

Rev 26-01-21a

Greetings fellow members of Grace & Truth Bible Church and all other interested parties listening to the mellifluous tones of my voice tonight. This is the 21st of January 2026. We are continuing our study in the book of Revelation.

We are going to see some fascinating things tonight. We are in chapter 8 moving into chapter 9 looking at the trumpet judgments. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study.

We will start. Father it is such a privilege to be nourished in our souls, built up and strengthened by the power that is contained in the truth of your word and in the hands of the Holy Spirit. What a transforming and enabling effect it has on us.

We would otherwise be hopeless, helpless and useless but with the provision you have made and the blessing you bestowed on us in Christ we can redeem the time, we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds, we can put on your full armor and be useful and have a purpose and meaning in our life that transcends the moment, that transcends the daily and the temporal and that which fades and passes away from the human point of view. You have enabled us already to enter into eternal life and we are so grateful. We pray that as we look at your word tonight that the Holy Spirit will impress it on our hearts, help us to see not only things to come but also the things that should come in our own lives as we contemplate the unfolding of this consummation of your purposes in human history.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's read our passage.

We are looking at Revelation chapter 8. The seventh seal is open. There was silence in heaven for about half an hour. That should be the last verse of chapter 7. It belongs with the seals because we rewind, we stand at a different perspective and now we are going to see things from an intermediary point of view, from the angelic perspective, that which partakes of the air and the place where eagles soar.

So we really begin in verse 2. John says, I saw seven angels who stand before God and to them were given seven trumpets. I believe these are the lamp or torch angels that we saw earlier. I think they are the seven spirits of God that are before the throne that were mentioned in chapter 1. These seven angels are high order cabinet level angels who accomplish God's will on earth and in heaven.

They are the first to receive instructions when they emanate from the throne. Sometimes the living creatures will speak, the cherubim, and it depends. There's a fascinating study you can do to determine when is it that God routes instructions through the living creatures.

When are they given directly to these seven angels? It isn't pertinent to our study right now. We see these seven angels. They have seven trumpets, but we have an interposition.

We have a pause. They're given the trumpets. You would expect the next verse to say, and the first angel blew his trumpet, but that isn't what happens.

There is a pause. 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 is before the throne.

There's an unanswered question here that we will find out later, but what kind of people are qualified to offer sacrifices on altars? What do we call those people? Priests. Elizabeth just gave me the ASL sign for priest. They are priests.

This is not one of the seven angels that are before the throne. This is another angel. Why does he use the censer and offer these prayers? He evidently, or apparently, is of some order of priestly angels.

We have to consider that not all angels, not just any angel, could walk up and make an offering. It's a fascinating idea. Again, it's not particularly pertinent to what we're studying, but it's just one of those questions that if you ever saw Arsenio Hall years ago, he would say, these are things that make you say, hmm.

And so without further ado, this offering is made. What is the point of this? What is the purpose of this particular section? It is a reminder and an emphatic demonstration of the fact that your prayers matter. I have set up my stereo from long years ago.

My equipment is decades old. It's been in storage. Now I have a place to set it up.

I've been enjoying going back through my extensive collection of vinyl. I was playing some Paul Simon the other night. If you've ever heard his song, he reunited with Art Garfunkel after many years of operating separately.

He released a single decades ago called My Little Town. Paul Simon is unsurpassed in his poetic gifts to express ideas and impressions in his lyrics, as well as being phenomenal in his musical abilities. But one part of that song, he says that he mentions God, and he says, God, he mentions him in the preceding line, and he says, and he used to lean upon me as I pledged allegiance to the wall.

Lord, I recall my little town. And for many of us, that is so evocative, saying the Pledge of Allegiance. I don't think they do this anymore, but when some of us were kids, every morning we would start, I pledge allegiance to the flag.

But it was a long time before we really understood what that meant. What does it mean to pledge your allegiance, your loyalty to the flag and to the republic that it represents? I pledge allegiance to the United States of America. I think this whole notion has largely been forgotten in much of our society.

But in the earlier days, when you don't really know what you're doing, you're going through the form and you do it because that's just what you do. That's everyone else is doing. And I thought it was such an apt description.

