

Fifth Trumpet, part 2

Revelation 9:1-6, part 2

By Phillip G. Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2016-08-21

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Text

Revelation 9:1 So the fifth angel trumpeted, and I saw a 'star' that had fallen out of the sky to the earth. And to him was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. 2 So he opened the shaft of the Abyss and smoke went up out of the shaft, like the smoke of a burning furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke from the shaft. 3 And 'locusts' exited from the smoke into the earth. And to them was given a capability just like the scorpions of the earth have capability. 4 And they were told not to harm the grass of the earth, nor any green plant, nor any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And it was designated to them [locusts], not to kill them [men] but, to torment them five months. And their torment is like the torment of a scorpion whenever it strikes a person. 6 And in those days the people will seek death but not find it; they will want to die but death will run away from them.

7 Now the appearance of the 'locusts' was like horses prepared for battle, and something like a golden crown was on their heads, and their faces were like human faces. 8 They had hair like a woman's and their teeth were like a lion's. 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. 10 And, they have tails like scorpions and stingers precisely in those tails! They have the capability to hurt the populace five months, 11 having as king over them the angel of the Abyss—his name in Hebrew is Abbadon, while in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

12 The first woe is past, but, two woes are still coming, after these things.

Introduction

Last week I demonstrated that these locusts are not a literal locust plague. Instead, the apostle John wrote it in a way that would have immediately directed the mind of the first century's reader to the bristling symbols in Rome's armies, all of which pointed to their gods (what we call demons). We saw that the official emblem of Titus' Fifteenth Legion was the locust (and a locust was the symbol on all the shields of the infantry), and the official emblem on the shields of the cavalry was the scorpion, and the various symbols here represent a collage of all of the totems and symbols in Titus' army that they themselves saw as pointing to their patron god Apollyon and all of the "gods" under Apollyon. So we looked at the symbols last week, and showed how they pointed to the summoning of Titus' armies on October 31 of AD 66.

Today I am going to begin unraveling what this passage teaches us about the demons that were symbolized. And because John assumes an understanding of previous Scriptures, we are going to dig into several issues that are briefly stated in verse 1. He expects you to already know what the Abyss is. He

expects you to know what the "shaft" or dungeon portion of the Abyss is. He expects you to know what stars symbolize, and what demons are. But because the modern church is messed up on those issues, I am going to spend the whole sermon on just verse 1. Today's sermon is an introduction to the demonology of the chapter.

I. Fifth angel versus star. Fifth angel = good angelic general; star = Satan

Verse 1 says, "So the fifth angel trumpeted, and I saw a 'star' that had fallen out of the sky to the earth." Let's stop there for now. That clause introduces us to two quite different angels. When you start counting off the earlier angels, 1,2,3,4 - you realize that this is the fifth in a sequence of good angels who are carrying out Christ's orders. These were the generals of the mighty Cherubim armies.

But pitted against this good angelic general there is a fallen star. And this star is identified as a "him" who seems to have greater authority than the demonic king that he releases. Well, when you begin to realize the incredible power of Apollyon in verse 11, and when you realize that this "star" angel is greater, then he has to be none other than Satan. So I (along with Beale and many other commentaries) believe that this fallen star is Satan himself. And all of the locusts are one sub-group army of a larger army of angels that Satan had led in a rebellion against God. These ones were unleashed from the Abyss, and there will be other demons under Satan who will be unleashed from the region of the Euphrates in the second half of the chapter. And to me that is already an encouragement. Demons can't go just anywhere they want to go. They are restricted to regions and they are restricted in what they can do. That's a comfort. So that is my brief summary of the first phrase in verse 1.

But my interpretation instantly raises controversy. And because so many Evangelicals are (in my opinion) messed up on their views of demonology, we will have to take this slowly. If we don't identify this fallen star appropriately, or the locusts, or the Abyss, it will mess up some of our applications later in this chapter. When you see some of the strange teachings and even stranger practices of people on demonology, you realize that the consequences of getting these things wrong are pretty serious. And I know that some of you have read books by Henry Wright and others that can lead you astray. So be patient - I really want to set the groundwork for our later teaching on this chapter. And I think you will later appreciate the fact that we have slogged through these controversies today.

The first thing that I want to do this morning is to make the case that this chapter is describing Satan releasing Apollyon (who was one of his generals) and releasing Apollyon's angels from the lowest portion of the Abyss called the dungeon, or Tartarus, or the pit. The Abyss has different chambers, each of which has locking gates. And these demons are particularly vicious demons that had previously been imprisoned there. So let me build this theology step by step.

II. The origin of angels and demons.

A. A "star" (v. 1) is often a symbol of an angel (cf. Job 38:7; Judges 5:20; Is. 14:13; Dan. 8:10; Rev. 12:4), and this fallen star who seems to have authority over the demon locusts seems to be identified as Satan in Revelation 12:7,9; Luke 10:17-20; Isaiah 14:12-15. Note that verse 11 and Revelation 12:7,9 identify these demons that Satan rules over as "his angels."

First of all, the identity of the fallen "star." In your outlines you will see a number of Scriptures where angels are called "stars." Job 38:7 says that on day one of creation all the morning stars sang together in worship, and in context he is clearly referring to angels.

Judges 5:20 has a poem that has two parallel thoughts. The first thought speaks of invisible beings who "fought from the heaven." What kind of good invisible beings fight on our behalf from the heavens? Angels do. But in the second parallel thought he says, "The stars from their courses fought against Sisera." Now, we know that it was angels who were fighting on Israel's behalf. So by way of parallelism that passage indicates that angels and stars are synonyms. One is a symbol of the other. I am making the case that this star is a fallen angel, not Jesus.

