

Revelation Lesson 92  
The Warning Shot Across Earth's Bow

Revelation 8:2-6 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

Last week we noted why there is silence in Heaven for about 30 minutes. No salvations occurring on earth and Heaven holding its breath so to speak as the Lord's Judgments are unveiled. Tonight we see things are being prepared for the warning shot across Earth's bow.

Some people don't get that. Let me explain. This bow (b-o-w) is not a bow (OW) that you do in respect or a bow (OH) on top of a present. Rather this bow (OW) is that forward part of a ship's hull. During the 18th Century, a warning shot (in nautical terms, often called a shot across the bow) could be fired towards any ship whose "colours" (nationality) had to be ascertained. According to the law of the sea, a ship thus hailed had to fly her flag and confirm it with a gunshot. Warning shots may still be used in modern times to signal a vessel to stop or keep off and may be fired from other ships, boats, or aircraft. This happened some years ago in modern times on October 27, 1962, in the waters off Cuba, the Soviet ship *Grozny* crossed a quarantine line set up by the US during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The *Grozny* stopped after U.S. Navy ships fired star shells (flares in use since the 1600s) across her bow.

Again, I use this as an illustration. The Lord is preparing Heaven and Earth to receive His Judgment.

**And I saw the seven angels which stood before God;** - I want you to notice the definite article "the" - we always note this important "big but little" word. This shows us that these "7 angels" are no ordinary angels - evidently these angels are always standing somewhere before the Lord (unless dispatched on duty). Consider what Oliver B. Greene states: "Not all angels are said to stand before God. Gabriel stood before God (Luke 1:19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.) They [stand] before God to pour out God's wrath upon His enemies."

**and to them were given seven trumpets.** - Trumpets have important roles in the Bible. All throughout the Old and New Testaments they can be seen and observed calling the people to worship, "for the convocation[s], to proclaim festivals....and for judgments. Read: Exodus 19:6; Amos 3:6; Joshua 6:13-16 and Zephaniah 1:14-16."

**And another angel came and stood at the altar,** - Now we see 2 things here. There appears another angel - different from the seven, yet still - catch this now - an angel. Now there is something of a division here in regards to the identity of this "other" angel. Some learned men as Oliver B. Greene say this angel is none other than Jesus Christ. Yet others like J. Vernon McGee disagree and believe this to be just an angel.

Again I'm not knocking any preacher, but I'm interested in seeing what the Bible says. Notice: "another angel" this is why I said that this angel is an angel. Greene gives his reasoning as follows: "The service rendered by the other angel at the altar proves that it could be none other than the

Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest. ... The term “another angel” is mentioned 3 times in Revelation – first in Chapter 8:3, second in chapter 10:1, third in chapter 18:1.”

Now, while he is onto an interesting idea, to “divide the Word of God” in this way would require us to “spiritualize” the wording “another angel.” In other words we would have to depart from the golden rule of Bible Interpretation: If the common sense, makes sense, seek no other sense. Consider what McGee says about this similar notion in a verse Greene cited as evidence: “There has been definite disagreement among outstanding and fundamental Bible expositors as to the identity of the mighty angel. Godet, Vincent, Pettingill, DeHaan, Ironside, Walter Scott, and William Kelly all identify the strong angel as Christ.

Newell and others consider him to be just an angel of great power and authority, but not Christ. Dr. John Walvoord takes this viewpoint, and Vernon McGee takes it also. If you go with either crowd, you will be in good company. In the first group are some men I have great respect for and whom I love in the Lord. I have personally known three of those men, and they were my dear friends. If you follow them, it will be all right, and you will be in good company; but if you want to be right, you want to come along with me on this!

There is ample evidence to show that this angel is only a mighty angel. Christ does not appear in Revelation as an angel. It is true that in the Old Testament the preincarnate Christ was seen as *the* Angel of the Lord. But after He took upon Himself our humanity, after He died and rose again and received a glorified body, we now see Him in the place of great power and glory yonder at God's right hand. We never see Him as an angel again.”

Again, Tim LaHaye states in regards to our text (Revelation 8:3): “Some say that the other angel of verse 3 is the Lord Jesus Christ, for only He is worthy to receive the prayers of the saints. Since He is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), no one else is qualified to receive the prayers of the saints. Actually all agree that Christ is the only mediator with God and that prayer should be made directly to Him through Jesus Christ the Son. However, Revelation 5:8 indicates that...the 24 elders have...the prayers of the saints. All of this means that prayers are directed to God, but when unanswerable, may be stored...until the time for their answer...”

