

Revelation - the seven trumpets

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[0 : 00] If you look around there, the number of uses of the word like. So the locusts looked like horses.

! On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold. Their faces were like human faces. Their hair was like women's hair. Their teeth were like lines. There's a lot of like there.

And I wasn't actually even tempted to try and draw a picture that fitted everything here. But I do notice it doesn't say was. It just says was like.

Another thing that you might like to notice is the scroll. Where was the scroll? Chapter 10 verse 2. A little scroll. The Greek word for little scroll is, it likes the word Bible, biblion.

[0 : 57] And the word functions for scroll. It also functions for books. So when it says the books were opened, it uses the same word as scroll.

So I just said that so we don't have in our mind there's two completely different sort of forms of writing. And the scholars say there's no particular difference between a little scroll and a scroll. Anyway, I'll just mention that. I don't know whether it turns out to be significant. And I will, just while we're here, in chapter 9 verse 14.

Just as we are concerned about what's happening on the borders of Ukraine and Russia. And with a certain amount of trembling. Think, you know, what is going to happen there?

Apparently, in the days when this was written, they had the same feeling about the borders of the river Euphrates. And they were really rather scared that the Parthians would come across with all their forces and attack the Roman Empire.

[2 : 05] So I think there's a reference there, like a contemporary reference to the things that people were worried about in those days. And was there anything else I was going to mention?

Oh yeah, I was going to say, just off the top of your heads, did you notice any biblical references or anything you thought, oh, we must have got that from the Bible as we were reading through?

I mean, there's actually quite a lot. But anybody just to get our... Carry on. Let's have the microphone so that it will turn up on the recording.

I think you're probably in chapter 10 verse 9, around there. Oh yes, the scroll in your mouth, it will be...

You'll turn your stomachs out, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey. That's right, because the prophet Ezekiel is given a scroll to eat, isn't he? And it has the same sort of effect, I think.

[3 : 08] So that's one thing. Thank you very much. Anything else? The end of chapter 9. I should know that by now, shouldn't I?

Here's the microphone. The end of chapter 9, verse 21. Oh, sorry, no, verse 20. The rest of mankind, who were not killed with his place, they still not repent of the work of their hands. The bit where it says, they did not stop worshipping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood.

Reminded me of the verse from Deuteronomy. I had it just a minute ago. It's gone. Deuteronomy 4, 28. There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell.

Excellent. You get a gold star for that. I fancy saying I read that. And it just reminded me of Deuteronomy 4, verse 8. Whatever you just said. What did you say? Deuteronomy 4?

Apparently it's 4, 28. 4, 28. Yeah. Well done. Thank you. That's brilliant. I didn't know where the reference was. I had to look it up. Oh, you looked it up.

[4 : 17] Okay. Anything about, like in 11, verse 6, not raining? Does that remind you of anybody in the Bible?

Yep. Elijah. Yeah. Do you know how long there was between praying that it wouldn't rain and praying that it did rain? Anybody know? Three years.

Nearly. A little bit long, a little bit more. Hmm? It was three and a half years, because James tells us he prayed for three and a half years.

And just looking at those figures, 42 months. What's that in years? Three and a half. Yeah. Yeah. And if you do 100, 1,260 days, if you have 30-day months, which is a round figure, but I think that turned...

It's the same. Yeah, it's the same. So this three and a half year period seems to be quite, you know, good. It is a thing.

[5 : 25] No, was there anything else I was going to mention? Yeah. Yeah. And the numbers would go to Daniel. By the time and half a time. Yep. There's a time, times and half a time.

It used to be three, three and a half. Time times is two and a half. Three and a half. Yeah. Let's not get too bogged down in...

There's actually loads of threads there that you could pull that lead back into the Old Testament. And as I think, probably some threads that if you pulled would lead to their current situation. Now then, I think just to make sure we're all on the same page, we'll do a little bit about his accent. So I'll do it a different way this time. When I first was driven around in Colombo, the traffic there made absolutely no sense to me at all.

