

Revelation 9: 13-21; "The Sounding of the 6th Angel" (Part 1),
Sermon # 74 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness",
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 23, 2007,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.

In opening the meaning of the sounding of the 5th Trumpet, I said to you that it was hard for me to decide whether this woe referred to the announcement of the rise of the Mohammedan powers, or whether it refers to the rise the Papal power. In my introduction to the 5th Trumpet, I told you that I believe that we have to take them together. Together they form the Antichristian powers which still plague the Church of Jesus Christ. There are reasons for our taking them together, which are not arbitrary. First of all, both of them arose at the same time in Church History. It was in the year 606 A.D. that the Emperor Phocas gave the title of Universal Bishop to Pope Boniface III. It was in that same year that Mohammed retired to the cave of Hera and supposedly had direct communication from the angel Gabriel. It was in the year 756 that the Pope received the power as a temporal prince and a geographic state to live in and to rule over. It was in this very same time frame that Mohammedanism arose and became established as a false religion. George Stanley Faber says in his commentary that Mohammed emerged from his "prophetic" seclusion in 609 A.D. and for three more years was silently employed in the conversion of 14 proselytes, the first fruits of his mission. "But in the fourth year, the year 612, then Mohammed and his disciples, or "Apollyon and his locusts," as he calls them, "may be considered as issuing from the bottomless pit, which the fallen star Sergius had been the main instrument of opening." "Consequently the five prophetic months, during which the locusts were allowed to torment mankind expired in the year 762 when the caliph Almansor built Bagdad as the future seat of his empire and called it the City of Peace." "At this period the Saracens ceased from their locust devastations, and became a settled people." In other words, he is saying that it was during those 150 years that Mohammedanism was firmly established; although the power of the Saracens began to decline in order to make room for its new proselytes, the Turks, which he believes are being described under this 6th trumpet that we are studying now.

It certainly is true that during this 150 year time period, referred to as the 5 months, in the two places that it is mentioned, under the fifth trumpet; that it fits with the rise of Mohammedanism. And I know that many expositors have interpreted the verses under the 5th Trumpet in this way. But I believe that the 5th and the 6th Trumpets are referring to 2 separate woes, which are linked together, not only for their 150 year time periods of beginning, rise, and establishment; but also because they are appointed in God's time calendar of prophetic history, to run in their duration together down through the entire time period of the 1260 day's prophecy which we will be looking at in the 11th Chapter.

And this is why I believe that each of them has a separate and distinct Trumpet given to them. They are linked together in their times, and in their Antichristian causes. Both have Satan's strategy behind them. And who knows but that Satan will find some way to link them together as allies in the final manifestation of Antichrist which is still to come. But at this time they are separate. And this is why I believe that the 5th Trumpet refers to the rise of the Papal Antichrist, and that the 6th refers to the rise of the Mohammedan Antichristian power. The one arose in the Western section of the Roman Empire; the other in the Eastern section of the Roman Empire. This false religion of Mohammed, I believe, arose as a scourge to the false Christianity which had arisen within the true Church of Jesus Christ; a Church which had fallen into great errors in doctrine and in allowing to come into power the false authorities that come to rule over the Church. Idolatry had come marching right into the churches, the people who were supposed to be guarding themselves from idols. So the Lord would ordain and permit this plague to come upon the visible Church to wake her up from her slumbers in departing from the pure Word of God and not being watchful against what was and is false. Mohammedan military forces under the Saracens were attempting to take over the Eastern Roman Empire in the days of the time period which we are studying. They would also have taken over the Western section if they could have, in those days. This scourge, this plague of Mohammedanism is still at work in our day, both politically and spiritually, in a very great and evil way. What I want to do this afternoon is to first look at the sovereignty of God over this spiritual plague. Then secondly, I want us to look at the great numbers and the world-wide effects of this plague. And then the next time I preach to you we will look at the description of these spiritual forces.

1st of all- Let's look at God's sovereignty over this spiritual plague.