Revelation 12:4 says that the dragon, Satan, drew a third of the stars of heaven and made them fall. So in our chapter a star has fallen from heaven and in that chapter there are a bunch of stars that had fallen. Perhaps it is the same kind of star. Thankfully, in verses 7 and 9 John identifies those stars as "his angels" - Satan's angels. But Revelation 12 clearly describes the head of all those stars as being cast to the ground himself. So that would be a star being cast to the ground, and identified as the dragon, the devil, and Satan. So that's a fairly tight argument for this fallen star being Satan. John seems to be defining what he means within the book. I could probably end there, but there is so much controversy on this that I want to give you more

evidence:

Luke 10 uses a different metaphor when Jesus says, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Let me read you all four verses. Luke 10:17-20.

Luke 10:17-20 17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." 18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Notice that Jesus calls those demons scorpions. That's an interesting parallel to our own passage, where the locusts have a sting like scorpions. But Jesus also treats Satan as being one of the demons. Well, if Satan is identified as a demon there and he is identified as an angel elsewhere, that would be another proof that demons are fallen angels. And in the same passage Jesus gives other names to these demons: serpents, scorpions, the enemy, and spirits. They are tormenting spirits under Satan's authority. Keep those facts in mind when we identify demons. But in terms of a further parallel to our passage, Beale translates that verse as, "I saw Satan fall like a star from heaven." According to the dictionary meaning of the Greek word for "lightning," a "star" is a legitimate translation. It's not the most obvious translation, but it is a legitimate one. Either way, it is a very close parallel to Revelation 9:1. And it clearly identifies this light that falls from heaven as Satan.

Of course, Luke 10 is probably alluding to Isaiah 14, which is another description of Satan as a star fallen from heaven. Isaiah 14. In that chapter, Lucifer's temptation of pride was to say this: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God." He wanted to be the chief angel. But God says to him, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground." Son of the morning was the brightest star, and the name Lucifer means "morning star." So that passage explicitly calls angels stars and says that the morning star, Lucifer, had fallen. Commentaries say that this is so close to Revelation 9:1 that it is virtually a commentary on it, calling the star Satan, or Lucifer.

And Beale's commentary cites numerous Jewish and early Christian commentaries that identified this fallen star as Satan.¹ So I believe it is

¹ He says,

In 1 En. 88:1-3 an evil angel (perhaps Satan, cf. 1 En. 10:4) is referred to as a "star that had fallen from heaven ... into an abyss ... narrow ... and dark" (so also 86:1-2; cf. 1 En. 18:11-16; 86:3; 90:23-26, where disobedient angels are "stars" that have been cast into the "abyss"). Jesus uses virtually the identical expression to describe Satan's judgment in Luke 10:18: "I was seeing Satan as a star falling from heaven." In Luke 10:17-20 Jesus identifies Satan as head over the demons and, with them, in the

virtually certain that first century readers would have interpreted this fallen star as being the fallen star of Isaiah 14, Lucifer - not Christ; not a good angel; not some other fallen angel, but Satan.

And the reason I bring all of that up is that you don't have to read very many books on demonology written by Evangelicals before you run across ridiculous theories of where demons come from. And sadly, it negatively affects their practice of how to resist the demonic. There is a lot of superstition from the Greeks and unbelieving Jews that Evangelicals and Messianic Jews have introduced and it has created some very problematic practices. I wish I didn't even have to deal with these false theories this morning, but I do. Some of you have been exposed to them. So I at least want to give you a bare-bones response to each theory. And it is one of the reasons why I have given you such an extensive outline. I want you to have plenty of Scriptures even though I won't go over all of them.

B. The three primary viewpoints among evangelicals on the origin of angels and demons (only one fits with the evidence of this chapter)

False theory #1 - demons = spirits of pre-Adamite race (Gen. 1:1-2 with Jer. 4:23-26; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6; Luke 20:36; 1 Cor. 15:44; 2 Cor. 5:2-3; Acts 23:8-9). Problems with this theory: (Luke 16:26; Heb. 9:22; Jer. 4:23-26 should not be taken out of context of verses 27-31; Acts 23:8-9; Psalm 104:4; Heb. 1:4; Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 12:7,9; 2 Cor. 12:7)

The first false theory says that demons are the spirits of a pre-Adamite race who desperately want to get back into bodies again, so they try to possess people. You might find it hard to believe that anyone would hold to such a ridiculous theory, but it is very prevalent out there. In fact, some of you have read authors who teach this and have wondered. Let me give you five reasons why this interpretation is totally bogus.

First, this theory cannot survive without the Gap Theory. Now, if you hold to the Gap Theory that may not be a very good argument, so I will give you

process of being subjected to him and his disciples. The expression in Rev. 9:1 may be another way of saying that "Satan ... was cast to the earth, and his angels with him were cast" (12:9; cf. 12:13).

Testament of Solomon 20:14-17 says that good angels do not fall like stars from heaven because they "have their foundations laid in the firmament"; but "demons" appear as "stars ... falling from heaven ... dropped like flashes of lightning to the earth" because they have no such foundation.

G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 492.

more in a minute. But in my opinion, the Gap Theory is a theory that has been thoroughly discredited in recent years by Hebrew studies. Basically, the Gap Theory says that there is a gap of billions of years between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, and an entire civilization was wiped out long before Adam came along. Rather than all things in the universe being created in six days, they say that the world was being refashioned and reordered in six days. So the sun and moon that had already existed for billions of years began to shine through the cloud cover on day four as God refashioned an already existing world. So on the pre-Adamite-humans view, the dinosaur bones came from a time before Genesis 1:2. Many of those same people believe that the so-called Cro-Magnon man, Neanderthal man, Nebraska man, Java man, and other humanoid bones came from that time too. (We won't delve into how each of those so-called hominoids and their bones were hoaxes. But this theory was developed before that was shown to be the case.) In any case, many of those Gap-theorists still think demons are the spirits of those pre-Adamite men. When I preached on Genesis 1, I dealt with that gap theory at great length, and won't do so now. But if you can disprove the Gap Theory, you can pretty much disprove this view of demons. But because people continue to believe in the gap theory, let me give some additional reasons why demons could not possibly be the spirits of pre-Adamite humans.

