jesus, the Lord of life, who is exalted far above the heavens.

[24 : 46] Which king do you want to serve? The prison guard over the bottomless pit or the one who reigns at the right hand of the Father? The first woe unmasks the grotesque and macabre reality of the demonic forces so that people who dwell on the earth might be awakened from Satan's deception and see the truth, the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let's look a little more closely at the grisly picture of the demons in the following verses. When the fallen angel opens the shaft of the bottomless pit, smoke like the smoke of a great furnace rises from the shaft and darkens the air and the sun.

So imagine if something is enough to darken the sun, it's not this kind of transparent mist-like thing. It's a thick, dark plumage of smoke like the kind that erupts from a volcano.

There's so much of it. And then out of that smoke emerges, it says, locusts on the earth and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. This is an obvious allusion to the Exodus, like the eighth plague of Egypt in Exodus 10 where a dense swarm of locusts came from the east and covered all of Egypt so that the land was darkened.

Again, that's another parallel. And it says that they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left so that not a green thing remained in all of Egypt except for where God's people, the Israelites, lived.

[26 : 19] We're so far living here in Boston. We're so far removed from locusts. I don't even know if you guys have even seen a locust. I don't know that I've seen a locust.

I've seen grasshoppers. And it's hard to imagine how devastating they can be but we're more bothered by pests like rats here.

But desert locusts are often called the world's most devastating pests for a reason. When locusts begin to form swarms, they say that they multiply twentyfold in three months.

Imagine their population growing twentyfold in three months. And they can reach densities of thirty-one million locusts per square mile. And they could occupy many square miles.

So imagine what that's like if they covered like, you know, let's say even they covered their swarm of eighty million locusts covering maybe three or three square miles or so.

[27 : 19] They can consume the food equivalent of about thirty-five thousand people. What thirty-five thousand people will eat on any given day. They could eat that on a single day.

So you imagine that kind of swarm going through your farmland. There's nothing left. That's how devastating and dreadful, how dreaded these locust swarms were in that part of the world.

And so that's what you should see, what you should feel when you hear locusts. Once again, the key difference here is that these locusts are primarily, I think, symbolic.

I think that's why, I mean, in 2020, there were locust swarms in East Africa that were so bad that the BBC called them the biblical locust plagues of 2020. I'm sure some people were crying out that this is a fulfillment of the revelation, but I just don't think so because these are demonic locusts.

These are not, those are real locusts that eat plants. And these locusts are not interested in plants at all. Revelation 9, 45, it says specifically that these locusts were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

[28 : 37] They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them. So these locusts are not interested in green things at all. They're just interested in people and in particularly people who have not been sealed with the name of God.

Moreover, another remarkable thing about locusts that we know from Proverbs 30, 27 is that locusts have no king, yet all of them march in rank. But we are told here in Revelation 9, 11 that these locusts have a king.

They have as their king an angel of the bottomless pits. These are not literal locusts. We can also tell that these locusts are symbolic from the composite imagery.

And notice just how many times the word like is used in the description of these locusts. Verse 3, they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth.

Verse 5, their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. Verse 7, in appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold.

[29 : 43] Their faces were like human faces. Verse 8, their hair is like woman's hair and their teeth like lion's teeth. In verse 9, they had breastplates like breastplates of iron and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle.

Like, like, like, like. These are similes. This is the language of figurative comparison. John's doing his best to describe what he saw in his vision. He's not telling us exactly what it is.

He's just describing them. It's a picture for us to imagine. And they are representative of the thing that's behind it, the substance that's behind it. And because these are demonic, clearly, I don't think, as some people have claimed, that these locusts are a description of the Apache helicopter or some other modern warfare contraption that's going to come as a whore to attack people or whatever.

You know, I don't think that's the case. You know, it's a composite picture of what demons are like. And this description of their appearance exaggerates various aspects of the locusts to make them look as hideous as possible.

