

Death Returns!

Revelation 9:13-21; 11:1-14

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- My father's losing battle with cancer. *"One day you will view death as a friend."*
- Times when we wish the Lord would come and take us home.
- Paul conflict between staying and leaving
 - Philippians 1:20-21--*"in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."*
 - Philippians 1:22-24-- *"But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labors; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is more needful for you."*
- For many, suicide is their way of escaping pain or hopelessness
- Physician-assisted suicide in New Jersey
- During the fifth trumpet judgment, death will not be an option.
 - Revelation 9:6-- *"in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them."*

Death Returns!

A. For the Masses

- Revelation 9:13-19-- *"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 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 heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed-- by 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."*
1. **The identity of the "voice from the four horns of the golden altar"**
 2. **Identity of the "Four Bound Angels"?**
 - a. Not good or holy angels, since nowhere in Scripture are they said to be bound
 - b. Evil angels or demons
 - 1) *"who are bound"*-- perfect tense, indicating an act in the past with continuing results
 - 2) *"hour and day and month and year"*-- they will be released at the precise moment to carry out God's sovereign plan.
 - 3) *"bound at the great river Euphrates"*
 - a) Longest river in the Middle East-- 1,700 miles
 - b) Central location of the three world powers that oppressed Israel: Assyria, Babylon, and Media-Persia
 - 4) Could be the four demons that controlled the four major world empires: Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. -- Daniel 10
 3. **Identity of the 200 Million Army**
 - a. **Human army from the nations of the East**
 - 1) The link between the sixth trumpet judgment and the sixth bowl judgment.

- Revelation 16:12-- *"Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared."*
- 2) Such a large army could come from China and India, the great population centers of the world which account for over 2.8 billion of earth's 7.98 billion people.
 - 3) China today could easily outfit an army of 200 million
 - 4) The description of the armament fits modern day military hardware of tanks, artillery, rocket launchers, helicopter gunships, etc.
- b. **Demonic army of 200 million demons**
- 1) The fifth through seventh trumpets are lumped together under three "woes".
 - Revelation 9:12-- *"One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things!"*
 - 2) The fifth and sixth trumpets appear to be connected with the fifth featuring a demonic invasion to torment, and with the sixth going a step further and allowing them to kill.
 - 3) Fallen angels lead the armada in both the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments. Since the leaders are four demons it makes sense that the army is composed of demons too.
 - 4) Revelation 16:12 makes no mention of the size of the armies led by the kings of the East.
 - 5) The weapons used-- *"fire, smoke, and brimstone"* are always supernatural weapons associated with hell in the book of Revelation.
 - Revelation 14:10-11-- *"he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."*
 - 6) A human army of 200 million would be humanly impossible to mobilize.
4. **Results of the Assault:** One-third of the World's population will die! This is in addition to the one-fourth killed by the fourth horsemen of the Apocalypse. Altogether, over half of the world's population will die as a result of these two judgments.
- Revelation 6:8-- *"Power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with the sword, with hunger, with death (or disease) and by the beasts of the earth."*

B. For the Two Witnesses

- Revelation 11:1-6-- *"Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, 'Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship here. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the Holy City underfoot for forty-two months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty-days, clothed in sackcloth.' These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire."*
1. **Review of the Identity of the Two Witnesses**
 - a. Two Spirit-filled prophets of God, the *"two olive trees and the two lampstands"* of Zechariah 4
 - b. Ministry will begin before the middle of the tribulation and span 3 ½ years or 1,260 days
 - c. They will warn men of the judgment that is coming and will preach the gospel, urging them to repent of their sins and to call upon the name of the Lord in order to be saved.
 - d. They will possess supernatural power to perform miracles.
 - Revelation 11:6-- *"have power to shut up heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over water to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues as often as they desire."*

- 1) Withhold rain for 3 ½ years resulting in drought and crop failure. This is in addition to the first and third trumpet judgments that affect the earth's vegetation and fresh water supply.
 - 2) They will have the power to turn water into blood. This is in addition to the second trumpet judgment that turns a third of the sea into blood.
- e. They may be like Elijah and Moses who announced ahead of time that certain judgments were coming. Perhaps they will be announcing to the Antichrist and earth dwellers what is coming next.
 - f. They probably will be blamed for all the catastrophes that the earth experiences under God's judgment. It is their fault that people are suffering.
 - g. Many will try to harm or kill them, but they are invincible and untouchable
 - Revelation 11:5-- *"if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner."*

2. The Death of the Two Witnesses

- Revelation 11:7-10-- *"When they finished their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a half days, and not allow their bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth."*
- a. The dishonoring and desecration of their bodies
 - 1 Samuel 31:10-13-- *"put his armor in the temple of Ashtoreths, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan. Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days."*
 - b. The location: The great city of Jerusalem, called Sodom and Egypt because of its wickedness.
 - Luke 13:34-- *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing."*
 - c. The whole world watches and parties. The "Anti-Christmas" with gift giving. Only time that rejoicing is mentioned in the book of Revelation

3. The Resurrection and Rapture of the Two Witnesses

- Revelation 11:11-14-- *"Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here.' And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell, In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly."*
- a. Resurrection and Ascension of the Two Witnesses
 - b. Great earthquake to remind everyone that God is not finished judging the world
 - c. Response to the earthquake and to the sixth Trumpet Judgment
 - 1) Some believed, giving "glory to God"
 - Revelation 4:9-- *"give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever."*
 - Revelation 16:9-- *"blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and did not repent and give Him glory."*

- 2) Most were hardened in their unbelief and refused to repent.
 - Revelation 9:20-21-- *"But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by the 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."*
 - Jude 15-- *"the Lord comes with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."*
 - Jude 23 -- *"with fear, fulling them out of the fire, hating even the garments defiled by the flesh."*

Applications for us today?

1. **The longsuffering nature of God gives men an opportunity to repent.**
 - 2 Peter 3:9-- *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promises as some count slackness, but is longsuffering towards us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*
2. **Our need to adopt Paul's mindset that *"For me to live is Christ and to die is gain"* so as to finish well.**
 - 2 Timothy 4:7-- *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith!"*