The second reason why it is not credible is that there is not even a hint of a pre-Adamite race in Scripture. People will point to these demons as that hint, but that is circular reasoning. Even if you assume the Gap Theory to be true, there is no Biblical evidence that humans with spirits existed before Adam. That idea is inserted into the text.

Third, Romans 5:12 says that death came to planet earth as a result of Adam's fall. To posit billions of years' worth of fossil record to a time before Genesis 1:2 contradicts God's statement at the end of that chapter (v. 31), which says, "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good." Everything was very good. Would dinosaur bones with tumors, breaks, and evidences of disease be very good? No. Would a fossil record of a rebellious pre-Adamite race be very good? No. Gary North points out that everything in creation was very good because God decreed it, God's creation produced it, God's standards measured it, and God's evaluation announced it. But it also contradicts Paul's statement in Romans 5:12 that the world did not know death till Genesis 3. All animals with breath started dying after the fall of Adam.

Fourth, the one passage that they try to use to distinguish demons from

fallen angels, which is Acts 23:8-9, actually proves too much. Let me read that for you. It says,

Acts 23:8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. 9 Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, "We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God."

They try to say that a spirit is different than an angel here, so angels must have bodies. Well, that's a wild leap of reasoning. But secondly, they say that this passage proves that there are spirits besides angels that can talk to men. But if that passage proves that angels have bodies, then Revelation 16:14, which speaks of "spirits of demons," must mean that demons have bodies (something that even they claim that they don't). In fact, that would undermine their argument because it would still show no difference between angels and demons.

Secondly, we don't get our theology from the Sadducees or the Pharisees. They were both enemies of the cross. And that verse is quoting the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

And furthermore, the passage was clearly talking about what they thought of unfallen spirits or angels, not bad ones. If they want to say that the word "spirit" there proves a pre-Adamite race existed, then they would have to say that there were some pre-Adamite spirits that didn't fall, which of course they don't believe. They don't see good pre-Adamite spirits wandering around and talking to people. So that completely discredits the theory.

It is much better to understand the Pharisees using angel and spirit as designations for Seraphim (who are the messengers) and Cherubim (who are the warriors).² We have seen that even the book of Revelation distinguishes those two orders of angels in precisely that fashion.

Lastly, whether or not these spirits previously had bodies is meaningless to the debate of why demons want to possess people. Demons possess people because they hate God's image in man and are bent on destroying that image. It is much more straightforward to take all demons as fallen angels, just like the earlier passages that I gave demonstrate.

² Notice that it is not a hard and fast division since angels are called spirits in Psalm 104:4 and Heb. 1:4. As to the binding of angels, there is an equal difficulty on all views concerning what this binding of Jude 6 and 2 Pet. 2:4 means since it is clear that all angels have not been bound in the absolute sense that this theory implies (Rev. 12:7,9; 2 Cor. 12:7 Greek)

False theory #2 - demons are the disembodied spirits of all unbelievers or at least of very wicked unbelievers. Problems with this theory: Ezek. 31:16-17; Is. 11:11; Luke 16; etc)

A second theory says that demons are the disembodied spirits of all unbelievers or at least of very wicked unbelievers.³ So on this theory, when your neighbor down the street dies, he vacates his body, and because he doesn't feel comfortable or complete without a body, his spirit will wander around till he can find a person that he can inhabit.

But Scripture is quite clear that the moment unbelievers die, they go down to hell, or Hades, and are awaiting the final day of judgment. They can't wander around. Ezekiel 31:16-17 speaks of "those who descend into the Pit... down to hell." And then makes clear that they cannot escape. They cannot wander around. Isaiah 11 says of the king of Babylon, "your pomp is brought down to Sheol" (v. 11) Luke 16 gives the story of the rich man and Lazarus, and Abraham tells the person in hell, "And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us." And as you continue reading in that story it is clear that the rich man can't come to earth to talk to his relatives. He's stuck. The souls of men simply do not have liberty to roam around.

And these occult practitioners in Omaha who do seances are interacting with demons who impersonate dead people, but they are not interacting with the spirits of dead people. When Roman Catholics try to talk to and pray to the spirits of their dead relatives and other Christians they are engaging in grave error. It is a direct disobedience to God's commands to not try to contact the dead. You are automatically involving yourself in the demonic when you do so.

There are many other arguments that make this interpretation a lame one, but certainly Revelation 9 contradicts it by calling this head-demon, Apollyon, an angel. If the locusts are demons and the locust-king is an angel, that would seem to identify the two. Likewise if Satan is called a demon in one passage and an angel in another passage, that would seem to identify demons and angels.

³ Josephus said that demons "are no other than the spirits of the wicked, which enter into men that are alive, and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them" (Wars of the Jews, 7:6:3)

False theory #3 - demons = the monstrous offspring of angels and women (Gen. 6:4 with Job 1:6; 2:1). Problems with this theory (Gen. 6:2 with Matt. 22:30; Gen. 6:4; Scriptures above; Rev. 9:11)

But there is one more theory that has become incredibly popular in Evangelical circles. This one says that the giants or the Nephilim in Genesis 6:4 were the monstrous offspring of angels and women. There are two versions of this theory. One version says that it was good angels who at the time of Genesis 6 lusted after women and took women to be their wives. Well, that would amount to a second fall of angels.⁴ And their books and websites do indeed distinguish that fall from the earlier fall of angels. The other version of this theory says that it was already fallen angels who lusted after women and took women to be their wives. But both versions of this theory appeal to Jude 7 which speaks of pre-flood people lusting after strange flesh. Instead of seeing that as homosexuality, they see it as angels going after flesh that is different from their flesh. Well, that is ridiculous since angels don't have bodies. They are spirits. And Christ was quite clear that angels do not marry (Matt. 22:30), yet whoever Genesis 6:2 is talking about, they did marry. They can't be angels. The logic is that Genesis 6:2 says that the "sons of God" married women. Jesus says that angels do not marry women. Ergo, the "sons of God" can't be angels.