Instead of these, like, regular things that, you know, stick out of their mouths like you've seen locusts, they have lion's fans right there. Can you imagine what they can do with that?

[31 : 05] How much more they can eat, chew down with that? And they, like, normally they have scales, called, like, their thoraxes look like scaled armor, but they actually have breastplate of iron.

That's what that looks like. These are, like, these are locusts on demonic steroids. And they appear, like, their sound is like rumbling of chariots, like a powerful army.

And most of this image is taken, actually, from Joel 1, 2, which describes the day of the Lord, day of the Lord's judgment when a locust-like army will come. It says, and then, and they're described as having lion's teeth.

Their appearance is like the appearance of horses. And like the war horses, they run, as with the rumbling of chariots, like a powerful army, it says in Joel 1, 6. So, but here, I don't think it's a physical army, but a spiritual, demonic one.

And so, whenever you're tempted by the seductive power of the enemy, whenever you're looking at sin and saying, oh, man, that looks really good. That, that looks like a really happy lifestyle.

[32 : 17] That, that looks blessed. You look at the enemy's temptations, then that's what you feel. Imagine these hideous, demonic locusts.

That's what you're dealing with. Not some pleasant sweets. Do you want anything to do with these creatures?

Of course we don't. Three times, in verses 3, 5, and 10, we are told that these locusts wield the power of scorpions. Scorpion's sting is an apt comparison because their sting is intensely painful, but they are rarely fatal.

I hear that the scorpions in the Middle East, their stings are even more painful than the small kinds you see in Arizona and different places. And, but they're still not lethal.

And so, it really fits well with this, the limitation that God has placed on them, that they're not allowed to kill but only to torment. And they're limited for a five-month period.

[33 : 22] And like most numbers in Revelation, that's probably also a symbolic number. But it's a symbolic number that's readily available because locusts, their lifespan is normally five months.

That's usually how long locust swarms stay around. And then they, I don't know if that's their entire lifespan or not. But even during those five months, they would normally only consume for short periods of that.

But these demonic locusts are active for the entire five-month season. And, God has sovereignly put boundaries around the extent and the duration and the object of their demonic activity.

As I've hinted already, their extent is limited in that they can only torment but not kill. Their duration is limited in that they can only torment for five months. So, at least it's not for an indefinite period of time.

There's a limit to it. It's going to end at some point. Their object is limited in that they cannot torment those who have the seal of God on their foreheads. This is hearkening back to chapter 7 where the 144,000 representing the true Israel, the full number of God's elect people were sealed with the name of the living God so that they can be identified as belonging to God and so that they can be protected, spiritually protected from these ensuing judgments.

[34 : 39] So, this is not a physical seal that you write with a sharpie or it's not a computer chip that someone's going to put inside your body. This is a spiritual seal, the name of the living God and it's written upon our souls as Christians by the Holy Spirit and those who do not have the seal of the living God are sealed instead with the name of Satan's beast in Revelation 13, 17 and these unbelievers who are then tormented by these demon locusts and there's no middle ground, there's a neutral ground.

You're either taking the mark of the beast or you're taking the seal of the name of the living God and Jesus Christ. Notice the striking parallels with this passage in Luke 10, 18-20 which I already referenced earlier.

Jesus said to his disciples, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I've given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall hurt you.

Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this that the spirits are subject to you but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. So here, Jesus is explaining having authority over serpents and scorpions as having power over the enemy.

Having authority over all the powers of the enemy. So scorpions and serpents are symbols of evil because they cause so much pain. And so this is, I think this is what John is referring to here in using that image in this vision.

[36 : 22] And so over, this is, if you are then hurt by scorpions, I think most likely that it's referring in the symbolic sense to the spiritual torment that the enemy, the powers of the enemy inflict upon those who do not know the Lord and those who have not been sealed with the name of God.

If this is, if this is, lies in the future and has yet to be fulfilled, I mean, it's also possible that there will be a physical torment inflicted by these demons.

