

Current Affairs #89 – The Angels Before God

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We continue now in our studies in the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation, as far as it concerns our time, is the motherlode of prophetic Scriptures. And just as a reminder, the purpose of this deep dive into prophetic Scripture is because we live in a time when everything is being shaken, uncontrovertibly so, and only that which is consistent with the Kingdom of God will escape judgments, and therefore will remain. In fact, in the judgments themselves that are coming upon the earth, the point of these judgments and the purpose behind these judgments is to make room for the Kingdom of God to manifest itself in the full scope of what God envisioned, even as He created the heavens and the earth. If we are going to find that safe place on which to stand, it is going to be the understanding of the Kingdom.

One of the remarkable things about the Book of Revelation is that it is not a stand-alone book in the Bible; it is not simply inserted at the end. It really is very much a summary, not only of other prophetic Scriptures, but especially of the ancient promises that God made. And, it is the unfolding of the symbolisms of the Scriptures to reveal Christ—in a paramount way, to reveal the triumphant Christ. In so doing, it does of necessity also reveal the triumphant Body of Christ. Which, by the way, is the only description of the church found in the Scriptures—not an institution, not a thing crafted by men, not a thing developed by the imaginations of men, but the real thing. So, part of what is happening at the end of the age is the clarification of what is the Body of Christ, because that and that alone will enjoy the benefits of being associated with Christ, who is being revealed in His ultimate triumph and His ultimate overcoming.

With that said, I would like for us now to resume our discussions in the 8th chapter of the Book of Revelation. When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. We paused there, when the Lamb opened the seventh seal. Now you will recall in chapter 5, the Lion of the tribe of Judah was found worthy to take the scroll and to open the seals. We have been looking at the opening of each of these seals. When you come to the seventh seal then, you understand that because this is a scroll sealed with seven seals, the seventh seal is about the culmination of all that has been sealed, and of course, not inconsistent with the very meaning of seven, which is completion: the final thing.

Sometimes the number seven is used simply as a metaphor for completeness, and sometimes it is an actual number, seven, which also means it is the wrapping up or completing of things. We are told that there were seven seals, and we have observed, chronologically, the opening of six prior seals. Now we are at the opening of the seventh seal, so we may properly expect that from this point forward in the prophetic narrative, we are going to see the wrapping up of things.

Once again, the wrapping up of things is going to refer back to certain things that have already been mentioned in the Scriptures. This is one of the most wonderful keys of understanding regarding the Book of Revelation. As I said, it is not a stand-alone book. It goes back and it brings forward things that are of the most ancient of references, and it brings them forward now and shows them in the light of final things. At this point it might be said that there is an imminence (a soon to occur) of the eschaton, of the hidden things of eschatology; it is the wrapping up surrounding the doctrine of last things.

I understand that people have said, “Well, you know, the earth will go on forever.” That is not biblical. That is unbiblical. The Bible begins with the statement that the heavens and the earth were created,¹ so there was a time when they were not. They were created against the background of what purposes they were designed to serve, and when those purposes have reached their completion, the heavens and the earth will pass away. Now I know when we look out through our eyes into our daily circumstances, the concept of things coming to an end—the finality of things, the eschaton, the wrapping up of things—does not seem real. Right now in the world there are many challenges and challenging things, and understandably, the mind of man is fixated on these challenges. Even believers are inclined to be grappling with how are things to be resolved.

For example, right now, as a point of marking, we are in the post-election for president in the United States, and the nation is obsessed with the outcome of challenges raised by the present administration regarding what appears to be the incoming administration and the elections. And the church is completely caught up in that. It is sorrowful to watch the degree to which evangelical church leaders are completely caught up in that. So it is not surprising that the unfolding of

All Scripture quotations are from the NKJV Bible, unless otherwise noted.

¹ See Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

eschatological things, last things, will catch the church, under its present leadership, unawares. They are distracted, and distracted from these overarching things—these things that actually determine what the course of history is. That is why we are told again and again in the Scriptures, by none other than the Lord Himself, “Watch ye therefore,”² meaning, do not lose your focus.

Now by Revelation 8, the Lamb is opening the final seal. We better pay attention.

