

Have No Fear, The End is Near

A Practical Discussion on the
Book of Revelation

11.4.09

Revelation 8:1 When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. ³ And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, ⁴ and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. ⁶ Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

Incense and Prayer

- The cycle of seven seals being opened has ended. Another cycle is about to begin. (Seven trumpets)
- This small section is very important.
 - It tells the early church and us that prayer is instrumental in God's plan.
 - God hears the prayers of His people.
 - He acts on them.

Incense and Prayer

- In order to understand the imagery here, one must understand the ancient background.
- Numbers 7 – Dedication of the Tabernacle
 - God's prelude to the temple. He commanded it be dedicated.
 - Two million Israelites participated in the event.
 - Twelve tribes represented by a leader (already alluded to in Revelation)
 - Each leader brings an offering. All the offerings are identical, yet the Bible lists each offering in full.

Incense and Prayer

Numbers 7:12 He who offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah. ¹³ And his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ¹⁴ one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; ¹⁵ one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ¹⁶ one male goat for a sin offering; ¹⁷ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

Incense and Prayer

- Twelve offerings all the same.
- Each part has significance, but for our purposes in understanding Revelation:
 - A golden dish full of incense
 - A one-year old male lamb, for a burnt offering
- Both of these are significant in the last few chapters of Revelation.
- We are supposed to connect the dots between the altar in chapter 8 and the altar in the Tabernacle.

Incense and Prayer

- In ancient times, there were specific recipes for incense used in worship, especially with Yahweh.
 - Nadab and Abihu – Strange incense = death
- It represented a pleasing aroma rising to heaven.
- It served practically to hide the stink of sacrifice.

Incense and Prayer

- Putting it all together...
 - Our prayers are imperfect but are offered with incense.
 - They are of extreme importance to God.
 - He hears them and He even incorporates them into His plan somehow.
 - Notice – There is direct action in response to the prayers of the saints. They matter in the unfolding of history!!!