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Curtis Mitchell

Lloyd T. Anderson

J. Richard Chase

Charles Lee Feinberg

Samuel H. Sutherland

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# TEMPTATION

By: Dr. Curtis Mitchell

About the only Christians who aren't aware of the problem of temptation are sometimes new converts in their first throes of experience with the Lord. Some may have been led to believe that once coming to the Savior they could avoid trials, heartaches, and testings with a gradual drift heavenward. Such is certainly far from the actual case. Jesus Himself didn't live a life free from temptation and trials. The same was true with Paul. This is why he underscored the importance of putting on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:12-18). Scripture confirms that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against a well-organized spiritual enemy." Temptation is always a greater problem for Christians than for those who have never put their faith in Christ. Imagine a dead fish floating downstream. There is very little resistance. Then picture that fish becoming alive, trying to swim against the powerful current. This is, in a sense, what happens when we are saved. Before our conversion we are dead in trespasses and sin, floating with the tide. When we become alive in Christ we begin to buck the tide of this world system. Temptations become even greater. How tragic that the average Christian is so tremendously ignorant concerning the matter of temptation.

The Bible pictures the Christian life as a battle. We have a highly organized enemy who has strategy and tactics about which we can hardly conceive. We wonder why we are constantly defeated although we don't handle ourselves properly. In any battle there are two factors necessary for victory: there must be power and there must be ammunition. There has to be a realization that we don't fight in our own strength. It is only through the power of the indwelling Christ (Galatians 2:20).

There is also another aspect to the Christian battle which centers on the matter of tactics and strategy. The Bible tells us that there are different kinds of temptations. Likewise, there are different ways to handle these vivid presentations. We must follow the battle manual if we don't want to be defeated. If you try to run when God says fight, you will lose. If you try to fight when God says to run, you will not win. Too often we fail to follow the strategy established for our benefit outlined in the Bible.

The first thing to determine is our vulnerable or susceptible point of attack. Scripture promises, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly" (I Thess. 5:23). The word "wholly" means entirely, while "sanctified" means to set apart. Paul prays that believers might be entirely set apart for God. The whole man involves spirit, soul and body. Any temptation you face will come in one of these three areas. This should help to simplify things. Probably the easiest of the three to understand is the body. When Scripture uses "body," it means the material self. Some temptations are directed right at the biological drives of the body. This is why so much emphasis in our culture is placed on sex. Satan seeks to get us to misuse and misdirect this God-given biological drive. Of course, sex temptations aren't the only

temptations directed at the body. Consider, too, the problem of overeating. This can be a very real difficulty for many individuals.

In II Corinthians 5 Paul uses the analogy of a house to liken his physical body. He realizes, "one of these days I'm going to move out to something better." The real you is non-material, operating through the physical body. This real you is referred to as spirit-soul. Most of the time, in the Bible, spirit and soul are synonymous. In some passages, however, there is some distinction made. When the Word uses the word "spirit," it means the self-consciousness. It is the self-awareness that you have to be aware of yourself in relationship to the things around you. You are totally different from the person sitting next to you. You would be surprised how many temptations are directed right in that area. This is the thing as ego, or pride. Analyze your temptations carefully and you will find that the overwhelming majority are directed right at pride. Man was made to be aware of himself in relationship to the things about him. He was also made to be aware of the Lord. This God-consciousness is something that makes man unique from the animals. Animals have self-consciousness, but not any awareness of God. They have souls, not spirits. You never find a cow or a chimpanzee trying to worship something, regardless where you find man, he always has a capacity for worship.

All temptation, when it's yielded to, becomes sin. All sin definitely affects your relationship with God. Anytime you are tempted to doubt the Lord's faithfulness, for example, it is a temptation directed right at your relationship with God.

The Bible teaches us that all evil finds its ultimate source in the devil. This does not mean that Satan always attacks us personally. As an analogy, we could say Hitler was behind all German aggression in World War II. This would be true. It doesn't mean, however, that Hitler attacked every GI himself. When the German submarines sank our ships in the Atlantic, that was Hitler; when the German air force went over and bombed London, that was Hitler; when the German Panzer divisions over France and Belgium, that was Hitler. He came in these three different ways on the same token, the Bible teaches that the devil comes at us in three basic channels: the world, the flesh and the devil. It is vitally important for us to understand our enemy.

When we use the term "devil" we mean either the one personal supernatural spirit being, known as Satan, or more probably one of the unknown number of spirit beings which do his bidding. These are known as demons or fallen angels. The existence of such a force is not questioned greatly today, since it has become a focalized part of conversation and interest. The Bible certainly teaches it. I predict we can expect Christians to be under increased, direct demonic attack in the days to come.

The Bible also refers to the "world" as a source of enemy attack. We are commanded to "Love not the world" (Romans 12:2). "If any man is a friend of this world, he is an enemy of God" (James 4:4). The hostility here means the world of unsaved people, society, culture, and all the value systems which have been established. Probably 90 percent of the individuals in our community are unsaved. Their control is in the hands of Satan. They walk "according to the course of this world, according to the principles of the power of the air, the spirit that now energizes the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1-3). This means that the demon-dominated unsaved world is where the value systems are established. Most of the time when you are tempted by the world you are not tempted to do anything illegal. It is something devastating to your spiritual welfare.

Finally, the flesh, as we use it in this series, is the old sin nature. You may have an enemy, a traitor, right within the ranks of your own personality. You may have received it from your parents. They in turn got it from their parents. It all goes

right back to fallen Adam, who in his rebellious condition, begat sons and daughters after his likeness and after his image.

