

A graphic featuring a large, gnarled tree trunk in the center, with two glowing circular openings. The word "GENESIS" is written in small, gold, uppercase letters above the tree, and "REVELATION" is written in small, gold, uppercase letters below it. The word "BOOKENDS" is written in large, white, serif, uppercase letters across the middle of the tree trunk, with the letters appearing to be part of the tree's structure. The background is a dark, atmospheric scene of a city at night, with lights reflecting on water.

GENESIS BOOKENDS REVELATION

GOD'S TRUMPET WARNINGS OF THE JUDGMENT TO COME

REVELATION 8 & 9

SYNOPSIS

This sermon on Revelation 8 and 9 presents God's judgments as merciful warnings throughout the Church Age. The silence in heaven reveals holy anticipation as the prayers of the saints rise to God and are used to accomplish His purposes. The seven trumpets symbolize ongoing calamities, natural disasters, and demonic activity, all functioning as divine warnings calling humanity to repentance. Even Satan's work is under God's authority and serves His purposes. Yet despite these warnings, many still refuse to repent. The central call is urgent and clear: judgment is coming, so flee to Christ now, who has already borne the fullness of God's judgment on the cross.

SERMON OUTLINE

Main Idea: *Be warned. Judgment for all sin is coming. Flee to Christ while there is still time.*

1. **The Prayers of the Saints (Revelation 8:1-5):** In verses 1-5 we see the prayers of the saints rise up to God, mix with the incense before his throne, and poured back out upon this Earth. Here we learn that God's sovereign plan includes the use of prayer for the accomplishment of His will.
2. **The First Four Trumpets (Revelation 8:6-13):** The first four trumpets show that God uses natural disasters throughout history as trumpet warnings to the unbelieving world.
 - a. Trumpet 1: Disasters on Earth
 - b. Trumpet 2: Disasters on Sea
 - c. Trumpet 3: Disasters on Rivers and Lakes

- d. Trumpet 4: Disasters in heavens
3. **The Fifth & Sixth Trumpet (Revelation 9:1-21):** The fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets are described as “woes.” They are far worse and more frightening than the first four, and yet they serve the same purpose, to awaken the unbelieving world to God’s authority and power.
- a. Trumpet 5: Satan and his demonic hoard
 - b. Trumpet 6: War

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Special Leader’s Note: *Please remember that we are getting into heavily debated passages of scripture. Some will likely disagree with Pastor Raef’s choice of interpretation on various symbols in this and coming chapters. That is okay! But be careful to not let the group discussion become a debate on symbol interpretation. Get to the practical heart level discussions around the principles of the text.*

GROUP REFLECTION & APPLICATION

1. **Observing the Text:** First, make sure to have your group spend time looking at the text, and observing the text without reflecting on the sermon. You want the group to get familiar with the text, and the words, and the flow of thought. Keep making observations until you feel the group has a solid grasp of the entire text.
2. **Prayer (Revelation 8:1-5):** In this sermon we discussed the possibility that the reason our prayers are mixed with incense before the throne (Revelation 8:3) is because of the weakness and often selfish motivations of our prayers. The incense serves to purify them before the altar. Praise God even our weak and sinfully motivated prayers are heard!
 - a. What would selfish or wrong motivation look like in prayer?
 - b. Can you think of an example from your own prayer life of potentially wrong motivation or heart in your prayers?
3. **Shots Across the Bow:** Pastor Raef described the trumpets as God’s “shots across the bow”, warning shots designed to wake us up to the danger ahead. Think about your own life. When have you experienced a “shot across the bow” from God, a moment of disruption, suffering, or warning that forced you to pay attention? How did you respond then, and how are you responding to God’s warnings right now?
4. **The First Four Trumpets (Revelation 8:6-13):** The first four trumpets spoke about natural disasters on earth, sea, rivers, and sky. We discussed that natural disasters are actually God’s trumpets shouting to the unbelieving world of His power and authority and of the ultimate judgment to come. This is entirely consistent with God’s character that we see throughout the scripture (think of the 10 plagues in Egypt).

- a. Is this a new way for you to think about natural disasters? How do you receive it? What questions emerge for you?

5. **The Fifth Trumpet (Revelation 9:1-12):** The fifth trumpet represents all satanic and demonic spiritual warfare, which God permits and even uses to accomplish his ultimate purposes.
 - a. Are you experiencing any spiritual warfare in your life right now? Share with the group and spend time praying right then and there for each other.

6. **A Hard Heart (Revelation 9:20-21):** Revelation 9 shows people experiencing judgment yet still refusing to repent. Where do you see hardness of heart in your own life, patterns of sin you justify, ignore, or cling to? What is one concrete step you can take to soften your heart and flee to Christ more fully?