

980712 AM DTS # 22 THE PATIENCE OF JESUS
REVELATION 8
JESUS AND THE POWER OF PRAYER

This morning the scene in 8th chapter of the Revelation explains to us one of the great mysteries of Heaven. We see how God responds to the prayers of His saints. We see into the inner court of the Lord God Almighty and how there, standing in God's presence, are seven archangels. And we see how the Patience of Jesus and the prayers of the saints work together to fulfill God's purposes. Finally we see how the vengeance God has promised to His people is finally poured out upon sinful earth in Heaven's perfect time.

**GOD WAITS –
TIME TO REPENT:
(v. 1-2)**

Psalm 46: 10

Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!

This is the wait of patience 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

The heavenly setting finds it still before God's Throne. All the voices of the myriads of angels, heavenly creatures and saints we heard in chapters 4 and 5 are now strangely silent. There is a holy hush as the great High Priest who ever lives to intercede for us approaches the Throne with the prayers of His saints. This is most likely the Lord Jesus fulfilling another of His offices. He was seen as a Lamb slain earlier, now He steps forward to do His work of intercession, hearing and presenting our prayers to the Majesty on High.

The silence in Heaven may well be a precious insight into how vital our prayers are to God. Everything halts before the Throne as the prayers of His saints arise before our Almighty God. If everything else halts and God breathes in the sweet fragrance of the devoted prayers we offer, doesn't that make us want to pray, and pray without ceasing as Paul exhorts us?

The altar that is seven times noted (6:9; 8:3 twice; 8:5; 9:13; 14:18 and 16:7) in heaven is not an altar of burnt offering. Jesus was offered once and there are no animal sacrifices in heaven needed. So the only other altar is the altar of incense. This altar is found in the 3rd and 4th Books of Moses (Lev. 16:12; Num. 16:46) just in front of the Holy of Holies, the tiny room of God's presence over the Ark of the Covenant. This altar was hollow, rectangular box, covered with gold, standing 3 feet high and a foot and a half square. Along the top of this Incense altar was a small rail fence to hold burning coals from tumbling off as the priests came to offer burnt incense as a fragrant wrapping around the offered sacrifices. Because the incense was offered before the first sacrifice and after the last, it is almost as if the offerings of the people were sent to God tied with the fragrant ribbons of perfumed incense smoke.

In the context of Revelation 8 we see God looks upon our prayers as sacrifices rising from the altars of our heart, rising as a fragrant aroma of perfume from a devoted spirit raised worshipfully to God. What an awesome privilege it is to pray. And, what a captivating thought we see as God waits for these prayers to rise before Him. Truly He seeks such worship, adoration, devotion and praise from each of us. Is the altar of your soul burning with fragrant incense to God this morning? Are the coals of your soul glowing with fire for Him? Do our prayers fill His presence with our devotion? Those are some awesome thoughts that should really draw us to bow in our souls before our Creator and speak to Him our worship!

You may have nothing to give to God more important right now than your prayers. And as they rise Jesus is waiting to capture them and pour them out before the His father, our Lord God Almighty!

GOD LISTENS – TIME TO PRAY (v. 3-5)

One of the big problems of life is we speak too soon. But God is patient! The rest of the picture in this chapter is that prayers prompt the hand of God. As the angel takes a censor, fills it with coals from the altar and hurls them down to wreak horrible vengeance upon the earth. So if the rising fragrant incense is a picture of our prayers rising to God, then the fiery coals hurled to the earth is a portrait of the power of answered prayer in God's perfect time.

In the Old Testament we see this same type of action as an angel pours coals over Jerusalem (Ezk. 10:2) as a prelude to the destruction of the city and its inhabitants. Isaiah also sees that altar and a burning coal is used to cleanse his foul mouth (6:6).

The picture of Revelation 8 differs from the other two Old Testament scenes because these coals are the long withheld vengent response of God to the prayers of His persecuted saints. H.B. Swete once said, "The prayers of the saints return to

the earth in wrath." These are the prayers shared by all of God's people since Eden. This prayer was first detected as Adam stumbled from the garden in shame, again as Noah slowly stepped off the ark and survey the ravages of the Flood, God's friend may well have prayed this as he crossed the desert to wait for a city God would some day welcome him into. And on and on it has been. We today join that chorus mankind's sin had caused have echoed through the corridors of Heaven, spilling out before the Throne. **THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS (PERFECTLY DONE) IN HEAVEN.**

(8:2,6) The angels who carry out this sacred service at the altar are the ones who stand "in the presence of God". In ancient royal courts only the most favored were honored to stand in the King's presence. They also were the first allowed to go and do his bidding. One of the great honors of an Old Testament prophet was to be able to say "The Lord God before whom I stand" (I Kings 17:1; 18:15; II Kings 3:14; 5:16). Do you feel the honor of standing boldly in Christ before God's Throne? Do you experience the thrill of His Presence this morning? You can know no greater joy or awesome pleasure in life than this, to stand before the Majesty of High, our Lord God Almighty and know that through Jesus we are His beloved sons and daughters!