Thus, we have a battle on our hands. Everyday we have to face this triad: the world, the flesh and the devil. As one fellow said, "We have the world that's external to deal with; we have the flesh that's internal to deal with; and we have the devil that's infernal to deal with every day of our lives." Aren't you thankful for the realization that "greater is He who is in us (the Holy Spirit), than he (Satan) who is in the world" (I John 4:4)?

When one analyzes Scripture he discovers that a direct demonic attack will generally be launched at believers in the area of our spirit, or God-consciousness. We are tempted to doubt the Lord's goodness and faithfulness. The world attacks us in the area of the soul or the self-consciousness. It is in this way that we want money and the things money can buy, including personal power. Usually we delight to be noticed. There is always pride, ego, and the flesh to contend with. Whenever you are attacked in the biological drives of the body, it comes from the old sin nature. There are three basic kinds of temptation: type "A", the devil attacking the God-consciousness, the spirit; type "B", the world attacking the soul, the self-consciousness, or the ego; type "C", the flesh attacking the biological drives of the body. The Bible has a different tactical maneuver for us to handle these three basic kinds of temptation.

First of all, determine what kind of temptation it is. Otherwise you won't know the biblical strategy to use for victory. It would be well to take a brief view of three different men in the Bible who had three different kinds of temptations fitting into these distinct categories. In Genesis 13 we find the account of Abraham and Lot being very wealthy in cattle. This is the first recorded range war in Scripture. There was a bad testimony which developed so Abraham very graciously allowed Lot to choose which land he wanted for himself. Abraham was obviously more concerned about the glory of God than about personal gain. "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan." This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. This was the most serious temptation Lot ever faced. His decision was the beginning of the end for him as a man of God. One of the most vile stories recorded in the Bible is recorded a few chapters after this as to what happened to Lot in a drunken condition with his two daughters. It all started with this decision right here. The enticing feature seems to be the well-watered plains with the lush green grass. Lot wanted to be the biggest cattleman in all of Palestine. His ego was obviously under attack. The temptation was in the area of the world. It may have been perfectly legitimate, but ultimately it would bring ruination to his spiritual welfare.

In II Samuel 11:1, 2 we read the story of King David's temptation to sin in adultery. The story is well known how that he looked at another man's wife and desired her for himself. The attack of the enemy was different than that with Lot. It wasn't to his ego or pride that the devil made the vivid presentation, but rather the biological drives of the body through the flesh.

The other type of temptation is recorded in Luke 22:54. Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, meets the soldiers coming to take Him to be tried. Crucifixion faces Him directly. Peter had run away and denied Christ in the face of strangers. The major thrust of this temptation was right at his relationship with God. He was tempted successfully to deny his Lord. This was a direct demonic attack. The Saviour had even warned Peter a few days before that this was going to happen (Luke 22:31).

Generally speaking, most of our temptations in the course of life will be type "B": the world attacking the ego, especially in this materialistic society where the love of money is the root of all evil. There is nothing morally wrong with money, but it

soon becomes a vital part of the value system of this world. Scripture tells us "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:5). If you find you are tremendous desires for the world, such as money and prestige, then this is a symptom of something far deeper. You are not loving God as you should. Don't try to fix the symptom. Let it simply warn you of a greater need. If you find that you are really lusting after the things of this world, prestige, clothes, bigger houses, advance in your job status so that people will notice you, then your problem is your devotional love for Jesus Christ has probably slipped. Take time to sit at Savior's feet. Hear His words. Take time to communicate with Him, maintaining vital love relationship. The gospel song puts it properly,

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow  
strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and  
grace."

Maintain that love relationship. If it begins to slip, the world is going to come and fill the vacuum.

In type "C" the old sin nature attacks the appetites of the body. These are sex temptations, overeating, and the rest. God is very specific as to this type of temptation. II Timothy 2:22 warns, "Flee youthful lusts." I Corinthians 6:19 tells you to fight it; it tells you to flee.

Type "B" temptation urges you to check out your devotional life. Type "C" temptation points out to run or flee. With type "A" temptation, it is a direct demonic attack at your relationship with God. James 4:7 stresses, "resist the devil and he will flee from you." The best way to do this is to follow the pattern Christ set. Three times the devil came at Him and each time our Saviour used the same tactical maneuver. He said, "It is written." He used the Sword of the Spirit. When the devil comes at you, trying to tempt you to doubt your salvation, hit him in the teeth with John 1:12. If you are tempted to doubt God's faithfulness, beat him over the head with the promises of God such as Romans 8:28. This is why you must know the Scriptures. This is why David declared, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee."

Reviewing just briefly, type "A" temptation--direct demonic attack; tempted to doubt God's faithfulness and goodness; resist with the Word of God. Type "B" temptation--the world system attacking your ego; check out your devotional life; get that devotional relationship warmed up, and the whole problem will solve itself. And type "C"--the flesh attacking the appetites of the body; flee or run, in one way or another.

Part II will be included in next month's issue.

Dr. Mitchell is Associate Professor  
of Biblical Studies at Biola College.

# REVELATION

By: Dr. Lloyd T. Anderson

As the trumpet judgments proceed, we find several stages of God's intervention in the affairs of man during the tribulation (Revelation 8:2 - 9:21). With the awesome sounding of the third instrument, the apostle John says that "there fell a great star from heaven." Some Bible teachers hold that this is an angel to whom will be given the key to open the bottomless pit. Certainly an intelligent being must be intended here because a regular star would not have such authority. Then, too, any inanimate object would not use a literal key. We have an interesting use here of the bottomless pit, or abyss. This is the first instance of such an expression in the Bible. It is mentioned three times in this chapter and four additional times later on in Revelation. It refers to the abode of the demons (Luke 8:31). Romans 10:7 implies hypothetically that Jesus Christ descended into the spirit world between His death and resurrection. Some have concluded that the pit is none other than the place of detention of the wicked angels who fell. It is here that Satan himself will be confined for a thousand years during the millennial rule of the Savior (Revelation 20:1, 3).

