

Current Affairs #99 – Understanding Prophetic Scripture
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We want to continue with our reading and the interpretation from the 9th chapter of the Book of Revelation. We had already made certain comments about the fact that five angels had sounded trumpets and the forms of these judgments. When the sixth angel had sounded his trumpet—that is where we are in chapter 9, verse 13—it continues now.

Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is 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 and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts (Revelation 9:13-21 NKJV).

Let’s go back and pick it up at verse 13, where the sixth angel sounded. This, of course, is the second woe. There are three woes, as you will recall, and these all have to do with demonic based attacks and demonic based judgments coming forth upon the earth. Before that, of course, there was an environment that precedes all of this. In the first four of the trumpet judgments, we saw things like the sun being darkened and the moon not giving her light, and so on. What we saw with that was a climate in the earth in which deception, darkness, a cloak for wickedness and for unrighteous thoughts, unrighteous behavior, all of that descended upon the earth.

Keep in mind again, as I have said before, none of this affects those who have been sealed, you will remember, from the 7th chapter. Before any of the pourings forth of what would be the wrath of God, by way of judgment upon the wickedness of mankind—which wickedness had reached the apogee; it was full—before any of that began to be released, you began to observe that God was protecting His own. They were sealed, by the way, with the mark of the Father on their foreheads.¹ Which is to say, you know, people are obsessed with the mark of the beast. Believers should not be. We should not be concerned about the mark of the beast. Why? Because we have the mark of the Father on our foreheads.

Here again, the Book of Revelation is indeed, highly symbolic, but it is not so dense and so opaque as to be impenetrable. The reason is, so many of the things that have been spoken in the Book of Revelation by symbol has been spoken of before in Scripture, whether by direct reference or by analogy. For example, the sealing of the people of God, which precludes them or grants them immunity from the terrifying judgments that are coming upon the earth, is analogous to the way that Israel, in the land of Goshen, in the time of Egypt and the plagues, were sealed by the blood of a lamb on two sides of the door and on the lintel. So the structure of the doorway had the blood on it, and it prevented the weaponry that God was using, which was, of course, the use of destruction and death, even referred to as spirits or angels. The destroyer—and if you want to extend it, the plagues—did not have an effect upon the people of God in Egypt. Why? Because they were sealed; in a type and shadow of Christ, they were sealed by the blood of a lamb, the reminder of an existing covenant. So, as I said, we see the same patterns occurring again and again and again throughout the Scripture. God does that so that when we are coming to these not easy to be understood prophetic passages, it is not as though we are taking a shot in the dark. We may walk on the illuminated path of the word revealed.

All Scripture quotations are from the NKJV Bible, unless otherwise noted.

¹ See Revelation 7:2-3: “Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ ”

What is interesting, of course, is that for religion and religious people, they view the Scriptures as a series of statements that have already come to pass, or a series of dos and don'ts. They do not, in fact, see it in the way it ought to be seen, which is a manner in which God is communicating to people on the frequency or the wavelength of the Spirit. The dryness of Scripture, to people who view the Scriptures as dry, is precisely because they view the Scriptures topically. They see it as a Book of rules and/or they see it as a Book of finished prophetic utterances, for the most part. And then they make up things. You know, like the four living creatures, they will say, "Well, those are the four gospels." That is a classic Roman Catholic perspective. Well, that is nonsense. Anybody who sees the references to the four living creatures, say, in the Book of Ezekiel, and the same four living creatures in the Book of Revelation, could not possibly conclude that we are talking about the four gospels. But, if enough people believe it, then it takes the position of precedent. But silly precedent, albeit precedent, does not help you. In fact, the difficulty with prophetic Scripture is largely a function of the unbelief that is rampant in the church.

You see, there was always going to be a price to be paid for relegating the Holy Spirit to a phenomenon of the past, or, at best, relegating the Holy Spirit to a theology—a person of Godhead, but other than that, generally, having simply written the Bible or inspired men to write the Bible, He then sort of took off—and now it is up to us, primarily through our seminaries, and through our Bible studies and discussions, and the rest of it, controlled by denominational thinking. It is in that framework that we lose the brilliance and the beauty of Scripture.