In any case, this theory claims that the Septuagint translates the Hebrew word, nephelim, with gigantes, which according to this theory comes from gegenes which they believe means "earth born" rather than simply born, and they claim that "earth born" was a term used by the Greeks to refer to the mythological Titans, who were partly celestial and partly terrestrial in origin. And then these books gives us a ton of their theology from Greek mythology. Well, not only is it a stretch of definitions, it denies the sufficiency of Scripture for our demonology.

In any case, on their theory, when God judged the world with the flood, the bodies of the Nephilim died, but the spirits of these half-angel/half-human beings are the demons who want to get back into a body. They say that these

4 See <http://adivineencounter.weebly.com/demons-are-not-fallen-angels.html> for one example of many. He says, "demons are the spirits of the giants, half angelic/half-human, or hybrid animals who died but had no destination because they were not natural beings created by God. Although the bible did not give reference to sexual relations between the evil angels and animal, Enoch and Jubilees gave reference to. We also know that creatures bring forth after their kind. The giants and other hybrid creatures brought forth offspring, which would obviously be of the same race. The offspring of the fallen angels were not created by God, nor were they natural; so they could not receive the judgement of Angels, they were not fully angels, but they could not receive the judgement of humans, they were not fully humans." See <http://www.tbm.org/origindemons.htm>

demonic spirits are neither angel nor human, but a mixture that produced a monstrosity.

But there are several problems that I have with that theory. The first is that Genesis 6 calls these Nephilim "men," not half-men, but "men." Verse 4 says, "Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown." As far as I am concerned, that is a death-blow to the theory. But you still find even Reformed people (and commentaries) who buy into this strange theory, so let me give a couple of other objections that I have to it. And if you hold to the theory, at least be Bereans and check out my references in each point of this outline that points to demons being angels.

I have already cited several Scriptures that speak of the souls of all men in the Old Testament going down to Sheol. The Bible knows of no exceptions. If these are men (which Genesis 6:2 says they were), then their souls went down to Sheol when they died. They are in prison, not roaming around trying to possess people and making a nuisance of themselves.

Third, on their theory, Jude has God binding the so-called "father-angels" in the pit but not the offspring. Why? Why would the angels be bound in the pit, but not the offspring - especially when the offspring themselves supposedly go after strange flesh? I have never seen a good answer.

Fourth, they run up against the same exegetical arguments as the first theory does when they try to distinguish angels from spirits, which is something also essential to their theory. Take a look again at the description of the head locust in Revelation 9. He got released from the pit along with all of the other demon locusts that he was king over. Verse 11 says, "having as king over them the angel of the Abyss — his name in Hebrew is Abbadon, while in Greek he has the name Apollyon." Notice that this head locust is called an angel. If the king of demons is called an angel, it implies that the demons are too.

The true view - Demons are fallen angels. On this view all angels were created perfect as was Lucifer (Job. 38:7; Ezek. 28:15). In Satan's original rebellion he drew with him a third of all angels (Ezek. 28:18; Rev. 12:4) and from that time on he has been the king of angels (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:7,9) which is the same as being the ruler of demons (Matt 12:24-30). Note how this fits with the evidence here:

Let me reiterate the true view one more time. The true view is that demons are fallen angels. On this view all angels were created perfect, as was

Lucifer, or the Devil. God tells Satan, "You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you" (Ezek. 28:15). That chapter describes Satan as having rebelled against God and having incited other angels to rebel, which Revelation 12:4 says amounted to a third of all the angels. And by the way, in Ezekiel 28 the king of Tyre was possessed by Satan in much the same way that Nero was possessed by the Beast in this book.

Turn now to Matthew 25. Jesus describes who will end up in hell on the final day of judgment. And there are only two categories, not three or four. In this chapter Jesus says that He will divide the unbelievers on His left hand and believers on His right hand. Now, look at what he says to those on his left in verse 41:

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

There are only two categories of beings that hell was prepared for - unbelieving humans and the angels that Satan rules over. There is not a third category of millions of non-angelic demons that he rules over. There are only humans and angels who will be in hell.

Revelation 12 is also explicitly clear that Satan has a kingdom of angels that he uses on planet earth. Well, with that in mind, look at Matthew 12:24-30.

Matt. 12:24-30 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.” 25 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. 30 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

Notice verse 26: "If Satan casts out Satan." If Satan were not one of the demons that statement would make no sense. Jesus was casting out demons, the Pharisees falsely accuse him of casting out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. Christ says that amounts to saying that Satan casts out Satan. For that statement to be true, Satan has to be a demon. In any case, it is crystal clear here that the representatives of Satan's kingdom are called "demons". In other passages the representatives of Satan's kingdom are called "angels". They are one and the same thing.

C. Angels are described in Scripture as:

having a very unique nature: they were created (Ps. 148:2-5; Col. 1:16) on day one of creation (Job. 38:4-7; Neh. 9:6; Ezek. 28:13-15), are quite distinct from man (Heb. 12:22-23; 1 Cor. 6:3; Heb. 2:16; Matt. 22:30), are immortal (Heb. 1:14; Luke 20:36) spirit beings (Heb. 1:14; Eph. 6:12), yet they can shape-shift and manifest themselves with the appearance of humans or other shapes as needed (Ezek. 1:9,12,14; Judges 6:11-12; Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:26; John 20:12; Ps. 104:4; cf. diff between Ex. 25:20; 37:9; 2 Chron. 3:13 with Ezek. 41:18-19, and Ezek. 10)

Let me hurry through the rest of the outline. And I'm not going to develop all of the Scriptures that I have given in your outline, but let me at least read the summary statement about the unique nature of angels and make a couple comments. Point C, subpoint 1 says that angels have "a very unique nature: they were created by God (Ps. 148:2-5; Col. 1:16) on day one of creation (Job. 38:4-7; Neh. 9:6; Ezek. 28:13-15), are quite distinct from man (Heb. 12:22-23; 1 Cor. 6:3; Heb. 2:16; Matt. 22:30), are immortal (Heb. 1:14; Luke 20:36) spirit beings (Heb. 1:14; Eph. 6:12), yet they can shape-shift and manifest themselves with the appearance of humans or other shapes as needed (Ezek. 1:9,12,14; Judges 6:11-12; Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:26; John 20:12; Ps. 104:4; cf. diff between Ex. 25:20; 37:9; 2 Chron. 3:13 with Ezek. 41:18-19, and Ezek. 10)."

