

Session 1 Altar of Incense: Releasing Judgment

INTRODUCTION

We're going to get back to Revelation 4 and 5. We've been away for about two months now, and I want to get back to this. I'm going to look at the verse that we talk about at IHOP-KC. We talk about the harp and bowl model.

We think we're familiar with Revelation 5:8, but really we're not. We're familiar with the phrase "harp and bowl," but the dynamic of what's happening here is absolutely stunning. It's mysterious. It's dramatic. It's fascinating. It has to do with the culmination of natural history on planet earth. I want to look at this and develop it a little, as it's central to the heavenly symphony.

THE GOD-MAN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER GOVERNS HUMAN HISTORY

This passage is describing Jesus. "Now when He had taken the scroll. . ." (Rev. 5:8). When the ascended God-Man at the right hand of God the Father, fully God and fully Man, had taken the scroll out of the Father's hand—which speaks of Him stepping into that divinely-given role of leading the unfolding of human history—He said, "I take responsibility under Your leadership, Father, to administrate human history." The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures were overwhelmed at a human assuming this position, in the perfect will of the Father, of leading human history.

There it is: a man who is fully God. The fact that He's fully man is the miracle—not that God would lead human history, but that a man would lead human history in perfection.

There He is in His place. The governmental ministries are around the throne. They're awestruck; they're overwhelmed that the Man who would lead human history is now seated at the right hand of the Father with the scroll in His hands, which speaks of assuming that position of leadership. He's taken it. They fell before this Man, the Lamb. Each one of them had a harp and golden bowls full of incense. That's what we're going to look at tonight: "Golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."

THE NEW SONG LOOSES THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD INTO THE NATURAL ARENA

"And they sang the new song," and there are a number of dimensions to the new song in Scripture. The new song is mentioned nine times. It's mentioned seven times in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament, both of which are in the book of Revelation. There are a number of levels to the new song. We're touching the fringes of the new song when we sing spontaneously. We're touching the beginnings of it. The pinnacle of the new song is that it looses the government of God into the natural arena.

When they sang the new song, "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals" (Rev. 5:9, paraphrased), they were ascribing to Jesus the fact that He was qualified to open the seal, which means to loose the judgments throughout human history that come to a crescendo right before the second coming. The new song is the vehicle; Psalm 149 says that it actually releases it in partnership with the God-Man. The God-Man with the scroll is not enough. It's the God-Man with the scroll, with a bride participating in unity with His heart, with the new song of Psalm 149 loosing the judgments written in the scroll.

TWENTY-EIGHT GOLDEN BOWLS, FILLED WITH PERFUMED INCENSE

That's not the part I want to look at, though all of that excites me. The part I'm looking at is the "four living creatures and the twenty-four elders"—twenty-eight beings, each with golden bowls full of incense. We know that there are at least twenty-eight full golden bowls. There's not just one golden bowl; there are at least twenty-eight. We know that when the time comes for the judgments of God to be administrated throughout human history at the end of the age that the bowls are full. The global prayer movement will be successful. It's a prayer movement, or a worship movement, if you will. It's really a worship movement, and it will be fully anointed. It will touch every tribe, every nation, and every island of the earth. The bowls will be full. The night watch across the earth will be established. The night belongs to the Lord. That's the banner over the Night Watch as far as I'm concerned.

THE PERUME AND THE PRAYERS COME TOGETHER IN THE MYSTERY OF GOD

Here's the phrase that has grabbed my attention, and it's a very powerful and mysterious phrase. "The golden bowls full of incense, which are"—and there's the key word, *are*—"the prayers of the saints." There may be more than twenty-eight, but there are at least twenty-eight. They are filled with perfumed incense. It's the very fragrance of God Himself identified fully with the bride's prayers on the earth.

In chapter 5:8, the incense and the prayers are one and the same. What we're going to find out in a minute is that the incense was distinct from the prayers originally. They're brought together in a supernatural union; they're mingled together by the death of Jesus. The fragrance of this divine perfume and the prayers of the saints, which at one time were distinct, have come together in the mystery of God. They're presented before Jesus. All the bowls are full; and the new song releases the seals.

JUDGMENTS THAT WILL BRING THE GREATEST DEPTH OF LOVE

We find in Revelation 6 that the seals are these monumental, catastrophic events at the end of the age. There are so many things going on here at one time. There's so much drama taking place before the throne that the twenty-four elders are overwhelmed. Again, they're overwhelmed that a man is in this position with a scroll. It's mysterious and powerful as well. It's the prayers of the saints, which are now one and the same with the divine incense. The very essence of Jesus' own fragrance has become one with the prayers of the bride at the end of the age.