The opening verse of chapter nine presents the devil as having the key to the pit, with the power to release those who are confined there. When the abyss is opened, smoke comes out of it "like the smoke of a great furnace." It darkens the sun and the air. This causes the eruption, polluting the air and darkening the light of the day. This seems to portend spiritual corruption caused by these demons released from their confinement. It identifies the character of the judgment involved in the fifth trumpet as that of being demonic and satanic oppression. What a tremendously difficult hour that will be. I wouldn't want to be on the earth during this particular time. Those who don't know the Lord as personal Savior are, of course, going to be here upon the earth when the church of Jesus Christ goes home. It is after this event, known as the rapture, that the tribulation will ensue.

There is no greater contrast imaginable than between God's love and God's wrath. We find this underscored in John's statement, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). This is the alternative: if you have received the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you have nothing to fear about eternal things yet to come. But, if you have rejected and turned to one side His provision for your sin penalty, then you will have to bear the responsibilities for your sin by yourself. Thus, you will experience the wrath of God throughout all eternity in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15).

Many Christian people have been troubled by the references in the book of Exodus which tell of God hardening Pharaoh's heart. Sometimes they have erroneously reasoned, "What chance does a man have if God hardens his heart?" This is the very problem Paul was combating in Romans 9:14, "What shall we say then? Is there

unrighteousness with God? God forbid." The solution is made clear, "What if God willing to show His judgment and wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath (or these human beings of wrath) fitted for destruction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory" (Romans 9:22, 23). Because of His longsuffering, God had mercy on Pharaoh for a long time. He held back His wrath against Pharaoh's disobedience. When the pressure was on, it seemed as if Pharaoh was going to repent, but then he simply went back to his own willful rejection. Finally, when God knew that Pharaoh would never obey His will, then He used Pharaoh's hardened heart to bring forth His glory.

We see God's longsuffering and mercy also in our own day. Since the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, nearly two thousand years have passed. The Lord is patiently waiting for men to receive His Son to become their Savior. "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). But the day will come when He will no longer hold back His judgment. True to the loving character of God, even in wrath we see His mercy. It is the same throughout the book of Revelation. Whereas the wrath of God is poured out on those who reject Him, yet in His mercy He still gives men an opportunity to repent. The day is coming when every opportunity to repent will be forever past!

There are numerous woes which follow the first four trumpets of Revelation 8:2-9. The sounding of the fifth instrument of judgment signifies satanic and demonic activity on the earth. There is some disagreement among Bible interpreters relative to the identity of the fallen star (Revelation 9:1). The adjective, "fallen," is used in a tense which indicates the action having already taken place. It is also interesting to notice that the star acts with intelligence. The key represents authority. In Revelation 1:20 we saw that the word "stars" was used for the ministers of the seven churches. This, of course, is a figure of speech, such as we would refer to an athletic "star." It seems most accurate here in Revelation 9:1 to interpret this star as the devil himself.

There are many indications in the Bible why this interpretation is correct. In Isaiah 14:12, for example, Satan, who was originally created as Lucifer, the son of the morning, one of the leading angels of heaven, is asked the question, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the nations!" In the same passage Scripture declares, "Yet thou shall be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Isaiah 14:15). Jesus told His disciples, "I beheld Satan as lightning falling from heaven" (Luke 10:18). Then in II Corinthians 11:14 Satan is spoken of as "an angel of light." In the middle of the tribulation, as recorded in Revelation 12:7-12, we discover that Satan will be cast out upon the earth. This will end his ability to accuse the brethren.

The key given to the devil (Revelation 9:1) is actually restricted authority delegated to him. Eventually the devil himself, who is now given the key to the bottomless pit, will be cast into that very pit (Revelation 20:3). The Lord Jesus Christ is the one who has the final authority. The bottomless pit literally means in the original, "the well of the abyss." In other words, it is like a great shaft, which is boundless or bottomless. Perhaps it is somewhere in the center of the earth. The abyss is entered by this shaft, carefully guarded under lock and key. It is the abode of some demons.

The word "abyss" occurs seven times in Revelation and only twice in the rest of the New Testament. In both of these two earlier occurrences the word is translated "deep." We see this in Luke 8:31 where the demons came to Jesus Christ and besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the "deep." They were pleading

the Savior not to torment them before their time. It is possible that the abyss refers to the place spoken of in the Old Testament as "sheol," which the New Testament refers to as "hades." Before the ascension of Christ, sheol or hades was a place where the wicked dead were separated from the righteous dead by a great gulf (Luke 16:26). At the ascension of Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, He declared His victory to those in hades who had believed on Him and were godly people. He took the spirits of the believing dead from hades up to heaven to be with Him (Ephesians 4:8, 9). The spirits of the wicked dead still abide in hades where they are in conscious torment (Luke 16:19-31).

Today there are two places where the dead can go. This has nothing to do with their bodies. At this point that isn't significant. It is the soul or the spirit that we are considering here. Scripture makes it very clear that those who have never accepted the Lord Jesus Christ now continue going to hades (Greek), or sheol (Hebrew). It is the place of conscious torment where the souls and spirits of the unbelieving dead await the final day of judgment where they will be cast into everlasting hell. The believer in Christ, the one who has been born again, by faith, when he dies goes to be with the Lord. This is what the apostle Paul said about himself, "When I die, I will be in the presence of the Lord, which is far better."

