

Why Will God Bring the Events of The Day of the Lord Upon Mankind?

Day of Trumpets

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Happy Feast of Trumpets to all of you. Brethren, as we know, most of us in the church of God when we think of the fall holy days, I think our minds most quickly go to the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, the reason being that those are typically kind of the highlights of our year. Whether we are looking at them physically or spiritually, they are just very fun, positive things to think about. The Feast of Tabernacles, even physically, tends to be the highlight of our year. We go to interesting locations. We stay in nice accommodations. We have extra money to take part in activities or eat nice meals that we typically don't necessarily do the rest of the year. We will spend time with friends and family that maybe we haven't seen in a year or so. It is, again, a very positive, uplifting time. We look forward to it even spiritually. We look forward to the promises of the Millennium and the wonderful, utopian environment that that pictures. Looking forward to those promises is uplifting and fun just to talk about. Maybe we even think about the Last Great Day and what it all pictures and all of the loves ones that we have maybe known throughout our lives that have since died and think about seeing them again and them coming up and having their chance to understand God's truth and receive His spirit and have a chance at salvation. Maybe we even think about the meaning of Atonement, of Satan being put away for a thousand years and mankind getting a break from him and just how positive that will be and the wonderful environment that will create having him out of the picture and mankind getting a break.

However, the Feast of Trumpets is kind of a different picture when we think in terms of the fall holy days, because the Feast of Trumpets pictures the day of the Lord. As we are going to see, the Bible even refers to it as a dark and gloomy day, because it pictures the most catastrophic, horrific events that have ever taken place in the history of mankind. When we think of the Feast of Trumpets in terms of the picture of the fall holy days, it's kind of similar to a colloquial saying that we have in our culture today. A lot of times we will look at a situation and say, you know, things are going to get a lot worse before they get better. That's kind of a good way to sum up the Feast of Trumpets in terms of how it fits into the fall holy day plan. It pictures when things get a lot worse before they get better. In fact, as we are going to see today, the events of the day of the Lord are so catastrophic, so horrific that it's oftentimes difficult to wrap our minds around, to really understand the magnitude of them.

That leaves us with an interesting question: Why would a loving God bring about these horrific events on mankind? Again, they are so catastrophic, so horrific it's hard sometimes to wrap our minds around them. We love to think about all of the positive things that come after that, but why would He do this upon mankind. We are going to look at that particular question today.

If you would like a title for this sermon, it's

Why Will God Bring the Events of the Day of the Lord Upon Mankind?

As I mentioned, the Bible tells us directly that the Feast of Trumpets, which pictures the day of the Lord, is described as a dark and gloomy day. Turn over to Zephaniah 1:

Zephaniah 1:14. *The great day of the LORD is near; it is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out.*

15) *That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,*

16) *A day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers.*

17) *"I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like refuse."*

18) *Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, for He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land.*
(NKJV)

Notice here, as we go through the events of the day of the Lord, by the time this day is over [it pictures really more of a year, but it is referred to as the day of the Lord], the vast majority of mankind will be dead. There will only be a small percentage of mankind that will survive through this. Again, these are very horrific events, so much so that it's oftentimes difficult to wrap our head around.

In spite of that, God commands us to set aside a day, called the Feast of Trumpets, to focus on the meaning of this day and to understand how this fits into His plan of salvation. Turn to Leviticus 23 and we can look at where this day is particularly commanded for us. Leviticus 23 gives us an overview of the holy days that God

appoints throughout the entire year. As we know, the holy days are a picture for us that reveal to us God's plan of salvation for all of mankind, when we look at the meaning of these days.

Leviticus 23:23. *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,*

24) "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.

25) You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.'" (NKJV)

This is instructing us to keep this particular day of the Feast of Trumpets. Notice here first of all, it's referred to as the Feast of Trumpets. Let me point out here that it's Trumpets with an "s" on it. The reason I mention that is because we are going to see today, the day of the Lord is comprised of seven trumpets. The reason I am making a big deal out of this is growing up in the church of God my entire life I have to admit there have been a number of times I have seen the Feast of Trumpets handled as if it's the Feast of Trumpet, in other words, just one. The reason is because there are seven trumpets described there, but when the seventh one is blown, as we know, that's when the resurrection takes place. That's when all of those who have died in the faith throughout history get raised to receive their inheritance and those who are still living, following God at that point, have qualified to be firstfruits get resurrected to meet Christ in the air to go up to the marriage supper. Sometimes we extract that one out and just focus on that day, because that's good news. That's fun and exciting to look forward to, while again the rest of the day of the Lord is pretty horrific in terms of the events that are going to take place here.

Let's also ask the question now, why connect this with Trumpets? Why specifically say that this is the day of the memorial of the blowing of trumpets? What's the significance there? To understand the meaning of that we need to understand in the context of the Old Testament at that time how they would think of the sound of a blowing of a trumpet. It's different in our culture today. We need to understand how they would have looked at this as to why God would connect trumpets with this day. To understand that let's turn to Jeremiah 4:

Jeremiah 4:19. *O my soul, my soul! I am pained in my very heart! My heart makes a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because you have heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. (NKJV)*

