Psg today - ch8 – opens where we left off last week. God comforting his long-suffering ppl – wipe every tear from their eyes. 7th seal:

* **8:1** – silence for ½ hr. Almost every verse has a link to OT – have to move speedily though – plenty you can do – study – research.
  + **Hab** **2:20** The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.
  + **Ps 46:10** Be still, and know that I am God
  + Sometimes silence is the best response to what God has revealed[[1]](#endnote-1).
    - **John 21** – after J resn – one morning – still dark – disc fishing – caught/. Mysterious stranger on shore: try other side of boat. Did: biggest catch seen since last time. Calls them to have breakfast on beach. None of the disciples dared ask him, ‘Who are you?’ They knew… – awesome presence – silence in presence of God.
  + Think: meant to meditate on this scene:
    - God’s judgement on sin
    - God’s intimate presence with his beloved ppl.
  + Great place to end the book!

But more! Cycles. Skip **11:15** - /this week – same place again.

* Throne room - 24 Elders bowing down to worship. Ch5,7,11, 15 – and finally in ch21.
  + Crime – mystery dramas.
    - Old: linear story. This happened, then this – until the ending.
    - New: story from 1 perspective. Now ep2 – flashback from s/o else’s pers. Ep3 – s/o else’s
    - Building up picture – each w diff emphasis to tell big story. Same in Rev.

Back to ch8 – consider trumpets

* First 4 – similar themes – ecological disasters – natural disasters[[2]](#endnote-2):
  + #1 (v7) a third of the earth was burned up.
  + #2 (v8) a third of the sea turned to blood.
  + #3 (v10) a third of the rivers polluted – damaged.
  + #4 (v12) – a third of the skies darkened.
* Remember Boxing day Tsunami 2004? 228k ppl died.
  + At time: “were a 1/3 of ships destroyed? That’s the fulfilment of v9”
    - Daft b/c denies the suffering of previous generations. Always been terrible floods – hurricanes – forest fires.
  + In fact, trying to tie specific world events to things in Rev: doomed to fail b/c not the point of Rev.
    - 30yrs ago: EU. Today: COVID – implants.
* Whether it’s volcanoes, tsunamis, forest fires, droughts, floods, storms or meteorites: all covered by those descriptions.
  + Common to all of humanity over all time.
    - 1/3 – all through this chapter. Think: most ppl /affected. /final judgement: Warnings,
  + Point: where there is a natural disaster, of any scale: meant to be a warning trumpet to us!

**The trumpets are a warning to repent**

* Why warnings? Symbolism of trumpet – announcement – warning.
  + What is the warning? Repent – turn to the Lord!
* Jesus: asked once (**Luke 13**) – bunch of Jewish people from Galilee killed by Romans. Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way?
  + Do you think God singled them out b/c particularly bad? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.
* Tower of Siloam – collapsed – killed 18 ppl. Do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem?
  + Did God arrange for the 18 worst ppl in the city to be together in one place and then wiped them out? Is that the mesg we’re meant to take away? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.
* Do you notice: Romans killing a few people: deliberate human decision. Tower falling over: earthquake? Certainly sounds a lot more like a natural disaster.
  + Either way: whether natural disaster – or human-caused disaster: warning to us to get right with God.
  + Bring up to date: Do you think those blown up - Manchester Arena bombing[[3]](#endnote-3) – worse than other ppl in Manchester that night? No! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.
  + Do you think your neighbour who died of COVID was particularly worse than your neighbour who didn’t? No! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.
    - See point: natural disasters – warnings to us.
  + Every time there’s a Grenfell fire (72) – Izmir earthquake (117) – Bushfire in Australia (478) – we’re /think: how terrible they must have been.
    - No! Warnings – trumpet blasts to us – repent from sins and turn to God and be saved.

**The trumpets are an act of mercy**

* Point of a warning - /want anyone to get harmed. Anyone: Rugeley power station main chimney this morning? What do you hear before explosion? Siren. Why? /Want anyone to be harmed.
  + **Ezekiel 33:11** As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord [swears by himself!], I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die?[[4]](#endnote-4)
  + Sometimes ppl who know a bit of theology get tied in knots: what if God has not chosen me? /elect? How can I repent is he /chosen me?
    - Forget that: says “turn and live!”
    - Jesus: glorious, beautiful promise: **John 6:37** whoever comes to me I will never drive away. But must come.
* Maybe wonder: these angels w trumpets – why are they allowed to do this – horrible things?
  + Do you see 8:2 – trumpets are given to the Angels.
    - /Own initiative - /idea. God: instructing these angels to sound a warning to the earth[[5]](#endnote-5) - wants us to be harmed by judgement that’s coming.

**The trumpets tell us far worse is coming**

* If natural disasters are a warning to us – and they’re pretty horrific – what does that tell us about what’s coming? Far worse.
  + This: where it gets really dark:
  + Very end of ch8 – Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels! Talked abt 4 – 3 left:
* /think happened yet – b/c:
  + v4 – these troubles only affect those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads – IOW: only affects unbelievers. /Think of any disaster in our world today /affect Xn ppl.