Wherever the bottomless pit is, we know the devil is given the key to it in Revelation 9:1 and 2. Then, in Revelation 20 he, himself, is cast into that bottomless pit while Christ is ruling over this earth. Even though Christ has complete control over the abyss, He gives the devil the key, or the authority. John describes for us the scene in terms we can understand. He likens what he sees to what you and I can comprehend. When the bottomless pit is opened, it is like a great volcano that is erupting. The sun and air are darkened by the smoke.

In addition there will also be devouring locusts. They are given power, "as the scorpions of the earth had power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (Revelation 9:3, 4). As we study the passage we will see that these locusts are different than those earlier described. This will unveil even more dire judgment.

In one of the judgments of God upon this world we note from Revelation 9:3, 4, "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads." We recall the plague of locusts which attacked the land of Egypt (Exodus 10:14, 15). This Scriptural account declares, "there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall there be such" (v. 14). Such a statement indicates the locusts in Revelation 9 cannot be the same type of creatures. The earlier insects "ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees, so that no green thing was left." Vegetation is spared in God's future judgment at this point. These dread denizens in Revelation are said to be literal creatures, demonic in nature. Demons themselves have no shape, but desire to do their work through others, whether animal or human beings. In God's omnipotence He puts Satan to foolishness by using the emissaries of the devil to bring intense pain on the unsaved during the tribulation.

Regardless of the age in which we happen to be living, God knows those individuals who belong to Him. During the tribulation some will have the seal of the Almighty in their foreheads (Revelation 7:3). Believers on earth during that time will thereby be spared the torment of the demons in locust form. Notice that the torment is like a scorpion when it strikes a man. It doesn't specifically say that it is. Those who have experienced a scorpion's sting say there is hardly anything more painful in all the world.

Limitations are definitely placed on the locusts. They are to torment (9:4) only those who do not have the seal of God in their foreheads; they are able to torment (v. 5) but not to kill; the period of their torment is limited to five months (v. 6). This reminds us of the restrictions placed on the devil recorded in the first two chapters of Job. So grave is the persecution that people will try unsuccessfully to commit suicide. How regrettable that even the torment of these locusts will apparently not cause people to repent and receive Christ (9:20, 21). In other words, God gives the devil and his demons just so much liberty and no more to deal with people of the earth during the hour of tribulation. Those who are tormented now learn that God even controls the span of a man's life and how that He has His own time for all creatures.

In describing the locusts, the apostle again uses the language of comparison with words such as "like" and "as." Certainly John had never seen anything like it before in all his existence. Through the Holy Spirit, he seeks to describe it to us in terms we can understand. He refers to things with which we are well acquainted in verses 7 to 10. There is an eight part description given of them. What monstrous things they must be! They are utterly fearful and devastating. These things reveal the character of Satan who so often comes as an angel of light. Here, however, we see him in his true ugliness. We're living in a day when demon possession is rapidly coming the order of the hour. There are people who drink blood here in Southern California as a part of their evil rituals.

These demon-like locusts can only torment men for five months. The Lord Jesus Christ is in complete control, although the devil is loosed. When God's purpose for the torment is fulfilled, He brings it to an utterly devastating end. The purpose of the invasion of the locusts is to show what the heart of the unbeliever is really like. While such people suffer extreme torment during the tribulation, yet they still don't repent and turn to God. Instead, they still resist the Lord, pitting their wills against the Almighty. The attempts to commit suicide reveal the depravity of the human heart. Imagine such folly; man would rather destroy himself than turn to the Lord Jesus Christ!

How wonderful it is to know that God is still able to reach men, bringing them to salvation through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Were it not for this one would ever be saved. The truth of Galatians 6:7, 8 is absolutely borne out, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." You see, "man has rejected Jesus Christ as Savior and has trampled under foot the Son of God and has counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified to be an unholy thing and done despite unto the spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29).

Revelation 9:13-16 brings us to the second woe which will take place during the tribulation. In this passage we find the language of symbolism, representing something that is literally going to take place. When the sixth angel sounds his trumpet, a voice is heard from the four horns of the golden altar (v. 13). This voice is most likely coming from the angel about whom John has previously told us (Revelation 8:3). Here he speaks at God's command. He gives the orders to release the four bound angels. The altar from which the voice comes is the place where mercy is normally extended. It is also the place of prayer. Now, however, judgment and judgment proceed upon the face of the earth from it. Mankind has rejected God's love and His promise of salvation. In His longsuffering the Lord has withheld His judgment so that man might still come to Him, even during the hour of tribulation. Now the Almighty is seen as holding back His judgment no longer.

The four angels of Revelation 9:14 are evil. Their release turns loose a flood of destruction. The question logically arises, "Why were these angels bound at this particular location?" We should note the prominence in the Bible of the geographical position of the River Euphrates. The Garden of Eden was once located in this area

and this is where the sin of man began. It was also in this particular area where Nimrod lived and began his false religion (Genesis 10, 11). The result was the building of the tower of Babel, which brought God's judgment through the confusion of their languages and the dispersion of the people (Genesis 11). The great city located on this river was Babylon, which later became the center of the false religions and the political hub of the Babylonian empire. Abraham, the man chosen of God to give birth to the nation of Israel, was called from this area to go into the promised land. It was also to Babylon that the children of Israel were taken captive for 70 years under Nebuchadnezzar's rule. This area has been the fountainhead of all human idolatry and the worship of false gods. There God will bring His judgment during the tribulation, after the church of Jesus Christ has been taken out of the world. This very place where Satan's empire among wicked men began is where the judgment of God is going to be poured out.