But it's something that believers will be protected from. And that's really ironic if you think about it. You think that, I mean, who are, who's, who's Satan against? Satan's against God.

He's against God and his people. And you think that if Satan's out to get somebody, he would try to, to torment the Christians, the ones who do, have the seal of God.

I'm sure he wants to, but he can't. He has no authority to. And that's the irony of it here, is that instead, Satan torments those who belong to him, those who have the mark of the beast, so that they long to die.

[37 : 35] That's what Satan does to his followers. Sometimes I hear Christians say, oh, it's so hard to be a Christian. It would be nice to be a non-Christian and not have to worry about fighting sin all the time.

You've got to be kidding me. You'd rather be enslaved to sin. You'd rather be under divine condemnation.

You'd rather have no eternal purpose or ultimate fulfillment in life. You'd rather be afflicted with this tormenting power of Satan. Absolutely not.

Don't think, don't think for a moment that Satan will give you an easy way out. He will do everything in his power to make your life a living hell. Satan's horde of demonic locusts torment those who do not know Jesus Christ and make them long for death.

Imagine how painful this is. They long for death because life is such a torment yet they cannot have it.

[38 : 53] Death eludes them. It flees from them. This is such a dire picture of futility, purposelessness, despair, hopelessness.

This condition of unbelievers here forms a stark contrast with the way the believers are described in Revelation 12, 11, as those who bore faithful witness to Jesus Christ and loved their lives not unto death because they were killed, basically, because of their faithful witness to Jesus by the unbelieving world.

They were persecuted and martyred. And so, these believers were killed by these unbelievers but now they're in the eternal joy of an eternal life and these people who killed them want to die but cannot die.

That's the stark contrast. It's a fitting punishment. Now, I think if this is referring to something that's already happening and it's of a spiritual nature, of course, there are Christians who can sometimes fall into hopelessness and despair as well but then how do you square this reality with verse 4 which says that those who have the seal of God on their foreheads are protected from the torment of these demonic locusts and the difference is that the non-Christians do not have the seal of God while Christians do have the seal of God's protection over them.

Ephesians 1, 13 to 14 says, when we heard the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation and believed in Jesus, we were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit with the guarantee of our inheritance until God redeems his possession.

[40 : 44] The Spirit of God guarantees our heavenly inheritance to us and so we have a hope that has substance regardless of how you feel in the moment.

It's not a wishful thinking but it's hope that is based on and grounded in reality of something that will actually happen in the future and Christians all have that hope. We all have that seal as opposed to non-Christians who do not.

We have the means, access to the shield of faith as Ephesians 6, 16 which we can raise in order to extinguish the flaming darts of the evil one. Now let's look at the second woe which is the sixth trumpet.

When it's blown it says it releases the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. This is reminiscent of Revelation 7, 1 where there were four angels standing at the four corners of the earth and were holding back the four winds of the earth.

I think there's some parallels there but I think these are different angels because there's a series of escalation.

[41 : 58] We saw of the four horsemen kind of the demonic angels earlier Revelation 6 as well and they were permitted to take a fourth of life kill a fourth of humanity and here they have the authority to kill a third of mankind Revelation 9, 18 so there's an escalation here and the four winds in chapter 7 were restrained until God's people were sealed but this second woe occurs after God's people are sealed.