Realize that in their culture the blowing of the trumpet was a warning signal. These are times way before the technology we have today. Everybody didn't have a cell phone on their belt to easily contact each other, so if you were going to warn people of a calamity happening, a trumpet was a loud noise that you could get a warning message out to people. It was common in that time oftentimes to set up a watchman, someone to guard a nation on the horizon, looking for trouble to come. If they saw it, like an army invading or danger coming, the blowing of a trumpet was the way to alarm people. Calamity is about to come. You need to take appropriate action. That's how they associated it. To make it similar to our culture today, it would be more commonly associated with a fire alarm or a tornado siren. A couple of times in my life I have been traveling and staying in a hotel and in the middle of the night a fire alarm goes off. You hear this loud, buzzing noise and lights flashing in your room and you wake up in a full-fledged panic with your heart beating, because again that's a sound you associate with danger. Your response is that you need to do something. This is how they would associate that sound, of what that would mean. Turn over to Ezekiel 33. You can see again this whole concept in their culture of how they would oftentimes set a watchman to warn people of coming calamity and the instrument which they would use to warn people, to get the message out, would be a trumpet, and the blowing of a trumpet.

Ezekiel 33:1. Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

2) "Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: 'When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman,

3) when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people,

4) then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head.

5) He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life.

6) But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.'

7) "So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me.

8) When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

9) Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

10) *"Therefore you, O son of man, say to the house of Israel: 'Thus you say, "If our transgressions and our sins lie upon us, and we pine away in them, how can we then live?""*

11) *Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'* (NKJV)

Notice again, it was common in Old Testament times to set up a watchman, who would use a trumpet as a means to warn people. God also tells us in this that when He is about to bring calamity upon the people, He tends to send someone as a watchman as well to warn people to try to prevent the calamity. He says, it's not His desire to do cruel and evil things to people. To cause them harm and calamity is not His desire. He wants people to repent. As we are going to see here as we go through this sermon, it is God's track record before He intervenes in human affairs, especially bringing about something as horrific as the day of the Lord, to warn people ahead of time. As we see in the verses we just read here, He gives out a warning to people, and then He holds them accountable for how they respond or don't respond to that warning. In understanding why the day of the Lord would happen, why God would do such horrific events, it's important to understand this principle. As we are going to see He gives an ample warning to people before He does this.

Let's notice first of all God's track record. Turn to Amos 3, because he reveals here a basic principal about how God approaches things before He takes drastic action with mankind.

Amos 3:7. *Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.* (NKJV)

In other words, God doesn't do something like this and bring about this type of calamity without first revealing to His prophets what's going to happen and sending them to basically give a warning message, to essentially blow the trumpet to tell the people, hey, really bad, catastrophic things are about to come upon you. The answer is to repent. If you repent of your sins and turn to God, things will go much easier for you. If you don't, I'm warning you, it's about to get really bad. That's essentially what God typically does before something like this happens. As we are going to see here, God foretells us exactly how He is going to warn people prior to the day of the Lord. He's not going to bring about these horrific events without mankind having an ample warning and an opportunity to repent.

Turn to Revelation 11. We are going to see here God foretells ahead of time exactly how He is going to warn mankind prior to the day of the Lord events taking place.

Revelation 11:3. *And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." (NKJV)*

What he is referring to here is clothed in humility.

4) These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.

5) 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.

6) 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. (NKJV)

What He is saying here is that He is going to send two individuals as His prophets that He has revealed these events to, whose job is going to be to come and warn mankind of these events taking place.

We can kind of put together the time line here. We are going to cover the latter part of this chapter a little bit later today. One of the things that we will discover when we read that is that these guys are actually killed three and one-half days prior to the resurrection happening. God actually allows the beast power to kill them at the very end. We can use that basically as a measuring stick to measure back as to when they start. We know that they die three and one-half days prior to the resurrection. It tells us that they prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days. Therefore, we just count backwards for twelve hundred and sixty days from there. They are starting this about three and one-half years prior to the resurrection. What this means is that they will be on the scene prophesying and warning people a couple of years prior to the events of the day of the Lord taking place. There will be a couple of years here with them basically telling people they need to repent prior to this taking place. The events of the day of the Lord are not going to come out of nowhere. It's not like these things are going to happen and people had no idea that this was going to come about.

Keep in mind what we read in verses 5 and 6 in regards to what these individuals will do. Think about this in terms of the attention that these guys will bring about. In other words people aren't going to miss them. If you have two individuals coming on the

scene proclaiming, I'm a prophet of God. I am here speaking on His behalf. That's not too terribly unusual in today's world. Lots of people come and claim that type of thing, but if fire comes out of your mouth and consumes those that are opposing you. Let me also clarify that. That can mean one of two things. It could mean that fire literally comes out of their mouth or it could be more like Elijah when Elijah was opposing some of the enemies of God, he would speak the words and fire would come down from heaven to consume them. That could be a reference to out of their mouth being they spoke the words and God brings down fire from heaven. Either way, you bring down fire to consume people, you get attention. If you can turn water to blood, if you can stop it from raining and bring all manner of plagues down, the whole world is going to pay attention to you.

Just think about what's happened here in our world in the last month or so. In the last month or two a hunter from America went to Zimbabwe, went on a hunt and shot a lion. Because of social media, within a few days an inconsequential event, just one animal being shot on the other side of the world and within a few days most Americans knew about the story. That's how fast the news traveled. Think about this. You have two guys on the scene calling fire down, turning water to blood, performing these kinds of miracles. They are going to be on every news channel. Facebook and Twitter are going to be lit up talking about them. The whole world is going to know who these people are. They are not going to miss this. They are probably going to hate these guys and not want to listen to them, but everyone is going to know who they are. It's not going to be an issue, I've never heard of these guys, never heard of this message.