*When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour
Revelation 8:1 NKJV).*

This pause, this break would indicate a separation from what had been talked about just previously, to what is about to be unleashed. What follows is a brief bridge between what had been talked about in the end of the 7th chapter, where those who have overcome have been given not only the white robes and the incidences of honor and glory and rest, but their prayers—they had offered prayers to God—and every indication was that their prayers were being answered. It was a time for their prayers to be answered. Prayers such as, “How long, O Lord, will You put up with the unrelenting oppression of Your people? How long will You tolerate the wickedness of men? How long will You permit lawlessness and evil, by rulers and people alike, to go unchecked upon the earth? How long?” They were given every assurance that they were heard: they were exalted, they were robed, and they were otherwise honored in heaven.³ And now, there is a break from that to what is about to be released at the opening of the seventh seal. So the next thing that is said is,

*And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets
(Revelation 8:2).*

In Luke, the 1st chapter, one of the angels who stands before God came to see Zacharias, and then Mary. As a greeting, the angel announced, “I am Gabriel, one of the angels who stands before

² See Mark 13:35 KJV: “Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:”

³ See Revelation 6:9-11; 7:9-17

God.”⁴ It would appear that the angels who stand before God, inclusive of Gabriel, are waiting to be dispatched with messages from God. We also saw the angel Gabriel, in the Book of Daniel, coming to tell Daniel about events that were about to unfold in his day and in his time.⁵ As ominous and as unusual as the reference “the seven angels who stand before God” sounds, we are really quite familiar with the fact that there are angels who stand before God, waiting to announce the things that God wishes to do upon the earth. In the case of Gabriel, both references that we have to him—and, in fact, there are other references to Gabriel, but the two that I have referred to—indicate that when this messenger comes and brings a message, the whole earth is changed by what is said. In that sense, the sayings of God are the means by which He alters the trajectory of human history.

For example, when the angel Gabriel came to tell Daniel that while Daniel was still praying, Gabriel said, “I was dispatched to bring you understanding.”⁶ As Gabriel finished telling about the understanding,—some of which was to happen immediately, and some of which was meant to occur in what are called seventy ‘sevens’⁷ (seventy prophetic weeks of Daniel) to culminate with the revealing of the righteous One, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the end of the age—one of the things he said was, “As I was coming to you, Daniel, the prince of Persia detained me for a fortnight (for twenty-one days), and no one came to my rescue except Michael, and he overthrew (or knocked down) the prince of Persia. When I return, the prince of Greece will come” (cf. Daniel 10:12-13, 20-21).

⁴ See Luke 1:19: “And the angel answered and said to him, ‘I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.’ ”

⁵ See Daniel 8:15-16: “Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man’s voice between *the banks of the Ulai*, who called, and said, ‘Gabriel, make this *man* understand the vision.’ ”

⁶ See Daniel 9:21-22: “...yes, while I *was* speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, ‘O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.’ ”

⁷ See Daniel 9:24 NIV: “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.”

Even in those, what appear to be just passing statements, enormous revelation as to what changes on the earth is deposited. He prophesied the end of Darius II, the destruction of Darius, by one described in Scripture as this shaggy goat.⁸ The term “Macedonia” or *Macedone* related to goat-herders—tenders of goats. In the encryption, so to speak, he speaks of the king of Macedonia, who at that time would be Alexander the Great, the son of Philip of Macedonia, would come and would destroy the Persian Empire. Well, in history that is exactly what happened. He described this shaggy goat as moving so fast across the ground that his feet did not touch the ground.⁹ It was this that was Alexander’s military strength. He could move, in military terms, with lightning speed, what the Germans would call in World War II, blitzkrieg. This was the way they circumvented the marginal line that separated between the defensive positions of France versus Germany. They simply swept around the ends and captured the Vichy armies of France in World War II. Alexander perfected that art millennia before and destroyed the Prince of Persia. So, in that statement brought by the angel Gabriel that said, “When I return, the prince of Greece will come,” he tells about shaking the earth, establishing a new rule, and destroying another form of rule.

