

## **Hopewell ARP Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, December 2, 2020** **Devotional from Revelation 8:1–5**

*<sup>1</sup> When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. <sup>3</sup> Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. <sup>4</sup> And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. <sup>5</sup> Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.*

It is remarkable, after how very loud things have been in heaven throughout the book, that the seventh seal would be silence! Certainly, the passing out of the trumpets during this silence builds great anticipation. The Lord is about to do something.

But notice what He appoints to instigate the blowing of those trumpets: the prayers of the saints. We already had the prayers of the saints described as golden bowls full of incense in 5:8.

Now, an Angel brings a censer (fire shovel/pan) full of additional incense and adds it to those prayers in v3. And the smoke ascends before God (v4).

Now that the smoke is going up, and the censer is empty, He refills it this time with fire from the altar.

The trumpets of devastation are not merely the wrath of God breaking out. They are the answer to the saints' prayers, and the response to the sacrifice of Christ, and the answer to the additional incense that this great Angel has added to the prayers of the saints.

Our prayers do not go up to God by themselves, but always carried by Christ and His intercession<sup>1</sup> for us.

And these prayers carry with them the force both:

(1) of the sweet aroma that Christ is unto God, and  
(2) of the burning wrath that has been absorbed as far as the elect are concerned, but are provoked all the more against those who obey not the gospel<sup>2</sup> by the greatness of the sacrifice of the Christ of that gospel.

The saints are a praying people of a praying Savior. Christ is much glorified by our praying through Him, and it is these prayers that God has given the privilege of provoking His great acts on the earth.

And God is a prayer-answering God. Behold how great are His doings on earth in response to the prayers, "noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake."

Let us learn to pray not only in reaction to our circumstances on earth, but also in anticipation of the great actions of our Father Who is in heaven!

---

<sup>1</sup> <sup>24</sup> But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. <sup>25</sup> Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

<sup>26</sup> For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; <sup>27</sup> who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. (Heb 7:25–27)

<sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup> so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, <sup>5</sup> which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; <sup>6</sup> since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, <sup>7</sup> and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2Thess 1:4–8)

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription.** Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via [tinysa.com/hopewellarp](https://tinysa.com/hopewellarp))

---

Revelation 8 1 through 5. These are God's words. When he opened the 7th seal there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God.

And to them were given seven trumpets. Then another angel. Having a golden sensor came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascended before God from the angels and.

Then the angel took the sensor filled it with fire from the altar and through it to the earth. And there were noises thunderings lightning and an earthquake.

So for the reading of God's inspired and inherent word. So up until this point the book of Revelation has been a very loud book. The multitude and the 24 elders and four living creatures have been continuously. Proclaiming the praise of God and making a great noise of it. And the last seal the seventh seal.

Actually introduces something very interesting. It opens the seventh seal on the whole seventh seal is just silence. There's an action that takes place. It appears during the silence or perhaps after the silence, but the seventh seal of silence. And as sometimes happens when it's been very noisy for a while silence by contrast is very marked.

For instance every once in a while. When this room is full of people having good fellowship and making lots of noise and I get up in the front every once in a long while when I get up in the front everyone becomes silent and it's quite sudden and it's quite marked.

Much more rarely in our house which you know, there's 10 of us and we're usually all kind of in the one room. If you count the kitchen and the dining area together. If suddenly everyone is quiet it is a very quiet quiet suspenseful even and that's what's that's what's happening here.

There is this silence that is marked by its contrast to how loud everything has been up until this point. And then to increase the marketness of the silent, what does what gets passed out to seven angels? Seven trumpets there's a very loud trumpets the kind of thing that you would blow to summon or direct or instruct an entire army what they of what they should do and so.

The silence both is contrasting what has come before and it's anticipating what is about to come the Lord is about to do something. But notice what he appoints to instigate his own action. And we see that it instigates action because. Once it happens, we have this great noise and thunderings and lightnings and earthquake on earth verse five which are followed by the trumpet trumpets being sounded one at a time in heaven.

Beginning in verse seven, so what does he appoint or what does he ordain to instigate this? This great actions and earth and heaven that he is building this suspense for. Well verse three there's this other angel and this other angel is acting as a priest. Which I think gives us an indication of who he might be.