As we can see, the Bible makes it very clear to us that when the day of the Lord starts, mankind knows what's happening. We can see exactly from what's recorded that they are not puzzled about what's taking place and not understand. They understand the day of the Lord is about to come upon them. You can see that by turning to Revelation 6:12. Let me just give an overview before we actually get there. If you look at the timeline of prophecy, one of the things you are going to see about Revelation is the number seven a lot. As you can see, you have basically seven seals here and in the seventh is the day of the Lord. There are seven trumpets and in that last trumpet there are seven last bowl plagues. We are going pick up here in the sixth seal, which is the heavenly signs which occur right before the day of the Lord.

Revelation 6:12. *I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.*

13) And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

14) Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

15) And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

16) and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

17) For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (NKJV)

Notice first of all that the day of the Lord is not going to sneak up on anybody. It's not going to be a situation where, I was really busy and I wasn't watching the news and it slipped past and I didn't notice it. You would have to be dead or in a coma to miss this, because we are talking about a global earthquake that shakes every mountain and island. That's a global situation. It is not regional. Not only that you have all of these heavenly signs that take place.

Notice also the reaction that mankind is having. It is not an issue of, man, what on earth is taking place. I don't understand. What's happening? The reaction is, it's the day of the Lord. Why would they know that this is the day of the Lord? Why would that be a universal reaction? This is the day that these two guys that are always on the news have been telling us about. These two guys that everybody hates have been saying that this is going to happen and it's happening just like they said. So, they are paying attention to this. Understanding all of this means that people have been warned ahead of time. They have been told for several years that this is the wrath of God. The answer here is to repent of your sins and turn to God. Life will go much easier for you. What we need to understand is the reaction that mankind has throughout all of these events. As all of these events play out, it's repeatedly stated, mankind doesn't repent. They turn against God. They are blaspheming God throughout the entire event. We have to understand how heinous, how sinful mankind will be through all of this, because that helps us understand why God would bring this about.

To understand the actual events of the day of the Lord let's turn to Revelation 8. We'll just take an overview of the basic events that are taking place here. As I mentioned, there are seven trumpets that play out throughout all of the events of the day of the Lord. I am going to summarize a lot of this just to get a feel for what it's about and try to give us a visual picture of the magnitude of these events. I think it's important for us to understand these are global events. The reason I mention that is in our frame of reference, when we think of catastrophes and disasters, anything we've experienced in our lifetime, we think of them regionally. If you have a tornado that hits something, or even a tsunami or a hurricane that hits an area and you see the pictures on the news,

how bad it is, still in your mind you know that area that got hit is a limited area. The rest of the planet is okay. That's how our minds conceptualize this, because that's our experience. It's hard for us oftentimes to wrap our minds around the events of the day of the Lord, because these are global events. We need to understand the magnitude and also understand and see the pictures as we go through this that these are supernatural interventions. One of the things we are going to talk about today is sometimes in our physical minds we concoct physical explanations for some of the events that happen here. If you look at the magnitude of what these events are portraying here, it's obvious that these are supernatural interventions. If you think about what's happening here, you can't pull this stuff off physically. Sometimes we try to put it in our physical minds and concoct a physical scenario for how this could happen. I think we go down a totally false road in doing that. We need to understand that this is the day of God's wrath against rebellious mankind. These are events of supernatural intervention. Verse 7 tells us about the first trumpet. What this tells us is that when this first trumpet is blown, we wind up with all of the green grass on the entire planet being destroyed. You can't pull that off physically. That's too huge. This is obviously supernatural intervention. We have all of the grass and a third of the trees wiped out. Now, this isn't just destroying people's lawns. Think about the magnitude of this. If you are wiping out all of the green grass on the entire planet, you are wiping out all of your grain products, your wheat, your barley. All of the major grain crops that are used to feed the planet are wiped out as a result of that. As we are going to see, these first several trumpets wipe out about a third of the food source for the entire planet. That's going to have very catastrophic effects.

The other thing here is that it kills about a third of the trees. Not only is that wiping out fruit trees, which are a source of food, but also, if you look at the oxygen supply of the planet, roughly half of it is produced from the oceans from plankton. The other half is produced by trees and other living green plants and such that take carbon dioxide and turn it into oxygen. If you wipe out one-third of the trees for the entire planet, you are significantly affecting the oxygen supply for the planet.

Let's also notice in the second trumpet in verse 8 it says a third of the sea is turned to blood. Basically, in all the areas where this takes place it wipes out all of the sea creatures. As you can imagine they can't live in blood. Not only have we significantly affected sea life in terms of a food supply, because in a coastal area typically seafood is a major portion of the diet that people have, not only that, but remember that the ocean is about half of the oxygen source for the planet. If you turn a third of it into blood, you have just significantly reduced the oxygen supply to the planet. Taking out a third of the trees and a third of the ocean is going to have a very global effect.

In verse 10, we have the third trumpet. Now we have a third of the fresh water for the entire planet being poisoned. It tells us that it was bitter and the men that drank it died. Not only do we have those who are directly dying now as a result of drinking this and it being poisonous, also realize we have wiped out a third of the water supply for the planet. Human beings can't go very long without hydration. We can last a lot longer without food than we can without water. That is also true of animals and of plants. If you wipe out a third of the fresh water supply to the planet, you have wiped out a huge amount of the animals as a food source. You have also wiped out large amounts of vegetation that the animals and people need for food source. You are going to wind up with massive starvation as a result of this.