And I won't comment on all of the Scriptures that I used as proof texts, but let me comment on the changes of shape that they can take on. The shape shifting can help to explain why both elect angels and fallen angels appear in different forms in the Old Testament and in the book of Revelation. Sometimes they appear like men; sometimes like fire, and sometimes like creatures. In the Old Testament there were demons who deliberately took on very ugly shapes. Why would they do that? Because they are evil and try to twist and deform all that God has made. For example, there are five passages (Is. 13:21LXX; 34:14LXX; Lev. 17:7; 2 Chron. 11:15; 2 Kings 22:8) where some demons are called "Satyrs" in the Old Testament. The Satyr was a god that the pagans worshiped who looked half human and half goat. And you study the Greek thinking behind that and it promoted a bestiality and a blurring of distinctions between humans and animals. But when Scripture itself calls the demons "Satyrs," it implies that they on occasion manifested themselves like Satyrs to the pagans who worshiped them. And it could be that the demons in this chapter occasionally took on the shapes of the

symbols in Titus' army. There is no reason why the demons could not have looked exactly this way at times, and then changed their shape at other times.

as personal beings: (Luke 1:10) that can rejoice (1 Pet. 1:12); fight (Rev. 12:7), worship (Heb. 1:6), travel (Gen. 19:1; Luke 9:26), talk (Zech. 1:9; Luke 1:13), gain knowledge (2 Sam. 14:20; Mark 13:32; Eph. 3:10) or lack details of knowledge (Matt. 24:36), serve (Matt. 13:29-49; Acts 5:19), transport people to heaven (Matt. 22:30), have a will (2 Tim. 2:26), do the will of God (Rev. 22:9), and hate evil (Rev. 12:12).

But though they appear like animals on occasion, they are still personal beings. And in your outlines I have given numerous Scriptures that show personality - things like rejoicing, fighting, worshiping, traveling, talking, growing in knowledge or lacking certain details of knowledge. They serve, transport people to heaven, have a will, do the will of God (or in the case of demons, try to resist God's revealed will), and they hate evil (or in the case of demons, love evil). But they are clearly personal beings with an internal moral compass that knows right from wrong.

as possessing enormous power: they travel fast (Dan. 9:23; Ezek. 1:9,12,14), excel in strength (Ps. 103:20), are mighty (1 Thes. 1:7), terrify hardened soldiers (Matt. 28:4), break chains and prison doors (Acts 12:7,10; Matt. 28:2), bring plagues

But the Scriptures in the next point show that they have powers that vastly exceed the powers of humans. Ezekiel portrays angels as being able to move as fast as lightning. Psalm 103 says that they excel in strength. 1 Thessalonians 1 calls them mighty. How mighty are they? Well, when Daniel saw one he became so weak in the presence of the angel that he fell to the ground powerless and couldn't stand up. In Matthew 28:4 the hardened soldiers guarding Christ's tomb were so frightened by the sight of an angel that they fell to the ground and became like dead men. Angels broke chains off of Peter's wrists and ankles like they were nothing, and broke open prison doors. Psalm 78:49 says that the ten plagues were brought by angels. And when we looked at the Cherubim angels in chapter 4, we saw that angels were involved in all kinds of providences. In Revelation 7:1-2 we saw that some angels can hold back the wind. The more you study the doctrine of angels, that more you realize that they are incredibly powerful beings.

Now here is the point - if demons are fallen angels we should not be

surprised that they are powerful too. We must not underestimate the power and the incredible danger of demons. We don't need to fear them, but neither do we treat them lightly. And unbelieving humans are simply pawns in their hands.

D. Which fall does verse 1 refer to? 1) The fall associated with the serpent in Eden (cf. 12:3-4,9 with Gen. 3:1-5,13-15), 2) or their being cast out of the third heaven (12:7-12)? Either way, both the king of the demons and the demons themselves are fallen angels.

Well, let's move on and identify the fall in verse 1. Verse 1 says, "I saw a 'star' that had fallen out of the sky to the earth." Commentaries point out that John didn't see the fall happen right then. The Greek grammar indicates that the fall had taken place before this unleashing of the demons. He is an already fallen angel. So the question comes, "Which fall is this referring to?" There was a fall from sinlessness into a sinful state somewhere around the time of Genesis 3. And Isaiah 14:12 talks about that fall saying, How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground...

It is very similar language to this. So that is one option. From Genesis 3 and on Satan and his angels had access to heaven but no longer had a kingdom in heaven or authority in heaven.

The second option is a spatial fall, when Satan and all demons were kicked out of heaven and were barred from ever again having access to God's throne room in heaven.

And Revelation 12 describes both falls. Verse 4 describes his spiritual fall, and verses 7-12 describe his being cast out of heaven in May of AD 66. The spiritual fall happened around the time of Genesis 3. The spatial fall happened just a few months earlier in May of 66 and immediately preceded the first three and a half years of the Great Wrath. Revelation 12:10 describes this second fall in these words:

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

Prior to AD 66, Satan had access to heaven, just like he did in the book of Job. But with the war of the archangel Michael against Satan and his angels, God was no longer going to allow Satan to have access to His throne room. That had happened about five months earlier that year.

So those are the two options. Both falls were previous to this event. But on

either interpretation, the fallen star of verse 1 is describing an evil fallen angel. And this leader of the locusts in verse 11 was also a fallen angel, or demon. He is restricted to planet earth and its atmosphere. But he wants to create as much havoc as he can, and when Christ determines to judge Israel, this demon no doubt jumps at the chance to lead some of his demons that he had previously had charge over. Getting out of the pit would have been a delight. Being able to engage in torment would have been an equal delight to his evil nature.