You get motorbikes and cyclists and taxis and vans and tuk-tuks. They go all over the place.

[6 : 32] And there's beeping and beeping. And I thought it was just chaos. But as I... The more I watched, I realised there's a convention. And people understand the rules. And the rules about beeping...

So in English driving, if you sound your horn, it's a sound of aggression, isn't it? You really... If people sound their horn, they're cross with you. But in driving in Sri Lanka, what I discovered was... If you're a tuk-tuk driver and you're going past a cyclist, out of courtesy, you go beep to show that you're behind him. And then when you pass the cyclist, you go beep to show, I am now passing you.

And then when you've passed the cyclist, you go beep to say, I've passed you. And it's all a perfectly civilised sort of convention. I know there's a certain amount of optimising time with it. But once you get the idea, you say, oh, this is exactly what's happening. This is what... It's all... There's a language there which can be understood.

[7 : 39] Now, there's a convention of how you drive. And there are conventions of the way that John speaks and writes in the book of Revelation.

And just... I think we just need to reinforce this amongst us. So, we've done this before. But he uses symbolic numbers. And you can just call out an example of a symbolic number.

12. Yeah, 12 for 12 tribes or 12 apostles. 7 being the number of completeness. And now we've just got 3 1/2, which is some sort of time.

Something to do with time. 3 1/2 years. And there are symbolic things. And...

The critics of this way of looking at Revelation would say, Oh, this is just allegorising. You can make it mean anything you want. And I don't think that's right. I think we have to listen to the way he does use symbols.

[8 : 48] Because he uses them in a specific way. And to take him seriously, we have to understand his symbolism. So, for example, some sort of symbolic things that we've come across.

Symbolic creatures, for example. There's beasts. Yeah. And they come from, for example, the book of Daniel.

And they usually... Well, I don't know. We haven't really got to beasts. Let's keep beasts out of it for the time being. Another very well-known animal in the book of Revelation on the throne?

A lamb. Yeah. The lamb equals Jesus. That is not saying we should take it literally that Jesus has got four paws and it's covered in wool.

We're saying this is a symbolic way of referring to Jesus. And the symbolism is appropriate because... The lamb is a sacrificial animal.

[9 : 47] Yeah. And we also found a lion. And the lion represents whom? Jesus.

Yeah. Since it's Jesus again, isn't it? So, we've got symbolic things. Sorry? Yeah. We've got scorpions.

Let's come to the scorpions in a moment. And we had a thing that I think he does of hearing versus seeing. And can anybody think back something?

He hears one thing and he sees something different. Sorry? Yeah. Okay. That's true.

That's... Wasn't the one I had in mind. Yeah. The lion and the lamb. The lion and the lamb. He hears a lion. And when he turns and looks, he sees a lamb.

[10:46] And you get the same thing. He hears 144,000. And he looks and he sees a multitude that no one can number. That's supposed to be an infinite number of people.

And I think he conveys theological subtlety by combining two things that you wouldn't have thought you could combine. So, Jesus is a lion and he is a lamb.

And the church of Jesus Christ, as we looked at it the other time, is a very precise number with two lots of 12 in it. The tribes and the apostles.

It's very precise. But it's also a multitude that no one can number because it's a vast, vast number. And you remember that these 144,000 had what?

A seal. Yeah. They were sealed on their forehead. And that comes into the passage that we were looking at. I would like to suggest, oh, this, which if you weren't here before, I would say, do people know any Babylonian languages?

[12:06] But what is that symbolizing? Fast forward on a cassette tape recorder or on your media player.

Because I think one of the ways that he speaks is to hit the rewind button. He takes us through and then he will rewind. And I'd like to suggest that it's a very helpful insight into the whole book that he takes us through to the end.

Rewinds back to the beginning. Shows us it again. Rewinds back to the beginning. Shows us it again. Rewinds back to the beginning. If you don't think he did that, then it really becomes an extraordinarily complicated book.