The song goes forth, and this is the Psalm 149 song. It looses the judgments; it brings the wrath of God on rebellion. It purges sin out of the bride. It brings forth the bride in mature love at the end of the age. The judgments of God are calculated in the hands of the God-Man with perfect wisdom. His judgments are calculated to bring more people to the greatest depth of voluntary love possible. His judgments aren't God venting His frustration. It's a divine strategy to bring the largest number of people to the greatest depth of love that's possible without violating their free will.

Yes, the seals of judgment release the wrath of God upon the rebellious. As we read tonight in Isaiah 4, the spirit of judgment cleanses filthiness and purges sin from the camp of the redeemed. Floyd said this most recently, but you've heard it said on a number of occasions: nothing pierces the human heart like beauty on one hand, and affliction or pain or the other. It's the loosing of the seals of judgment, and, when they're loosed, the judgments are loosed on the earth. It's the pinnacle of beauty, which is the revelation of God Himself: "The Branch of the Lord will be seen in His beauty" (Isa. 4:2, paraphrased). It's the pinnacle revelation of beauty

with the pain of the judgments piercing the human heart. It's beauty and pain producing the largest number with the greatest depth of maturity of voluntary lovers that's possible without violating the free will of the human heart. That's what's going on here.

It's mysterious, and some of you have never thought about it, so it's not a powerful fact for you just yet. I find it overwhelming that the incense and the prayers are one and the same, because they weren't always the same. That's what we're going to look at.

JUDGMENTS THAT COME TO THEIR FULLEST EXPRESSION AT THE END OF HISTORY

Turn to Revelation 8. We'll start with verse 1, but chapter 8:3 gives more detail to the mystery going on in chapter 5:8. Chapter 8:3 shows us a little more of the detail of the merging of the fragrances of Jesus with the prayers of the Church into one reality before God the Father. It's that reality to which we've given our lives, which looses the judgment and purifies the Church, which causes love to increase like no other time in history. That's what our lives are about. They're very dramatic passages of Scripture. They're very grand themes. They're really stunning themes in their scope and essence.

Revelation 8 is the seven trumpet judgments. By the way, many scholars say these judgment seals have happened for 2,000 years of church history. I have no problem believing that, because God never changes. What He does at the end of the age, undoubtedly He does in principle, though in much smaller measure, in releasing the same judgments throughout history. I'm absolutely convinced that they come to their fullest expression at the end of human history. Though you can read Revelation 6 and find signs of the seals throughout history, they have their ultimate fulfillment in the generation of the Lord's return. That's not to negate their partial fulfillment for 2,000 years. It's the same thing with the trumpet judgments. Revelation 8 and 9 describe the trumpet judgments. There are six, yea, seven trumpet judgments. These judgments are real. They're literal, and the songs and the prayers of the believing church loose them.

THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS RELEASE THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS

What we're doing at IHOP-KC, and what we will do for many years by the will and grace of God, will loose the judgments that are proclaimed in these trumpets. These are judgment trumpets. Not all the trumpets in heaven are associated with judgment, but these seven trumpets are dynamically related to the end-time judgments. These trumpets are terrifying. The prayers of the saints on the earth release these trumpets. These are the most terrifying musical instruments that exist anywhere in all the created order. When they sound, the earth will be shaken to its core. The sounding of these trumpets is dynamically related to what we do day and night at IHOP-KC.

It's interesting that people pray, and there's truth to this—you just have to divide it rightly—whenever a calamity happens, for the calamity to stop. That's the most natural thing for believers to do. They pray to stop the calamity. There are calamities that are initiated by the enemy. The Lord wants us to pray to shut them down. There are catastrophic events that the devil will initiate, and prayers will minimize or stop them. They're the prayers of the Church.

That's one type of calamity. Those are the calamities and catastrophes that the Church is most aware of. It's the ones that are generated or initiated by the rage of Satan. The praying church is meant to stop them. That's the only category that most believers are familiar with.

The calamities at the end of the age are mostly not in that category. There's another category, which is far bigger than the ones that are brought by Satan in a direct initiation. The other category is the catastrophic events that are engineered by the Lamb of God Himself. Prayer doesn't stop them, but prayer accelerates them. It's a new idea to the praying church: that the one category that's based on the rage of Satan can be stopped through prayer, and the other category actually looses and accelerates the judgments. It's the judgments that produce more people in deeper love than any time in history. It's the judgments that bring beauty and pain together to produce mature love in the earth amongst a billion-plus believers on the earth.

A PASSAGE THAT DESERVES DEVOUT AND IN-DEPTH STUDY

These are mysterious themes. These are awesome and terrifying realities. They're real. We're so used to business as usual that truths like Revelation 8 seem a little remote and unrealistic to us. It's a very natural thing that they do. They're grand themes. I encourage you tonight, if you stay a little longer, to read Revelation 8 and 9. These are judgment trumpets. These are literal events that are going to happen on planet earth in the lifetime of many people in this room. More than that, your very prayers will be instrumental in releasing them. These are grand themes. These are terrifying themes. They deserve our study. They deserve devout and in-depth study.