God used to lean upon me as I pledged allegiance to the wall. But we sometimes get this unconsciously, I think, or without really realizing it. We don't really think that prayer counts, that it matters, that it is heard.

Everyone has their individual relationship with God the Father, and I encourage you to pray in keeping with your personal and individual understanding between yourself and our Heavenly Father. We're all different. I do not repeat my prayers very much.

I typically have a concern. I bring it before God. I lay that at His feet.

I cast my cares on Him. I know that He cares for me, and I don't bug Him about it because I consider the privilege of prayer and the opportunity to enter into the throne room and to make a request, raise an issue, express a concern. It's such a privilege.

I don't want to abuse it. I don't want to think that I can just run in there and God heard me the first time. It is my belief.

So I will take it there, and when it returns to my mind, I have peace. I say, you know, I brought this to the Father, and it's in His hands. I will pray that God will give me guidance in a situation day by day.

I can repeat that prayer because every day is different. Circumstances change. Things progress or deteriorate, and I need a fresh understanding.

I ask God to bring to my mind the promises and the principles and the doctrines that pertain. But in terms of, Lord, here's a concern. I would like to make an intercession on behalf of this person or in this case or this situation.

I take it to Him once, and it's like the artillery where it's fire and forget. I've sent those rounds downrange. They are going to do what they're going to do, and I don't keep firing on that same target over and over again.

But everyone is different, and don't take that as gospel. I say that to say this. Look at the importance of your prayers, of our prayers.

The trumpets are handed out, but before they are sounded, and remember, there is mediation. Angels mediate. There is Jacob's ladder.

Angels ascending and descending. Jesus compared Himself to that ladder. You will see angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

Because of the Lord Jesus, there is angelic intervention in your life. There is angelic

representation of our concerns. There's not only our prayerful report and request and intercession and appeal, but angels make reports as well.

Jesus said, these little ones that belong to my Father, these spiritual sheep or children or lambs, whichever metaphor you want to pick, their angels are always beholding the face of my Father. Angels are, in representative language to help us understand, angels are constantly letting the Father know what our situation is, above and beyond our subjective view, what we are able to understand. There may be forces at work.

There may be hard places and rocks that we are pinched between, and we don't even know their nature or their extent or their future. But there is angelic observation. And this is legitimate.

I've never been a fan of worshiping angels, talking to angels, the whole angel fad that came and thankfully went some years back. But they do have a role. And there's a no kidding function that angels accomplish on our behalf.

They are intermediaries. And these trumpet judgments reflect this intermediate point of view. It's one level up from what we see in an earthly perspective.

And so, as these angels prepare to blow their individual shofar, their trumpet, there is a pause. And John is shown the reason for these trumpets of judgment to be sounded and for the results to be perpetrated on the earth and the nature of those judgments, their origin and their effect. And it is tied to, it is inextricably linked.

It is a result of prayers on the part of people like you and me. So that's what you see here. It is so important to realize prayer is not something that should be taken for granted or casual or God is my buddy.

I'll just talk to him like I would a friend. I'll send him a text. When we pray, we are entering the throne.

We're reading Hebrews chapter 10. I mean, this is a privilege granted to us because of the torn flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ. That veil that was torn to allow us unrestricted access, that is something to be respected, to be treated with great care and reverence, ensure that our hearts have been sprinkled from an evil conscience before we go rushing in there, that our bodies have been washed with pure water, that we have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and we don't go schlepping in there in ragged attire, that we respect it for the privilege it is and the cost at which it came to us.

So this angel, some type of priestly angel, we know this because of his function, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints. And this makes me smile because I know my prayers are often, despite my best efforts, somewhat pathetic and perhaps even would be odious if they were just communicated directly to God.

So in this picture from John, there's a lot of incense. John doesn't say the prayers are incense. Each of these prayers is a sweet-smelling savor before God.

These prayers that come from us, we are fallen, we are corrupt, we are subjective, we are myopic, we are emotional, we are tragically misguided, misled, and badly motivated. And so it takes a lot of incense to fix these prayers so that they can come up before the Father. Paul puts it a different way and talks about the role of the Holy Spirit in taking these prayers and reformulating them and translating them with sounds that cannot be uttered, with a language that we can't even understand.