Because Jesus Christ is in control of all events, the four wicked angels are loosed at His command. Notice especially that they were prepared "for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year" (v. 15). They are unleashed exactly at God's specified time. This is the "zero hour" for the earth. Their purpose is to slay the third part of the human race.

Other wicked angels besides these have been bound and tied up in chains of darkness (Revelation 19:1, 2). We know, too, that even the devil is going to be bound for a thousand years while Jesus Christ rules over this world (Revelation 20:2, 3). God knows His own timing and is exact in the minutest detail. He is never too late and never too early. Thus far, these judgments result in the destruction of half the entire world population. This doesn't count those who die from the plagues. How gracious our Lord has been to extend His hand of love and grace to each of us in this hour of need.

In the ninth chapter of Revelation we are given a very vivid picture of the trumpet judgments during the tribulation. The first of these woes is described in verses 1 and 2 as the fifth angel blows the trumpet and a star falls from heaven to the earth. After this, locusts come forth to torment "those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads." The Bible tells us that "the shapes of the locusts were like horses prepared unto battle" (9:7-10). We also learn that "their power was to hurt men five months."

verses 13 to 16 present the second woe as the sixth angel sounds the trumpet. John tells us, "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, Loose the four angels who are bound in the great river, Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, to slay the third part of man. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand; and I heard the number of them." We now see a floodtide of destruction unleashed upon the face of the earth. Consider the army of two hundred million. It is a supernatural army, but not of God. Remember that the trumpet judgments are mostly the result of the devil's doings. Of course, he cannot go beyond God's permission. Here, however, we see the exhibition of Satan's power almost completely unrestrained. This diabolical army of demons sweeps over the face of the earth. It will most certainly be a terrifying sight. In verse 17 we get a closer perspective of them. The apostle says, "I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of iron, and of jacinth, and brimstone; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone." John is using the language of appearance to describe these evil riders. It is interesting to notice that the riders themselves do not do the killing (v. 19). They only have protective weapons on their bodies. It is the horselike creatures which are the killers. Their power is in their mouths and tails. This reminds us of modern warfare with its tanks, machine guns and flame throwers. Keep in mind that the war of Revelation 9 is not the battle of Armageddon. That will be fought in the land of

Palestine, whereas this particular conflagration involves the whole earth.

Mark it well that as the result of the judgment of the sixth trumpet, a third of the earth's population will be destroyed. Unbelievers used to think this Scripture incredible. Yet, in the atomic age in which we live, our minds are now concerned about total annihilation. This sixth trumpet brings a greater segment of the earth's population under God's judgment than at any time since the days of Noah.

The response of those who are not killed in the judgment of the sixth trumpet is suggested in verses 20 and 21, "And the rest of the men who were not killed by the plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, and silver, and bronze, and stone, and wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk; Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." Isn't that a sad commentary on the stubborn, wicked and rebellious hearts of man? We see absolutely no repentance whatsoever. This may well be the fulfillment of II Thessalonians 2: "They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie." The simple fact is that fear in itself is not sufficient to drive a person to the Lord for salvation. This uncovers the true nature of human depravity. Yet, how wonderful it is to know that when we receive Jesus Christ as our own personal Savior, He comes into our lives and gives us a brand new nature that desires to please Him (II Corinthians 5:17). Have you ever come to the place of realizing that only the death of our Lord Jesus Christ can ever pay the penalty for your sins? If you have never done so, take this step of faith today, and you will come into possession of everlasting life (John 5:24). I firmly believe we are living in the latter days described by the apostle Paul (I Timothy 4:1, 2). Demonism is on the increase and occultism is on every hand. It will continue to spread like a virus throughout the earth during the tribulation, after the church has gone home to be with the Lord. Murder and stealing will no doubt be the result of great wars and starvation. The emphasis today is on sex, and during the tribulation, when men are face-to-face with judgment, even then they will not repent of their adultery and fornication. The Antichrist during that time will apparently make full use of drug addiction to bring the population of the world into line. How urgent should be our concern for the things of Christ and the outreach of His Gospel message.

Between the breaking of the sixth and seventh seals in the book of Revelation we find a special "interlude." Recorded in chapter 7 was the description of how the Lord remembers mercy in the midst of judgment, sealing a host of Jews and Gentiles. Another such parenthesis appears between the sixth and seventh trumpets in Revelation 10:1-11. The seventh trumpet doesn't sound until the 15th verse of chapter 11. These interludes are not unconnected statements but are always a part of the whole picture sweeping before us.

First of all, John tells us, "I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as though it were the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire" (v. 1). The mighty angel is not named; however, there are a number of things about him which have led some Bible teachers to identify him as the Lord Jesus Christ. That He is referred to as an angel shouldn't trouble us at all. The word "angel", like the "Son of Man", is a title. It doesn't suggest thereby that He is a created being. Frequently in the Old Testament our Savior is known as "The angel of Jehovah." These pre-virgin birth appearances of Christ are known as "theophanies" or "Christophanies" (Exodus 3:2; Isaiah 63:9). Here, in the apocalyptic vision, John sees the Lord come down from heaven. The description is that His face was as it were the sun. We see something similar in Revelation 1:16. The same characteristic is noted when He came at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:2). It was thus with Saul of Tarsus, who later

became the apostle Paul, when he met Him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3).

