

The Beginning of the End

Revelation 8

Big Idea: God speaks through creation, His Word, and His Son Jesus. The question is: Are you listening? As we study Revelation 8, we're reminded that our prayers matter and judgment is coming. Today is the day of salvation. Turn to Christ now and share His hope with others.

Main Points

1. God has revealed Himself through creation, Scripture, and ultimately through Jesus Christ
2. Our prayers matter to God – they rise before Him like precious incense
3. The coming judgments are real but serve God's purposes of righteousness, mercy, and awakening
4. We should respond with: lament, repentance, witness, rejoicing, and prayer
5. We don't know when Christ will return, but we should live ready and share the gospel urgently

Scriptures:

- Psalm 19:1-14
- Hebrews 1:1-3
- Revelation 7:14-17
- Revelation 4-5
- Philippians 2:10-11
- Revelation 6:9-10
- Psalm 13:1-3
- Romans 1
- Colossians 1:17

Opening Question:

What's one thing in nature (creation) that most clearly reveals God's glory to you? Why?

Discussion Questions:

Why do you think there is silence in heaven for "about half an hour" before the seventh seal is opened? What does this communicate about what's to come?

Read Revelation 8:3-4 together. What does it mean that our prayers are like incense rising before God? How does this change your perspective on prayer?

The sermon mentioned three reasons why God brings these judgments: God is a righteous judge, God is being merciful (many will turn to Christ), God will open the eyes of the Jewish people. Which of these reasons is hardest for you to understand or accept? Why?

Pastor Tim quoted A.W. Tozer: "Religion has accepted the monstrous heresy that noise, size, activity, and bluster make a man dear to God." How does our culture (and sometimes our churches) fall into this trap? What does it look like to "be still and know that I am God" in your daily life?

When was the last time you opened your Bible and simply asked, "Lord, please speak to me"? What keeps you from doing this more regularly?

Pastor Tim mentioned Psalm 13 where David cries, "How long, O Lord?" Have you ever prayed a "how long" prayer? Share (if comfortable) about a time when you struggled with waiting on God.

Looking at the devastating judgments described in Revelation 8, what should be our emotional response? How do we balance: Recognizing God's righteousness, Feeling grief over human suffering, Having joy in our salvation?

Pastor Tim emphasized that "every prayer you've ever prayed matters." Does knowing this change how you approach prayer? What would it look like for you to become more dependent on God through prayer this week?

Practical Applications:

1. **Daily Stillness:** Set aside 10-15 minutes each day to sit quietly with your Bible open and ask God to speak to you
2. **Prayer List:** Write down 3-5 people who don't know Christ and commit to praying for them daily
3. **Lament and Rejoice:** Spend time this week both grieving over those who don't know Christ AND rejoicing in your own salvation
4. **Share Your Faith:** Look for one opportunity this week to share the hope you have in Christ with someone
5. **National Day of Prayer:** Participate in focused prayer (individually or corporately) on the National Day of Prayer
6. **Study Deeper:** Read through Revelation 6-9 this week, asking God to help you understand His character more fully

Closing Thought/Prayer:

Thank God for revealing Himself to us. Pray for those who don't yet know Christ. Ask God to help you become more dependent on Him through prayer.