III. Satan given authorization to open the Abyss

But verse 1 goes on to say, "And to him was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss." That phrase is about as far as we will have time to go today because it has enough issues.

A. What is the Abyss (sometimes translated as the "bottomless pit")?

First of all, what is the Abyss? The New King James translates that as the "bottomless pit." But the word "bottomless" does not occur in the text. It has a bottom. It is simply the Abyss or the deep. Well, let's look at some other passages where that term, Abyss (ἄβυσσος) occurs.

A place where Jesus went when He died (Rom. 10:7). Also called "the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. 4:9) and Hades (Acts 2:27,31). The Old Testament name for Hades is Sheol (Acts 2:27,31 is quoting Psalm 16:10). Sheol/Hades had two compartments:

Romans 10:7 shows that this was where Christ's spirit went when He died. Let me start reading at verse 6.

But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) 7 or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

So the abyss was the place of the dead. And Christ went to the place of the dead. But in Ephesians 4:9, when Paul makes the same argument, he substitutes "the lower parts of the earth" for the word "abyss." He says, 9 (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?

So "Abyss" and "lower parts of the earth" are synonyms. Christ's body was not in the lower parts of the earth; only His soul was. And in Acts 2 Peter quotes Psalm 16:10, saying, "For You will not leave my soul in Hades..." Well, that means "Hades" is also a synonym for the Abyss. Psalm 16 uses the

term "Sheol" (which is the Hebrew term) and when Peter quotes the Psalm he uses the term "Hades" which is the Greek name for the same place. So I will be referring to them as Sheol or Hades, but they are the same thing. In any case, preaching on Psalm 16, Peter says, David "foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption." The soul of Christ was in Hades and the body was in the above-ground tomb. So far we are seeing that the Abyss, the lower parts of the earth, and Sheol/Hades are synonyms for the same place.

These two compartments had a huge gulf that no one could cross over (Luke 16:26) and had gates (Job 17:16)

And if you were to do a study of all the words that use Sheol in the Old Testament or Hades in the New Testament, you will see that it is in the heart of the earth. In the Old Testament Sheol is said to be down 62 times. People go down to Sheol. And He's not talking about the grave. The words Sheol or Hades never refer to the grave. Let me give you some proofs. King Saul was said to go down to Sheol while his body hung above ground for several days. His body was lifted up, but his soul went down.

Another proof is that people talk in Sheol, weep, feel pain. Well, you don't do that in the grave. And (on the other hand) other people are said to feel great pleasure and comfort in Sheol. How could both of those things be true of the same place? How could Sheol be both the place of pain and the place of pleasure?

And the answer is that there are two compartments Sheol/Hades. In Christ's story in Luke 16, both Abraham and the evil rich man were in Hades, but the rich man is way down and he looks way up at an upper compartment to see Abraham and Lazarus experiencing comfort and joy in paradise. Paradise used to be the upper portion of Sheol. After Christ's resurrection He transferred paradise to heaven. Prior to that Jesus said, "No one has ascended to heaven" (John 3:13)

But Sheol is also described in Job 17:16 as having gates. Gates shut things out or let things in. And in Luke 16's description of Hades, both compartments are shut to each other. They can see each other, but they are kept from traveling to each other. So there are gates on Sheol.

Torment Sheol/Hades is called the "lowest part of Sheol" (Deut. 32:22; Ps. 86:13) or "the depths of Sheol" (Prov. 9:18). It is a place of torment (Luke 16:23-31), pain (Ps. 116:3), "sorrows" (2 Sam. 22:6), and burning fire (Deut. 32:22; Luke 16:23-24). But people can still communicate with each other in Sheol/Hades (Is. 14:9,10; Ezek. 32:21-23; cf. Luke 16:19-31)

In your outlines I have a point that gives Scriptures very briefly describing the torment portion of Sheol or Hades. Two Scriptures describe that portion as the lowest parts of Sheol (Deut. 32:22; Psalm 86:13) and another verse describes it as "the depths of Sheol" (Prov. 9:18). It is spoken of as being a deep place, an abyss (Luke 8:31), the heart of the earth (Matt 12:30). And this lowest part of Sheol is spoken of as being a place of pain (Psalm 116:3). That sure doesn't sound like the place of the grave. It is said to be a place of "sorrows" (2 Samuel 22:6) and a place of burning fire. For example, Deuteronomy 32:22 says "it shall burn to the lowest Sheol; it shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains." So the fire that is experienced in Sheol has something to do with the molten fiery mass that rises up underneath some mountains, namely, volcanoes. They say that the center of the earth (because of the pressure of what is above) is anywhere from 11,000-13,000 degrees Fahrenheit. 212 degrees Fahrenheit is plenty hot, but this is 61 times hotter. That is hotter than the surface of the sun. And so it is a very literal lake of fire in the heart of the earth. So that is hell before the second coming.

At the second coming, Revelation 20:13 tells us that Sheol/Hades will be emptied out and cast into a lake of fire which in turn will be cast into outer darkness forever and ever. It says, "Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire." Now we aren't told what shape that lake will take. Will it be similar to the molten lake that they are in under the earth right now? We aren't told. Some have imagined it like a giant sun that is a lake of liquid which burns. Others have likened it to a massive planet, the weight of which would cause unbelievable temperatures at its core and lesser temperatures at higher levels. And if the planet were cast out into space, there would not only be darkness all around, there would be darkness within. But we aren't told the specifics of how God will accomplish it. We are just told that hell will be transferred from within the earth to some other place at the end of earth history. So that is torment Sheol.

