

God's Wake-up Calls

REVELATION: FAITH FOR THE END OF THE STORY

Revelation 8-9

When he came to his senses, he said, "I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father,

I have sinned against heaven and against you." LUKE 15:13-20

What is a Wake-up Call?

God's heart is that you and I will join his family and have a growing relationship with him (1 TIMOTHY 2:4). In his kindness, he gives us wake-up calls to bring us to our senses. Some ways he does that:

Disillusionment with life: I figure out that my way isn't working.

Gratitude for blessings: I realize how much God has done for me. "God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance." (2:4)

The challenge of another person: What they say "makes sense."

Personal crisis: I encounter a challenge that puts my life in focus.

The Wake-up Calls of the Seven Trumpets

1 LAND (8:7) hail and fire cause environmental destruction.

2 SEA (8:8-9) a blazing mountain devastates animals and ships.

3 RIVERS + SPRINGS (8:10-11) a falling star ruins water quality.

4 OUTER SPACE (8:12-13) one-third of sun, moon, and stars go dark.

5 TERROR 1 (9:1-12) scorpion-like creatures from the Abyss torture those who haven't put their trust in Christ.

6 TERROR 2 (9:13-21) 1/3 of humanity killed by fire, smoke and sulfur.

A PAUSE . . .

(similar to the pause we find in Rev. 6-8)

A MIGHTY ANGEL + A LITTLE OPENED SCROLL (REV. 10)

THE TWO WITNESSES (REV. 11)

7 TERROR 3 (11:15-19) The Lord God rewards those who honor him, and punishes those who ignore or reject him.

What We Learn from the 7 Trumpets

This is the second of three sets of seven that warn of judgment. Each of these sets of seven are a warning, a wake-up call, to make sure people are in a right relationship with God.

7 SEALS (6:1-8:5) these highlight God's protection over his people during the difficult times of the "last days."

7 TRUMPETS sounded by angels (REV. 8:6-11:19) These highlight God's judgment on the world.

7 BOWLS (16:1-21).

7 SEALS AND 7 TRUMPETS

the first 4 of each are mainly focused on inanimate objects, while the last 3 are directed toward people.

JUDGMENT AND MERCY

Several times we read that "1/3 of" the people or nature are affected. The judgments are severe, but not total. We live in a time when change is possible: God's mercy is still open to all.

ALREADY... NOT YET

This is another example of the "already, not yet" theme in the Bible. God's wrath already "is being revealed" (ROMANS 1:18), even though a final judgment is yet to come (REVELATION 11:18).

The Big Point: What will it take for us to get right with God?

"The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent..." REVELATION 9:20-21

Wake-up calls are a clear sign of God's love for us, and his heart (and the desire of others who care about us) is that we will "come to our senses" sooner rather than later. It's the only way to real life.

What's an example of a wake-up call that God has given you?

How do you think God feels when we ignore his attempts to get our attention?

Small Group Study

MESSAGE FOLLOW-UP

Ice Breaker: How would you least like to be woken up from sleep: (a) a bugle call, (b) a rooster crowing, (c) a mystery sound, (d) a sudden loud noise, or (e) a child silently standing by your bedside?

Group Objective: God's heart is that you and I will begin a relationship with him. As an expression of that love, he gives us wake-up calls to bring us to our senses, so that we can choose to follow him.

How to Use: Follow-up for personal use or for your small group's discussion. Small group leaders

generally choose the questions they feel are most applicable for their group. Not all questions may be covered in the allotted time. Enjoy!

REVIEW & WARM-UP

1. Thinking back on your notes from the week's sermon, what was something that: you heard for the first time, caught your attention, or challenged you?

Read Luke 15:11-24

2. What led to the younger son leaving home and going to a distant country?

Do you think he was immediately sorry that he left home?

What from this passage makes you think that?

3. What changed in his circumstances to prepare him for his wake-up call?

What words in verse 17 indicate a distinct change in his understanding of his situation?

4. In Luke 15:18 the son said, "I will set out and go back to my father," and in verse 20 we read that he got up and went.

What do you think is the difference between these two verses?

How might we get stuck between coming to our senses and actually moving toward God and his plan for our lives?

LIFE APPLICATION

Looking back at the 7 trumpets:

5. Do you see the progression in severity from #1-7? Why might that be?

Though each wake-up call is dreadful, can you also see evidence of mercy?

How has God used both drastic situations and his loving mercy to bring you to your senses?

Read 1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9, John 3:16

6. What do we know from these verses about the heart of God for all people?

How does the lens of his merciful love change the way you see the seven trumpets?

How can it change the way you see the trials you are experiencing in your own life?

It's often easy to hear a message like this for others. How can we be sure we don't miss our own wake-up call?

GOING DEEPER

7. In Rev. 9:14-15 we read that the four angels had been bound and "kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year."

What does this verse reveal about God's sovereignty, his eternal plan, and his perfect timing?

In what ways have you struggled with God's timing?

God's perfect plan INCLUDES your wake-up call. How does this compel you to act?

How will you respond this week?

HOW TO RESPOND TO YOUR WAKE-UP CALL:

If you have not yet done so, make the life changing decision to follow Jesus Christ. Then tell someone about your decision. (Romans 10:9-10)

If you have walked away from God to go your own way, today is the day to come back home to your Father. He is waiting with open arms. (1 John 1:9)

If you are walking with Jesus daily, ask him to give you his eyes to see all those who are lost and in need of Jesus, as well as a prompting to do something about it. (2 Corinthians 5:20)