

## Revelation 8 | The Measured Mercy of God Revealed in His Just Judgments

### You will remember:

- Vision—heaven—scroll—The Lion and the Lamb—seals—progressive

### The Seventh Seal (v. 1-2)

- From it comes the rest of the wrath of God
- In the form of 7 trumpets (v. 2) and 7 bowls (Ch. 16)
- Progressively more severe (Each of the trumpets intensifies and then the bowls are worse)
  - **Implications:**
    - How bad must sin be before God? (That He would give His son = How loving)
      - Shows the holiness and righteousness of God
      - Shows the kindness of God—that He saves sinners (rejoice in your Savior!)

### The severity of God's righteous judgment will be such that as it is revealed it stuns heaven to silence (v. 1)

- There has been much noise in these visions
- When these judgments becomes visible in the scroll—there is solemn silence (speechless awe)
- "about half and hour"
  - Heaven is generally considered to be outside the time-space continuum (i.e. Eternal)
  - But for John who is seeing the vision, there is time—and a long time (Cnt: "A moment of silence")
    - Can you imagine the intensity of the moment?
      - God's wrath is a terrible thing
    - **What is absent from the scene?** Answer: Any objections whatsoever
      - Creation is silent in the face of God's justice and before The Lamb ("He" in v. 1)
        - God is shown to be righteous in His judgments (nature of sin revealed)
      - What can be said in the face of justice, when such mercy had been extended?
      - Who can argue with The Lamb that was slain for the sins of the world?

### What is not absent from the scene?

- Believer's cries (prayers) for justice and for the vanquishing of sin and its tragic results (vv. 3-5)
  - From Israel's cries for deliverance when enslaved to Egypt
  - To Christ's cry on the Cross
  - To the martyrs cries for justice
  - To your cries when you are suffering the effects and tragedy of sin in this world (yours and others)
  - Our cries for sin to be defeated and Satan to be destroyed; death to be dealt with and Christ's righteous rule to come
- God has heard these prayers and His justice is coming (in response; as a result—"threw it to the earth")
- Luke 18:1-8 (NLT) (A parable by contrast—God is just and will deliver justice!)
  - Hold on dear saint (through the ages)—your prayers have been heard—they are precious to God—justice and judgment will be rendered—sin will be dealt with—evil will not carry the day

### The First Trumpet (v. 7)

- Hail and fire mixed with blood thrown to the earth
  - Clear: From Heaven—Act of God
    - Precedent:
      - Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24, NASB)
      - Pharaoh and Egypt (Exodus 9:24-25, NASB)
      - Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38:22-23, NASB)
      - The wicked in general (Psalm 11:6-7, NASB)
    - In all of these instances. God is acting justly—as He will be in the end
    - Also: Sodom and Gomorrah; Pharaoh and Egypt actually happened (may be literal)

- Results: Partial devastation (God is also acting with mercy)
  - 1/3 of earth and tress and all the green grass (Cf. Patient and progressive (unfolding over time)
    - It is clear that these and some of the judgments that have come before are “warning judgments”—designed to bring people to repentance
      - Because they are **limited** in their effects (leaving room)
    - As we discussed last week... many do (tongue & tribe) and many don't (Cf. **Rev 9:20-21**)
  - Also shows us that God is in **complete control** (And, He is measured and temperate—restrained)
    - The 1/3 pattern reveals these things to be **divine acts** not merely natural catastrophes

### The Second Trumpet (vv. 8-9)

- Last trumpet affected the land, this one (2<sup>nd</sup>) the sea
- “mountain burning with fire”
  - Perhaps a meteor
  - Perhaps a symbol of unbelievable power from heaven in judgment (John is seeing pictures)
- Partial devastation (1/3 blood; died; ships)

### The Third Trumpet (vv. 10-11)

- The 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet affected the land; the 2<sup>nd</sup> the sea; this 3<sup>rd</sup> affects freshwater
- The sources of life (given as gifts from God) that people have put their trust in are being disrupted
  - “Put your hope in the Creator not the creation—turn to the true source of life”
  - The disruption of fresh water points us toward living water (you'll never thirst again)
- Wormwood
  - Shrub whose leaves are extremely bitter; used to make a liqueur so toxic, its largely banned
  - Only time in NT; Several times (8) in OT; with judgment imagery—bitterness of idolatry
  - Jeremiah 9:13-15, NASB
    - I.e. Sin, rebellion, idolatry create bitter toxicity in our lives (We have a sweet Savior)

### The Fourth Trumpet (v. 12)

- Affects the heavens; common judgment language (Isaiah, Joel, Amos, Ezekiel) Ezekiel 32:7-8, NASB
- Jesus also spoke of this: Luke 21:25-28, NASB
- These sorts of things would **precede His coming** and should cause the world to “look up”

### The merciful call from heaven (v. 13)

- One of the angelic creatures from chapter 4—“the 4<sup>th</sup> creature was like a flying eagle” (4:7)
- Another warning amidst warnings (Cf. again in Revelation 14:6-7, NASB)
- Both of these are gracious, supernatural acts of God to call people to repentance—to be saved
- God is shown to **both just and merciful**—and if mercy is refused, then there is only just judgment
- Though people know these things are from God (**6:16-17**) they refuse to respond rightly (↑ intensity)

### What about you today?

- What is God doing in your life? What is Jesus saying to you? Calling you away from? Or to? Listening?

### Hebrews 3:7-15 (NLT)

7 ... The Holy Spirit says, “**Today** when you hear his voice,

8 **don't harden your hearts** as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested me in the wilderness.

9 There your ancestors tested and tried my patience, even though they saw my miracles for forty years.

10 So I was angry with them, and I said, ‘Their hearts always **turn away** from me. **They refuse** to do what I tell them.’ ...

12 Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. **Make sure that your own hearts** are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God.

13 You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be **deceived by sin** and **hardened against** God.

14 For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.

15 **Remember** what it says: “Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts...”