So, there's the rewind principle. There's also this principle where we have Tom Cruise seeing the plutonium on the train.

And then he jumps onto the train. And then he rescues the plutonium from the terrorists. And everybody is pleased. And that's the end of the film.

[13:14] So, it's a little storyboard. And he uses these little pieces of action to describe some theology.

And we had that. Can anybody think of an example where we had that? The scroll. Yeah, saying who can open the scroll?

And I wept and wept. So, that would be him weeping and weeping, for example. And then he says, well, actually, somebody has conquered and can open the scroll.

And this is the lamb who sits on the throne. So, it's about Jesus' achievement. And it's put into the form of a little set of scenes, like a little action.

So, I call that the storyboard. And I'd like to suggest one other. If you go back to the four horsemen, which you remember were in chapter 6.

[14:28] There was, it looks like conquest. People killing each other. Inequality and deprivation and death and disease.

So, there were the four horsemen. Do you think we're meant to understand that, first of all, there was conquest and then that finished. Then there was civil war and that finished.

And then there was deprivation and inequality and then that finished. And then there was death and disease. Do you think they're meant to be read in sequence? Because I think not.

I think, do you know what a collage is when people, it's a sort of primary school thing, isn't it? Where you put all sorts of things. There's a picture of mummy.

There's a picture of uncle. There's what we did on our holidays. There's a picture of a car. There's a picture that nobody can really understand what that is. Here's some scribbles. Here's a handprint.

And they all go up on the wall together.

[15:40] And there's no particular order to them. But they say, you know, what we did over the weekend or something like that. And it seems to me that John makes a collage of things.

They're not meant to be read as if they only happened in some particular order. But you put them all together to get an overall picture of what he's trying to describe. Anyway, that was by way of revision.

And let's get down to see what we can do with this section. So, it makes sense.

Sorry, it makes sense. If you see riders and horses lining up in battle, they don't go out individually. Yeah. They line together. Yeah, yeah. How would we recognize that though?

If he's specifying. So, it's like, okay, the first force and then the second force and then the third and then the fourth. He does. I mean, there's no doubt that it's specified one, two, three, four.

[16:41] But the question is, do you think we're meant to understand it as a precise sequence? Or is he giving us one ingredient? Ingredient number two, ingredient number three, ingredient number four.

I mean, hold the thought. See what works. I mean, if you're making a recipe for bread, you'd say, number one, you need flour. Number two, you need salt. Number three, you need yeast. But you put them all together in the end, don't you?

So, good point though. Right. This is previous thinking. It's an unveiling. It's a letter.

It's a prophecy. And it has all those things in it. And that was the little Persian rider thing from history.

And we looked at the seven seals. And you remember that there were four of them that went together. Then there was the fifth was a bit different.

[17:41] The sixth was the final end. Then there was a rewind. And then the seventh was the conclusion. It was too awesome to say anything. It had that particular form. Right.

So, let's look at the trumpets. How many trumpets? Correct. Have a look with your neighbor and just see where the seven trumpets come in the passage.

Just so that we know where they are. Just have a look with your neighbor. Where are the seven trumpets? Let's go. Thank you.

Thank you.

It says something about the way they're spaced out when you're looking for them. Got them? Got them? Let's have a look on the screen, see whether you agree with me.

[19:55] Just why trumpets? Anybody thought of why trumpets are appropriate? Yeah, they're used for signalling. There's various uses for trumpets.

Calling together an assembly. It could be like the assembly bell. Going around Jericho was a shofar. It says a ram's horn. So I don't know whether that's technically a trumpet.

But those references, it is an alarm for an impending battle. It is a sort of warning. And I think that's probably where we're looking at trumpets.

And we want to try and get to the meaning of the trumpets. We're certainly not going to get everything. But see if we can find the meaning of the trumpet. So I thought it looked a bit like that. So you've got four of them together.