But the Holy Spirit buffers our prayers and makes them acceptable to the Father. We want to try to minimize this effort on the part of the intermediate agency by which our requests are made known to God. But we recognize that currently we are very weak, but God has made provision.

And our requests, feeble and ignorant though they may be, God hears them. He doesn't say, well, this one's too bad to be listened to. I'm sidelining that one.

Don't even bring that before me. It just takes more incense and greater activity on the part of the Holy Spirit. But our prayers, your prayers, my prayers go to the Father and they are heard and there is a response.

And as with so many things that happen on earth, often this response is mediated by angels. Angels change circumstances. Angels stabilize cars that are sliding on ice.

Angels stop someone at a stoplight and they are a minute and a half later than they would have been and the day is entirely different. God changes circumstances. He interposes His will and He doesn't sit up there thinking things into existence all day long.

He tells the angels, this is what I want to have happen. And He delegates that and they ensure as faithful stewards, as flaming ministers of God's will, that there is extremely vigorous activity all the time, even as we speak. That's why there are so many angels.

Look at how big this planet is and for circumstances to be managed, to be monitored, to be conditioned, to be limited in extent and scope, to ensure that God's promise that we will never be tested above what we're able to bear is carried out. God doesn't do all of this personally. He's got a staff.

He's got legions of angels. He gives them instructions and they are faithful and obedient. And aren't you grateful that they are? I love the fact that the angels that are involved in my immediate periphery are faithful and obedient and they fully, totally, completely, 100% carry out God's instructions where they impinge on me and mine and you.

How important is it to be faithful and obedient? Look at what's on the line. If the Lord Jesus had not been faithful and obedient, where would we be? If the constant angelic mediation of

human history was not faithful and obedient, if even one angel stepped out of line and decided he had a better idea, as Satan did, catastrophe could ensue. I was recently reminded, and there are videos you can watch of this, someone will fill an entire room with mousetraps that have ping-pong balls set on them and you set up a camera and then you toss one ping-pong ball into the room.

One ping-pong ball and very shortly there is massive chaos and there are no ping-pong balls left on mousetraps in a very short order. So much depends on individual faithfulness and obedience and we can't see the room. We can't see the angels.

We can't see all of the causes and conditions and successions and relations that God has structured and woven together of which we are a part and we think, what does it matter if I harbor some bad thoughts? What does it matter if I make this choice or engage in this conversation or say this thoughtless thing or participate or commit some action that is seemingly minor? Jephthah makes a quick promise to God on his way out to battle and look at the effect it had on his daughter. He had no idea that was coming. Countless examples in the Word of God.

So when you see these prayers in Revelation chapter 8, it seems like, well, let's get to the good stuff. Get those angels blowing their horns. Gabriel, blow your horn, as they say in New Orleans.

But look at how important this is. Those angels are standing there with the shofar and they don't do anything until the prayers of all of the saints are perfumed and presented and processed. And when you see what happens, the smoke of the incense in verse 4, with the prayers of the saints, notice verse 3, the prayers of all the saints are upon the golden altar before the throne.

The smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascended before God from the angel's hand. It doesn't get any clearer than this. There is an angel that brings this message to John from the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus was given it from his father.

And our prayers go back the same way. Angelic mediation. You can't get around it.

It is scriptural. Don't be distracted. Don't start getting spookified and think you can see them or hear them.

Don't start praying to them or trying to bribe them. But be aware, God functions through intermediaries, and the lesson for us is we are intermediaries as well. As members of the body of Christ, we have an assignment, and we have a function.

And to the extent that we are faithful and obedient in our connections within the body and reflecting God's glory to the outside world, we will be able to participate in the eternal future the way the angels are currently doing. This is revealed to us so that we can understand the way God's economy works. And we want to be fit.

We want to be equipped. We want to be qualified. We want to be the name that gets called.

When God's picking a team, we want him to call our name. Believe me, it is no fun when you're on the playground, and people are picking people to be on their team, and you keep standing there, and nobody picks you. Why is that? They've seen you play kickball.

They've seen you play volleyball. They've seen you play baseball, and they know you're no good. You're not reliable.

You don't have skills. You're not going to be an asset to the team. And you can't help it sometimes that you're awkward, but this is something we can help.