The brilliance and the beauty of Scripture is that it reoccurs. The same patterns occur again and again and again, so that those who are led by the Spirit have a clear picture that this is what God is saying. In fact, instead of Scripture, unless they are specifically fulfilled—like when Jesus says, "This is what was spoken," or "This is what the law and the prophets spoke about Me." When someone like the Lord Jesus Christ so specifically nails it down, there is nowhere to go with it except to say, "This is that." Or when even the prophets are speaking, and they say, "Now these four great beasts that you saw are four kingdoms,"² then it is tied in precisely, and we are not left to question or to doubt what is being meant. However, the mere reoccurrence of patterns in

² See Daniel 7:17: "Those great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings *which* arise out of the earth."

Scripture, and the fact that you can identify certain things referenced in Scripture to certain events in Scripture, does not mean it is a complete fulfillment.

But the point of it is, and the value of understanding the reoccurrence of Scripture is, this is how God means to communicate with you, so that when these Scriptures that are yet to be unpacked are unpacked, you have that aha! moment. Here is what Romans 15:4 says: “For whatsoever things were written before time (in antiquity, if you like), were written for our learning, so that we through patience and the comfort of Scripture might have hope.” This is the manner in which prophetic Scriptures are especially as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path,³ so that we do not walk in darkness—we who are in Christ, who is Himself the Word,⁴ whose person has been revealed to us through the Holy Spirit, who was specifically sent to take of what belongs to Jesus and to make it known to us,⁵ and that in the timing of the Lord. According to Paul, when he spoke to the philosophers on Mars Hill, he said God had appointed the times and the seasons in which men are to dwell, and has set their boundaries.⁶ Unless the Scriptures have internally concluded that a matter has been fulfilled, then we may expect that even though there is a fulfillment of it that is definitive, that there are yet other fulfillments of the same thing. In that sense, you see, it becomes a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

Otherwise, take the times in which we now live. How on earth would we, as the children of God, be comforted by patience and the comfort of Scripture to have hope? If there are no roadmaps, if there is no lighted path for us to walk on, then we are not going to be any different from the people of this present age. And right now, these would be frightening times if we were not given understanding of the prophetic Scriptures.

³ See Psalm 119:105 KJV: “Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

⁴ See John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

⁵ See John 16:13-14: “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you.”

⁶ See Acts 17:26-27: “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;”

Having the name of the Father, the seal of the Father on the forehead, was the first thing that God did as it related to preserving and protecting the people of God. My analogy is, again, like Israel in Goshen in the days of the plagues in Egypt, and specifically in the days of the plagues in Egypt that had to do with the slaying of the firstborn, there was a sealing of those by the blood of a lamb for those who were behind the door. This is a type and shadow, of course, of being in the House of God. So, we are granted immunity from the terrors that stalk mankind in these days of darkness. As we proceed from the time of darkness in the first four of the trumpet judgments, we move into, with the sounding of the fifth trumpet—so five, six, and seven; the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets—the unveiling of the demonic, who are very much a part of the judgment that God is bringing upon mankind who has not been sealed.

You see, there has always been the sons of God and the rest of mankind. That was true in the days of Noah: the sons of God were in the ark, and the rest of mankind were in the water. God intends and intended, by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, to reap a harvest from among mankind, from among the sons of men. Now all mankind was created by God, and Jesus was given in the fullness of time to redeem mankind. Whoever is redeemed out of every tribe, and tongue, and language, and nation is no longer to be categorized as mankind, but may be categorized as the sons of God, who by definition, biblically, represent a new creation. Because, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation⁷—no longer sons of Adam, no longer part of the general mix of the races of mankind, but now specifically the sons of God. And relative to the sons of God, God has broken down every dividing partition, every wall of separation, so that in this Body of Christ we are one new man.⁸ We are one holy race.⁹ We are the sons of God.