Let's just check where they are. So four of them together is in 8, verse 7, verse 8, verse 10, and verse 12.

[20:54] So those four go together. They're quite close to one another. And then the fifth one seems to be rather different. So this is the one with the star.

And there's a lot going on there. And where's the sixth one? And the sixth one is similarly bizarre, like this. And then you get a long gap, which seems to go off in a different direction.

A sort of interlude or an intermission. Let's see whether I've got those trumpets. A sort of interlude or an insertion in the sequence. And then it comes back to the seventh one, which is the final end. Have I put anything there for that? No, I haven't put anything there for that. So it's a little bit like the sequence of the seals, where you had four together. And then the fifth and sixth were different.

Then there was an interlude or a backtrack. And then the seventh. And here we've got four. As I'm saying, four. And five and six are different. There's an interlude or an insertion there.

[22:01] And then you get to number seven. And all the way through, the trumpets are sounding. And we want to try and at least get some idea of what they're saying. So let's look, first of all, at those first four.

And my question is, look at it with a broad brush. Because I can't answer questions about all the details. But I think we could at least agree on the general idea.

What is covered by those trumpets? And how much of it is covered by those trumpets? Ask your neighbor. What do they think the trumpets are aimed at?

Or where do they have an effect? Ask your neighbor. Thank you.

Thank you. So it's really a question about location. Don't get bogged down too much in the details.

[23:45] Thank you. Thank you. Okay, let's have a look at what we think.

Any ideas then about the first angel and his trumpet? What's the target area for this? Land. Yeah, land or earth.

And how much of the earth? A third. So it's a proportion. It's not the whole thing. There's a sort of limit on it. And I think, Michael, you asked last time about proportions, didn't you?

Was it something that was a quarter that you asked the other time? I'm sure you asked a sensible question about it. But it's worth picking up these fractions because here we now get a third.

And what have I got? Earth, a third. What was the next one, the second angel? The sea. Yeah, the sea. And how much of the sea? A third.

[24 : 49] Turning into blood reminds us of what? The plagues in Egypt. The plagues in Egypt. The plagues in Egypt. We're into the area of plagues in Egypt.

When God pronounced judgment on the specific country of Egypt, there was, sorry, water was turned to blood.

Can anybody remember any of the other plagues? Frogs. Frogs. Flies. Flies. Darkness. Darkness. Locusts. Locusts.

Yeah. Pardon? Boils. Boils. Yes. Death. Death. Yeah. The death of the firstborn, wasn't it? So just interesting.

Those were plagues on a particular nation at a particular time. And he's picking up on that idea. But as we will see, he's taking it a bit broader. So we had sea.

[25 : 43] What was the next thing? The third angel. Rivers. Rivers. Rivers. Yeah. This is fresh water, isn't it? Rivers and springs.

And they turn bitter. Any idea of where the idea of fresh water and bitter water comes in the Bible? Pardon?

In the, after the Exodus. But Mara. After, Mara means bitter, doesn't it? After the Exodus, there was bitter water and they threw a log in and it turns sweet.

And this is working the other way around. This is sweet water. You throw something wooden in and it turns bitter. And, oh, I should have asked. And, oh, I should have asked, you know, how much of it is a third, wasn't it?

And the fourth angel, what's the area that he, that is hit this time? Light. Light. Light. Sky. Yes. Sun.

[26 : 40] Moon. Stars. Stars. How much of the sky is hit? A third. So, when you've got earth, sea, fresh water, sky, what have you ended up with?

Yeah, creation. You've got the whole of creation as it's seen from a human point of view, which is always the way the Bible looks at it. You know, we're not built to look at it from a million miles away. We're built to look at it from where we are. And where we are, the earth is hit, the sea is hit, the fresh water is hit, the sky is hit when those four trumpets sound.

And there are problems in all those areas. It's limited, but it's problematic. And it's said to be a woe. Does that remind you of anything current? There's just recently been a conference, hasn't there? The COP. What was that about?