So it says in verse 15 that the four angels had been prepared for the hour the day the month and the year when they are released to kill a third of mankind and so that seems to indicate a very definite planned time that God has in mind when these four angels are going to be released and because of that I think whether you take all of the trumpets as lying in the future or you know or most of it except for the last two perhaps lying in the lying in the present and happening in the present I think this seal definitely lies in the future I don't want to say definitely because it's hard to say anything definitely about these seals and the trumpets and the bowls but I think most likely this is lying in the future because there's an appointed time prepared for the hour the day the month and the year to kill a third of mankind and that would fit because even in the seal series it's in the sixth seal that we begin to see kind of the climactic judgments that will occur in the future and likewise in the seventh bowl the seventh in the seventh bowl series the sixth bowl actually has so many parallels to the sixth trumpet both the demonic sources originating from Euphrates and in that and in that judgment in Revelation 16 they assemble the demonic beings that are released assemble deceive the kings in order to assemble an army to wage war against against God at the battle of Armageddon and so I think it's possible that this trumpet sick trumpet is paralleling that sixth bowl that pen ultimate the second to last sign of divine judgment before Christ returns and the seventh seal and the seventh bowl seventh trumpet are all unleashed

I think they're the seventh of each of those series are referring to the final judgment when these four angels are released they will appear with mounted troops that number twice ten thousand times ten thousand which is if you take it literally two hundred million but I think that's probably a figurative number for an extremely large demonic horde I saw somewhere that apparently like there was a times magazine article in 1965 that's before I was born so I don't know but I looked it up and they said that I heard some preachers say that China boasted of having an army of two hundred million soldiers and that and that that's fulfillment of this revelation prophecy and I looked up the article and it actually doesn't say two hundred million

I think it says something closer to like twelve point five million and so I don't know who made that up but just this kind of misinformation is all over the internet so just don't look on the internet for these things and I think the but it's just an extremely large demonic horde their horses have heads I mean they may involve human who are doing the demon's bidding but what's described here is clearly demonic the horses have heads that look like lions heads when have you ever seen something like that their mouths they breathe out fire and smoke and sulfur which are called the three plagues that kill a third of mankind and these horses also have tails which are like serpents with heads with which they wound so this demonic cavalry wounds with their serpent head tails and kill with their lion-like heads and they spew out fire and smoke and sulfur the collar of their breastplates correspond to what they spew out from their mouths the color of fire of sapphire and of sulfur sapphire is literally in Greek hyacinth which matches the bluish the hue of the smoke the color of smoke and the physical death that these demonic hordes will bring about leads to eternal spiritual death the second death and because these people die without repenting of their sins this is signaled by the mention of the fire and the smoke and the sulfur which are symbolic of divine judgment in Genesis 19 if you recall in Sodom and Gomorrah when God brings judgment upon them what rains down is fire and sulfur and fire and later it makes the cities burn with smoke so fire and sulfur and smoke you see all of that in Genesis 19 and then fire and sulfur are also together mentioned as a pair elsewhere in Revelation to represent God's final judgment for unrepentant sinners it says in Revelation 21 8 but as for the cowardly the faithless the detestable as for murderers the sexually immoral sorcerers idolaters and all liars their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur which is the second death those who perish during this second woe killed by this demonic horde will be destined for the eternal fire and sulfur of the second death and if you are fortunate enough to survive it then this is a warning sign again for unbelievers repent and believe in Jesus for salvation so that you might be sealed protected

Revelation 20 21 drive home that main theological point it says the rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood which cannot see or hear or walk nor did they repent nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts there are many differing views on how the seven seals and the trumpets and the bowls fit within human history and with each other and to what degree they should be interpreted symbolically but however hopefully most of us can still agree on this theological point that the sovereign judgments of God should make sinners repent these unbelieving earth dwellers should have repented of their sins and turned toward God the alarms were blaring all over all around them and throughout their lives and yet they chose to ignore the warning signs ignore the birth pains of redemption which is why they will perish when the final trumpet is blown the seventh trumpet is blown and these verses also vindicate God and demonstrate his righteousness in judging sinners because despite many opportunities for repentance sinners are stubborn in their rebellion against God they do not give up worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood this is the violation of the second half