His feet are like "pillars of fire." These are the feet of majesty, set for the judgment of the earth. He was also "clothed with a cloud." Such was the garment of His divine presence in olden days. It always signified the Lord's divine activity. He directed Israel by day (Exodus 13:21) by a pillar of cloud. When Israel murmured (Exodus 16:10), the glory of the Lord appeared in the clouds. At Mount Sinai God descended in a thick cloud (Exodus 19:9-16). When the tables of stone were renewed to replace the broken ones (Exodus 34:4, 5), the Lord descended in a cloud. When the tabernacle was completed (Exodus 40:34), "then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." God said, "I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat" (Leviticus 16:2). The cloud is always associated with direction as well as God's deity (Numbers 11:15-22; Psalm 97:2). There was also a rainbow upon His head. This is a beautiful symbol of God's everlasting covenant with the earth (Genesis 9:12, 13). We would not expect anyone other than the Lord's divine Person to wear it upon the head. Ezekiel saw the rainbow as a part of the glory of the throne of God (Ezekiel 1:28). Just as the cloud is indicative of the coming storm of God's divine wrath, so the rainbow is indicative of divine mercy in the midst of judgment. It is an evident token of security for those who believe, even in the hour of great tribulation. God protects His own when conditions on the earth are at their worst.

We also observe the activities of the mighty Angel, "He set His right foot upon the sea, and His left foot upon the earth" (Revelation 10:2). The sea and the land stand for the sum total of God's material universe. Here the Savior claims both the earth and the sea as His own possession (I Corinthians 10:26-28). Christ has every intention of taking possession of that which is rightfully His. It is an act befitting the character and the office of the Savior, but hardly that of simply a created angel. All things must be put under His feet (Psalm 8:6; Hebrews 2:8). While the devil asserts his claim to the earth, Christ puts His foot down and takes possession of His own property, subduing all the assaults of the enemy.

This mighty Angel then will be heard to cry "with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices (Rev. 10:3,4), there is the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5). Elsewhere in the Bible the lion's roar is a symbol of imminent judgment (Hosea 11:10; Joel 3:16). Thunder is so a recognized type and symbol of God's voice in judgment (I Samuel 7:10). The tailed substance of these awesome peals of thunder is not indicated to us in the book of Revelation. The number seven, however, is suggestive of the completeness and finality of the Angel's mighty sayings. John heard what the thunder said. But, when he was about to put it into writing a voice came from heaven which ordered, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."

When we come to the 10th chapter of Revelation we see another mighty angel come down from heaven. The description given clearly indicates that he can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He will have in His hand a little book (v. 2). This is His little deed to the possession of the earth. It is very possible that this little book is the seven-sealed book of Revelation 5. There the volume is seen as containing the requirements for the redemption of the earth. The Savior is the only One worthy and able to open the seals (Revelation 5:5-7). With the opening of the first seal, judgments began to fall during the tribulation. When the last seal is opened it produces a heavenly silence, after which the seven trumpet judgments are revealed.

In Revelation 10 we see the book with the seals already broken. With it, Christ wrests away control from earthly rulers and usurpers of authority, taking possession for Himself. This is the exact purpose of the judgments of the tribulation.

The inspired apostle sees this Angel put His right foot upon the sea and His left

foot upon the earth. The Psalmist, too, reminds us that everything belongs to Lord (Psalm 95:3-5). Waters or the sea are often symbolically used in Revelation to refer to the peoples of the world (i.e. Revelation 17:15). Throughout Scripture the land normally refers to the people of Israel. All of this belongs to Christ by the right of creation as well as by the right of redemption. The Angel simply claims what rightly belongs to the Savior. John was about to write what the seven thunders had uttered (Revelation 10:3, 4) but was then commanded not to do so. This is the only time he is forbidden to put down what he hears and sees. That is a remarkable thing. The reason is apparently that it isn't yet time to reveal these particular judgments.

Now the glad announcement comes that the mystery of God is going to be finished (Revelation 10:7). This means that it will be brought to completion. "Mystery" in mind something previously unrevealed. There are several mysteries mentioned in the Bible. There is the mystery of iniquity, which Paul says is already at work (II Thessalonians 2:7); there is also the mystery of Israel's blindness during the age of the church (Romans 11:25); in the book of Revelation we read about the fall of Babylon (Revelation 17:5). Whatever is unrevealed is going to be made fully known during the tribulational period. God has a tremendously sovereign program. He is not frustrated by the devil or the rulers of the earth. His program will be fulfilled. We may have difficulty understanding His plans today, not only because of our limited minds, but also because of our selfish outlook on things. The Lord wanted to do everything for you and me and the age of the church in His program. Therefore, He could not do everything for the heroes of faith as they lived in the age of the Old Testament (Hebrews 11). Time is not a crucial element with God. With Him one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day (II Peter 3:8).

The mystery of God (Revelation 10:7) is to be brought to an end in the days of the voice of the seventh angel (v. 7). This has to do with when the kingdom will be established on the earth. Jesus Christ will rule over this world for a thousand blessed years. The Old Testament prophets wrote about this kingdom. When they lived on this earth many believed He would establish the kingdom at that time. His disciples were confused about that matter (Acts 1:6). Christ's answer indicated that the answer is very, very sacred. He declared, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in His power" (Matthew 25:37). This was Paul's comment too to New Testament believers, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (I Thessalonians 5:1, 2). The mysteries of the voices of the seven thunders are not to be known at this time in John's writing. They will have to wait until the time of their complete revelation in the scope of God's providence.

Dr. Anderson is Pastor of  
Bethany Baptist Church,  
West Covina, California.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

Panel: Dr. Chase, Dr. Feinberg and Dr. Sutherland

Q. "Would you please tell me what Biola teaches about the passage in Acts 21:23-26? Was this a sin or do you believe that Paul was in the Lord's will?"