[27 : 44] It was climate change. And how much of our world does climate change affect?

Sort of everything, actually. And here is Scripture saying that when these trumpets sound, this will affect our world.

And he's divided this into those four and says it's all going to be hit in one way or another. And then I'm going to ask, do you think they will happen sequentially?

Or is it saying that there will be effect? Is it like a collage? There's a picture of the sea being hit. There's a picture of the rivers being hit. A picture of the sky being hit.

A picture of the earth being hit. And it's all put together. I'm going to go for the collage idea.

Because it seems to fit. Okay. And I said, do you relate it to anything today?

[28 : 45] And I think it's terribly contemporary, actually. I'm sure that the book of Revelation is contemporary in every age because people can look and say, well, this is happening.

You know, you read this in the Middle Ages and say black death is happening or the plague is happening. That's what is described here. And we look at it and we say climate change is happening.

And so it's sort of describing the situation in God's world. And I did have a slide right at the beginning of the cover of Today's Times.

I won't wind all the way back to it. But it had something about war. It had something about rich people getting away with being rich, extraordinarily rich. And it probably had something about

climate change.

And it probably had something about crops or something like that. It just strikes me that, no, let me go back to the beginning with that.

[29 : 53] I think when people look out on that, they might say, well, where's God in all this? It just doesn't seem anything to do with God. But the book of Revelation is saying, actually, these are God's trumpets sounding.

And we need to listen to what they say. So let's go and see if we can work this out. The trumpets are sounding and meaning something. Now, should we have a go at the fifth and sixth trumpet, which I think are quite difficult, aren't they?

Okay. So let's go through it. I don't know whether I'm going to do this as an animation. Let's have a look. The first one is locusts.

Am I right? Locusts, verse 3. So that's... I'll do a locust there, in case you didn't know what a locust looked like.

And we'll come into detail in a moment. But the sixth one, what happens with the sixth one? Verse 16.

[31 : 03] Mounted troops. I think it's probably the central idea of that. Weird horses and riders. So that's my little drawing of a horse. And after that, we get chapters 10 and 11, which we won't try and do anything about today.

Yeah. And then the seventh trumpet, which we also won't touch. But let's see what we can do with trumpets 5 and 6. So let's take...

Let's try ourselves through this. So the fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. And the star was given the key to the shaft of the abyss.

The book of Revelation uses, generally speaking, a three-decker universe with the heavens, the earth, and under the earth.

Or in this case, it's called the abyss. It's sort of three floors, if you like. So it says, The star was given the key to the shaft of the abyss.

[32 : 16] When he opened the abyss, smoke rose from it like smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the abyss. So let's see if we can do that.

The star falls. There's a hole into the abyss. And out of that comes smoke. And out of the smoke comes these locusts.

And they're given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They're told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree. But only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

They were not allowed to kill them, but only to torture them. Torment them, torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes.

I think I've got a scorpion. No, I haven't. I've got people. There's a sting of the scorpion. During those days, people will seek death, but will not find it. They will long to die, but death will elude them.

[33 : 19] It's a fairly horrible description. Now then, I think I've got some questions. First question. Any idea about stars?

Why a star? Any thoughts on a star? Thank you. I'm going to remember the Lord Jesus said he saw a sacrifice for Jesus. Thank you. Yes. Jesus said, I saw Lucifer fall.

Does he say like a star from heaven? It's like lightning. Yes. I don't think you're like a star, but like lightning. But I think that idea of falling from heaven is definitely there.

In Genesis 1.18, it says that the heavenly bodies do what? Do you know there's a verb there that they do something? They govern.

They govern. Yeah, that's right. And I think from that idea, there is an idea of stars relating to governors. Perhaps kings or princes or people in authority.

[34 : 22] Remember that the wise men, when they saw the star, they made a connection with a king, didn't they? And I think that's a sort of connection.