For the most part, Revelation 8 and 9 have been—and I say this generously with grace—accidentally overlooked. The average devout believer anywhere in the world doesn't really have much of an idea of what's in Revelation 8 and 9. If you asked them, they would say, "Yeah, isn't that where a lot of trees burn or something like that? I read that once."

Revelation 8 and 9 is one of the most relevant passages for this time of history for you, your family, and your neighbors. For many people, however, it's completely unfamiliar, with only an occasional reading here and there. It's so unrealistic to the natural mind, and we might have some trouble relating to it, but it's real. It deserves a devout and in-depth study. The prayer movement can't ignore or write off as foolish Revelation 8 and 9. We're going to lock into those two chapters tonight.

Of course, Revelation 16 is the bowl judgments. Revelation 16 is more terrifying than Revelation 8 and 9. Those three chapters together will really change your paradigm of life. Revelation 8 and 9 touches everything dear to the human race, and it's real. Again, I realize that it hasn't really touched the prayer movement yet. We will be fueled by this, because Revelation 8 and 9 is the essence of what's going on in Revelation 5:8—the harp and the bowl before the throne. This is what the harp and the bowl is all about. It's the pinnacle of human history being described prophetically by John 2,000 years ago.

“THERE WAS SILENCE IN HEAVEN FOR ABOUT HALF AN HOUR”

“When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour” (Rev. 8:1). *He* is the Lion-Lamb of Revelation 6:1. Let's go back and look at Revelation 6:1. I want you to see it with your own eyes; I want you to know it.

“Now I saw when the Lamb opened the first seal” (Rev. 6:1). Who opens the seals of judgment? The Lamb of God does. It's essential that the designation is of Jesus our Messiah as the Lamb and as the One who died. He's not just the triumphant Lion showing His strength. He knows the human frame. He loves humans. That's why He became the Lamb. It's the God who loves and knows the human frame that looses the seals. It's the Lamb.

John could have said anything. He could have said, “The King of kings draws His sword.” But God the Holy Spirit says, “They must know that He’s one of them. He knows their plight. He’s sympathetic with their weakness. He has born their pain. He’s going to use His judgments to enhance the human experience to those who say yes.”

It’s the Lamb that opens the seals. It isn’t just the King of kings. It isn’t just the triumphant Lion. It isn’t just the Captain of the armies of heaven. Yes, He’s all of those, but it was the Lamb, which points to His weak humanity given as an offering of sin. It’s the sympathetic One who looses the judgments for the enhancing of the human race. It’s the enhancing of the human experience if they’ll say yes to Him.

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT WERE A DRESS REHEARSAL FOR CALAMITIES TO COME

One by one, all throughout Revelation 6, the Lamb opens the seals. “Then I saw when He had opened the sixth seal...” (Rev. 6:12). All the six seals are opened by the Lamb of God. Revelation 7 is a brief interlude in which we get to see the heavenly scene. In Revelation 8:1, Jesus picks up where He left off in chapter 6:12. The Lamb now opens the seventh seal. By the way, the seventh seal is comprised of seven trumpet judgments. The seventh seal has seven trumpets locked up in it. When Jesus opens the seventh seal, He’s setting in motion the trumpet judgments into natural history. Jesus is the One who’s doing it.

These seals, like the trumpets, are monumental in their scope. They’re global. They’re absolutely real and staggering. They’re far more powerful than what happened with Moses in Egypt. What Moses did to Egypt through the power of God only touched one nation. It was severe, yes, but it only touched one nation for a few moments, or for a very short period of time. This is global. What God did in Exodus 7 to 12, the ten plagues, is the introductory course to understanding Revelation 8, 9, and 16, which are the trumpet and the bowls. If you want to know whether God would really do this, then read Exodus 7 to 12. Moses’ miracle ministry in Exodus wasn’t just a children’s church story. Mostly now, the ten plagues of Egypt have been relegated to children’s church. The ten plagues of Egypt were a dress rehearsal showing all of human history what God will do when He’s ready to take a people for Himself across the earth. In the ten plagues of Egypt, the miracle-working power of God was that God would have a people for Himself. It’s the very same motive He has in Revelation 8 and 9. It’s to take a people for Himself. It’s to entirely possess a people for Himself. It’s the Lamb who is doing this.

JUDGMENT TO THE REBELLIOUS, REVIVAL TO THE RECEPTIVE

The word *judgment* isn’t written here, but I just want to look at it. It’s the word *judgment*, or the word *justice*. Most of the time, you can use them synonymously. Judgment and justice are really one and the same thing. In Luke 18:8, Jesus says, “When you pray night and day, justice,” or *vengeance*, or *judgment*, “will be released” (Lk. 18:8, paraphrased).