[50 : 00] I mean the first half of the ten commandments which deal with loving God with our whole hearts they also refuse to repent it says in verse 21 repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts this is a summary of the second half of the ten commandments which deal with loving our neighbors as ourselves this is a summary of the ten commandments in verses 20 and 21 which are summarizing the greatest commandment that Jesus gives to love God with your whole heart and love your neighbor as yourself and all of humanity has broken these laws the only difference between Christians and non-Christians on that front is that Christians have repented of having broken these laws consider how the unbelieving world is in violation of the first half of the ten commandments first of which is you shall have no other gods before me and second is you shall have making for yourself you shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or in the earth or in the waters below and you shall not bow down to them and worship them we don't find many non-Christians around us worshipping demons explicitly although in Salem they do have

Satan's temple and some people do do that and there are real Satan worshippers but most people who claim to be Satan worshippers are just trolls fishing for attention and we don't need to give it to them and however the reality is as 1 Corinthians 10 18 to 21 tells us when people worship idols false gods of other false religions it says in 1 Corinthians 10 18 to 20 that there are actually demons lying behind that idolatry so false religions like Islam and Hinduism are not benign aspects of human culture that we can celebrate as part of our cultural diversity they lead people to the worship of demons the Bible is very clear about that some people in the West like to claim that Buddhism is oh Buddhism is a philosophy it's not a religion there's no God it's just a system of how to live have you been to a Buddhist country if you go to a country that actually is Buddhist and where everybody is Buddhist they worship demons there's all kinds of spirits and gods involved in Buddhism and it's not even if you're not involved with these false gods sometimes idolatry can be more subtle

Habakkuk 1.11 speaks of guilty men whose own might is their God do you put your confidence in your own strength in your own power maybe the authority you have and you live as if might makes right then you are a worshiper of power an idolater Job 31 24-20 says if I have made gold my trust or called fine gold my confidence if I have rejoiced because my wealth was abundant or because my hand had found much this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges for I would have been false to God above this is why Jesus says you cannot worship both God and money there are many many people in our country and in the world that worship money if your primary confidence in life for your own security and for your well-being is not in God who provides for you but in your bank account in your job security you're worshipping money if that's what you're occupied primarily with

Philippians 3-19 says that the enemies of the cross of Christ that their God is their belly and they glory in their shame with minds set on earthly things if your primary purpose in life is to enjoy good foods and good drinks and to travel and enjoy beautiful scenery it's not wrong to enjoy such things but if that's your primary purpose in life that's what you live for that's what you have your mindset on then you have your mindset on earthly things not on things of heaven and you're worshipping your own belly gluttony is idolatrous and sometimes it's the skinniest people who are the most gluttonous Colossians 3-5 teaches us that covetousness is idolatry it's not an accident that the first commandment is you shall have no other gods before me and the tenth commandment is you shall not covet it bookends the two it bookends the ten commandments covetousness so if you desire what you don't have what rightly belongs to another person it's idolatry maybe it's someone else's boyfriend or girlfriend or someone else's career or someone else's family or their vacation it's guilty of idolatry if that's what's driving your life that's the animating source of your life all these specific biblical examples teach us that an idol is not necessarily a physical idol or a false god but what you count on and put your trust in other than god what you desire more than god what you are devoted to more than god and I believe there are people here who need to repent who are not actually followers of

Jesus and you need to repent what do you count on and put your trust in other than god your beauty attractiveness your academic credentials your intelligence your wealth your spouse maybe you idolize politicians think the next president will be the savior of the world solve all our problems maybe you turn to horoscopes tarot cards what do you desire and covet what are you devoted to more than god what are you what are you devoted to if someone looked at your life and asked what is and tried to figure out what is this person devoted to would it be god or would it be something else would it be finding love would it be climbing the ladder of success would it be having children matthew 10 37

[57 : 00] It says, whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Idolaters do not worship God with all their hearts because their allegiance is divided.

They have other things that they're worshipping, and this is a warning to repent. Verse 21 tells us that the earth dwellers also refuse to repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

This is a violation of the second greatest commandment, to love your neighbor as yourself. Instead of loving their neighbors, they love themselves, so they hate, and hatred leads to murder.