**having a golden censer;** - This censer is not censor which means you don't have freedom of speech – hahaha – no this censer is a vessel, some say a bowl. Such as you see in a Catholic church and it's swinging from side to side and there's smoke coming from it. That swinging pot is a censer. Now, the word in Greek is: “LIBANOTOS” (G3031) which means an incense vessel or container! Wow! You already knew that and you didn't even know Greek! Furthermore, the vessel is said to be made of pure gold.

**and there was given unto him much incense,** - Incense is the shortened form of Frankincense. It is gum, resin that has exuded from a frankincense tree. It is burned and has an aroma to it. Historically it represented prayers.

**that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints** – I echo somewhat what LaHaye said earlier back in Lesson 72 when we covered Chapter 5:8 in “What Happens when you Pray?” and we found out that while angels could be involved with the “burning of prayers” it falls to the Church – the believer priests in Heaven to perform such duties. During Lesson 72 we were attempting to solidly determine who the 24 elders are and we covered the following:

“The Elders are those who were saved from 30AD – The Rapture and thus were a part of the Church, the Body of Christ. Now, they are called priests in Rev. 5:10. Now, while we are alive on the Earth, we the saved, are admonished to PRAY WITHOUT CEASING (1 Thess. 5:17) and we note that we Pray to the Father (Matthew 6:9) asking in Jesus' Name (John 16:26) because there

is (one Mediator between God and Man (Galatians 3:20 and 1 Timothy 2:5) which means that all prayers to saints and Mary and etc are NOT heard. We must ask in Faith (James 1:5-6 & 5:15) and must ensure that we are right with God (i.e. - have no sin in our life (Psalm 66:17-20) and that we pray in the Power of the Holy Ghost (Ephesians 6:18).

Now in the Old Testament the average Israelite could not come directly to God, he had to go through a priest, who then acted upon his behalf. This still works today through Jesus Christ our High Priest (Heb. 7:10-14). BUT, we note in the Old Testament that the priests served in various duties in the Tabernacle and then the Temple. So, too it appears that we believer priests will act accordingly. For now we know that in 1 Peter 2:4 God calls us a Holy and a Royal Priesthood and then in Rev. 1:5 we are noted to be a kingdom of priests.

It appears that while on Earth we have the duty to pray. While in Heaven – when serving as one of the 24 Elders – it seems appearant one of our duties will involve “burning the prayers of the Saints” and it seems soldily to me that the Angels and Elders work in unison to accomplish this. But each one has a specific duty in regards to that.

For example, in Daniel 10:12 we read the following: “Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.” Notice now two things: 1.) The Lord hears the prayers of the Righteous (Saved and in Fellowship) – 1 Peter 3:12 – so we understand that GOD HEARS the prayer. But now, note 2.) an Angel came for Daniel's Words! So within the Spiritual Realm, it appears then that a prayer becomes an actual object in the Spirit Realm. So the way I understand it an “angelic courier service” call it the UPS of Heaven is enacted. If you read further in Chapter 10, there was an angelic “war” to prevent the transportation of the prayer – for this was an important one related to prophecy.

So, Angels it seems have the ability to transport or move prayers. Consider Revelation 8:3-4 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.” The Angel seen here, read it carefully, is transporting Incense to offer WITH the prayers, but is not seen to transport the actual prayers!

While it would seem that the Believer-Priests (now) have the right/ability to offer the prayers before the Throne of God.”

So here again the Angel seen here in Chapter 8, read it carefully, is *transporting Incense* to offer WITH the prayers, *but is not seen to transport the actual prayers!* This will be seen once again in a moment.

**upon the golden altar which was before the throne.** - This is the golden altar of incense.

**And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.** - Notice closely there is an explanatory note in the middle of this verse that is seperated by commas; that note says: which came with the prayers of the saints. Now read the main idea by skipping the words in the commas – remember that is so designed so that you can gain the main idea without reading the details within the commas (that's in English grammar mind you and that does not mean you delete anything from God's Word) and it says: and the smoke of the incense ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

See? The angel is NOT offering the prayers of the saints! This angel is merely offering incense

which has always been symbolic of prayer. I want to add another detail here from Lesson 72 where I touched on that:

“Now recall that God has ALREADY heard the Prayers of the Righteous (the Saved and In-Fellowship Believer) and the angel courier service has retrieved the prayer from the Earth and dropped it off in Heaven. Now, enter the believer-priest who takes a golden vial (bowl) which contains “odours” the text says.

The implication is it is likened to incense upon the Earth. Note in the duties of the priests in Israel (Exodus 30:1-9) was to burn Incense in the Tabernacle (and later the Temple). Now Moses was commanded to make the Earthly Tabernacle furniture after the “Heavenly” pattern (Exodus 25:9 & 40) so if there is an Altar of Incense upon the Earth, there is one in Heaven. On Earth it was in the Holy Place in front of the veil which cordoned off the Holy of Holies (where the Ark of the Covenant or God's Throne was). Which in turn indicates that in Heaven there is an Altar of Incense before the Throne of God.