**Trumpet #5** **9:1** Some kind of terrifying army – John – seeing this vision – running out of words again:

* Locusts – think maybe of Joel ch1 – vision of an army – like locusts – come to ravage the countryside – destroy crops. That’s what locusts do.
  + Here is worse than Joel: v4 – told /harm the crops – instead to torture the ppl – tails like scorpions. The agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. During those days people will seek death but will not find it.[[6]](#endnote-6)
* V7-11 description: locusts with scorpion tails – look like battle-horses with lion’s teeth[[7]](#endnote-7). ?know - /want to think. 2 things:
  + **Demonic:** **v1** I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.
    - Star falling to earth – language taken from **Is 14**
    - Jesus too: **Luke 10:18** – talking about Satan.
    - Abyss – mentioned **Luke 8:31** – place even demons /afraid of – end – destiny. These creatures – come from there. Something demonic.
  + **Time-limited**: V5 – five months. No more.
    - Ties in – Rev 20 – says Satan bound for 1000yrs (long time) and then released for a short time.
    - Talked abt this before – Jesus bound Satan at cross – to keep him from deceiving the nations any more.
    - Exactly what’s happened in this gospel age btw J first and 2nd coming. God’s ppl – gone from tiny nation of Israel - to the entire world – global mission – to bring in ppl of every tribe - language - ppl - nation.
* Make of this?
  + Warning that worse is coming! Many in our world – see natural disasters – experience natural disasters for themselves – will not turn to God.
  + Like motorway: accident ahead: miles before: speed limit. All looks clear: everyone ignores it. Lane closure. Flashing lights. Warnings get bigger & brighter as you get nearer.
* So: make it plainer – sound a louder trumpet! Release Satan & demonic forces on earth for a while – taste of hell.
  + God is in totally in control, again.
    - Even when the collective powers of hell are unleashed: boundaries. Powers of evil must submit to his rule & authority.
    - Please /think evil is OOC. God is always on the Throne.

**Trumpet #6** Angel – probably unleashing war – “fire, smoke & sulphur”. Only one where lots of ppl die. Again 1/3. Most live.

**Trumpet #7: next time.**

Think about that: if all these things are warnings to us – all of these: immense suffering - If that’s the warning – the thing coming must be far worse.

**A call to respond**

Finally, get to **v20-21** – see response: [they] still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshipping demons, and idols… Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

* Surely ppl will turn to Him now?.
  + But the vast majority will not turn to J for forgiveness. Vast majority will not repent of sin. Carry on as before.
  + Such is the hardness – stubbornness of the human heart.
    - Such would have been you and me – were it not for the Holy Spirit giving new birth – new heart that is willing to respond to Jesus.
* But see: point of a warning: chance to be saved. Otherwise /genuine warning.
  + See later in Rev – time will run out. Too late.
  + But for now, warnings going on every time we turn on the news – every time we open FB – Twitter – see some disaster occurred. Esp COVID. How interpret?
    - OOC? No. Warning: loud and clear.
    - God is saying repent – b/c today is the day of salvation. Now is the time to come to Him.
* What right does God have to do all this?
  + He is God!
  + God is holy and perfect – cares far more about sin than we do. B/c far more holy than us.
    - Even we care when we injustice – wrongdoing: even we get angry when we see litter strewn across a park – a kid stabbed to death – old person defrauded – or even see arrogance – pride – self-centredness - greed. Even with our very limited sense of right & wrong – we get that.
  + But God: infinite holiness – takes sin far more seriously than us. And finds us all guilty – all fallen short.
  + And J is the great – eternal – only saviour. Name: God saves.
  + Jesus has done all you need to be forgiven and saved for eternity.
    - You might be the world’s greatest rebel against God – deserve hell for eternity for what you have done.
    - But Jesus says come to me – his blood can make the foulest clean – he died and bore the wrath of God against sin on behalf of ppl like you and me.
  + Right response: Turn from sin – turn to J.
    - He will receive you. Welcome you with open arms.
* **Luke 13:6** – after Tower of Siloam thing. J tells a parable: man has a fig tree – garden. Each year – summer comes and goes – no fruit. Eventually: chop it down. No, wait one more year – fertiliser – dig it around – every opportunity to produce fruit – do everything. But if no fruit next year: chop it down.
  + If you’re watching me today – that is God digging around your tree – fertilising it – giving you every opportunity to bear fruit.
  + But if you choose not to: one day he will chop it down. And judgement will come.
* Terrible warning. Incredible offer.

1. Also Zephaniah 1:7; Zechariah 2:13 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. I think it’s possible that all four could be the result of a huge meteorite impact. Certainly some of the descriptions in v7-12 fit. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchester_Arena_bombing> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cut for space: Lamentations 3:33 he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone. Sometimes it’s necessary – but /pleasure in it. God mercifully warns us that judgement is coming – so we have an opportunity to repent. That’s what he wants! [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. There an implication in 8:3-5 – scene – angel standing at the altar. Remember who is under the altar? Souls of martyrs (6:9) – picture: prayers of God’s ppl – suffering – crying out for justice - prayers of God’s ppl. That’s why God sends the trumpets – warnings. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. In Joel, the locusts primarily destroy the crops (Joel 1:4,7,10-12,16-20) wheras in Revelation 9 they are told specifically they must not harm the crops, but only the people (v4). [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. This image is from Joel 1:6. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)