I'm not saying that. I'm not trying to tell you that stars, you know, like horoscopes, control our world. But I'm just saying that that's the conceptual. That's the idea that connects them.

So some powerful agent falls and is given. Yeah, where does he fall to?

To the earth, yeah. And let me just, I've lost the place again. And he was given the key to the deep.

And when he opened the deep, smoke rose from it like smoke from a gigantic furnace. And the sun and sky were darkened by the smoke. Any thoughts about smoke? How is smoke and darkness used in the Bible?

[35 : 29] Because we've mentioned one already, but you can... Pardon? There's concealment.

So in Isaiah's vision of the Lord, in the temple, smoke filled the temple. So that's, I guess that's good smoke, but it conceals.

Yeah, we've got other smoke and darkness as well, haven't we? One of the plagues of Egypt was darkness. Yeah, one of the plagues of Egypt was darkness. And there's quite a few references, which I haven't got in my head at all, of battle where the sun gets darkened and the moon gets darkened.

And I think, again, looking at it from a human point of view, if you've got a battlefield and people are burning stuff, then the smoke fills the air and you can't see the sun anymore and you can't see the moon anymore.

And it's a sort of terrible, like World War I trenches, horrible battle scene. So maybe that's what is connected with.

[36 : 35] And then out of the smoke, locusts come down on the earth and we're given power like that of scorpions. So locusts. So I think somebody over here was... Where does the idea of locusts come from?

The plagues. The plagues in Egypt. So these are plaguing things. Click. What do they do and not do and for how long? That's right.

So the trumpets hit the ecosystem. Yep. Sky, earth, sea, rivers. But these locusts don't hit that.

What do they hit? Human beings. Yes. With the exception of people who have the seal.

So God's people. They hit people with the exception of God's people. And how long do they do it for? Seven years? Three and a half years?

[37 : 38] Five months? Which seems to be, I don't know, a shorter period. A limited period. And what is the result? What? People want to kill themselves.

They think this is so appalling and so horrible. I would rather die than go on any longer with this. It's a horrible thing, isn't it? And I'd probably better move quickly.

It's a fearsome set of descriptions. What do you think? I mean, presumably these locusts mean something.

If we just go back, they're a plague. They're given by permission because this agent is given the key.

He's allowed to do this. There's something demonic and horrible about this. It doesn't affect the people of God, but it affects other people in a limited way, but so badly that they would want to die.

[38 : 46] Do we see anything like this in our world? You could say, like, the plight of sin in a person's life.

It could completely destroy a person's appointment. They think, I've got nothing. I don't want to live anymore. There's no hope. It's like an absence. Yeah, I agree with that.

I think there's a sort of in the mental health area, if you don't have assurance of salvation, if you don't have anything to live for, you might well say it's just so tortuous and tormented.

You know, we can think of examples of people who felt like that. I'm just thinking of Virginia Woolf. Didn't she take her own life, poor woman? A lady who was an author lived in Sussex.

You can think of other examples of that. I'm also thinking of some things like substance abuse, where people get into drugs in such a way that they think, this is so awful, there's no way out of this.

[40 : 01] It would be better to end my life than to carry on in this sort of way. And perhaps addiction to alcohol. I'm not saying that Christian people don't ever get things like that in their lives, but I think the tendency is, if you're a Christian person, you're sort of spared those things by your lifestyle, aren't you?

And you're spared hopelessness because Christ has given us hope. But outside of Christ, you're at the mercy of these horrible powers.

There's something demonic about them. And so I've put some suggestions there. There are addictions, you know, promiscuity, where people go from partner to partner and actually it doesn't give them any satisfaction.

They just feel empty and cheap. And I've put bitter and horrible cycles of insecurity and deprivation. Yeah, it just describes something of the horrible state that people can be in without Christ.

And does that work as a sort of interpretation? It reminds me of Psalm 40, verse 2.

[41 : 21] He lifted me out of the slimy pits, out of the mud and mire. He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth. Amen.

