

"The Sixth Trumpet Judgment"

Revelation 9:13-21

The trumpet judgments up to this point have been quite devastating. In the **1st trumpet**, we have seen fire and hail mixed with blood thrown to the earth and burning up 1/3 of the land and trees and all the green grass, which caused widespread fires, destruction of crops, the death of many animals, the destruction of massive amounts of wood and a drastic reduction of air quality. In the **2nd trumpet** we have seen a huge meteor or asteroid the size of a mountain fall into the ocean turning 1/3 of the sea water to blood, killing 1/3 of the sea life, and destroying 1/3 of the ships. In the **3rd trumpet** we have seen another meteor or comet, which breaks up over the earth's fresh water supply poisoning 1/3 of the drinking water with a deadly poison by which many men died. In the **4th trumpet** we have seen a strange atmospheric condition, which caused 1/3 of the sun, moon and stars to be darkened. As a result the temperatures would plummet severely disrupting the earth's weather patterns and sea tides, leading to violent unpredictable storms, tides, the destruction of crops, and further deaths. In the **5th trumpet** we have seen the unlocking of the abyss and the release of a demonic locust plague. This plague will wreak widespread pain and suffering upon the inhabitants of the earth to the point that men will vehemently seek to kill themselves, but they will be unable to. These previous 5 trumpet judgments have brought pain, much suffering, destruction to the earth's ecology and death to part of the earth's population. Now we move on to the **6th trumpet** (the 2nd woe).

The Release of Demons: {9:13-15}

The Voice: After the sixth angel sounds his trumpet, John hears a voice. This voice comes from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God. The Greek text specifically states, "I heard *one* voice." John is emphasizing one single/solitary voice was heard. The text, however does not tell us the identity of the voice. Many views have been offered, but none can be held dogmatically. Since the voice issues forth a command, some believe that this is a command issued by Christ the Lamb, because He has broken the seals on the scroll unleashing these judgments upon the world (6:1). Others believe that this voice could be that of the angel, who stood before the altar offering up the incense, which represented the prayers of the tribulation martyrs (8:3). Whatever the case, it is clear that the mention of the altar here, connects this 6th trumpet judgment with the prayers of the martyrs as part of God's continued answer to their prayers.

The Command: Notice first of all who this command is directed to. It is a specific command directed to the 6th trumpet angel. This 6th trumpet angel was commanded to release four bound angels. Since these angels are bound, it seems evident that they like the locusts of the 5th trumpet are also fallen angels/demons. Unfallen angels are nowhere mentioned in Scripture as bound. The Scripture does not go into any further detail, such as why they have been bound there. God in some prior time had them bound and had planned their release for the purpose of using them as instruments of judgment upon sinful mankind. The location of these four bound angels is that of the great Euphrates River. In Genesis 2:4, the Euphrates river was one of the four that flowed out of the Garden of Eden. After the flood the Euphrates River flowed from sources near Mount Ararat in Turkey. The Euphrates River flows about 1700 miles until emptying into the Persian Gulf. "The Euphrates was the eastern boundary of the Promised Land (Gen. 15:18; Ex. 23:31; Deut. 11:24),

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and Israel's influence extended to the Euphrates during the reigns of David (1 Chron. 18:3) and Solomon (2 Chron. 9:26)."²⁸⁸

The Release: In verse 15 these four demons who had been bound for that very time were released. These demons are likely very evil beings, who seek to kill mankind. They had been bound by God and kept from doing so until the precise moment that God had predetermined to use them as instruments of His judgment. The purpose for releasing these 4 evil beings was that they would kill 1/3 of mankind. The 4th seal judgment resulted in _ of Earth's population being killed. Now an additional 1/3 of the remaining inhabitants will be killed. Based on our current population levels of 6 billion, the result would be 1.5 billion during the 4th seal and an additional 1.5 billion during the 6th trumpet for a total of _ of the earth's population. Obviously if the LORD carries the numbers could be even more devastating.

The Regiment of Horsemen: (9:16-19)

The Number of the Horsemen: John moves on to mention a large number of horsemen in connection with these four demons. These four demons are likely of high rank and will gather together a large number of demons for the purpose of launching a full assault upon mankind for the purpose of killing them. John mentions the number of these demonic hordes who have taken on the form of horsemen. He gives an amazing statistic of 200 million horsemen. In previous generations an army of this size was unfathomable and certainly unnecessary to kill 1/3 of mankind. However due to recent rapid population growth, it not only is becoming a reasonable number, but also a necessary number of horsemen for the purpose of killing 1/3 of all mankind. Many have mistakenly identified these horsemen as the army from the East in Revelation 16:12, but it is important to note that Revelation 16:12 falls under the events of the sixth bowl judgment. Therefore, the army from the East of Revelation 16 **cannot** be identified as the horsemen here in Revelation 9.