A. There are some who feel that Paul made a colossal mistake when he met some of the brethren there in Jerusalem. There were those who had been concerned about the apostle's work among Jewish believers. They told him, "We have heard that you have advised some to forsake Moses, suggesting they did not need to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs" (21:21). They were worried that people might think it was not necessary to "walk orderly and keep the law." They wanted the Gentiles to know that there was more than "keeping themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." While they found no fault in that, they still believed the Jews should adhere in some measure at least "to the law of Moses."

As a result, Scripture records that Paul took the men, "and the next day, purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until an offering should be offered for every one of them." Some have taught that this was Paul's mistake because he was seized in the temple and ultimately taken to Rome where he was martyred. Of course, this view overlooks the will of God being wrought in his life. Acts is a book which records truth in transition. We are introduced to people at that time who were living on earth before Pentecost as well as after it. They had been in the age of the law, as well as the church age. Obviously this is not true with any of us. Therefore, everything in the book of Acts can't apply similarly to us today. God didn't give Paul all the truth at one time. He wasn't taught the whole ramification of the Gospel of grace. This was revealed to him as we see in Ephesians 3. Up to this point he was going according to I Corinthians 9:20. He was trying to be to the Jews a Jew, to those under the law as those under the law, to Gentiles as those without the law. That he was consistent is clear from Galatians when he took Peter to task for trying to live according to two different viewpoints. He had been afraid of what people would say about his eating with Gentiles. Here in Acts 21 he is not inconsistent but is doing this to shut the mouths of the accusers, as well as to have a larger entry and acceptance for the message of redeeming grace. Paul only did this in Jerusalem because the brethren wanted him not to have his testimony discounted from the start. We do not believe that he was out of the will of God since he was seeking an entrance for the Gospel.

Q. "Are the angels of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 1:20 the same as we understand angels in other parts of Scripture?"

A. This passage reads, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven lampstands which thou sawest are the seven churches."



There are several views on this. One suggests that there are angels as spirit beings who hover over a given congregation to take care of their affairs and congregational members. This does not appear to be the point in this verse. Another idea points out that the word "angel" is another translation of the descriptive "messenger." These people believe that all members of the congregation are messengers. Since seven is the perfect number, all of the members of a church included. We rather believe that the description refers to ministers who are the leaders of the seven churches. When a man is ordained of God, set apart to promote God's truth, he has a peculiar relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ which the ordinary person doesn't experience. Pastors who are really called of God are in the hollow of His hand in a very peculiar way. It would seem to appear that they are the ministers of the seven churches who have the responsibility of the oversight of those congregations from a human point of view. They stand in a very peculiar intimate relationship with the Savior.

Q. "How do Joel 2 and Acts 2:17, 18 fit into the subject of prophecy?"

A. There is a great deal of unfortunate confusion today on the subject of the Spirit and His manifestation. Joel 2:28-32 is a passage which was considered so important that in the Hebrew Bible it is a chapter all of its own. Because Joel 2:28-32 is a separate chapter, in the Hebrew Bible Joel has four chapters, not three. Remember that one of the very important things in the study of the Bible is to look well at the context. Verse 28 has before it this statement, "Ye shall see that I am in the midst of Israel" (Joel 2:27). This gives us our time bracket, provides the "historical framework." One cannot interpret this passage, or Acts 2, properly unless he will pay close attention to time phrases. Do not forget that it is your sons in Israel, your daughters in Israel, your old men in Israel, and your young men. We dare not overlook that. In coming to Acts 2:15 we read, "This is that which was spoken through the prophet, Joel." Notice, he didn't say, "It was done that it might be fulfilled." It is rather a first downpayment, or a fulfillment that we see. The total realization will come to pass finally in the days that "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh." With the death of the Messiah through Israel's rejection, therefore, the Jews couldn't enter into the new covenant as a nation. There are actually two comings of Christ. The first was to accomplish death, burial, and resurrection, laying a foundation for the church. Now He is the Great Intermediator for those who trust Him. There are many other things which are to be accomplished at the second coming. This isn't because He did something in the first stage of His ministry. Just as there are two comings of Christ so there have been two comings of the Holy Spirit. The first, recorded in Acts 2, was to Israel. Because they rejected Him, the message of salvation was given to the Gentiles. As a test for this timing, read God's words through Joel, "On my servants, on my handmaids, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit. They shall prophesy and shall show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke." Certainly we don't find the fulfillment of that in Acts 2. The sun wasn't turned into darkness, nor the moon into blood, "before that great and notable day of the Lord come." We have had nineteen hundred years since Christ's death, and we are still waiting. Just as Christ will be received and believed on in His second coming (Revelation 1:7), so the Holy Spirit will be received. "Ye do always resist the Spirit," said Stephen in Acts 7. He will be received in that coming day and then all these wonders in heaven, on earth, the sun, moon, will all be revealed to Israel.

Q. "From the basis of Scripture, what happens to babies when they die?"

A. Nothing is specifically said about babies when they die. All we do know is when the Lord comes, those little infants are to be given resurrection bodies fashioned like unto His glorious body. It is generally universally agreed by the segments of Christendom that when a baby dies, before it comes to the age of

accountability, that infant is saved. This concept is based upon our understanding of the infinite love, mercy and goodness of our gracious heavenly Father.

"Is there Scripture substantiating the creation of the different races?"