God’s justice, or His judgments, is Him making wrong things right. It’s God’s judgments that judge everything rooted in the kingdom of darkness. God’s judgments result in great revival. There’s a judgment on sickness, and we call it, “signs and wonders.” There’s a judgment on unbelief, and we call it 100,000 people saved in the stadium event. It’s a judgment on the kingdom of darkness when 100,000 people get saved in a city. That’s judgment. When the Church is purified, that’s God’s judgment on the kingdom of darkness. When the Holy Spirit convicts you and me of a sin, don’t take it so personally, as though He’s mad at you. It’s a judgment on Satan’s kingdom when you’re convicted of sin. It’s a judgment on the kingdom of darkness. It’s justice. When your heart gets pierced and you say, “I can’t slander anymore,” that’s a judgment upon Satan’s kingdom, and upon the realm of darkness that’s still lodged in our own hearts. Judgment, or justice, is called revival to the

receptive. It's called wrath to the rebellious. The seals and the trumpets loose judgments. There's a redemptive dimension to them that awakens people to the reality of Jesus.

It's fundamental to understand this. We will never understand the prayer movement until we understand the judgment and God's motive for judgment to enhance the human experience. We have to get out of the place where we're crosswise with God's heart in His judgments.

I've heard people say, "I love the love stuff." Judgment is about the love stuff. Judgment is all about love increasing; it isn't the loving God and then the mean God. It's all about love, but it's God bringing the issues to a head. That's all. God's judgments are a tremendous dimension of His mercy. Here's why: eternal judgment will never be moved away, never. The only thing that can free us from eternal judgment is the slain Lamb. Throughout all of history, if they have rejected the slain Lamb, then eternal judgment awaits them. It's the mercy of God to loose temporal judgments, because the eternal judgments will not be stopped. We're not people who choose between the mean God and the loving God. No, as a matter of fact, it's only people in the bridal paradigm who can understand judgment. It's critical to be lovesick with the beautiful Bridegroom and to approach this subject called, "The new song that looses judgment."

JUDGMENT PREACHING MUST FLOW FROM AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE BRIDEGROOM GOD

You hear of judgment preachers all the time. I don't have really personal opinions about any one of them in a negative way; I just leave them to the Lord. I know this: that when a preacher preaches on judgment without a revelation of the Bridegroom, more often than not there's a cruelty and a meanness undergirding the harshness of the message. I'm not saying every time, but certainly the majority of the time, a good portion of the judgment preaching is coming out of frustrated, disappointed preachers venting their anger at the lack of responsiveness, often even in their own ministry. They become judgment preachers who say, "Well, I'll tell them truth if they won't respond." There's an unsettled issue in their own lives. That kind of judgment preaching normally closes the hearts of others. The Lord has His way, and I'm not trying to put everyone in that category. Judgment preaching must flow from an encounter with the Bridegroom God.

The beautiful God of Isaiah 4:2 is the judgment God of Isaiah 4:4. It's the beauty and then the releasing of judgment. If a man or a woman approaches the subject of judgment without touching the subject of beauty, inevitably they're going to steward the truth of judgment in a wrong way.

THE ROD THAT GOES FORTH IS THE UNIFIED CHURCH IN WORSHIP

It's more than the subject of beauty. It's amazing that God so locked this concept of judgment to love in beauty that judgment is loosed through love songs. Isn't that something? The judgments at the end of the age aren't released like they were with Moses. Moses extended a rod and the judgments were loosed. Now the rod that goes forth is the unified church in worship.

Why would something so dreadful as the judgments be linked to the singing of love songs? Judgment is dreadful in the natural, but these are songs of intimacy and majesty. Part of it protects the Church from a wrong spirit, and from offense even towards God while loosing the judgments through the ministry of worship. That's not the whole issue, but in some ways, the Lord is saying, "You can't understand the subject of judgment unless you enter into intimacy and majesty with Me through worship. You can't even understand what it is for. Your heart won't be protected. You will get angry at Me in My judgments if you don't encounter Me in intimacy and

majesty.” He says, “You will draw away from Me in fear if I don’t use you as a partner to loose the judgments in the earth.” It’s the Church in unity with heaven. It’s “on earth as it is in heaven,” loosing the judgments with the slain Lamb.

The Bridegroom, beauty-and-worship dynamic is that, one, it makes our spirit right. Two, it prevents us from getting angry with God when His judgments are shaking the earth. We know it’s all about the beautiful God in love wanting to go forth in tenderness to enhance the human experience. It makes us not draw back from God when we’re used to call forth the judgments, or when His judgments go forth. He uses us in them with Himself as we encounter Him in intimacy. It’s the beautiful God in the judgments going forth.

THE MANIFEST LEADERSHIP OF JESUS BREAKS INTO THE NATURAL REALM

This new song is amazing! That’s the vehicle of the judgments and the leadership of the God-Man. In Revelation 8:1, He’s the one who opens the seven seals. There are seven trumpets locked up in it. When the seventh seal is opened, then the seven trumpets are released.

Here’s the context. If you remember in Revelation 5, the Father has a scroll in His hand. They say that no one is worthy, and John weeps. The God-Man comes forth and takes the scroll, and He has had the scroll in hand. In Revelation 6, as we saw just a moment ago, He’s taken six seals off the scroll. There’s only one remaining seal—the seventh one. When the seventh seal is taken off that scroll, then the contents are unfolded in human experience throughout human history.

The scroll is opened once the seals are all broken. This is the seventh seal. Once it’s broken, then the full ownership and the full position of Jesus’ leadership over the human race breaks forth in manifestations with urgency. When that scroll is opened, then the manifest leadership of the God-Man breaks into the natural realm.

I don’t understand the full mystery. Was John watching the actual opening of the seals, or was John having a vision of that which would happen in human history at the end of the age? I say both. They’re both right. These are actually manifest in time and space in historical context at the end of the age. John witnessed them as a reality in the ever-eternal presence of God the Father. In the human dimension, the seals are being opened even now in human experience. This is in terms of discerning it throughout human history. Those six seals undoubtedly have had manifestations throughout church history. What God will do at the end of the age, He’s done in likeness but in smaller measures throughout all history, because God never changes.

If you read Revelation 6 in a careful way, there are too many details that haven’t been fulfilled through history. They’re fulfilled at the end of the age, like in chapter 6:8 where one-fourth of the whole human race dies. There’s never been a time where one-fourth of the earth died in one season in an unnatural way.

THERE’S A DREADFUL, HOLY HUSH AROUND THE THRONE OF GOD

There’s silence in heaven; there’s a holy hush. There He is—the God-Man with the scroll. All the six seals are gone. He has His hand on the seventh seal. There’s a holy hush around the throne of God. They’re looking at Him. When His hand breaks that seal, then the action breaks forth. As Malachi 4 says, it’s “the great and dreadful day of the Lord” for the human race (Mal. 4:5). It’s this mysterious, heavenly silence around the throne. It’s the silence of awe. It’s the silence of holy dread breaking in upon the celestial host around the throne. It’s terrifying, adoring, awful, wonderful, silent, and awestruck. His hand is breaking the seventh seal.

There's the holy, adoring, and terrifying wonderment gripping everyone. They're looking and saying, "It's now upon us."

THE THRONE OF GOD IS THE MUSIC CENTER OF THE CREATED UNIVERSE

No one knows for sure what's on the inside of the contents; it's the mystery of God. But the God-Man knows, and the Father and the Spirit know. This silence is in total contrast to Revelation 7. In Revelation 7, the worship was breaking out. The throne of God is the music center of the created universe. The throne of God is the music center. The music center goes deadly silent with this adoring, dreadful, wonderment and awe of silence as they're gazing. It's intense anticipation.

The other six seals were so large and catastrophic. They're getting worse every time in their severity and their effectiveness to awaken the human heart. Pain and beauty pierce the heart like nothing else. It's suspense, wonder, and drama.

By the way, this silence in heaven, which is literal and real, has a counterpart on the earth. When these things are loosed in the Spirit around the throne, they have an earthly counterpart. There are about five or six times in the Old Testament where the whole earth is silent (Hab. 2:20, 3:3; Zeph. 1:REF). The earth will have a natural counterpart to this awestruck wonderment, this dreadful and terrifying anticipation that's happening in heaven. It will happen on earth as well. There's an earthly counterpart. There's a global silence that's the counterpart of the heavenly silence around the throne.

The reason I'm developing this is because it moves me, number one. I'm sharing my devotional life with you, but it's critical to what's going on at IHOP-KC. It's all about this. I say this, and I'm not trying to put anyone down. I'm really not, though sometimes it sounds that way. It's more than a new profession: "I think I'll do IHOP-KC for a while. If nothing else works, I'll try that." No, this is where the very balance of human life is. It's weighed in the matters of night-and-day prayer, and of the worshiping church on the earth in unity with heaven.

Something far bigger is going on than, "I like the music and it feels better than working at a restaurant or the clothing shop. This actually feels better. It pays worse, but I feel God and I have friends." So much more is going on.

You can't understand IHOP-KC until you understand Revelation 8. Revelation 8 is the development of what's really happening in Revelation 5:8. It's where the harp and the bowl are mentioned together.

SEVEN TRUMPETS WERE GIVEN TO THE SEVEN ANGELS

In Revelation 8:2, seven trumpets were given to the seven angels who stand before God. Whoa! Notice the definite article, "The seven angels" (Rev. 8:2). Most commentators agree that these are a unique class of highly-exalted angels. We don't know what they're called. They might be the archangels, because in Hebrew tradition there are seven archangels that stand in the presence of God, like Gabriel in Luke 1:19. Gabriel said, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God" (Lk. 1:19). That's what these seven angels do: they stand before God. It's a reasonable guess that these might be the seven archangels of Hebrew tradition. There are a number of Hebrew writings that boldly proclaim that there are seven angels that stand in God's presence. They're archangels. We don't have to know that for sure. I find that interesting, but not important. It doesn't say that they're archangels. They might be, and it's interesting, but not really important that we know or God would

have told us. They're standing before the Lord. They're prepared. They were given seven instruments; each angel was given a trumpet.

THE EARTHLY COUNTERPART OF THE TRUMPET THAT SOUNDS IN HEAVEN

There are trumpets in heaven used for different purposes, but these are uniquely set apart to loose the judgments. Oh, what trumpets! There's going to be an earthly counterpart of the anointed trumpet sound that reflects the reality of what's happening around the throne.

We have to get trumpets. I so appreciate Steve tonight. What's the verse? Psalm 47:5, "God goes up amidst the shout and amidst the sound of the trumpet" (Ps. 47:5, paraphrased). There's an earthly counterpart of the trumpet. There's an anointing on the earth on the trumpet that corresponds with those heavenly trumpets.

That's not my point right now. I just can't resist making it, because we need more trumpet players. They're given the trumpets. The trumpets release the two sides of justice. Again, to the receptive it's called revival, but to the rebellious it's called wrath. Those are the two sides of justice. The trumpets are a warning, which means these trumpets are in themselves mercy. It's the sound of the oncoming train. They're warning the people, "Don't drive across the tracks; we're coming." That's what they're doing. "Don't drive across the tracks; there's trouble."

The sirens went off in World War II in the battle of Britain when London was being bombed day after day for almost two straight months. When the sirens went off, it was the trumpet sound; it was the alarm to avoid danger. In God's heart, these trumpets are meant to get the human race to avoid more danger. They're in themselves a statement of mercy, because more is coming in Revelation 16. The bowls of wrath are much more severe and intense than the trumpets. With the trumpets, God is saying, "There's more where this came from. There's more where this came from, and I mean business. My Son is going to manifest His leadership over planet earth now. The scroll is in His hands." It's His mercy.

God wants more people to be saved. I'm getting ahead of myself. The trumpets are loosed by the night-and-day ministry of worship and prayer.

AN ANGEL WITH A GOLDEN CENSER COMES AND STANDS BEFORE THE ALTAR

Look at Revelation 8:3. Here is the mystery verse. Revelation 8:3 is what breaks apart what's going on in Revelation 5:8, where the harp and bowl come together. It's complex in its argument, but you can follow it. It's stunning because it's about our lives and what we do. It's what you do in the Night Watch. Daniel Talmadge, seventeen years old, is leading, and this is what you're about right here in chapter 8:3. It's Shelley Hundley lying in bed over at the house, saying, "Oh God! You're still doing Revelation 8:3."

OK. There are seven angels with trumpets. These are serious angels, but there's another angel. It's an eighth one, and is of a different category. This is an angel related to intercessory prayer. It's a global prayer movement. This angel has a golden censer in his hand. The censer is this bowl. You can write the word *bowl* if you want. It's a golden censer.

I like this verb—the angel "came and stood before the altar"—the golden altar. He came. I try to picture him walking to the golden altar, or flying. Where did he come from? When did he come? How did he come? "He came to the golden altar."

How dramatic! He's coming with the prayers from across the earth, to present them at the golden altar to loose the judgments that are a warning. The bowl judgments are coming around the corner, and they're far more severe.

Anyway, this angel came somehow. I'm curious to know the manner of his coming. This is a personal curiosity. He stands at the golden altar. The golden altar, which you find in Moses' tabernacle, is where the incense was. The golden altar spoke of the worship and prayer ministries. When we studied the heavenly symphony in Revelation 4 and 5, they didn't mention the golden altar, but we know that the golden altar is right next to the throne as well—just as, in the tabernacle of Moses, the golden altar was right before the ark of the covenant. The golden altar in heaven is right before the throne. The golden altar is the place of worship and incense. It's right next to the throne of God. It's somewhere on that sapphire sea with the river of fire flowing. It's right there.

Now he's standing at the golden altar. He had to come to arrive there. He didn't get the chance to stay there all day every day. It's a great opportunity. It's an awesome privilege for this angel to come to the golden altar and stand with the collective prayers of the saints worldwide. What a dramatic hour!

Here's the key to some of the mystery that's going on. He was given it by God, and I don't know how he was given it. It doesn't say if an angel gave it to him, but this angel was given much incense—the divine substance of perfumed incense. It's a fragrance. He takes this incense and offers it with the prayers upon the golden altar which is before the throne.

THE FIRE ON THE ALTAR IN HEAVEN SHALL NEVER GO OUT

The incense and the prayers in Revelation 8:3 aren't the same substance; they're separate. In Revelation 5:8, they have been merged into one reality before God. We're going to look at this merging in a second. In chapter 8:5, the golden altar has fire on it. There's fire in heaven on the golden altar. There are live coals burning with fire.

You know the verse that the Lord told Moses, the verse that we have down at IHOP-KC. It's Leviticus 6:13: "The fire on the altar shall never go out" (Lev. 6:13, paraphrased). That's talking about an earthly altar. Why? The fire on the altar next to the throne always has live coals of the fire of God on it, always. The voice of God told Moses, "In the earthly counterpart, don't let the fire ever go out. Never, never, never let the fire go out."

When the seraphim visited Isaiah, they took a coal off of the fire of the altar. He came down from the altar of incense at the throne of God. He took the coal and put it on Isaiah's lips. It came directly from the heavenly altar. It was the altar of incense right before the throne. There's fire on that altar.

HEAVENLY ENCOUNTERS WITH THE FIRE OF THE ALTAR

I'm out of time, so I'll go forward a little into what we're looking at next week, because we're going to stay in Revelation 8. The prayers of the saints loose the fire into the natural realm. Isaiah had a token of the fire. It touched his lips. It made him an anointed preacher beyond anything he could ever have imagined. There are going to be heavenly encounters with the fire of the altar in the generation of the Lord's return. Preachers and singers and ministers with all kinds of functions in the Body of Christ will touch the realm of God's fire, a fire that's literally associated with the altar, as Isaiah did.

In Ezekiel 10:2, Ezekiel sees this cherubim take a handful of coals from the altar and throw them on the city of Jerusalem. In a very short amount of time after he threw them, the city of Jerusalem was decimated by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar.

There are living coals on that altar of incense. I'm getting way ahead of myself, but in Revelation 8:5, when the fire on that altar gets thrown to the earth, the Isaiahs come forth with anointed utterances. The rebellious cities like Jerusalem in that day are judged and totally annihilated. The most powerful reality in the natural world is when the fire in that heavenly altar touches the natural realm. That's what Isaiah 4:4 is about. It's both sides of the spirit of burning that's coming. The new songs are going to flow in that anointing, like Isaiah, under the power of the fire from the altar. We have to touch the worship-intercession altar in order to loose the judgments in the way described. In Isaiah 6, it was a coal from the worship altar. It was a coal from the intercessory altar that touched that prophet's mouth, and he loosed the judgments. I believe that coal is essential. I'm not imagining starting some new ministry of, "Whoever has been touched by the coal, sign here." You won't have to do that, because the new songs of God will loose the power and the fire into the natural realm.

I only have two minutes left, so I didn't even make my main point. I'm going to hint at it and make it next week. Then again, it's not like we're in a hurry. We have a lot of weeks ahead of us. The book of Revelation is full. What would happen is that the priest in the Old Testament would take these grains of incense; Exodus 30:34 describes the five ingredients of this incense. It was a holy incense. You were forbidden to make the holy oil, or to make the holy incense. Anyway, it's speaking of what's happening in our worship ministry. The incense was made by these five elements that are very powerful pictures of the death and victory of Jesus. It's this incense that's made in a special way, which depicts the death and the resurrection of Jesus. This incense is taken over to the altar of incense, which is the altar of worship and prayer.

They would take these grains of incense and throw them on the live coals. When they would throw the incense on the live coals, a big puff of smoke would go up. It would smell totally perfumed. It would be filled with fragrance. The high priest would say, "Wow!" He would take the incense and throw it on the live coals. The big smoke would go up, which spoke of God's divine acceptance.

Instead of saying, "He was given much incense," say, "He was given much perfumed incense." It's supernatural, divinely-perfumed incense.

THE SWEETNESS OF THE FRAGRANCE OF THE PERFUME OF JESUS

I'll quote 2 Corinthians 2:15; it talks about the fragrance of the perfume of Jesus. It's the very reality of the perfume of the Godhead; it's the fragrance of Jesus. It's the perfumed incense that was used in the Old Testament, which spoke of the death and resurrection of the God-Man who would come. This very incense is in the hand of the angel. Jesus' death and that perfumed reality, or the fragrance of the God-Man who died, is joined to the prayers of the Church at the end of the age. Initially they're two separate entities, but in Revelation 5:8 they're one.

Our prayers are the incense of God. They have been mysteriously joined. When we sing the new song, "Worthy is the Lamb," somewhere in the economy of God around the golden altar the very perfume of Jesus Himself touches it. There's a mysterious union, and our prayers become that very fragrance of God. I don't mean that it becomes like the fragrance of God. It says in 2 Corinthians 2:15 that we are the fragrance of God. We're the

perfume unto life that looses life. What we're doing in the Night Watch with eight people in the room, as the love of our hearts is emanating before God, is sending that love to the heavenly altar. It's the love of our hearts as we're worshiping in the lonely Night Watch. It's then that the love and passion of the bride, which is the praying church, ascends. The very substance of God's own fragrance gathers it together, or the angel gathers it and joins them. They become one before the Father. That reality and that new mysterious union looses the judgments of the seals of Revelation 5:8.

I realize that I've lost half of you, but I'm going to get you back. I spent more time than I was planning talking about why judgment is an enhancing of the human experience and not a diminishing of it. I didn't plan to do that. I want to develop this. It isn't imagery, but it's reality. What Moses did was a picture, but it's real in heaven. Beloved, when we worshiped tonight, something was going forth to the throne. It was combined with the very perfume and incense of God Himself. There was this mysterious incense in a large measure. This incense spoke of the very death of Jesus Himself. It's the very fragrance of Jesus Himself that 2 Corinthians 2:15 describes to us. That's what we're getting near. That's the river that we're dabbling and putting our toes in.

It's so much more than, "Well, I like IHOP-KC because it's easier than being a waitress. I like IHOP-KC because I like to feel the presence. I like those two things. I like IHOP-KC because I meet some friends who have the same vision and values that I have." That's good, too.

"I like IHOP-KC because things are really growing and I'm probably going to travel. It will be cool." That's OK, too.

"I like IHOP-KC because I'm a musician and I like music." That's good, but there's so much more going on. The very balance of human life is being weighed. It comes around the altar of incense at the throne. It's all about the prayers coming up. It's the night-and-day prayers from the lovesick church combined supernaturally with the incense of God loosing the judgments. It's bringing voluntary lovers to the greatest number and greatest depth ever possible without violating the free will of man.

Amen. Let's stand.

MINISTRY TIME

Now you repeat that sentence. We love You. We love You. Lord, I want to enter into that realm of Your incense. I want the fire of verse 5 to be loosed on the earth. I want to be an agent who receives and looses the fire. I want to relate to the altar of incense, the most powerful altar in the universe. It's the golden altar of incense around the throne. It's the worship-and-intercessory altar. That's what we're about. It's worth sacrifice. It's worth diligence. It's worth giving up careers. It's worth long hours. It's worth practice. It's worth learning. We're bumping into a realm called the incense with the fragrance of Jesus Himself. It's going to be mysteriously joined to our prayers. It's going to loose the judgments at the end of the age. This is what we're about.

This is why we get up in the morning for the Night Watch. This is why you get up in the afternoon. This is noble. This is life. This is reality. This is worth devoting our time, our energy, and our money. This is why we lose opportunities out in the world. There are big opportunities that some of you could have, but you're losing them for this.

I would like everyone to close their eyes and just gaze on the throne. Let's not be distracted, looking around the room. Softly, let's continue to flow in the music.

Come, Holy Spirit! Come!

I'm going to wait for a few minutes. Singers, you can sing like you did, but softly; just a little, and not the full measure of what you normally do.

\Come, Holy Spirit! Come and rest on these people right here in this room right now. Come like fire. Like fire! We need to be refreshed tonight. More, Lord.

We're asking for the manifest presence of God to rest on the people now. I'm asking the Lord to release tokens of His presence. If you feel the Spirit resting on you in any way that's discernible, then I'm taking that as the Lord's token saying, "This one needs more prayer tonight."

If you feel the Spirit touching you in any discernible way then I want you to come stand here. It doesn't mean that you're more sensitive. It means that the Lord is saying, "Pray for this one tonight. This one needs more prayer."

Just come up here. We're just going to continue in this mode. Just make a line across here and continue to wait. The Lord will give more if we pray for you. Spread out in a nice, comfortable space. Go ahead and spread out with plenty of room. We're going to wait for a few more minutes. His presence is going to build, and on some of you it's going to increase; just wait. Breathe, Holy Spirit. More! Release more! Release more of Your manifest presence!

The Lord will give more if we wait on Him and ask Him. Sometimes we get in a hurry and it shuts it down.

Release Your presence, Lord. Release Your presence, Lord, we ask! I'm going to ask for many of you to come on up and pray. Lay hands on them; stand in front of them. You don't have to say a lot of words. Just calmly pray over them what comes to you. We're going to ask the Lord to increase His presence. Some of these are discouraged in their callings. Their callings are worship and intercessors. The Lord just wants to give them a refreshing.

I need a bunch of you. Come on up front and just get in front of them and lay hands on them. It's important to stand in front of them; that way you can dialogue with them if you need to. It's more effective in the ministry exchange than standing behind them. Sometimes the only prayer you need to pray is, "Lord, release more. Release more, Lord." He will give more if the Church will ask.

Breathe! Breathe! Ministry team, look around and see those on whom the Lord is resting. Don't necessarily go to the first person beside you. You can see the Lord's presence resting on people just by looking at them. Let us work where the Lord is working. If He's working on this one, then go lay hands on them.

Spirit of burning!

I need a few more on the ministry team. There are a number of people whom the Lord is clearly resting on. They need someone to lay hands on them, and the Lord will give more.