(Verses 13 -15)

"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." The sixth angel in this vision of the Trumpets is under the authority of a "voice" from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God. This voice is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ who is there before God as an intercessor for His true people as we saw in Chapter 8, verse 4. There the altar is called the golden altar as well. The Lord Jesus is mentioned as being, "a voice" here because the picture is meant to convey to our minds His sovereignty. Turn with me to Psalm 29 and we will see that this is true. Here David is exhorting the Lord's people to "Give unto the Lord glory and strength, give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship Him in the beauty of holiness." Verse 3 says, "The voice of the Lord is over the water; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is over many waters." "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the

voice of the Lord is full of majesty." "The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, yes the Lord splinters the cedars of Lebanon." "He makes them also skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox." The Lord, in other words, is sovereign over all the physical elements of nature. This is most certainly true. But these words are meant to communicate also the fact that He is sovereign over all people. People are pictured prophetically by some of the words that are mentioned in this psalm. "Waters" and "cedars" can be used prophetically of peoples in general, and kings, in specific in the Scriptures. (See Revelation 17: 15 and 2 Kings 14: 9) Here in Revelation the "voice" is found proceeding from the "four horns of the golden altar which is before God." It is the altar of incense where, as we saw before, prayers are offered up for the advance of Christ's kingdom.

The four horns of the golden altar speak of Christ's power to intercede on behalf of His people and also to chastise them for their sins. He sees all the obedience of His true people; He also sees all their sins, all the corruptions from pure doctrine in His Church, all of the apostasy from the truth by false professors, as worthy of great judgment. And so He brings judgment upon the visible Church of that day, and our day as well. He does this for the correction of the believer and judgment upon those who would say that they are Christians and yet they are not. He says to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.'" These angels are either real evil angels, or they represent men who are leaders among the Mohammedan powers who are leading men into battle. John Trapp in his commentary thinks that they are the Arabians, the Saracens, the Tartars, and the Turks. Bishop Newton believes that they are the four sultanies or kingdoms of the Turks, bordering on the river Euphrates. Once again, I prefer to think of these things in terms of the power of spiritual deception that was set loose in that time period, in that geographic location then, and which spread as far as it could throughout the Empire, and continues to this day. But it will end at a certain time in the future of Church History. In part, I believe that it is speaking about the political conquests of the Mohammedan nations in that day. But the 4 angels, in my opinion represent the evil angels who are permitted, according to the plan and purpose of God, to go and have an evil influence to deceive the minds and hearts of many people in those Arab nations in that day, and all the way down through this second and third time period of the Roman Empire and Papal Rome's rule in the visible Church of Jesus Christ. You and I still live in this time period. The four angels have power and influence to deceive with false doctrine and power also to deceive men into thinking that the way to promote that false doctrine is by force, and war, and the sword. A Christianity which did not pursue and put into practice Biblical truth, was worshipping her idols, her saints, and the Virgin Mary would have to face the judgment of these Antichristian forces coming against them. Those who followed Mohammed believed that the Christians were infidels; that Allah was the only true God. They believed that all these "Christians" had to be destroyed. And God

would permit them to go quite a ways, in order to prove to all Christians that He is the God of holiness and truth. These 4 angels represent the power used by Satan, extended as far as he can get permission to go, to create an influence for great evil upon the minds of men in this way. It is a scourge and a plague ordained by God because of the self-deception in regard to Biblical truth, on the part of professed Christians in the visible Church.