He's a priest he takes this golden sensor this firepan or maybe fire. Bucket this bucket of that you would use for carrying fire in it. But this thing is full not yet of coals at first it's full of incense he's given much in sense that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar that is before the throne and so we've already seen in chapter 5 and verse 8 the prayers of of the saints as golden bowls of incense and so in addition to the prayers of the saints there, is this much incense that this other angel the, Angel of the Lord probably whom we know after his incarnation as the Lord Jesus his God the son.

And he offers his incense along with all the prayers of the saints which are their incense and verse 4 the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascends before God from the angels hand, and so the smoke is going up and now he's got an empty fire pan or.

Or bucket and he fills it with something else not incense this time but what then the angel took the sensor and he filled it with fire from the altar. And he threw it. To the earth. And so he refills it this time with the fire from the altar the trumpets that are going to be blown and every time one is blown and you devastation comes are not merely the wrath of

God breaking out the wrath of God breaks out as an answer to the saints prayers and a response to the sacrifice of Christ.

And an answer to the additional incense that he adds to the prayers of the Saints. Our prayers do not go up to God by themselves there are always carried by Christ and his intercession for us. When these prayers carry with them to great forces one is or two great have two great significance.

One is the sweet aroma that Christ himself is to God the one who went up. Verb for resurrection is the same verb that is used throughout the Greek old testament for the going up of the smoke and the going up of the incense and the going up of the offerings onto God there is something in the resurrection of Christ going up to God on our behalf having already offered himself in that offering been accepted and the scripture also uses that language of the Lord's offering himself as a sweet.

Aroma and so that's very powerful but the prayers are the saints also carry with them the significance and force of the burning wrath that has been absorbed on our behalf so that we are received favorably we are received propitiously that's related that word propitiation. And the burning wrath of God is actually provoked all the more against those who obey not the gospel that's the language that the apostle Paul uses second Thessalonians chapter one verses four through eight he says to them we ourselves both of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure and you remember not only the prayers are the saints that were bold of incense and, In chapter five, but also in the fifth seal the prayers of the Saints how long O Lord.

And this patience is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which you also suffer since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance.

On those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel. Of our Lord Jesus Christ and so there's something about Jesus having suffered in our place and the wrath of God that has been absorbed concerning saints in the case of Christ that provokes the fury of God against those who do not receive Christ who obey not the gospel.

And so the coals that are thrown. By this last great angel with his refilled sensor have not just the implication of God responding to our prayers, but the wrath of God even in connection with the sacrifice of Christ now issuing forth now remember. Before all of this the seventh seal and and the trumpets he sealed.

The those who were his servants the hundred and forty four thousand as it were figurative number. In chapter seven and so that which comes as punishment for those who are not in Christ does not come as punishment for those who are the servants of God. Now we see from this that the saints that's you who have been set apart to God in Christ are a praying people of a praying savior verse three he was given much in sense that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints also a text that we often sing in Psalm 32 thus shall all the godly pray in some 32.

Saints are praying people. And we are praying people of a praying savior. Christ is much glorified by our praying through him and it is these prayers that God has given the privilege of provoking his great actions. God here when he is about to do something new and something great he starts with the silence.

And then he responds to the prayers of his people. We come in weakness the middle of the week kind of late in the day we've all usually had a long day and we gather and we call upon God through Christ and it is it is a very lowly kind of action that we do and yet the living God who has ordained to do great and glorious things has ordained to do them in response.

To this action. So not only are the saints a praying people of a praying savior but we have a prayer answering God. Behold how great are his doing in response to the going up of this smoke of in this incense. When the angel took the sensor and filled it with fire from the altar and through it to the earth and there were noises and thunderings and lightnings.

And an earthquake. So let us learn not to pray let us learn to pray not only in reaction to our circumstances which sometimes as prayers take the form that we saw earlier how long O Lord. But let us also learn to pray an anticipation of the great actions of our.

Father in heaven who responds to us in His Son. And who responds to His Son. Who prays with us. Amen