

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

Part 1 of Understanding the Times. Revelation 8-9.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. May 7, 2023.

WE'RE BACK IN REVELATION

We need to understand the times we're living in ...

- So we'll endure in faith, and not be discouraged.

THE ULTIMATE CAUSE OF OUR CULTURAL TURBULENCE

According to Revelation 8-9, the ultimate cause is God himself.

- He is shaking things up and executing judgment on the God-rejecting world.

IN THESE TURBULENT TIMES, UNDERSTAND THAT ...

God in heaven is the true God.

Revelation 8:1-5 (ESV) When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

- It's the silence of knowing he is the one true God, and we are not, and therefore we have nothing to say.
- It's the silence of waiting for what God will do next (see Habakkuk 2:18-20).

God in heaven is executing judgment on earth now.

Revelation 8:5 (ESV) 5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

- Fire, thunder, lightning, earthquake are symbols of God, the terrifying judge. His judgments are flung to earth as a vivid image of God pouring out his wrath on the world.

IN THESE TURBULENT TIMES, UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD'S WRATH LOOKS LIKE

Natural disasters.

Revelation 8:7 (ESV) The first angel blew his trumpet ...

Collapse of governments.

Revelation 8:8 (ESV) The second angel blew his trumpet ...

Satanic oppression.

Revelation 8:10 (ESV) The third angel blew his trumpet ...

Spiritual deception and death.

Revelation 8:12 (ESV) The fourth angel blew his trumpet ...

The consequences of rejecting God are awful.

Revelation 8:13 (ESV) Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

IN THESE TURBULENT TIMES, UNDERSTAND THAT DEMONS HAVE BEEN UNLEASHED ON THE WORLD

Satan has unleashed demons on the world.

Revelation 9:1 (ESV) And the fifth angel blew his trumpet ...

Revelation 9:4b-5 (ESV) ... but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them ...

- The torments are not only physical, they are also spiritual and psychological.

Demons are killing people.

Revelation 9:13 (ESV) Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet ...

- The four angels are satanic allies. They command a massive demon army.
- A third of humanity die - spiritually speaking.
- They are completely deceived:

Revelation 9:20-21 (ESV) 20 The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, 21 nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

THIS IS WAR!

We're in a spiritual war. The stakes are high.

- If we're in Christ by faith, we're safe, but we must be on guard.
- If we're not in Christ because we're an atheist or idolater, we are in trouble.
- It's time to fear God and flee to Christ the Savior.

Brothers and sisters: stand firm.

- Endure in faith.
- Boldly live by truth.
- Reject lies and deceptions.
- Courageously share Christ.

CORNERSTONE GROUPS - TALK IT OVER

Pick one or more of these questions to discuss this week.

Review Sunday's teaching on multiple topics.

- Review Sunday's study guide or watch Peter's teaching on YouTube.
- What part of the teaching most impacted your thinking?
- Summarize the main ideas in your own words.

Prayerfully apply the insights of the teaching.

- What are some examples of lies/deceptions in our culture that you suspect are satanically/demonically inspired? Clue: generally speaking, they blind people to God, or keep them from faith in Jesus, and result in self-defeating, self-destructive, evil, or “plain stupid” decisions.
- Read this online article on demonic deception, and discuss: www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/18489/Demonic-Deception.htm
- Discuss this statement: “If we engage spiritually dead and blind people in political or philosophical debates, even if we win them over, they will still be spiritually dead and blind. Only Christ and the Gospel have the power to raise the dead and open blind eyes. Christians must focus on spiritual solutions to what are ultimately spiritual problems.”

Pray together. Be bold.

Almighty God in heaven, we bow down in reverent awe, and we are silent before your majesty. We see a world in turmoil, and we acknowledge that your judgment on men and women who reject you. Lord, in your wrath, remember mercy. Give us opportunities to share Christ and the Gospel, and rescue many from spiritual death and darkness. Amen!

Preparation for Next Sunday - Read Blessed, chapter 6.