Yeah, and if he hadn't done that, I'd still be in that pit, wouldn't I? Yeah. That's my suggestion for that trumpet. Let's look at the next one, which is, it says, The first woe is past, two other woes are still to come.

So the sixth angel. This is, the trumpet is sounded. It says, the sixth angel who held the trumpet, release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.

So let's see what I've got for that. That's my idea of what the river Euphrates looks like. And there's a fourfold thing, four angels. And then these guys get released.

And would you ask your neighbor what they would like to say about these mounted troops, their origin, their task, their number, their description, and what they do and don't do?

[42 : 33] Just very quickly see what you can think with your neighbor about that. Thank you.

Thank you. One of the questions is where they come from.

Okay, I'm going to stop you because I don't want us to take too long. The, where do they, where do these mounted troops come from?

From the sixth trumpet, yeah. And were they any particular place? Yeah, I think they're near the river Euphrates. I don't know whether the angels are the same as the mounted troops.

Not really quite clear on that. But their origin, they've been specifically kept for this. It's interesting, isn't it? There's nothing unplanned or unexpected.

[44 : 38] God has this under his control. And what is their task? To kill a third. To kill a third. Not all mankind, but a token amount, a third.

Yep. And their description, I was supposed to say 17 to 19. Just call out a couple of descriptive words. Yeah. Sulfur and smoke.

Power in their mouths. In their mouths. Yeah. Power in their mouths. In their tails. This fire, smoke, sulfur. It's all sort of very vividly horrible stuff really, isn't it?

And what do they not do? Perhaps I didn't ask that question very well. What do they not do? I'll answer it myself. They don't kill two-thirds.

They can affect one-third, but not more than that. So in some ways, they're like the locusts, I think. The locusts couldn't kill, but they just made life unbearable.

[45 : 41] But these mounted troops, and there's loads of them. They sort of are all over the place. They do kill people.

And so let's just try and stand back a little bit. Looking at verse 20 to 21, having had these trumpets so the ecosystem is hit, those things that sort of demonically and horribly make life unbearable for members of our human race, there are forces abroad which actually kill our fellow citizens.

And that's a horrible thing too. Verses 20 and 21 seem to express some sort of amazement.

Anybody like to suggest why there is an amazement here?

Because they didn't repent. The rest of mankind who were not killed by this place still did not repent. They didn't repent of the work of their hands, worshipping demons and idols.

They didn't repent of their murder, their magic arts or their sexual immorality or their theft. After all this, after all these trumpets, they still did not repent.

[47 : 07] So you see, the trumpets were saying something all the time. And what they were saying was, repent. So the ecosystem is hit and it's saying, guys, repent.

And life has got all these terrible things that really affect people so badly. And it's saying, repent. And there is death and shortness of life.

Some cases in a very tragic and horrible way. And it's saying, repent. Turn to God, our creator. And the amazement is that people still don't repent. That's what the chapter is saying, isn't it?

So they're saying, repent, repent, repent, repent. Repent. Now, if you'd look at the headlines, you'd say, well, just the world is a mess.

Where is God? And I think what this passage is telling us is that God is absolutely shouting out to the world, repent.

[48 : 11] The world is not right. This is not how it's supposed to be. You've missed God out of everything, our creator. And would you please turn back to him and get some sort of reality?

To say repent is not to be objectionable. It is to be kind. If somebody was drowning, no, if somebody was about to go swimming in the waters in Australia where there were sharks and you shouted to

them, get back, don't be so stupid, that would not be an insulting thing to do. That would be the kindest thing you could do, isn't it? And God, in his mercy, shouts out, repent. Let's look at a couple of verses here.

Romans 1, 18 to 20.

Puts it in sort of a Paul-type way. What is happening in our world? Well, this morning in the prayer time we read Psalm 104, which tells us that in God's world it's full of examples of his care and tenderness and presence.