We can be qualified. We can be strong. We can, having done all, stand in the full armor of God, and we will be those upon whom God will rely in the indefinite and unknown programs of the eternal future.

God's not going to be sitting on his throne watching the river of life flow by. The eternal future is going to be as busy, if not more busy, than this world, this life, this economy, the human and angelic participation. God stays busy.

He does things, and we want to be a part of that. Wouldn't you love to be these angels that are so faithful? They are detailed. They are named in the word of God.

I want to be available. I want to be a good and faithful servant. And when God needs something that requires a good and faithful servant, I want him to think of me.

How else can I express my gratitude for the wonderful salvation that I did not earn or deserve, that has been granted to me through the Lord Jesus? How better to thank the Lord Jesus for his sacrificial work of love and grace on my behalf than to exploit it and become the best person I can so that God can lean on me in the future. These prayers count. They mean something.

And in verse 5, the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. Look at the result of these prayers. God acts.

Angels cast these to earth. And notice, I want you to particularly pay attention to this fire that falls from heaven to earth, resulting in noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. This is a summary of everything that is to come.

This summarizes everything we're going to see in the trumpet judgments. We don't know in what way, but it is going to summarize the thunders. And it is going to summarize what happens with the bowl judgments.

This is the broad stroke global effect. Noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. So now the seven angels who have the seven trumpets are preparing themselves to sound.

Now we're going to back up. This is so typical of Semitic poetry, of Semitic narrative, which one

is very much like the other. There will be a summary.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And you say, well, that pretty well summarizes and consummates the whole thing. But then he goes back and says, here's what happened day by day.

And across six days of creation and a seventh day of rest, here are the details. Similarly, God is going to act. Prayer is going to have its effect.

And notice these answers to prayer may not have come even in the lifetime of the person who prayed, but there is going to be vindication. There's going to be justice. There's going to be response.

And there will be universal thanksgiving, not only for the fact that God chose to act, but when and how he chose to act. And it surpasses our understanding in the moment and in the immediacy of circumstances that God has a larger plan and a bigger answer than we could ever imagine to our prayers. So we're going to back up now from verses one through six.

And in verse seven, the first angel sounds, hail and fire followed mingled with blood. They were thrown to the earth. I'm going to read this entire chapter, read it with me and pay attention to the sequence of these trumpets, because we're going to see in detail what this portends on the earth.

When the first angel sounds, hail and fire followed mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth and a third of the trees were burned up and all green grass was burned up. Notice all the green grass goes, a third of the trees. That is significant.

That tells us something. Second angel sounds in verse eight, a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea and a third of the sea became blood and a third of living creatures in the sea died and a third of the ships were destroyed. Then the third angel sounded and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

The name of the star is wormwood, poison. A third of the waters became wormwood, poison, and many men died from the water because it was made bitter. Then the fourth angel sounded and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened.

A third of the day did not shine and likewise the night. This is talking about the shining that you would normally see in the night. Unless there's severe overcast, there's usually some light.

If you've ever gone down inside a cave and they say, okay, get ready, I'm going to turn out the lights and it is absolute blackness. You begin to see what's going on in your retina. You can see pulsing capillaries and things because there is no light coming into your eye at all.

It is seldom that way. It can be extremely pitch black, but we can almost always pick up a little bit, even on a heavily overcast night. But that ability to see at night will be cut by a third as well.

Verse 13, I looked and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth. Notice there's one woe for each of the remaining three trumpets, woe for the fifth trumpet, woe for the sixth trumpet, woe for the seventh trumpet, the inhabitants of the earth, the earth dwellers, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound. Three angels, three trumpets, three blasts.

That brings you to chapter nine. And what I want to do is summarize what we see and give a possible explanation here of chapter eight. We'll do this quickly, but there is really only one event that can explain from a physical point of view, this biblical description of what is going to happen.

And this event is a large impact triggered global event. In other words, an object from space is going to impact the earth. That's what the Bible says.

This thing like a mountain burning with fire. It's very interesting because we know about such an event that has happened in history. And this is the Chicxulub event.