The Description of the Riders: John moves on to give a brief description of the riders. He mentions their breastplates as being the color of fire, hyacinth, and brimstone. "The color of fire is red, that of hyacinth, dark blue or black like smoke; that of brimstone, a sulfurous yellow."²⁸⁹ So these breastplates will be the colors of red, bluish black, and yellow.

The Description of the Horses: The first description that John gives here is that they have heads like that of lions. We must remember that this is figurative language that John is using here. It is the best description that he can give using the terms of his day. These horses have lion like heads, not literal lion heads, which obviously implies that these are not natural horses just like the locusts were not natural locusts. These are demonic beings taking on a horse like form with what looked like riders on them. A further description is that fire, smoke and brimstone came forth from these horses mouths, which further demonstrate that these are demons taking on an unusual physical form. The terminology and context does not lend itself to identifying these as a human army using modern military capabilities.

The Plagues of the Horsemen: These horsemen kill 1/3 of mankind through three different plagues. These plagues are the fire, smoke, and brimstone that come forth from the mouths of these horse-like creatures. 1/3 of mankind will be incinerated with fire and asphyxiated by smoke and brimstone (the term used for brimstone indicates a possible sulfur-like smell).

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The Power of the Horses: These horses will not only have this awesome power of fire, smoke and brimstone coming forth from their mouths, but they will also have power in their tails. John describes their tails as being like that of serpent heads and that they can inflict harm. There is likely an implication of the venomous and deadly nature of a poisonous serpent/snake. These demonic hordes will be warlike, vicious, and have deadly power. "These images describe the supernatural deadliness of this demon force in terms that are commonly understood in the natural realm. Unlike the scorpion stings inflicted during the previous demonic assault (9:5), the snakebites inflicted by this host will be fatal."²⁹⁰

The Response of Mankind: (9:20-21)

John informs us that the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues from these demonic horse-like creatures refused to repent. It is unbelievable that people would refuse to repent in light of what is obviously severe judgment and wrath from God. They will be unaffected by these devastating judgments and the witness of believers. Instead of turning toward God in repentance and worship, these wicked individuals continue in their sin. John lists 5 specific sins that people will refuse to repent from:

Idolatry: The first is the area of idolatry. The phrase *the works of their hands* is used in Scripture to refer to idols (cf. Deut. 27:15; 31:29; 2 Kings 19:18; 22:17; 2 Chron. 32:19; 34:25; Ps. 135:15; Isa. 2:8; 17:8; 37:19; Jer. 1:16; 25:6-7, 14; 32:30; 44:8; Hos. 14:3; Mic. 5:13; Hag. 2:14; Acts 7:41). These idols were made of gold, silver, brass, stone or of wood. John informs us that in worshipping idols (things made with our hands) that the people were in fact worshipping demons. Psalm 96:5 and 106:37-38 informs us the same that worshipping idols is equivalent to worshipping demons. Paul also alludes to this in 1 Cor. 10:20. John MacArthur says, "At that future point in world history, idolatry, mysticism, spiritism, satanism, and all other forms of false religion will become pandemic, as demons lead people into more wicked and vicious behaviour."²⁹¹

Murders: Not only will there be a great deal of death resulting from God's wrath being poured out on the world, but people will also be killing other people. Violent crime and murders will increase at rapid rates as evil and immorality will be rampant during this future period.

Sorceries: The Greek word *pharmakeion* (sorceries) is the word from which we get the English word pharmacy. "This term is used to denote poisons, amulets, charms, drugs, magic spells, or any such object. It is also used in regards to the practice of witchcraft, seances, incantations or sorceries. It is closely tied to pagan idolatry and some have suggested that it can be connected to drugs used in abortion and infanticide."²⁹² Such demonic activity will be at an all time high during this future period.

Immorality: The Greek term here is *porneia* which is a broad term for any sexual sin and is best identified as sexual immorality in general and thus incorporating adultery, fornication, rape, homosexuality etc... Such sexual perversions will run rampant at this future time.

Thefts: Obviously as morality goes on the decline, so does honesty. The people of the world will be wicked and immoral, and they will refuse to repent of this evil activity even in the face of God's wrath being unleashed upon the earth.