We can catch a glimpse of what the viewpoint of our God in heaven is like, in regard to these angels that we are speaking about, if we turn to 2 Kings 22, verse 3. Here in this chapter we find that Ahab and Jezebel, king and queen of Israel, have sold themselves to do evil. In verse 26 of Chapter 21, it says, "He behaved very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel." Then after 3 years Ahab and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, had a meeting together. In verse 3, the king of Israel said to his servants, 'Do you know that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?' "So he said to Jehoshaphat, 'Will you go with me to fight at Ramoth Gilead?' Jehoshaphat was willing, but he wanted confirmation that it was the will of the Lord that they go up." In verse 7 it says, "And Jehoshaphat said, 'Is there not still a prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of him?'" "So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.'" "And Jehoshaphat said, 'Let not the king say such things!' So they bring Micaiah in, and in verse 13 it says, "Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him saying, 'Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king.'" "Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement." "And Micaiah said, "As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me that I will speak." "Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, 'Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?' "And he answered him, 'Go and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king!' "So the king said to him, 'How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?' Then Micaiah said, 'Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left.' "And the Lord said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' "So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner." "Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, and said, 'I will persuade him.'" "The Lord said to him, 'In what way?'" "So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'" "And the Lord said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail.'" "Go out and do so." We can learn several things from this. Not every spirit that comes and stands before the Lord in heaven is a good angel. The evil angels come as well, and appear before him. God's sovereignty, His divine control extends to everything. He is sovereign over evil, and He is sovereign over

good. He is not the author of evil, but He is the God of Justice. His purpose was to judge Ahab and set him aside as king, because of his many sins. In accomplishing this purpose, an evil spirit is permitted to tempt Ahab to go into battle, and this evil spirit would prevail in and through the witness of false prophets. No blame can be laid at God's doorstep. He was righteous and just to judge Ahab. Ahab did not want to listen to God's Word and do God's will. Therefore he went up to Ramoth Gilead and died. Here in Revelation 9 we have a similar situation. There had been a twisting and an adding to the Pure Word of God that was taking place in the rise of the Papacy and worshipping God in an idolatrous way. To be strengthened and encouraged to continue to walk in the truth of the Word of God, we must always remember that God is sovereign in the affairs of men. We must especially remember this when things go badly in both Church and State; when we do not see the outward and obvious advance of Christ's kingdom and people living righteously in our nation. Still, God would have us to shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Think of what you are called to, as a Christian as being a high calling. Learn to look for the beauty and perfection of all that God has done and will do. His work is perfect. It is flawless. Yes, men and women walk about, polluted by their sin, and glorying in their flesh, will try to rob you of the experience of a close walk with God. Evil men and deceivers will grow worse and worse. But Christ's grace is strong enough that He will protect you, watch over you, and keep your soul. Cultivate the secret life of prayer.

2ndly this afternoon- We want to look at the great numbers and the world-wide effect of this plague. (Verses 15-19)

The angels who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind, it says in verse 15. Note once again; the very specific timing and God's control of the timing. This hour day, month, and year are not meant to be taken prophetically like the 1260 days, but they are meant to be taken to mean that God has a specific time ordained, that this false system would arise and that it was in accord with His ordaining of all things that this plague of Mohammedanism would come. The plague which is first described as "an army of horsemen" is further subdivided into 3 plagues which are described for us. Listen to how it reads. "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 the heads on lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone." "By these plagues a third of mankind was killed--by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. Now the number of two hundred million is meant to represent the great numbers of people committed to wage war against the Church of Jesus Christ in the Islamic world of that day. Many commentators interpret these verses of the great attempts at the conquest of the Eastern and Western parts of the Roman Empire from this time period of 606 A.D. all the way to 1453 when Constantinople

fell to them and beyond, to 1687. But all of this, as important as it was politically in those days does not have relevance for us today. What does have relevance is the war-like attitude and advance of Islam into many nations of the world today. Truly it is a continuation of the spiritual and political plagues of the days that we are studying under the 6th Trumpet. Two weeks from now, Lord willing, we will look at these plagues that kill "a third of mankind" more closely. A third of mankind may mean a third part of the Roman Empire, but it bears a very close resemblance also to the effect that Islam has had in many generations since the since then. We will also look at the fact that men have not learned from these plagues to repent. Let us repent of all of our sins and guard ourselves against idols. Let us pray that God will give us the grace to love His Word and to practice truth and righteousness as these evil forces seek to come against us.