

# “INVASION FROM THE EAST”

Revelation 9:13-21

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## INTRODUCTION

200,000,000 Angry Chinese inundating the West! (?)

Middle East Crisis—Iraq and Iran and Arab confederation?—Location of Euphrates River in Iraq.

True explanation: Supernatural invasion—supernatural horses and horsemen.

As we look at this passage we have several questions: What is this judgment? Who is judged? Why are they judged?

### I. WHAT IS THE JUDGMENT?

#### A. The Voice (13a)

Not really the united prayers of the saints, but the response to their united concern, from:

- Their mediator – Christ
- The Angel of 8:1-5
- The altar itself, representing God’s response-- cf. 16:7

#### B. The Altar and Horns (13b; cf. 8:3-5)

- The four horns represent divine strength and the universality of divine vengeance.
- The place of mercy calls for vengeance, since the only sacrifice and true Mediator has been rejected.
- God’s people have been slain and sacrificed; therefore vengeance is required.
- Here we see the answer to the prayers of the saints in 8:3.
- The expression “before God” indicates God’s personal action.

#### C. The four Angels (14)

1. The common view: these are four evil angels indicated by the word “bound” and by their destroying work-- cf. II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6. But these Angels had chains that are everlasting and they are not released until the time of their judgment.
2. The Old Testament provides key passages helping us to the correct interpretation:
  - Daniel 7:2 – four winds
  - Zech. 6:54 winds – spirits were Angels, clearly God’s angels; note that according to 6:8 they appease God’s wrath. Such is not the function of evil angels.
  - Revelation 7:1 – not really a different function than here, both being restrained until the proper time. They were able to move but they remained at the appropriate location.

#### D. The River Euphrates (14b)

1. Is this a special place of evil where we find a concentration of evil angels? No!
2. Rather, God’s retribution originates at the site of man’s sin and rebellion.
  - a. The first human sin and rebellion occurred here (Genesis 3).
  - b. The first murder occurred here (Genesis 4).
  - c. The first great rebellion occurred here (Genesis 11 – Babel).
  - d. The first wicked world ruler was here (Nimrod) and the succession of evil rulers that culminates in the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18.
  - e. Great battles of the past and future (Revelation 16:12-14) emanate from here.
  - f. The Euphrates was the ultimate boundary of God’s land of Israel (Genesis 15:8; Deut. 11:24; Josh. 1:4).

- g. The river was the ideal limit between Israel and her chief enemies (cf. Is. 8:5-8 – Assyria overflows its banks into Judah).
  - h. It was also the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire.
- E. The Time of divine preparation (15a)--cf. Jonah's fish, gourd, worm, etc.
- It would be exactly at the hour of God's appointment.
  - It was the appointed hour occurring in the appointed day in the appointed month and that in the appointed year.
- F. The result (15b; 18a)—they kill 1/3 of mankind; compare 6:8 where ¼ are killed. Already over half of the world's population has died!
- G. The number of the Army (16)
1. Twice 10,000×10,000=200 million!
  2. John heard" the number – who could count it?
  3. This is a number of incalculable immensity!
  4. Key passages are Psalm 68:17 – the chariots of God; Daniel 7:10, and Revelation 5:11 (myriads of angels).
  5. All these are God's hosts, not Satan's; his armies far outnumber Satan's!

**Who can escape such a gigantic force? They spread out as far as the eye can see.**

- H. The description (17-19)
- "Saw" is in contrast to the "heard" of verse 16.
  - "Vision" doesn't mean they aren't real or that they are merely symbols.
  - In this description of horses and riders, no real description is given of the riders.
  - All real activity is by the horses!
1. Breastplates-- These horses and riders are evidently invincible; they cannot be killed. Their three colors match the three things coming out of the mouths of the horses:
    - Fire – reddish orange
    - Hyacinth – like the "dusky blue" of the smoke
    - Sulfur – yellow
    - Possibly there are three groups of horses having the three different colors, and each one having the corresponding object coming out of its mouth.
    - Or each horse could have all three colors.
  2. Heads-- like lions; cf. lions teeth of the locusts in 9:8= strength and destructiveness
  3. Mouths—from which proceed the fire, smoke, and brimstone. Note that these three items are considered three separate plagues (v. 18).
  4. Tails (19b)
    - Like serpents with heads and they bite and cause "harm".
    - Similar to the locusts, the serpent tails hurt but do not kill (9:4).
    - The reference to "serpents" and to "fire and brimstone" does not prove these beings to be wicked angelic forces.
    - Just the opposite is true. God is the one who torments in hell, not Satan!
    - Compare Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19:24; the Lord sent the fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven.
    - He serpent was created by God also; here they punish men who have listened to the serpent: the devil.

Yet even in His wrath, he remembers mercy, for only 1/3 of the earth's inhabitants are killed.

## II. WHO IS JUDGED?

- Cf. v. 4v with 20-21-- “earth dwellers”;
- Note that they do not repent.

## III. WHY ARE THEY JUDGED? Cf. Ephesians 5:6—“because of these is God’s wrath.”

- A. Persecution of God’s Saints (cf. v. 13 with 6:9-11; 8:3-5).
- B. Idolatry (20)-- here called “the works of their hands”: making objects of gold, silver, brass, stone, wood; such expressions are commonly found in the Old Testament.
  1. It is nature that they worship as a human substitute for the Creator.
  2. It is folly – totally ineffective – since they cannot see, hear, or walk (cf. Psalm 115:5-7 etc.)
  3. These idols are not transforming, purifying, redeeming.
- C. Wicked behavior (21)—such behavior is prevalent in a wicked world even today.
  1. Murder (cf. homicides, abortion, euthanasia, etc.—yet little capital punishment).
  2. Sorceries-- i.e. witchcraft; literally “drugs”
    - In our time we see the greatest deluge of occult activity and satanic rites, astrology, sorcery, witchcraft, etc. since the time of ancient Rome.
    - Compare New Age practices and writings—esp. in Sedona!—Parapsychology, clairvoyants, etc.
    - Men need relief from their sense of powerlessness in a computerized and pressurized society.
  3. Immorality – our culture is deluged with pornography and immoral behavior.
  4. Thefts-- our culture has become almost totally dishonest.
- With all of this compare II Timothy 3:1-5, 13—Paul mentioned that things would get worse before the coming of Christ.
- Compare the days of Noah and Lot.

## IV. RESPONSE TO GOD’S JUDGMENT—These wicked ones do not repent.

### CONCLUSION

This is an astounding picture of human depravity! Cf. Romans 1:18-30.

Men seek independence of God and bind themselves to destruction!

Cf. Ephesians 5:6--Because of these things God’s wrath comes upon the children of disobedience.

Revelation 22:15—Those who manifest such behavior will have no part in the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:8—They will be in the lake of fire!

How is our generation any better?

How shall we escape?

What does God need to do to get us to repent?

Let us give him our hearts and our lives!