When you wind up with massive famine, you also wind up with disease epidemics. Think of any area of the world, like Africa, where you have massive food shortages and people's health being affected by that. What do you wind up with? You wind up with disease epidemics, common diseases that are not really a big problem in other areas of the world wiping out and killing lots of people. Their health is affected, their immune systems are suppressed and now these common diseases can ravage through and kill lots of people. That normally would not do that to a healthier population.

You also have scarce resources now. Think about human nature. What are human beings going to do when their resources start becoming very scarce? They start fighting with each other over it. That's just human nature. Now you are going to have violence as a result of that and death as a result of the violence.

Now let's go to the fourth trumpet in verse 12. What we have described here is basically a third of the sunlight during the day and the moonlight during the night being wiped out. Once again, you can't pull this stuff off physically. There is no physical explanation for how that's going to happen to the entire planet. We have spiritual intervention here. Also notice what this is going to do to plant life. Photosynthesis is basically how a lot of your plant life survives and how it can create its energy. It requires light to do that. You take out one-third of the light supply to the entire planet. Again, you are now having a huge hit to the food sources for the entire planet. What we are going to wind up with here, the culmination effect of this, is killing off about a third of the planet. It's not just the diseases, the shortage of food, the violence that's going to result; all of this that plays out. It's going to be a pretty ugly picture.

Pick up on the fifth trumpet here starting in Revelation 9:1. What we have described here is basically Satan being given power to torture mankind. It says the angel over the bottomless pit, but if you go through here and dissect who this is, it's an obvious reference to Satan. Now, we don't have a death toll to describe with this one. It says

he is given power to torment mankind for five months. It actually says that this is going to be so unpleasant people will wish that they would die and long for death and death is not given to them.

Notice as I mentioned as we covered the first part of this, I emphasized the fact of how supernatural intervention plays out through all of the day of the Lord. If you look at most all of these events, it's very obviously supernatural intervention, because you just can't do this stuff physically.

The reason I make a point of that is oftentimes when we speculate about prophecy, some of the common speculation in the church of God when we look at the fifth and sixth trumpets is we try to insert a physical explanation to these. Before I go down this road, let me also state that there is a difference between what the Bible directly tells us and what we speculate. When we speculate we are getting into opinion and our own ideas and it should be treated as such. Prophecy inherently easily goes down that road. Some things we can nail down because the Bible directly says. The other time,s in our minds, we try to put forward the best logical guess. We try to put the pieces together and start giving speculation and opinion. I think oftentimes we can make the mistake of trying to give a physical explanation to the fifth and sixth trumpets. We try to explain them in terms of armies and physical conflicts between nations.

Let's notice here in the fifth trumpet. It talks about Satan. It says he is given this power for five months to torment men and how painful and unpleasant this is. That's what the Bible directly tells us. Now let's talk about speculation and the difference between what the Bible actually says and what our opinions and speculation are. I am going to give you some of my opinion and speculation. Again, my opinion and five bucks will get you a latte at Starbucks. That's where you file opinion and speculation, but common opinion and speculation that I've heard most of my life kind of goes like this. They look at the fifth trumpet and say, well, that's the beast and the nations aligned with the beast and they are using some kind of biological or chemical warfare against the nations of the east and they are doing this to them. Then the answer to the sixth trumpet is well, that's the nations of the east responding back. Let's think about that scenario. If we're going to explain it that way, that requires by definition that the fifth trumpet is a regional issue. Think about it. How do you do a war? If you have this group of nations attacking this other group of nations, then this would be something that just happened to the group of nations on the receiving end. When you are doing a war and you are attacking your enemies, you don't try to do to yourself what you are going to do to your enemies. You are specifically trying to hurt the other nations that you are against.

What does the Bible actually say happens here? That's an important thing to realize. Sometimes we have to back up from our common opinions and see what the Bible actually says. If we look at this in verse 4, it tells us exactly who this is against. It's against mankind and the exception is those who have the seal of God on their foreheads. That's who is excluded from it. It's a global event. If you think about it like that, it kind of throws a big monkey wrench into the idea that it's this group of nations against that group of nations, because that would again be a regional event. This is a global event and those who are excluded from it are those who have the seal of God on their foreheads, in other words those who are obeying God and following Him. That's going to be a very small group of people. Basically it's saying this is happening to the rest of mankind. My personal opinion, and I'll certainly characterize it like that is I think it makes a lot more sense to explain this as a supernatural event that is being carried out. Again, it's the wrath of God on a rebellious mankind. That's what the day of the Lord is. It kind of throws a monkey wrench into the whole idea when you think about this. It's a global event. If you are doing a military thing and you are attacking these other nations, you are not going to do to yourself what you are trying to do to your enemies. You are going to do that in one direction. This is described as a global event.

If you think about the sixth trumpet, that's picking up in verse 13. Let me talk about what the Bible actually says and then we'll talk about common speculation. What the Bible actually says is that four angels are released and they are sent out to carry out this trumpet plague. As a result of their action one-third of mankind dies in the span of an hour. It is very specific about that. What we are talking about based upon current population numbers is between two and two and one-half billion people dying in the course of an hour.

Here is where the speculation picks up, because in verse 16 he refers to these four angels using what it refers to as horsemen and it numbers them as two hundred million. Then we make the assumption that it must be a physical army. That's assumption number one. Then we stack another assumption on top of that and say, with huge numbers like that it must be China. Who else can produce numbers that huge? Then we turn around and make a third assumption and say, if you are going to kill that many people in course of an hour, it must be a nuclear war. How else could you pull that off? A conventional army couldn't kill that many people in that short of time. It would have to be nuclear. That's one assumption on top of another on top of another.