However, they commit sexual immorality and adultery because they care not for the well-being of someone else's marriage, but only for their own pleasure.

They steal because they want to possess what belongs to someone else for themselves. This is how the unbelieving world is. And if that's you, you need to repent.

[58 : 26] Repentance is not merely feeling sorry that you were caught red-handed. Some people are only sorry because they were caught. Not sorry for the wrong that they have actually done.

If you only feel grief for wrongdoing when you're caught doing it, and you never feel grief before God for sins that nobody else in the world knows of, then you're probably not repentant.

Because true Christians feel grief and godly sorrow for wrongdoing, not just because they were caught, but because they know that they're displeasing the Lord.

But it's even more. Repentance is even more than just merely expressing sorrow or regret for sin. It's actually turning from the sin.

2 Corinthians 7, 10 to 11 says that godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. Repentance entails turning from sin, turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

[59 : 34] This is 1 Thessalonians 1, 9. It's a change in belief that leads to a change in behavior, in the way you live. And of course, the change in behavior might take time.

It might be slow. It might include setbacks. But there will be a real, genuine, and discernible change in the life of a true believer. Imagine, right, I've used this illustration before that your friend is driving, and you're mounting the GPS, and your friend is clearly going in the opposite direction.

You say, hey, you've got to turn around. You're going in the wrong direction. And then your friend just keeps driving in the same direction. Right? I mean, then you would think that your friend didn't hear you right.

Or, right, I mean, did you really hear me? Like, you're going the wrong way. You've got to turn around. Like, something's wrong if they're not actually turning around. It shows that they haven't actually believed you.

They actually haven't heard you, or they just don't believe you. They think you're wrong. Likewise, if you tell someone about the Bible, if you tell someone about Jesus, if you tell someone the gospel, and they say, oh, yeah, yeah, sure, I believe in it, but there's no turning, I can assure you they haven't heard you.

[60 : 49] They haven't repented. Now, some of you have an overly active conscience, and very sensitive conscience, and maybe you're tormented every day thinking that maybe I'm not repentant enough.

Man, I don't think I'm safe because I'm not repentant enough. And I want to assure you that, yes, even when you make the turn, and you're trying to follow the directions that God's given you, you're still going to have some wrong turns.

Sometimes you're going to have some regression. But the big difference is that you're still trying to follow the directions that God's given you. You have made a decisive turn in your life.

So don't try to, I love the song that we sang. I was hoping that there would be lyrics up here that I can read.

The Come Ye Sinners, and the verse was talking about how we can be, don't try to work up a fancy, or get to a place where you feel like your works are sufficient, where you've done enough to get to a good place before God, good place with God.

[62 : 05] You can't get there. What God requires is you feel your need for Him. What God requires is that you know enough to say that my works are not enough. That turn, that turn is what saves you.

Why? Because Jesus died for your sin. If Jesus wanted, if God wanted you to save yourself, if God wanted you to earn your salvation, then Jesus would never have died on that cross.

But Jesus died on that cross because He wanted to pay the price for your sin, and because He wanted to give His righteousness to you as a gift so that you can be saved.

And so if you are here today and wondering if you can be saved or not, if you can repent, you can repent, and you can turn from your sins, and you can have the seal of God and a guarantee of eternal life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let's pray. Father, Father, bring every single person here, if there's any who has not truly repented, bring them to the godly sorrow that leads to repentance, Lord.

[63 : 39] And Lord, I pray for those of us who do know you, who are sometimes discouraged, by the way, remind us of your amazing grace, the wonderful gift and opportunity of repentance you've given us, and the privilege that we have turned from our slavery to sin and turned to you, and help us to rejoice and to delight in Christ, and live in light of that seal of the name of the living God that is upon our souls.

Oh, what joy and glory awaits us in eternity, and what protection and security we have here in this life.

We thank you for that, God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.