The second reference to the sayings of Gabriel—and my point is that when the angels who stand before God announce things on the earth, it indicates a profound shaking, a resetting of the earthly order of things to be consistent with the unveiling of the prophecies that are written in books that have been sealed, that are now being opened and making way for the advance of the Kingdom of God. Whenever these angels speak, it is always about shaking that makes way for the advance of the Kingdom of God. The second example, I was about to say, was when the angel Gabriel again came and spoke to Mary, the reference in Luke 1, about the 30th verse or so. Gabriel tells Mary that he had come to announce that she would be carrying the Child of the Holy Spirit, whose name would be called Immanuel¹⁰—*el*, being God; Immanuel being “God with us.”¹¹ There can be no doubt that the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ represented this substantial and total reset of human

⁸ See Daniel 8:21 NIV: “The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king.”

⁹ See Daniel 8:5 NIV: “As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground.”

¹⁰ See *Immanuel*, Strong’s Hebrew 6005 - <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/6005.htm>

¹¹ See also Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

history. This was the promise made to Abraham that was the very justification for the existence of Israel: “In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” The coming of the Holy One, the Child to be born, according to Isaiah 9:6, the Son to be given, would reset mankind.¹²

But that too was foreknown by God, indeed, from the foundations of the world. For the Lamb would be He, Immanuel, who would be slain from the foundations of the world to reset the order of things that would bring in everlasting righteousness, first in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then subsequently in the Body of Christ, that vehicle uniquely prepared to carry the image and likeness of God in the earth, to show to creation the excellence of its Creator and to invite mankind to become conformed to the standard of God’s righteousness revealed in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and shown to the earth and shown to principalities and powers in the heavenly places through the church.

So, from that simple statement, “I saw the seven angels who stand before God” (cf. Revelation 8:2a), we pulled out one of the seven angels, the one that we know for sure because he said so, “I am one of the angels who stands before God.” Now these seven angels are given seven trumpets. It is common for the angels who stand before God to announce things, and the seven trumpets are the seven announcements that will continue to shake the heavens and the earth to make room for the coming forth of the Kingdom of God in its greater fullness.

Let us understand, the Kingdom of God is not waiting to come. The Kingdom of God came and was first announced on the Day of Pentecost. It has been here since then, for two thousand years. But a prophecy regarding the Kingdom, even from Isaiah, declared that of the increase of His Kingdom, or of His government and of His rule, of the increase there shall be no end.¹³ So from its inception and continuing in perpetuity—certainly throughout this age, the rest of this age, through the millennial age, and then beyond, because at the end of the millennial age it is said that

¹² See Isaiah 9:6: “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

¹³ See Isaiah 9:7a: “Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end,”

the Lord Jesus Christ will hand up the Kingdom to the Father, and God will be all in all¹⁴—it is meant to increase from one stage to another, to another.

Although, the earmarks of the Kingdom remain the same. It is the situs of the throne of God, or the authority of God, and it is the place from which the rule of God is supported in the earth and projected through a people in the earth. Now it represents the incarnation of God in the person of Christ. When Jesus prayed to the Father and said, “Those who come after Me, let them be one in the same manner in which You and I are one. You are in Me; I am in You. Let them be one in Us” (cf. John 17:21), because we yet live in the flesh, and Jesus came in the form of flesh while He was on the earth, He was God incarnate. The word for “flesh” is the word “carnal,” so in an incarnated form it requires the existence of flesh or carnal. Now there will come a time when this mortal will put on immortality, when the natural will be clothed with the spiritual,¹⁵ so it will no longer be an incarnation, in that sense, but there will always be the dwelling of God in whatever form man is in, whether carnal now or spiritual subsequently.

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets (Revelation 8:2).

So we know that they are about to sound, and their soundings will change everything that follows. The change will be in the nature of destroying that which opposes the Kingdom and causes for the Kingdom to come in a greater measure than it has ever been before. But then it says,

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 [of God]. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand (Revelation 8:3-4, comments added in brackets).

¹⁴ See 1 Corinthians 15:28: “Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

¹⁵ See 1 Corinthians 15:54: “So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ”

This is not one of the seven angels; this is “another angel.” And he comes forth holding a golden censer, which is that object on which you burn incense. To understand this, we will need to go back to the Old Testament, in the building of the tabernacle, and look at the altar of incense, and look at the symbolism of incense offered as the prayers of the saints, and how strange fire offered on the censer is an abomination to God. We will therefore discuss what our prayers ought to be like, and why some prayers are not answered and other prayers, indeed, are answered.

I am Sam Soleyn. We are moving very carefully, slowly through the Book of Revelation, and we have come to chapter 8, at about the 3rd verse. We will talk again soon.