



Date: 4-26-2026

Sermon: When Heaven Answers Earth

Text: Revelation 8

1. The _____ Before the _____.

Revelation 8:1-2 NLT

1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal on the scroll, there was silence throughout heaven for about half an hour. 2 I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and they were given seven trumpets.

Notes:

Revelation 8:3-4 NLT

3 Then another angel with a gold incense burner came and stood at the altar. And a great amount of incense was given to him to mix with the prayers of God's people as an offering on the gold altar before the throne. 4 The smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of God's holy people, ascended up to God from the altar where the angel had poured them out.

Notes:

“The God who dwells in holiness has heard his people, and their prayers are now bound up with his holy action.”

Revelation 8:5 NLT

5 Then the angel filled the incense burner with fire from the altar and threw it down upon the earth; and thunder crashed, lightning flashed, and there was a terrible earthquake.

Notes:

“God’s answer to the cries of his persecuted people for justice and vindication.”

2. _____ sounds, creation breaks, and a greater _____ is coming.

Revelation 8:6-7 NLT

6 Then the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to blow their mighty blasts. 7 The first angel blew his trumpet, and hail and fire mixed with blood were thrown down on the earth. One-third of the earth was set on fire, one-third of the trees were burned, and all the green grass was burned.

First Trumpet: Land and vegetation are struck

Notes:

“So the first trumpet likely represents a limited but terrifying act of divine judgment meant to warn the rebellious world.”

Revelation 8:8-9 NLT

8 Then the second angel blew his trumpet, and a great mountain of fire was thrown into the sea. One-third of the water in the sea became blood, 9 one-third of all things living in the sea died, and one-third of all the ships on the sea were destroyed.

The Second Trumpet: Sea and maritime world is struck

Notes:

“God is striking the proud economic and political systems of the rebellious world, showing that even vast imperial power and commercial strength are not secure before him.”

Revelation 8:10-11 NLT

10 Then the third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from the sky, burning like a torch. It fell on one-third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of the star was Bitterness. It made one-third of the water bitter, and many people died from drinking the bitter water.

Third Trumpet: Rivers and Springs are struck

Notes:

”In other words, the judgment fits the sin. Those who reject God experience creation itself becoming hostile and bitter.”

Revelation 8:12 NLT

12 Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet, and one-third of the sun was struck, and one-third of the moon, and one-third of the stars, and they became dark. And one-third of the day was dark, and also one-third of the night.

Fourth Trumpet: Heavens

Notes:

“God is sending partial cosmic judgment that darkens the ordered world, showing that even the most stable and governing structures of creation and human civilization are under his authority and can be disrupted in response to rebellion.”

Revelation 8:13 NLT

13 Then I looked, and I heard a single eagle crying loudly as it flew through the air, "Terror, terror, terror to all who belong to this world because of what will happen when the last three angels blow their trumpets."

Notes:

“Heaven itself is announcing that intensified judgment is coming.”

That would do two things for the churches:

1. _____ them, because God is not ignoring evil
2. _____ them, because the world they may feel pressure to compromise with is under judgment

Application:

1. Keep praying, especially when nothing seems to change
2. Do not confuse God's silence with God's absence
3. Endure suffering without taking vengeance into your own hands
4. Stay distinct from those who "belong to this world"

Life Group Questions – Revelation 8

1. Get to Know You

What is something that usually gets your attention right away and makes you realize, “This is serious”?

2. Digging Deeper

Revelation 8 shows the prayers of the saints rising before God, followed by trumpet judgments that shake the earth, sea, waters, and heavens. What does this chapter teach us about God’s holiness, his response to the prayers of his people, his control over creation, and the way he uses judgment as a warning to the world?

3. Application

How does Revelation 8 challenge you to trust God more deeply, pray more confidently, and hold less tightly to the things in this world that often make you feel secure?

Commentary: Revelation: Four Views

1. Historicist

The **historicist** view reads Revelation as a symbolic panorama of **church history across the centuries**, rather than mainly first-century events or only the very end. In broad terms, the trumpets in Revelation 8 are often taken as large-scale judgments unfolding in successive eras of history, frequently tied to the **decline of the Roman world**, invasions, wars, or upheavals that affected Christendom. Historicists characteristically try to correlate each trumpet with a major historical development and often use the **day-year principle** elsewhere in Revelation.

For chapter 8 specifically, the first four trumpets are usually understood as **progressive historical calamities** falling on parts of the civilized world. In older Protestant historicism, these were often linked to judgments on the Roman Empire through invasions or political collapse. The strength of this view is that it sees Revelation as relevant through the whole church age; the weakness is that it can become **highly speculative and Eurocentric**, with interpreters revising which events match which symbols.

2. Preterist

The **preterist** view places most of Revelation's fulfillment in the **first century**, especially around the crisis leading to the destruction of **Jerusalem in AD 70** and the turmoil of the Roman world. Conservative preterists usually still reserve the final chapters for Christ's future return, but they read much of Revelation 4–19 as already fulfilled in the early church era.

In Revelation 8, a preterist typically sees the trumpet judgments as symbolic descriptions of **God's covenant judgment** breaking upon apostate Israel, and in some readings also on Rome as the persecuting power. The imagery of hail, fire, blood, poisoned waters, and darkened heavens is taken as **prophetic-apocalyptic language**, echoing Exodus and the prophets, to describe war, siege, devastation, and social collapse in the first-century judgment order rather than literal end-of-world meteorology.

3. Futurist

The **futurist** view holds that most of Revelation beyond chapter 3 is still **future**, especially connected with a coming period of tribulation before Christ's return. This is the dominant approach in much modern North American evangelicalism, especially in dispensational circles. Futurists tend to read the trumpets as events that will occur in a concentrated end-time sequence, often with a more literal emphasis than the other schools.

So in chapter 8, the trumpets are commonly taken as **future divine judgments** that will fall on the earth during the tribulation: catastrophic disturbances in land, sea, waters, and sky. Some futurists read them quite literally as cosmic or environmental disasters; others allow symbolism but still place the fulfillment in a future global crisis. The strength of the view is its seriousness about Revelation's predictive character; the weakness, according to critics, is that it can under-read apocalyptic symbolism and distance the book from its first readers.

4. Spiritual

The **spiritual** view, often called **idealist**, does not try to tie Revelation mainly to one historical period. Instead, it reads the visions as portraying the recurring spiritual conflict between **Christ and the powers of evil**, and between the church and the world, throughout the entire present age. The advantage of this view is that it does not require forcing the text into one specific set of historical events, though it can be criticized for making the book less tied to particular fulfillments.

In Revelation 8, the spiritual view sees the first four trumpets as symbolic of **God's judgments that repeatedly fall in history**—partial, warning judgments that unsettle human pride, expose false security, and call people to repentance. The focus is less on “when exactly did this happen?” and more on “what pattern of divine action is John revealing?” The chapter then becomes a timeless picture of God hearing the prayers of his people and answering with judgments that warn the rebellious world.