Some people believe there was a pre-Adamic race; however, the Bible indicates nothing to substantiate such a view. All the people in the world today came from the man who was created by God's hand, Adam, and the woman created by God taking a rib from Adam's body. Adam and Eve are the progenitors or the ancestors of the whole human family. When the earth began to be populated, the world was tremendously wicked. God saw the evil which had grown to such a degree that the every imagination of a man's heart was only evil continually. As a result, God brought severe judgment through a flood. Only eight people were spared: Noah, his wife, along with Shem, Ham, and Japheth with their respective mates. Apparently it must have been after this cataclysmic deluge that the different races came into being. In actuality, however, no one knows for sure. Scientists and anthropologists can't agree on the matter. While there is Scripture substantiating the fact that God created all these different people, yet how He did it and at what particular time the different nations became known, we do not know. Chapter 10 of Genesis gives us the results, while chapter 11 presents the process by which the nations were divided and became spread over all the earth. They were determined to go into idolatry, to build a tower at Babel. Their primary foolish and sinful goal was to displace God.

Q. "Was Jesus God or man while He hung on the cross and bore our sins? When the Savior spoke to His Father, crying out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' did this substantiate that He was all man at that time?"

A. This is one of the most profound questions which can possibly engage the attention of men. Theologians have discussed it and argued over it from the very beginning of the Christian era. First of all, Christ must have been the Son of God. As He hung on the cross He accomplished His mediatorial work at Calvary. At the same time, He was most certainly man. Understand the significance of His death. The body died and was laid away in the tomb. For that instant of time, God the Son was separated from God the Father. "Death" in the Bible always means separation. Of course, an infinite Being could do in an instant of time what it would take a finite being an eternity to accomplish. Jesus Christ, an infinite Being, could accomplish in an instant of time what it would take an eternity for all sinners to accomplish. When He cried out, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?", it was then that the Son was separated from the Father as He bore the penalty of our sins in His own body on the tree. What a tremendous sacrifice this was. The face of the Father was turned away from the scene of agony. The Savior willingly gave up His unique position to sacrifice Himself for us. We read in John 19:28, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." In His infinite knowledge and omniscience, Christ knew all the things that had to be fulfilled for His atonement. His propitiation was complete and He could confirm, "It is finished." He bowed His head and gave up His Spirit. This meant all of the work necessary for our salvation was completed. Without question, this is one of the most profound, beautiful, thrilling and humbling thoughts we can possibly engage in. Let us realize what it cost the Lord Jesus Christ to die on Calvary's cross for our sins. It was all because He loved us so much and was willing to do this because of His grace.

Q. "What does the Bible refer to when it says, 'Believeth all things' (I. Cor. 13:7)? Obviously there are a lot of things today which one cannot believe. Does this strictly refer to the Word of God? If so, what about false teachers who can confound a new believer?"

A. The quotation is taken from the great love chapter of the Bible. In the Amplified New Testament we have an excellent clarification of the meaning of the words, "Love is always ready to believe the best about everyone." So, the passage doesn't tell us to believe all things. There are many things in this world which are false, and indeed are the devil's lies. This is why we need the Spirit of Truth to guide and direct us in all we say, do and even think!

Q. "In the Old Testament God gave the Ten Commandments for His people. One was 'Thou shalt not kill.' Then, shortly afterwards, when they came to the land of Canaan, He told them to kill all the inhabitants. Why would He order them to kill when He had just commanded them not to?"

A. Keep in mind that the Ten Commandments were given for individuals to practice. They were never given for a nation to follow. Each individual was responsible for the observation and working out of God's laws. Individual Jews in Moses' day, as well as us today, do not have a right to take the law into our own hands. This is why the charge comes, "Thou shalt not kill." There was another command given which was based on national law and order. Because of their sinfulness and degradation God decreed that the Canaanites must be exterminated. The Lord uses nations sometimes in judgment upon other nations. The archaeologists have helped us to know a little of the civilization of that day. Idolators of the worst sort, these people were actually Satan worshippers, utterly debased in their religious practices. Unfortunately, the children of Israel didn't follow their divine instructions. For long they were following some of these false gods and practices too. The spiritual life of the nation was in jeopardy. God will use the judgment of nations again during the tribulation period.

Q. "How could Christ have shed human blood when each child or animal receives its blood type from the father? Jesus Christ had to have shed God's blood since there is no transferring of blood from mother to fetus. Will you please explain the chemistry of the blood?"

A. Several years ago there was quite a bit of discussion about this subject. Many of these earlier views have now been scientifically discredited. It is not correct that the fetus gets nothing from the mother. If this were true, then Jesus would not have had any human blood at all. This would have been impossible. He was a divine human being, but also he was a human being. Both are 100 percent correct. To say that you don't understand it is really the first step in recognizing the tremendous miracle this represents. If the Savior didn't shed human blood, then what did He mean by the declaration, "This is the new covenant in my blood?" How the second Person of the Trinity became man is a mystery and a miracle. To speak of God's blood is ridiculous. Deity has no blood as such. "God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." In any human concept the child prenatally partakes of both characteristics of the mother and the father. For Jesus Christ to have shed God's blood is impossible. The introduction of the idea of "the chemistry of the blood" can be a very thin veil for antisemitism. Be very careful of such views. Christ's birth and life is a miracle biologically as well as in every other way, too.

Q. "When we accept Christ, our sins are to be forgiven and we're made as white as snow. Are these same sins to be brought back at the last judgment?"

A. To this question we would give a resounding, "NO!" II Corinthians 5:10 tells us that only believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The judgment of the believer's works, not sins, is in question here. Only unbelievers will be at the final Great White Throne Judgment.

to our sins, when we confess them to the Lord, having come to Him for salvation, they are taken completely away. We read in Psalm 133:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." In Hebrews 10 we hear God telling us, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more forever." They are covered as a thick cloud, buried as in the depths of the sea, never to be resurrected. The judgment of the child of God (I Cor. 3:11-15) occurs at the return of Christ for His church. It is also called the "bema" for it is the place at which rewards will also be presented.