Let's logically and critically evaluate that. Realize that we are in the realm of opinion and speculation and I'm giving you my opinion and speculation. This is not foundational doctrine. First of all, let's think about that number. We assume first of all when it refers to an army of two hundred million that it must be a physical army. The Bible refers to

armies that are physical human beings. It also at times refers to armies that are made up of spiritual beings. If we are to look at it open-mindedly, it could be either.

Think about the number. It says this has two hundred million. That is two-thirds the population of the entire United States, men, women, children, elderly, everybody. No nation on earth has an army of that magnitude. I did some quick research for this sermon looking at estimates on armies. I looked at the United States' military forces as of 2013. If you combined all military branches of active personnel and all reserve branches and all of their personnel and added them all together, it's a little over two million people. This would be a force one hundred times that size.

Now let's look at the idea that maybe it's the Chinese. That's often times the speculation. Well, it must be the Chinese because of the big number. The biggest number I could find associated with the Chinese was about four million. When you looked at all active duty in military, reserves, all of the resources you could pull from, pull them together was about four million. We would be talking about over fifty times that size. There is not a nation in the world that has an army that big.

Let's also take into consideration the timing. By the time this is mentioned we have gone through the first five trumpets. We have already wiped out about a third of the earth's population. We now have a population of the earth that's about a third less than it currently is and an unfathomably large army that no nation today could even produce. Does that make a lot of sense?

Also consider when you think of the troops here, do you amass large amounts of troops to do a nuclear war? That's not how you fight one. How do you do a nuclear war? You would have a small number of guys in missile silos and submarines plugging codes into computers and pressing orange buttons. You don't want your troops anywhere near where these things are going to land, because it's going to obliterate them. Why is the number of troops relevant if this is nuclear? Again, it doesn't seem to add up when you start evaluating all of that. Again, it's just in my opinion. I think it makes more sense to look at this as a supernatural event. What does it tell us? Four angels go out to do this. It describes the horsemen and we make an assumption that's physical. It could be physical. It could be spiritual. I think it's more logical that it's spiritual. If you lay out the whole day of the Lord, every one of these events is supernatural intervention. These are the only two we try to give a physical explanation to. All of the rest of them are just blatantly obviously supernatural in terms of if we understand how they play out.

As we know, by the time the sixth trumpet is concluded two-thirds of mankind have basically been wiped out. The sixth trumpet alone tells us that by the time this is done,

when these four angels do their duty, a third of mankind is wiped out in the span of an hour.

Let's also notice the reaction that mankind in general has. Realize throughout all of this the two witnesses have been telling them, even from a couple years prior, God is upset with the way you guys live. You need to repent, turn to Him. Things will go much better for you if you do. Let's notice their reaction even after all of these events taking place. Realize the two witnesses, I am sure, will be prophesying out of this book and telling them before these things happen, it's all foretold here. Here's what's going to happen next and it happens. They have a pretty good track record up to this point.

Now we pick up in verse 20.

*20) But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these 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.
21) And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. (NKJV)*

In other words, in spite of all the warnings, all of the cataclysmic events that have happened, their reaction is that they would not repent. They're just blatantly rebelling against God. That's the whole time this is happening. I started this sermon off with the question of why would God do this. We need to understand just how evil mankind is at this point as to why God would bring all of this about.

Let's turn over to Revelation 11 and pick up where we left off before in terms of the two witnesses. We read about their prophesying and the miracles that they will perform and such. As I mentioned earlier, God would at the very end of their ministry give them over to the beast power and would allow the beast power to kill them. We can pick up in verse 7 and see this event.

Revelation 11:7. *When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.
8) 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.
9) Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.*

10) 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. (NKJV)

Notice, the people that God sent to warn them all this time, who have been telling them what the right thing to do is. They are throwing a party that they were able to kill these guys. That's how rebellious against God they are and against everything that's good.

Pick up here in verse 11:

11) 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.

12) 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.

13) 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.

14) The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly. (NKJV)

This is about the only reference you find throughout all of this of anyone having any sense of repenting and wanting to turn to God. They are celebrating that they killed these guys. They are making a big spectacle out of it and then they watch these guys get resurrected. How far do you have to go to get peoples' attention? For a couple of years these guys are saying what's going to happen, then these events start taking place. They start telling them what's going to happen next and these things happen. All of this plays out, they finally kill them and then they get to hear a loud voice saying, come up here, and these guys come back to life after they have been laying in the street dead for three and one-half days and they are ascending up to meet Christ in the air. If this doesn't get your attention, nothing will. Notice throughout this they still don't repent.

The seventh trumpet starts in verse 15. This is when the resurrection takes place. I am sure that it takes place when the two witnesses are raised from the dead. Revelation doesn't tell us here specifically that the resurrection takes place at this point. If you put this together with I Corinthians 15 and I Thessalonians 4, we know at the blowing of the seventh trumpet is when the resurrection takes place. We know this takes place at this point in the timeline. What we also realize at this point is as I mentioned here, one of the primary functions of the two witnesses throughout all of this has been warning mankind. They have been the prophets sent on behalf of God to tell people of the events that are taking place. The answer is to repent and to turn to God. At this point

they are resurrected. They are now going up with the firstfruits to the marriage supper. They are no longer on earth to continue the warning, but God doesn't stop warning in that regard. He sends angels now to warn them.

