

Rev. 8-9 "Prayer and History"

For the Children: Have you ever prayed for something, but the Lord did not answer the way you wanted? Perhaps you prayed for someone to get better from some sickness, but they didn't. Did you wonder if the Lord really answers your prayers? Adults sometimes feel that way when they pray that the Lord will stop all the bad things from happening in New Zealand. But those bad things are in some ways part of the Lord's punishment on those who hate Him: He leaves them to do the evil they want to do. But the Lord is also stopping some of the evil. And He is busy bringing some people to listen to His warnings, to repent and believe in His Son. **Questions:** How do the bad things around us give everyone a warning? How important are our prayers? How can the love of power, beauty, wealth etc harm people?

Introduction:

First Point: The Prayer of All the Saints

- 1) The Sound of Silence: The ½ hour silence before the trumpets shows the solemnity and importance of either the prayers of the saints or the judgements about to be released
- 2) The Golden Censer: The angel is given much incense to add to the prayers of the saints upon the golden "altar of incense" in heaven. This represents the prayers of ALL the saints, not just a few near the end of the world – all made acceptable and pleasing to God by the grace of God through Christ and His Spirit. See Rom. 8:26-27. The gold and the amount of incense added show how valuable these prayers are in God's sight, and how powerful and effective they will be
- 3) The Great Fireball: The angel fills the golden censer with fire from the altar and hurls it back to earth, amidst thunder & lightning, tumult and tremor – signs of God's omnipotence and judgement. This is His answer to the saints' prayer for vindication, help, justice and the triumph of God's Kingdom – as well as a furthering of God's own plan of judgement and salvation. It shows the power and effectiveness of prayer made according to that plan

Second Point: The Effect of the Saints' Prayer

- 1) The First Four: The trumpets introduce the judgement that comes to earth in answer to the saints' prayer. Trumpets represent a warning and a call to action. But the judgements are basically the same as those of the 4 horsemen/4 winds. They cover the same time period, but here in a new vision with some new symbols (7 trumpets) and new elements added. This time the judgements resemble the plagues on Egypt more. Again, they affect all creation, but the effect is limited (to 1/3)
- 2) The Sixth Trumpet: The 6th resembles the 4th horsemen, death – in all its forms. The 4 angels controlling this had been bound at the Euphrates, from where war often arose in that time. The monstrous appearance of the 200 million strong cavalry, the fire and smoke, and the colours of war and pestilence depict the horror of war and disaster unleashed on the world
- 3) The Fifth Trumpet: The fifth trumpet introduces a new element in God's judgements. The eagle's triple-woe shows that this is a most terrifying aspect: the freedom given to Satan to deceive many. Satan is called Abaddon and Apollyon ("destruction"). His fall has been accomplished by Christ (Lk. 10:18). But he is given the key to release his demonic horde upon the earth – though within limits (5 months). They come with the appearance of all that attracts the worldly – authority, victory and success, strength and beauty. They can possess all who lack God's seal. But the reality is that they come to conquer and torment.. There is a scorpion's deadly sting hidden behind the things that attract. This is not just about what will happen just before the end; this Satanic corruption is being seen NOW among the nations
- 4) A Response to Prayer: All this, including Satan's deceiving of the nations and the resultant degeneration of society, is an answer to the prayers of the saints. It shows that those prayers are powerful and effective, because of Christ's victory and God's plan. But the warning-nature of the trumpets, along with God's purpose of salvation, reminds us that while we pray for God's help, we must also work to warn sinners of what happens when they don't heed the warnings

Conclusion:

