

Revelation 8: 4-6; "The Angel with the Golden Censer",
Sermon # 65 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness",
Delivered on July 22nd, 2007 in the Afternoon Worship Service.

The opening of the Seventh Seal commences a period of time which lasts as long as the antichristian powers shall last. It takes in the whole period of time of the trumpets, which is the 2nd great time period of Satanic opposition to the kingdom of Christ; the supposedly Christian Roman Empire. And it also takes in the 3rd great time period of Satanic opposition to the kingdom of Christ; the Papal Roman Empire. The reason that I believe that this is so is because in verse 2, the seven angels who stand before God are given seven trumpets, and in verse 6 they are preparing to sound. They are warning of the deceptions of believing in false and heretical doctrines, and they are announcing the judgments that will come against those who believe them, and those who propagate them. The sounding of these angels, each in their order, representing a certain period of time in the history of the Church, continues all the way up until the time period of the vials(or bowls, as they are called in our translation) are completed. This is evident from Revelation 11: 15. At that verse we find the seventh angel sounding his trumpet and "there were voices in heaven saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. Indeed, we can say that the seventh seal commences a period of time which will last as long as the world shall last, because it takes in not only the destruction of the antichristian powers which have proceeded from the 4th World Monarchy, Rome; but also the Millennium itself, which is where the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Christ has the right and title to them now, and this is being announced, but His actual earthly reign over them through His spiritual kingdom the Church, will come toward the later end of the Church age. At that time it will be manifest that He is truly reigning over them spiritually. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The Church is Christ's body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. The seventh seal encompasses the blowing of all the seventh trumpets, and the seventh trumpet encompasses all the pouring out of the seven golden bowls of wrath on the Empire of Antichrist, which is false Babylon. It will result in its fall and false Babylon's fall will pave the way for the binding of Satan and the conversion of nations. This is the Spiritual Reign of Christ, which is His Church reigning in righteousness and truth, upon the earth. It is not the personal visible reign of Christ where He will reign in a direct political sense. That will be in the New Earth and the eternal state. I believe that I have sufficiently

demonstrated that the Bible teaches that when Christ comes, then will come the end of the World and the Eternal State. I have opened this up more in my sermons on the Overview of the 4 Major Views of this book.

In the time of the Millennium, the Church will then have its greatest success in gospel preaching that the world has ever seen, and holiness will prevail in a greater sense in the way that people live in those nations which will seek the Lord. The Lord's blessing will very much attend the preaching of His word and the acts of devotion in public worship; especially prayer. This will because of the Spirit will be poured out to incite God's people, to desire greatly; to seek and to find God. Zechariah 8, verse 20 says, "Thus says the Lord of hosts: People shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another saying, 'Let us continue to go and pray before the Lord and seek the Lord of hosts.'" "I myself will go also." "Yes, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord." No doubt this can refer in an initial sense to the time of the early Church when, on the Day of Pentecost, people from many of the regions and countries around Israel came to worship the Lord, and to pray, and the Holy Spirit was poured out in a mighty way. But the primary fulfillment of these verses seems to refer to an event which this world has not yet seen, when many people and strong nations (much greater in numbers) shall come together to pray in the New Testament Church of the latter day. Then shall the prayers be fulfilled, the prayers of many martyrs and the prayers of many confessors who suffered for the sake of the progress of truth advancing. How is it that those martyrs and those confessors of the faith were enabled to hold fast and hold forth the truth of the Bible and the gospel of Jesus Christ? And why is it, that we have good indications from the Word of God that truth will indeed triumph in the earth? It is because of what we read of here. It has been, and it will be, because the Angel with the golden censer has been interceding for them. This is what I want to bring to light this afternoon. The absolute importance of the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ. I want to ask, "What does it consist of?" What kind of sweet incense does the Lord Jesus have in His golden censer? We can see from our text that it consists of the efforts of His ministry as a High Priest, an Advocate, and the Defender of His people. This is how I will open up this text to you this afternoon; by helping you to better understand this great present ministry of Christ in heaven so that each of you will desire to pray more to such a Savior, and have faith that His kingdom will eventually triumph upon the earth.

1st of all - Jesus Christ intercedes for us as a High Priest

The picture that we find here in verse 3 of our text is of Christ our High priest who has fulfilled the Old testament type which Aaron was, as the high priest of the nation of Israel. Turn with me to Leviticus Chapter 16 and we will see this

more clearly. In this chapter in verse 2, God speaks to Moses and says, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat." "Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering." Verse 6 says, "Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house." "He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat." "Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats; one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat." "And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering." "But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, and let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness." "And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself." "Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil." "and he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die." "He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times." "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat." "So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness."

What a great picture of the ministry of what our High Priest Jesus Christ does for His Church and for every individual believer. Aaron would not come whenever he wanted into the Holy Place lest he die. He would come once a year to make atonement for himself and for the people. Jesus came in the fullness of time, and offered Himself once as a sacrifice for sins. Aaron would come to the Holy Place with the blood of a bull that he would sacrifice for himself; Jesus needed no sacrifice for his own sins; instead He offered Himself. Aaron also offered 2 goats; one he sacrificed for the people, which would be killed, and he would sprinkle its blood seven times on the East side of the mercy seat, on it and before it. The other scapegoat would live, and be released into the wilderness, after he had laid both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their

transgressions concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and then he would send it into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man," it says in verse 21. The two goats offered for the people are the type of Christ who died; one whose blood was shed. Christ's blood was shed and He Himself was brought inside the veil to appear in heaven itself on our behalf who believe in Him. The living goat represents the fact that our Lord Jesus is raised from the dead, and intercedes for us in regard to all of our sins. He is with us to help us in all of our weaknesses and temptations and trials to cover us with His righteousness and to pray for us that our faith may not fail. He does this ministry in regard to our sins being a matter of accusation by our great enemy Satan. Our past sins are put away by His death on the cross. Our present sins are forgiven as well, but we are interceded for according to the will of God, that we should not continue in them, but confess them and put them away. Satan's accusations are thus met and overcome, and we who are attempting to preach and to live out the truth of the word of God triumph even though accused and assailed by the devil. This is Christ's present High-priestly work; to so intercede for us His people that we triumph even though we are so insufficient and so inadequate in all of our going about to do God's will and live to His glory.

Secondly- Christ's intercession consists of His being the Advocate of His people.

Christ is pictured here as having the golden censer. Aaron, in Leviticus 16 is told to, "take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil." Christ brings that which is most pleasing to God, in His intercession on our behalf. Christ brings into the presence of God continually the sweet smelling incense of His own blood and righteousness and then uses them to effectually plead for all our sinful inadequacies to be covered. He also then extends to us sympathy in our weaknesses and grants comfort in our afflictions. He gives real strength of grace to His saints so that they will persevere in our faith. This is all a part of His intercession. Turn with me to Hebrews 9. Here it says, "Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary." "For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant." Verse 7 says, "But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the peoples sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way in to the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest. Which the first tabernacle was still standing." "It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which

cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience--concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation." "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is not of this creation, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. How many times have we failed to do and to be all that God would have us to be as Christians; those who desire to serve Him and who are attempting to serve Him. Christ is continually making up for what we lack, in the sight of a perfect and holy God.

Turn to Hebrews Chapter 7. In verse 20 it says, "And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him, "The Lord has sworn and will not relent, You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." "By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant." "Also, there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing." "But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood, 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." Both Christ's death and resurrection are important to His intercession. By dying for our sins; our reproach is taken away. "If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2: 1) The punishment due to our sins has been born by our surety. In rising again, Christ now has an eternal priesthood. He ever lives to make intercession for us who believe." The power and efficacy of His blood shall cleanse us from all sin, and we are given constant supplies of grace to go about to live the Christian life and attempt to keep God's commandments. We are made confident by the fact that now, because of faith in Jesus Christ, God is for us being for us, because Christ is pleading our case with Him.

A great part of His intercession is His sympathizing with our weaknesses. Look at Hebrews 4: 14. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." Remember, dear saints of God, that no matter how weak in your service to Christ, you see yourself as being, that Christ is sympathizing with you. He knows your heart, and the strength of it. He knows where you have failed, and has died for it. He knows what He needs to bring into your life so that you will die to sin and live to righteousness. He ever lives to make intercession for you. This should motivate you to seek Him more diligently in order to make progress

in your faith; to make progress in holiness, and to be a better witness for Him. What a glorious intercession this is that He performs on our behalf in perfect faithfulness. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." The Apostle Paul in Romans 8: 33 says, "Who shall bring a charge against God's Elect" "It is God who justifies." "Who is he who condemns?" "It is Christ who died, and furthermore is risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Christ's love for us His people is so very great and His intercession is so very powerful that nothing that comes against us can separate us from Him. We will speak more about Christ's intercession including His being their Defender the next time that we are together around this text.