Turn over to Revelation 14.

Revelation 14:6. *Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth — to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people —*

7) saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

8) And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

9) Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,

10) 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.

11) 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." (NKJV)

Notice here, even after the two witnesses have been killed and very dramatic events take place here with their resurrection to really get peoples' attention. If they had any intention of turning to God, it should be blatantly obvious at this point. These guys just came back to life. They are ascending up in the sky. There must be some truth to this argument that they are representing God and there is some credibility to what these guys have to say.

Once they are out of the picture God sends three angels to continue to warn people. What is their message? Don't follow the beast. Don't be a part of this system. Repent of your sins. Turn to God. Life's going to go much better for you. If you continue down this road in your sins following the beast, it's going to be horrible. You're not going to like it. The answer to this is to repent. They're continually told this. As we notice as these events continue to play out, mankind as a general rule just refuses to repent. We have to understand when we think about how horrific these events are, how evil

mankind is, how rebellious they are, how much they've turned against God. That's key to understanding why God would do something this horrific.

Now let's turn over to Revelation 16 and pick up with the rest of the day of the Lord. As I did with the trumpets, I am going to go through and kind of summarize a lot of the seven last bowl plagues. As I mentioned, we have the seventh trumpet and that trumpet has seven last bowl plagues, which are a part of the day of the Lord as well. This is covered in Revelation 16.

The first bowl has malignant sores, tormenting mankind with pain.

In the second bowl we have the sea turning to blood. This is all of it. It isn't just a portion of the sea. This is all of the salt water around the entire earth turning to blood. This is going to have catastrophic effects. It's hard oftentimes for us in our physical minds just to even wrap our heads around how bad this is going to be. If you turn the entire sea to blood, what you are going to do is end up killing all of the life in the ocean. All of your seafood is gone now. More importantly, you have wiped out your plankton, which produces about half of the oxygen supply to the entire world. The oxygen supply is getting significantly reduced more and more as we go through all of this. Just think about the cumulative effect these plagues are going to have, because you are stacking one on top of another as we are going through this.

Now you get down to the third bowl. You are turning all of the fresh water on the planet to blood as well. Think about what this means. There is no good water source now to the entire planet. All of the salt water is blood. All of the fresh water is now blood, too. You have no good water to drink. Human beings, as I mentioned, don't last very long without hydration. Not only that, think about your animal population. They need water, too. You are going to wind up wiping out lots of them as well, and all of the plant life that needs hydration to survive. You are going to have a massive effect and corresponding death toll that's going to come about as each of these events take place. You have a population that's just dwindling and dwindling and dwindling as we go through all of this. Notice the overall trend here as we go through all of these events. As I mentioned before sometimes we try to take the fifth and sixth trumpets and give them physical explanations, but look at everything else mentioned in the day of the Lord. It's obviously supernatural events. You can't turn all of the water to blood physically. That's the theme throughout this, because it's the day of the Lord. It's the day of God's wrath, His supernatural intervention against a rebellious mankind. If we look at that big picture, we get a clearer idea of how to interpret these things.

Then we get to the fourth bowl. I will just read through the fourth and the fifth ones, not only just looking at the plagues themselves, but understanding mankind's reaction to them. We pick up in Revelation 16:8:

Revelation 16:8. *Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.*

9) And men were scorched with great heat, ... (NKJV)

Now notice the reaction.

9b) ... and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. (NKJV)

Notice here, you have now turned up the heat. Think about the cumulative effect of everything that's taken place up to this point. If you have wiped out all of the water supply basically to the planet, what's going to happen to your vegetation? It is all brown and dead and dying. Now turn up the heat. What's going to happen? Fires are. These things are going to start combusting. That's also burning up more oxygen, because fires consume oxygen. You can see what a catastrophic effect this is having on the planet.

Pick up the fifth bowl plague in verse 10.

10) Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. (NKJV)

Now notice verse 11:

11) They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. (NKJV)

Notice the trend throughout all of this. They have been warned repeatedly. Things keep getting worse and worse and worse. They keep getting told the answer to this is to repent and turn to God. What do they do? They do the opposite. In spite of all of that, they're blaspheming God. They turn against Him and are fighting Him all the way.

If you look at the sixth bowl, this is the drying up of the Euphrates River, basically for the armies of the earth to assemble in the area of the Mount of Olives where Christ is going to be returning, because there's a battle that takes place. In spite of all of this, not only

are they not repenting, let's get the armies together and fight God with our guns, is basically their response to all of this. You would think after a while you would kind of figure out, I don't know that guns are going to do anything to this guy. Look at the stuff He can pull off. This isn't real logical, but this is their response to all of this.

In the seventh bowl we have a global earthquake. It says it's so severe that it flattens all of the mountains and it drowns the islands. They basically disappear; most likely with tsunamis. When you think about it, that huge of an earthquake, what are you going to get? Huge tsunamis will come. Again, if it's every mountain, every island, it's a global earthquake. If it's so severe it flattens mountains, it's going to wipe out pretty much every structure that we have. I don't know that we can build a structure that's going to survive that if mountains can't. Again, there will be another massive death toll.