Paradise Sheol/Hades was also called "Abraham's bosom" by the Jews (cf. Luke 16:22) because a believer was said to be "gathered unto his people" (Gen. 25:8,17; 35:29; 49:33) or to have "rested with his fathers" (1 Kings 2:10; 11:43; 14:20; etc.). The Paradise portion of Sheol/Hades was "afar off" (Luke 16:23) from Torment Sheol/Hades, and was elevated far above the place of torment (cf. Deut. 32:22; Psalm 86:13; Prov. 9:18 with Luke 16:23). It was a place of comfort (Luke 16:25), rest and freedom (Job 3:11-19). Compared to Sheol/Hades, earthly existence was disturbing (1 Sam. 28:15). This was the place Christ was referring to when He said to the thief on the cross "Today you will be with Me in Paradise."

But I have given a number of verses that show that in the Old Testament times there was an upper compartment of Sheol or Hades that was called paradise. Until after Christ's resurrection, saints always went down to paradise, not up. For example, in Genesis 37:31-35, Jacob says, "I will go down into Sheol to my son in mourning" (v. 35). Some translations translate that as "grave," but that doesn't make sense. Jacob thought Joseph had been eaten by animals, so surely he could not mean that he would join Joseph in a grave, or even in a grave like Joseph. Joseph simply was not in a grave. And Jacob never ended up being in a grave. His bones were in a box. But once he died, his soul would go down to the subteranean place of the dead.

Likewise, when Samuel was brought back from the dead, he did not come down from heaven, but his soul came "up out of the earth." (1 Sam. 28:11-16). Let me read that. And "Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Interestingly, Samuel told Saul, "Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me." (v. 19). But in chapter 31 we read that Saul didn't make it to the grave. He was hung on a wall and then burned. Clearly Samuel was referring to the souls of these men.

Now some may object and say that the thief on the cross went to heaven. But if Christ was in heaven with the thief, how could He say after His resurrection, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father" (John 20:17) On the third day He had not yet ascended to the Father. Indeed, how could Ephesians 4:8-10 say that Christ had to "first descend into the lower parts of the earth" before He could "ascend" to heaven? For three days and three nights Christ's "soul" was in Sheol/Hades (And you can see that in Psalm 16:10; 49:15; Acts 2:31-32). Each of those passages distinguish between Christ's soul and His body. His soul was released from Sheol and His body was preserved from corruption. Romans 10:7 makes it clear that when Christ came up from the dead, He ascended from "the abyss" - the same word that is used in Revelation 9:1.

A place where at least some demons are chained (Rev. 9:1,2,11; 11:7; 17:8) and the place where Satan will be chained at some point in the future (Rev. 20:1-3)

But it is not just Christ who would be in the Abyss - eventually Satan would too. Speaking of Satan Isaiah 14 says, "Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit" (Is. 14:15). Notice the use of the phrase "lowest depths of the pit." The only part of the pit; the only part of Sheol/Hades that Satan will ever be a part of is the "lowest part."

And the rest of the outline only deals with this lower Sheol or lower Hades. Revelation 9 indicates that previous to this chapter, Apollyon and these locust demons had been bound in the Abyss. And Revelation 17:8 speaks of the Beast who is about to ascend out of the bottomless pit. So obviously the Beast had been bound there too. When John wrote this book in early AD 66, God was "about to" unleash the Beast upon Nero. And most nowadays don't adequately account for these aspects of demonology.

And perhaps next time I will get into the whole theology of whether we can cast demons into the pit. I believe we can, but they fight it tooth and nail. Even the legion of demons that possessed the crazy man in Luke 8 begged Christ not to command them to go into the abyss (Luke 8:31). I believe he sent them there anyway, and that's why the whole herd of swine ran into the sea and drowned.

But there are Scriptures that indicate that all demons (including Satan) will eventually be confined to the Abyss. Revelation 20 talks about that, as does Zech 13:2. There will be a purging of planet earth of all demons sometime in our future yet sometime before the end of history. It precedes the "thousand years."

B. Implies that Satan can't come and go from Sheol/Hades at will

But there are other implications of this phrase. If Satan has to be given a key to have access to open the abyss, that implies that Satan can't come and go from the Abyss whenever he wants. He has limitations.

C. Implies that beings can't travel in and out of Sheol/Hades at will

But if these demons can't go to Israel without being released from the pit, it indicates that demons can't come and go from Hades either. They have their limitations for travel. Even those who aren't in the pit are sometimes barred

from traveling from one country to another. Praise God! If you look at verse 14, it says, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." So the Abyss is not the only way that God restricts the movements of demons. He can also keep them from entering a country. For many years, America was reasonably free of the demonic. There were small locations here and there that had demonic activity. But when demons were being cast out of witch doctors in Ethiopia when I was growing up, they frequently spoke of going overseas. The reports I receive now from the province where my dad used to work in Ethiopia say that is over 95% Christian and relatively free from the demonic. And America has become absolutely infested with the demonic. Perhaps they came from Africa to America. But their travels are restricted by God until a nation or a region deserve it. And America certainly deserves the demonic infestations that we have been experiencing.

D. Implies that Jesus controls access to and exit from Sheol/Hades (cf. Rev. 1:18)

But since every trumpet blast of the good angels is allowed by Jesus, this implies that demons can do nothing without Christ's sovereign permission as well. So Jesus controls access to and exit from Sheol/Hades. He controls the keys. And that is exactly what Jesus said in Revelation 1:18. He said, I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

Contrast that statement with Hebrews 2:14 which says that prior to the resurrection, Satan had the power of death. Hebrews 2:14 says, Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

There is a sense in which Satan used to have some of the keys to Hades, and those keys were stripped from his hands. So back to Revelation 1:18, early in AD 66, Jesus said that He had the keys of Hades in His hand. He had all the keys.