Now, someone asked me when I was in High School, if all this was/is true, what about those prayers we pray without speaking them? Those Mental “silent” prayers. I think Romans 8:26 might very well shed light on this: “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” So to me, when we mentally pray, the Holy Ghost takes that prayer and Camouflages it from the enemy. An Angelic courier, may or may not assist, but it still goes up.

So the prayer is there in Heaven, an Elder retrieves the prayer in a Golden Bowl and then dumps it before the Lord's Throne upon the Heavenly Altar of Incense. Now, IF God already has HEARD the prayer, what difference does it make? Look at Genesis 8:21 “And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.” This verse illustrates the principle to me, when God SMELLED the offering, He acted, there in Genesis 8:21 He begins the implementation of the Noahic Covenant.

This does not mean the more we pray (and the more prayers are thus burned) that we will influence God's decision, no, but rather we will hasten His verdict to be sent in His way, manner and timing! Now you know (I think) what happens when we pray! God hears and shall smell it!”

Now here begs the question, where did these prayers come from? They obviously came from those saints upon the earth – further telling us that there ARE people who are saved there and they are praying. They are praying hard. These are furthermore not Intercessory prayers, these are evidently Imprecatory prayers – calling for God's vengeance.

This is mirrored in Lesson 81 – Where the Old Testament martyrs cry out: *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood* – The question asked by all believers of all ages is “how long?” The Old Testament prophets wondered “how long” until the Saviour was to come? Habbakkuk wondered “How long” until God did something about the wicked. We too have wailed “how long” until You come back Lord? But this group will add yet another “how long” to the list, and theirs is a question pertaining to vengeance.

Now note again, that the Tribulation is NOT the age of grace. Note Oliver B. Greene's words: “These martyrs who had sealed their testimony with their life's blood, did not pray as Jesus prayed: Father forgive them for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34). They did not pray as Stephen prayed Lord lay not this sin to their charge. (Acts 7:60). The change of dispensation

changes the character of Jehovah's dealings with ungodly men. Law was the principle on which God dealt with the wicked men in the Old Testament era. Grace is the principle on which God deals in this present dispensation. Grace goes the second mile, [but] these martyrs are crying out in another dispensation. Grace is past. They are crying in keeping with [their dispensation, which matches the Tribulation dispensation looking to imprecatory prayers such as] Psalms 94:1-3 O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. 2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud. 3 LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?"

**And the angel took the censer,** - Again this angel takes the censer the golden vessel used for burning incense.

**and filled it with fire of the altar,** - This is Holy Fire. Fire kindled by the Lord Himself and now instead of cool coals, the censer is filled with the fire of the altar – thus this is literal in that this is taking place but there is a symbolic note here – the fire represents God's wrath as these prayers of the Saints calling out to God, God's children have cried and the Master is now stirred in His timing to begin meteing out His wrath upon the Earth.

**and cast it into the earth:** - The warning shot is now “fired” from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heaven and we must note that this is a LITERAL event. Skeptics and “others” may try to explain this is a comet, meteor, etc. but no this is real. Consider, if the censer could be found it would be an Extraterrestrial object....an object not of this world.....

**and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.** - The first time we encountered this was in Lesson 65 when we studied Revelation 4:5-6: **And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices:** - This puts us in mind of Exodus 19:16 when God stepped down to meet with His People: “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.”

The allusion is to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, when such things were seen and heard, or else the judgments of God, and the punishments inflicted upon his enemies, and the enemies of his church and people, and his awful threatenings of them, may be designed; see (Psalms 18:13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire.); with which compare Revelation 8:5 “And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.”

While the Law of first mention would seemingly tie these noises back to the throne, we look at the phrase here: “into the earth AND there were....and an earthquake.” These noises occur where the earthquake does – upon the Earth – but these are not mere sounds of earth or of nature – these same noises and actions that ORIGINATE FROM THE THRONE and will happen at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet being blown (11:19) and the 7<sup>th</sup> Vial being poured upon the Earth (16:18). So we see this in connection with the 7<sup>th</sup> seal being broken open and the judgments are about to fall! These noises LaHaye says: “indicate that the action of heaven initiates a responsive action on earth.”

God is, I contend, giving His final warning before He unleashes His Wrath – in a way like the Confederate told the Yankee after they swapped “Baccy and Cawfee” - Keep yer haid down Yank, we're gonna start shootin! But no matter what man does He is being given a moment of Grace before the storm is unleashed.

**And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.** - We arrive back at square 1 – the 7 angels with trumpets suck in and are about to sound.....