We're not going to take the time to go through Revelation 19, but if you read the story there of Christ and the firstfruits coming back down from the marriage supper to the Mount of Olives, you have the story there of the what's left of mankind. What are they doing? Instead of repenting, let's get our armies together and fight God. They have to be wiped out from there. What you wind up with by the time this is done is the earth's population being a tiny fraction of what it was when it started. In fact, you end up with the planet basically being wrecked, again to a magnitude that is hard for us to wrap our heads around. To understand what this is going to look like, turn over to Jeremiah 4. It gives us a description of that time.

Jeremiah 4:23. *I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; ... (NKJV)*

It's important to note that these are the same Hebrew words used in the book of Genesis; and the earth became without form and void and God had to recreate it, replenish it. It's basically saying it's going to look the same way. The planet is just destroyed.

23b) ... And the heavens, they had no light.

24) I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, and all the hills moved back and forth.

25) I beheld, and indeed there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens had fled.

26) I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the LORD, by His fierce anger. (NKJV)

In other words this is describing the conditions at the end of the day of the Lord. We have a planet that is so wrecked that if God doesn't come and supernaturally intervene to heal it, mankind wouldn't last much longer. Think about it. You have no water to drink. You have a greatly reduced supply of oxygen. Your food supply is basically wiped out. Mankind wouldn't last very much longer unless God came in and intervened and fixed all of this.

As I mentioned, these events are incredibly horrific, when we think about it, so much to the point that it's hard for us to wrap our heads around what this really looks like. Again, we tend to think of catastrophes in terms of regional. It's affecting this particular area. We don't think that the entire planet is like that, especially with the entire planet being affected this dramatically, but that's what's going to happen here.

We come back to the question of why. Why is God going to bring events so horrible on this? It's not fun or exciting to look at this. It's sobering. It's horrifying, but it's not something we look and say, oh, I want to see that. That will be fun to experience, like we think of the Millennium. We look at this and go, if I can skip this, it would be okay. I'm not looking forward to these events. Why would God do that? I think it's important for us to understand just how bad society will be at the time that God is doing this.

Let me share with you some observations I have made throughout my life. I grew up in the church of God my entire life. By the time I was old enough to appreciate what was being talked about and taught and remember things, it would probably be the 1970s. One of the things I have heard throughout my entire life, oftentimes people would talk about it and say, well, the end just had to be in the next couple of years. I just can't imagine how it could get any worse. I am not knocking people in saying this. I am just sharing an experience so that we can think about this and expand our thinking. I have to honestly admit, most of my life in the back of my mind I thought, I could see how it could get a lot worse. If you think about it, think back to the 1970s versus today. Wouldn't we all agree society is dramatically worse today than it was thirty to forty years ago? It just continues to steadily get worse. Growing up in the church of God it would puzzle me oftentimes looking at this, because I was like everybody else, thinking it's going to happen in the next few years. Look at the events of the day of the Lord and think, why would God do something this horrendous to these people. Oftentimes in looking at society in general, from my own personal experience, my own personal opinion, of course there has always been lots of evil in the world, lots of sin in the world, but growing up through a lot of those years I would look at the average person and think, yes, they are deceived. They don't understand God's way of life. They are not trying to obey all of His laws in their life, but for the most part lots of people pretty much

lived by Judeo Christian values the best they understood, were trying to live a life of principle and, as best they understood trying to go in a good direction.

I think it's important for us to understand just how evil mankind will be at this point, because God is not bringing these horrific events on a society of people that are just deceived and don't know the truth, but are relatively trying to follow Judeo Christian values, trying to go the right direction. What He foretells to us is a society that is just completely given over to evil at the time that this happens.

Turn to 2 Timothy 3 and we can see a description of what things are going to look like at the time that all of this takes place.

2 Tim 3:1. *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:
2) For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud,
blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
3) unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, ... (NKJV)*

Notice this next one, because we are going to focus on this.

*3b) ... despisers of good,
4) traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
5) having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn
away! (NKJV)*

When you look at a lot of this, especially when you look at unthankful, disobedient to parents, things of that nature, throughout society, throughout history we could always find examples of that. It's just mankind's nature to be sinful and want to do our own thing. God tells us to go His direction and, no, we think we know better. We are attracted and drawn towards sin. There is a difference between being drawn towards sin and wanting to dabble in sin and despising good. When you talk about despising good, you are just totally against moral principles and you are totally against everything that God stands for. It's not just yes, I want to have my sinful life. I want to have one foot in the world and one foot here. We're not talking about that. We are talking about despising good.

To give you an example of that, I'm sure you have probably all heard over the last year the stories in the news about same sex marriage. You have heard the stories of, I think, there was a baker, there was a couple that didn't want to make a cake for a same sex wedding, there was a florist that didn't want to provide flowers. What I want you to understand the distinction between someone who says, I think we should be open-

mindful and accepting of everyone's point of view and allow gays to do what they want to do, not that I am advocating that, but I am just illustrating a point here. There is a difference between that and, oh, you don't want to be involved? We'll try to destroy you. We want to financially ruin your life, because you would dare have a moral principle that you don't want to be involved in this. Now we're getting into despising good. We need to understand that that's what society is going to be like and that's why God is bringing about such horrific events.

As Christ tells us in the Olivet Prophecy, at the very end it's going to be like the days of Noah and the days of Lot. There are some lessons that we can learn from that. Turn to Genesis 6. You need to understand that God doesn't bring such horrific events like this on people that are just deceived and trying to live right and just don't understand the right way. He brings this kind of thing upon people that are totally wanting to go the way of evil. To understand the events leading up to the flood look at Genesis 6:5.

