

No Repentance

Revelation 9:20-21

The End Times

In my last post, we began to explore **Revelation 9:16-19** dealing with the **Description of the Army**. In this post, we will conclude our exploration of **Revelation 9** by examining verses **20-21** on **No Repentance**.

"The rest of mankind, those who were not killed by these plagues, even then did not turn from what they had made with their own hands - they did not stop worshipping demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹Nor did they turn [repent] from their murdering, their involvement with the occult and with drugs, their sexual immorality or their stealing. ~ Revelation 9:20-21 (CJB)

Continuing with Yochanan's vision with half of humanity destroyed, all this has no effect on the survivors. As the locusts in Joel 2:4-10 were intended to bring about repentance (Joel 2:11-14); likewise here, but the people refused.

Judgment in the early stages can lead to fear and terror (Revelation 6:16-17) but, when the hardening process reaches a certain point it provokes blasphemy (Revelation 16:8-10). Perhaps this is the decisive point in the lives of many, the moment when they deliberately refused the last overtures of grace and threw in their lot finally with the beast. The idolatry (v. 20) and the immorality (v. 21) of their society was too much a part of their lives to allow them to see sin from God's viewpoint that they might turn to the Lamb.

Even today we see a foreshadowing of that time, as false religions and cults are sweeping the globe like a tidal wave. This false religion not only condones but advocates the four big sins that are on the increase in today's world.

1. **Murder.** The crime of murder is increasing all over the world, not only by gangsters and terrorist, but by fathers, mothers, teenagers and even children. Violence is indeed filling the earth. Where there is no godly influence, human life is cheap. People today are getting conditioned to the taking of life by such acts as abortion and euthanasia. Murder will be so common during the tribulation period that it will be left up to the individual to protect his family, his property and his very life.
2. **Involvement with the occult and with drugs.** The word for sorcery in the Greek language is *pharmakeion* from which we get our word "pharmacy." Drug use will continue to increase and be one of the major problems in the end time. Greek *pharmakeia*, usually translated "sorceries," "witchcraft" or "magic arts," is here rendered by this longer phrase to focus on the fact that using potions and drugs is an essential part of the word's meaning - as is clear from the derived English words "pharmaceuticals" and "pharmacy." The usual renderings suggest to many people a setting so removed from the fabric of their lives that the text does not speak to them.

Spiritually speaking, there are four distinct categories of drug misuse: (1) taking drugs to explore spiritual realms, (2) taking drugs to engage in "sorcery, witchcraft and magic arts" while under their influence, (3) giving drugs to other people in order to gain control over them, which is another form of "sorcery, witchcraft and magic arts," and (4) taking drugs for pleasure. The last is a misuse because the drugs in question - besides whatever temporary enjoyment they provide, and apart from their adverse medical and psychological effects - open a person to supernatural or spiritual experiences; but these experiences are almost always demonic and not from God, since the Holy One of Israel reveals himself through his Word (Romans 1:16-17, 10:8-17), not through drugs.

So much for the Bad News. The Good News is that when a pride-filled, weak-willed, uncaring, despairing drug-user trusts Yeshua the Messiah, God can turn him into a person of faith and right action.

3. **Sexual immorality.** One has only to look around to see how sex mad our world has become and how a continuing moral decline will play a role in that day.

4. **Stealing.** With the absence of character and integrity; dishonesty, trickery, and irresponsibility become the norm for all relationships. A person's word means nothing as contracts are broken at will. The thinking is to obtain whatever one wants no matter who may get hurt in the process.

Special Comparative Note on Chapter 9:20-21 ¹

Historicist Approach:

Historicists view these verses as speaking of the apostate Latin and Greek churches, particularly applicable to the papal church.

Preterist Approach:

Preterists view this applying to the Jews shortly prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. It seems God had given them over to a debased mind, so repentance was no longer among their option. (Given the repeated call of repentance by Jeremiah before the subsequent Babylonian exile and the exponential growth of the Messianic community before the fall, it is impossible for me to accept their interpretation.)

Futurist Approach:

Futurists view these verses as an informative glimpse into the religious and moral conditions curing the Tribulation. (In our society today, murder [including abortion], involvement with the occult and drugs, sexual immorality and basic decency are daily headlines.)

Idealist Approach:

Idealists view the **seven shofars** as warning intended to bring men to repentance, and they intensify as the end approaches, but they fail to produce the desired results as hearts are hardened.

In my next post, we will begin to explore **Revelation 10**. We will unpack **Revelation 10:1-4** on the issue of **The Little Scroll and Seven Thunders**.

¹ Material in this section is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg. The notations in parenthesis are my comments.