GOD RESPONDS – TIME TO FLEE (v. 6-13)

(8:7) In a manner similar to Egypt's 7th plague (Ex. 9:23-24) at the hand of Moses, *The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.* This is most likely literal and would have a devastating effect on the atmosphere (smoke and ash), human life (breathable air), animal life and food chains (habitats and food destroyed).

(8:8-9) If the 1st trumpet attacked the land, the 2nd is an assault upon the sea. Revelation 8:8-9 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.⁹ And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. Whether a uniquely created flaming object or a comet, meteor or something, this is a object is a real problem. Unlike current movies, there is no combined human military genius to deflect the judgment. There are no heroes to brave their lives and even die to save the planet. In an instant a third of the ships are gone (there were over 25,000 military, merchant and cruise ships registered in UN records in 1995). Can you imagine what this involves? Atomic fuel, munitions, aircraft, diesel fuel, cargoes and passengers all evaporate. The tidal wave from such and event will erase countless coastal properties. The fouled, poisoned waters will wash ashore every continent and dead marine life will rise in a stench reaching most of the world.

(8:10-11) In deadly sequence the 3rd trumpet blast is heard.

Revelation 8:10-11 Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter. This may be the arrival of a poisonous frozen ammonia comet or something similar. An interesting fact is that the Russian meaning of the name CHERNOBYL is literally "wormwood". Just as radioactive fallout carried along by wind, water and soil is deadly to life, so this judgment will pollute life upon the earth. No matter how it arrives, it is dreadful in its effect.

(8:12) As the 4th trumpet sounds we can hear the words of Jesus echoing down the Mt. Of Olives as He warned in Luke 21:25-26 *"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken."* Listen as John describes this literally happening
Revelation 8:12 Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night. The universe is finely tuned. Even a variation of 5% radiance in our Sun would have long-term devastation on planet earth. A 33% change is catastrophic and unimaginable. Thus Jesus said people would die from sheer fright and powerlessness to comprehend such devastation.

(8:13) Finally as an omen foreboding even further doom, God sends another warning. Revelation 8:13 And I looked, and I heard an angel (or eagle) flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" Remember the 4th creature in Revelation 4:7? "and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle." Maybe the cherub from God's presence come or another angel, no matter who this is the message is clear, more trouble ahead!

What are some lessons to hold onto from this chapter?

1. THE EARTH-DWELLERS WILL HAVE A BAD ENDING. What is an earth dweller? The expression is found seven times (6:10; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:8) in the book and speaks of a type of people, those whose life is tied only to this world. It is thus another term for a worldly person, one who is at home and wants to live for this doomed planet.
2. THE JUDGMENTS COMING ARE HORRIBLY FRIGHTENING: God wants us to be jolted by the vivid and inescapable sights of future calamities. God always wants us to soberly look at reality. He has given us the truth and we need to act on it.
3. THE JUDGMENTS COMING ARE TERRIBLY UNSETTLING: we are powerless before an angry God. There is nothing that can stop His plan, His judgment and earth's ultimate dissolution as a planet.

4. THE JUDGMENTS COMING SHOULD MAKE US HUMBLY REACH OUT TO OUR GOD OF LOVE AND MERCY WHILE THERE IS TIME: If you listen carefully the compassionate voice of Jesus is heard all throughout this book of woe. He is calling John to not be afraid, He calls the wayward church members to repent and return to Him. It is Jesus who knocks patiently for us await our fellowship. It is Jesus who sends His witnesses in chapter 7. It is Jesus who sends warnings of doom, the two witnesses of chapter 11, the angel preaching the everlasting gospel in chapter 16 and so on. While there is time hear His voice and do not harden your hearts He cries!
5. ONLY YOU CAN CHOOSE YOUR DESTINATION: As the Bible opens with Jesus seeking His lost ones in the garden with "Where art thou". So it ends with Jesus calling "come to Me and drink of the water of life". Over and over He invited and all you need to do is come to Him!

FOCUS ON WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO GOD. What's that?

- ✓ HIS WORSHIP: Seraphim - Focus on His worship Is. 6 – holiness. So WORSHIP HIM!
 - ✓ HIS GLORY: Cherubim (Satan - Ezek. 28) - Focus on His glory. So GLORIFY HIM!
1. Gen. 4:24 - guard tree
 2. Ex. 25:18-22 in redemption
 3. Revelation 5:8, 14; 6:1, 3, 5, 7 seals proc
 4. Ezek. 10:1-20 guard glory
 5. Ezek. 2-3 dispense judgment, God's holy wrath
- ✓ HIS PRESENCE: 7 Spirits Focus on His presence 1:4 - God everywhere. So SEEK HIM!

431 I am Praying for you!