Genesis 6:5. *Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

6) And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

7) So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." (NKJV)

Notice what He says here. Every thought and the intent of their heart was just evil. We aren't talking about people that, yes, had their sins and were kind of going in a rebellious way, but they were still kind of good-hearted and trying to be good. He is saying, no, they were just inclined to evil. They were despisers of good. That's why He said, I just have to wipe this out and start over.

It's a similar situation in the days of Lot. Turn to Genesis 19. We know, in Lot's situation it wasn't a matter of destroying the planet. This was more of a regional event. God destroys the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. I am sure we are all familiar with the story of when the angels come to visit Lot and they are at his house and then a mob forms at the door demanding the angels be sent out to them. Let's notice a couple of details here.

Genesis 19:4. *Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. (NKJV)*

What I want you to see here, this isn't a situation that's saying, yes, there was this evil gang in a bad neighborhood and they were out doing some heinous acts. That's not what we are talking about here. He is basically saying all of the men of the area. You could debate whether it's every single individual. Obviously, the way that this is worded when it says all of the men, young and old from every quarter of the city. He is saying this is representative of the whole area. This wasn't a situation where, again, we have these derelicts, this bad street gang over in the bad neighborhood and they're out doing these heinous acts. He is saying this is representative of the whole culture there. They are despisers of good. Notice now verse 9.

9) And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. (NKJV)

This is the mob's comment. First of all, they said this man keeps trying to judge us. Obviously, this is not the first time that Lot made a comment that made them feel like they were being judged and he was pointing out their sins. Look at what they are in the process of doing. This isn't a mob that wants to do a gang rape here. What are they taking issue with? He judged. Doesn't that sound familiar today? What's the ultimate crime in our society today? Don't judge. You have to be open-minded and accepting of everything, but if you judge, you are a bad person. Basically what you are saying is, if you make a moral discernment, that is the ultimate evil. Worst of all, if you have the guts to stand up for a moral discernment and take a stand, you are a bigot, you are a sexist, you are a racist, you are a horrible person and we have to take action against you. You are standing up for good and we despise good. That's what's happening. That's what you develop in a culture that constantly says, be open-minded for every form of sin, but don't ever make a moral discernment. That's evil. What you wind up doing is creating a society of people that ultimately despise good. That's what we are going to wind up with by the very end.

Turn with me to Matthew 24. Notice here, Christ in the Olivet Prophecy is describing the time of the end. He is talking to the apostles here, but largely the church in general.

Matthew 24:9. *"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. (NKJV)*

He is not talking about there's going to be this radical group over here persecuting people. He's saying all nations are going to despise. This will be the general theme representing the culture. Why will they hate you? For my name's sake, a culture hates

you simply because you want to live God's way, because you are trying to follow His principles. They are despisers of good. That's why they want to kill those, simply for the issue that they are obeying God.

You can see now, the people with this kind of mentality, why they would go through all of these events, being warned again and again and again, told the answer is to repent. These people despise good. That's why He is bringing these events about. Essentially, what God is doing in the fall holy day plan, to give it a humorous modern day analogy, He is basically pressing control, alt, delete on the planet. He's doing a reboot. He's basically taking all of the evil of society and that's why He is wiping out the vast majority of the population and then starting over. The reason He is bringing these events about is because it is so given over to evil to the point that people despise good. Again, that's not a limited issue of over in the bad neighborhood or the radical group that's persecuting people. That is symptomatic of the society in general. That is the reality of where we are headed.

In my opinion it could be several more years before we get to that point. Please understand my opinion and five bucks will get you a latte at Starbucks. I don't suggest to have any advance knowledge of when it's going to happen. My guess is as good as yours. I just look at this and think we have several more years before this takes place. We need to hang on for the ride here, because this is going to be scary in terms of not just the events that play out here, but how bad society is going to get between now and then. We have to realize God has promised us He will be faithful in delivering us through whatever takes place.

Again, my point in this sermon is to understand sometimes we have trouble wrapping our heads around when we look at the horrific events of this day and even trying to understand them and then looking at why would a loving God do something so awful? These aren't fun, exciting things to look forward to. We look at this and see that this is so horrible it's hard to wrap our heads around. The reason being is because He is dealing with a society at that point that is despisers of good. The only way to bring about the society that He is trying to create in the Millennium is to wipe all of this out.

Being a loving God and consistent with His track record, He is not going to do that without warning them and giving them the opportunity to repent. Sending the two witnesses warning people ahead of time for several years, pulling off dramatic events that no one could miss, you have to realize that there is something special about these guys. You just can't do this without that, even having them resurrected, I would imagine probably on live television when that happens, whatever technology is still available at that point after all of that destruction. The world will definitely take notice when this

takes place. Even after they are resurrected He sends three angels down to warn them one more time. Here's the right answer. In spite of all of that it's rebellion, rebellion, rebellion and now let's take up arms and fight God when He comes back. That's why He has to bring about such severe catastrophic events. He is not only bringing His wrath as punishment upon mankind, to communicate how unhappy He is with this kind of mentality and this kind of culture, but it's also necessary again to set up the utopian environment of the Millennium to wipe out this mentality and this whole culture, just to do a reboot on the entire society.

As we keep this Feast of Trumpets and we look forward to this, these are horrific, awful events to look forward to, but God purposely commanded us to set aside this day to understand how this fits into His plan so that we can understand what He is looking to do. Now we can look at these events and understand that these are the actions of a loving God, who is ultimately bringing about all of this for the ultimate good of all mankind.