⁷ See 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

⁸ See Ephesians 2:14-16: “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”

⁹ See 1 Peter 2:9 ESV: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

By reference, of course, I just want to go back and restate this principle. I believe it is incredibly important that you understand these things as you are approaching the symbolisms of the Book of Revelation; otherwise, even if you are in the Body of Christ, but you have not been taught, then you will wonder what part of this applies to you and what part of it does not. I am telling you, according to the strength of Scripture, on the basis of Scripture, I am telling you that if you have been sealed with the name of your Father on the forehead—which has to say your mind has been renewed in a fashion that makes it consistent with the mind of Christ, therefore, you understand in this renewed mind, your identity is different: you are of God, you are a new creation, you are of the family of God—then you are not destined to come under the judgments of the world that are coming upon mankind in the world, simply because you have been taken out of one condition, and you have been translated into another condition. God has separated you from the kingdom of darkness, and He has invested you, He has enfranchised you in the Kingdom of God.¹⁰ That comes with benefits that include immunity from the activities of the demonic. You live in the world, but you are not of the world.

Having made that distinction clear, when the darkness comes by the first four of the trumpet blasts, the darkness will be the environment that preconditions mankind to the destructive visitations of the demonic. The demonic is literally let out of the abyss. Now keep in mind, although many of the demonic were put into Tartarus,¹¹ as we spoke of earlier, the activities of the demonic are not restricted in terms of the deceiving of mankind. And so this darkness that comes on the earth, at the end of chapter 8, is the uncontrovertible evidence of demonic blindness, of deception, in which mankind is now indulging every conceivable lust without restraint, because the Restrainer has been removed, and so the systems of mankind are breaking down, and lawlessness becomes the order of the day.

- That environment of lawlessness then becomes the one into which the demonic, coming out of the abyss to actually move around, yet in invisibility, among humankind, stirs and torments mankind, so much so that none of their decisions can find resolution in the results.

¹⁰ See Colossians 1:13: “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love,”

¹¹ See *tartaró*, Strong’s Greek 5020 - <https://biblehub.com/greek/5020.htm>

Everything is subject to change. Everything is uncertain and unstable. Everything is being shaken (cf. Revelation 9:1-6).

- We talked about the locusts (cf. Revelation 9:7-11).
- Then, we go now to that first woe that is passed, and then there are two more woes (cf. Revelation 9:12). Because there is a total of three woes to go with four other forms of judgment that we have looked at before (cf. Revelation 8:6-13). These constitute the seven trumpet blasts.

Now I will set up this by saying,

Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is 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 and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind (Revelation 9:13-15).

Before we get into who the four angels are, or what they are and what they do, let me remind you again— “Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God...”—once again I remind you that the saints were under the altar. This was back in chapter 6: the saints were under the altar, and the saints were crying out to God, asking for vindication.¹² These were the ones who had been oppressed, tormented, persecuted, and even killed; it was now the time for their vindication. Now it is not God Himself or the Lamb who is announcing these things. The voice is coming from where the saints were: they were under the golden altar. This is also the altar of incense.

By the way, let me say, the entire structure of the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the temple of Solomon, and the subsequently rebuilt temple, all of that had to do with types and shadows. Because you will see the Scriptures in the Book of Hebrews says that, as long as the earthly

¹² See Revelation 6:9-10: “When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ ”

tabernacle still remained, it was clear that the true tabernacle, the actual substantive thing which is in heaven, had not yet been revealed.¹³ So, there is a representation of the thing on the earth that is the shadow; but when you see the thing in heaven, that is the reality. Like the Ark of the Covenant, the box that was ported by the four priests, that is a type and shadow. The reality of that is the actual remembrance of the covenant that that represents; and that is always before God, so there is no forgetting. In fact, Hebrews 7 tells us this: That God, when He commits Himself to covenant and He gives a representation of the covenant, He does that because He wants us, who have fled to take hold of the hope that has been offered to us (the type and shadow of which is the symbolic in the earth), does so so that we may be greatly encouraged, and that this type and shadow would reference the more substantive reality, and our souls would be anchored by that which is beyond the veil.¹⁴ Which is to say that, knowing that in the type and shadow we have been given a hope, the substance of things hoped for, we have been given evidence of things not seen, that we might altogether hold on to the reality that is vested in the type and shadow.

So then, the voice that is heard is coming from the golden altar, under which the saints are, and therefore, the smoke that ascends from the altar is that which typifies the prayers of the saints. So it is the saints who are saying to the sixth angel, the voice from the altar is saying to the sixth angel, release the four angels who are bound by the great river Euphrates. That is where we will go when we continue.

¹³ See Hebrews 9:8: "...the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing."

¹⁴ See Hebrews 6:17-19: "Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*. This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the *Presence* behind the veil,"