E. Why would God allow Satan to unleash more evil demons upon the nation of Israel?

So why on earth would Jesus give back to Satan access to those keys - even if it was only for a short time? Well, actually, Jesus didn't give him the whole key ring. In Revelation 1:18 Jesus has the keys (plural), but here He gave him "the key" (in the Greek it is singular). And it is the key to only one

portion of Hades - the pit portion of the Abyss - what Pickering's translation renders "the shaft." Jeremiah 41:7-9 uses this word in the Septuagint to refer to the dungeon that Jeremiah was put into. And if you compare this verse with 2 Peter 2:4 side by side you will see a parallelism. You will see that Peter uses the word "Tartarus" as an equivalent to the shaft. Tartarus was the name for the very lowest part of Sheol or Hades that is a place of imprisonment for some of the most violent of the demons.

Revelation 9:1

Star
had fallen
pit of Abyss
locked in darkness
used as judgment

2 Peter 2:4

angels
cast down
Tartarus
chains of darkness
reserved for judgment

And I believe it is those demons that were now released. 2 Peter 2:4 says that they were reserved there for judgment. Is it their own judgment or the judgment of others? Either way, it is an imminent judgment - and I believe they fall upon Israel as a judgment on Israel and they receive their judgment in AD 70 along with the Beast. But demons can be unleashed for a time in history as Christ's judgment upon nations. And we will examine that subject much later in the book. But at least you have in your hands the Scriptures needed to settle the debates that swirl around verse 1.

Conclusion

I know this has been heavy teaching this morning, and hopefully we can get into the more practical stuff as we make our way through this chapter. But let me end with some applications of even what we have seen so far.

The biggest application is that we can trust Jesus to be more powerful than the most powerful of the demons. Too many times Christians fear the demonic. In one way that is understandable. But in Mark 16 Jesus gave power over demons to any believer. In Luke 10 Jesus told the seventy, Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notice that he said we have authority "over all the power of the enemy." That is an astounding promise. Revelation 12 says that even Satan is no match for a believer who is washed in the blood and armed with Christ. So that is the first application. Jesus is more powerful than the most powerful of demons and He has given us authority by union with Him, so that we do not need to fear demons.

The second application is that this whole trumpet is a judgment unleashed by Christ. Romans 1 says that there comes a time when God gives up a nation

unto a depraved mind. How does that happen? Often it is through the demonic. When nations defy Christ and cast off His bonds, they are very vulnerable to demonic attack and demonic blindness. It's very parallel to what can happen to an individual who defies Christ and casts off His bonds. And that we have demonic blindness in America is so obvious.

People turn a blind eye to the well-documented sale of baby parts by Planned Parenthood. One hundred years ago people would have been sickened to their stomach by this grisly industry. There would have been people being executed before a firing squad for it. But now they defend it. A presidential candidate defends it. Nobody is being prosecuted. In fact, the person who exposed Planned Parenthood's criminal behavior was sued and spent time in jail. Thankfully the charges were dismissed. But it is madness. And I think the demonic explains it.

The media refuses to report on criminal actions by leading politicians in DC. How can they get away with it? How can trillions of dollars go missing from certain departments and people shrug their shoulders? I think there is a demonic component to it that produces hardness and blindness.

Homosexuality used to be a crime in most states fifty years ago, but now you are considered guilty of a hate crime if you speak against homosexuality. How could things turn upside down so quickly? I think it is a demonic blindness. The media has spoken favorably of homosexuality for a long time, but in the last few weeks I have seen mainstream newspapers publishing "heart warming stories" of incest between generations, and writing in a way that shows that they want them to have rights too. And some of them are so sickening that it shows the demonic written all over it. Our nation deserves this judgment and nothing but God's grace can avert it.

And that is my third application. It is not a platitude to say that politics won't fix our nation. If you vote one of Satan's children into politics, he might be a conservative now, but how long will he be a conservative if Satan unleashes locusts upon him? Not long. Now it is true that Christians can surround such a person with protection, just like Nebuchadnezzar and later Darius had it. But the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther show how tenuous that situation can be. And without a wall of protection, they are vulnerable. I have seen politicians go to Washington with family values and being against homosexual marriage, and within a few years of being in that demonic beehive they are not only pro-homosexual, they are practicing homosexuals. They are under the influence of demonic locusts. Voting conservative unbelievers into Washington will not help. Nothing but the Gospel has

power against the demonic, and it is high time that Christians focused all of their efforts on getting Christians with good worldview and a close walk with Jesus elected.

But it is not enough to have a Christian elected. He must be prayed for constantly. And he himself must guard his heart. We saw with Kintner how easy it is for a Christian to be taken down. Revelation 12 does not promise that Christians can oppose Satan successfully with conservative principles. There are three conditions to success given in Revelation 12:11. It says,

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

The three conditions to success against demons are: 1) rightly using the blood of the Lamb, 2) rightly using a Scriptural testimony or speech, and 3) a life dedicated to Christ no matter what the cost - not loving their lives. Christians must learn how to moment by moment cleanse their own sins in the blood and they must learn how to resist demons with the blood of Christ. They need to learn how to engage in spiritual warfare with their speech. And thirdly, they need to be sold out to the word of God even if it is embarrassing. We must place the Scriptures on our lips in the public square if we hope to batter down the gates of Hades. It must become personalized - the word of their testimony. When you have hard-core Christians like that in politics, things could be turned upside down. When you have hard-core Christians like that in business, or the media, or science, or wherever, those industries will be turned upside down.

But what has happened is the opposite. Christians have cast off the Old Testament law and they are no longer experts in the book. They don't even believe in the book. So there goes the first condition for success.

No longer do they treat sin as very consequential, and their solution for statism is to elect statist. It makes no sense. They don't apply the blood of Christ to politics or culture. So there goes the second condition for success.

And they are not sold out to Christ no matter what the cost. So there goes the third condition. No wonder we are loosing the battle in America.

We are in trouble. We desperately need a Reformation of the church of Jesus Christ from the ground up. Nothing but a total makeover of the church will be sufficient to stem the tide in America. But if there is a makeover, not even the gates of Hades can withstand a church like that (Matt. 16:18). Pray with me that God would indeed raise up a church that can take on these powers of the Abyss. Amen.