[49 : 37] But that's not the only thing that's present in the world. In Romans 1, verse 18, he says, And he goes on to say that the world is showing the reality of God and it's showing God's wrath at the way people miss him out and ignore him and just carry on as if he didn't exist.

It's very insulting to pretend somebody doesn't exist. You know, if after the morning meeting you were standing around there and everybody just went past you as if you didn't exist, you would be very insulted.

You know, I'm here. Why doesn't anybody recognize me? They just sort of go past me. And to live in God's world and just to pretend that he doesn't exist is a great, great insult to him.

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven. Please can we look at Luke 13. Luke 13.

There were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices, which is a horrible and disgraceful thing.

[51 : 33] Jesus answered, Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered in this way? I tell you no. But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

And those 18 who died when the tower in Siloan fell on them, do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you no.

But unless you repent, you too will all perish. And Jesus is commenting on the horribleness of people. But he's also commenting on, as we might say, natural disasters.

This scaffolding fell down, killed these poor guys. And he's saying, you know, what do we make of that? It doesn't say these people are worse than anybody else. But this is the world we live in.

These things happen.

And they are warning us of a perishing that is even greater, that is yet to come. And it's a warning to repent, isn't it?

[52 : 35] Scaffolding falls down. That's not saying that those people are particularly nasty and we're good because scaffolding hasn't fallen on us. I tell you, unless you repent, you too will all perish.

It's a fearsome but very solemn and serious warning to repent. C.S. Lewis said, We can ignore even pleasure.

But pain insists upon being intended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but he shouts in our pains.

It is God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world. No doubt pain as God's megaphone is a terrible instrument. It may lead to final and unrepented rebellion.

But it gives the only opportunity the bad man can have for amendment. It removes the veil. It plants the flag of truth within the fortress of the rebel soul.

[53 : 44] See what he's saying. Pain and suffering is God's megaphone to rouse, what does he say, a deaf world. And I think that really helps us as we look on the world around, doesn't it?

Because we might be tempted to think, well, where's God in all this? And the answer is God is shouting through all this. And what he's shouting is, I am here. Things are not right. You need to repent.

And that is a kind thing for God to say. It's not an objectible thing for God to say. And just to close, what about Christians?

Christians, I'm interested to see that in the seven churches, a number of them were asked to repent. Do you remember that? And I think it's a very safe thing for Christians to make it their business to be repenting.

To, you know, Mark's template prayer, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication. I think the confession is an important thing.

[54 : 54] To look at our lives and say, this is where I've been wrong. This is where I want to change. And I turn back to the Lord from my sin and ask for that God would transform me in

repentance.

So I think repentance is just, it's not just for people outside the church. It's for us. And I close with this quote from Calvin. And he, the theologian Calvin, back in the, whenever it was 1500s, is it, would have put it this way.

We are not our own. Conversely, we are God's. And he expressed his repentance as being a lifelong race in which he turned away from his selfishness and turned to God.

And it is symbolized by the motto that Calvin adopted of a hand holding a heart with the words, my heart I give you, O Lord, promptly and sincerely.

And I think that's a great place to stop. We've seen the trumpets saying repent, but let them speak to us too.

[56 : 05] And let our response be what we were just singing. All I once held dear build my life upon. All this world reveres and wars to own.

All I once thought gain I've counted loss. Compared to this knowing you, Jesus. My heart I give you, O Lord, promptly and sincerely.

Let's finish there, shall we? Can I pray? Thank you, Lord, for being able to look into your word. And we pray that we ourselves would not just be onlookers and spectators of your word, but people who take it to heart.

And we ask that we ourselves would not be hard-hearted and proud and self-centered and unchanged, but that we ourselves would be repenting and offering our whole lives to you, whatever that might mean.

Our gifts, our futures, our health, our wealth, our possibilities, our dreams, our ambitions. We give it all to you.

[57 : 26] My heart I give unto you, O Lord, promptly and sincerely. Please be with us in this new week. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen.

Stop there.