Chicxulub, I'll spell it for you because you would lose in a spelling bee. C-H-I-C-X-U-L-U-B. Chick, like Chick-fil-A, C-H-I-C, then X-U-L-U-B.

Chicxulub. You've heard of this. This is the impact that took place down the Yucatan Peninsula.

And it's a 110 mile wide circular remnant down there. But this is credited with the mass extinction of over 75% of all of the earth's species about 66 million years ago, if standard scientific chronology has followed. I have my doubts about that, but we'll say for the sake of argument that it was 66 million years ago.

Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. It's over 110 miles wide and resulted in the extinction of over 75% of all of the living things on the earth. So this is a Chicxulub level event.

Interestingly, the name for that comes from the Mayan language and Chicxulub in Mayan means the devil's tail. The devil's tail. In any case, you have an event along that line.

Our text describes hail and fire mixed with blood. These things are thrown to the earth. One third of the earth is burned.

One third of the trees and all green grass is burned. So you don't get this from an algae bloom. You don't get this from mere global warming.

You don't get it from a volcanic dust cloud. It is combusive. It is sudden.

It is focused at the surface of the earth and it doesn't wipe everything out. One third. There is a

measured amount of destruction because God's judgment is not complete with this event.

But these first four trumpets, in the same way that the four seals encompassed the activity of the beast, the antichrist, these four trumpets encompass the effect of this celestial event, if you will. So you can't get this from too much cloud cover. You can't get it from volcanic dust or even impact dust.

A land impact wouldn't do this. Tunguska, for example, wouldn't do this. What you do get is a global event caused by an impact, a sufficiently large impact.

And by the way, I found this, I had to check several different sources, but the Chicxulub was thought to have been taken place by an object that was about 12 kilometers in diameter. Remember that, 12 kilometers in diameter. The Bible says the one that's coming is a mountain from the sky.

So Mount Kilimanjaro is 12 kilometers in circumference. Just so you know, a mountain-sized object is going to have a similar effect to what Chicxulub had, allegedly 66 million years ago. What happens? When this thing hits the atmosphere, you have what the scientists call incandescent ejecta.

As it passes through the earth, fragments peel off and take a different trajectory. They hit the ground and create firestorms all over the earth, especially the side of the earth that is exposed when this thing hits. This ejecta, this flaming lava, if you will, is going to come down.

And think about what happens. You've seen local fires. It can completely incinerate acres and acres and acres of pasture or grassland.

When it gets to the trees, the larger trees can survive it. They'll be burned, they'll be charred. But this is why all of the grass is burned, but only a third of the trees.

The larger trees will survive. This is not a complete destruction, but it tells you that this is a firestorm, but it is of regional proportions. Whole regions are set ablaze and only the largest and strongest of the trees or those that happen to be sheltered can survive this total destruction of the grass, the grains, the pastures.

All these people, depending on soy, there will be no soy and so on. So the Bible is describing a chikshalub event. Now think about this.

Regardless of people's understanding of inspiration or whatever, we are going to see that the order and the extent of these judgments exactly matches in a way that no uninformed, non-astronomical, non-historical, non-geological person could have possibly known. An uninspired John could never have described with such accuracy and such great detail exactly what happened with chikshalub and exactly what is going to happen the next time we have this size impact. It is precise.

It is in the right order. It is at the right extent. It's amazing.

There's no way he could have known without it being revealed by God. And if you want, just between us, you're never going to convince outsiders. They'll always find an excuse.

You've not converted a man because you've silenced him. You can confront people with truth and they're like the Pharisees. You shake their fist and say, I've got to kill this guy.

But between us, if you want confirmation and validation of the inspiration of scripture, when we come back from the break, the detail with which this impact event is described is just stunning. Science confirms the Bible, although the scientists don't know it. But what God showed John is beyond plausible.

This is what is going to happen, and it is going to be accomplished by natural means. And the two things to remember from our first session, think about the privilege and the importance of our prayers. And think about the privilege and the importance of being members of the body of Christ, who will be delivered from the wrath to come and will be observing these coming judgments.

We will not be here when these judgments fall. We will be the white-robed throng praising God. You want to talk about a heartfelt praise song, the sevenfold doxology we saw previously? We will be all able to sing and sing with a hearty voice and great conviction the praises of God who delivers us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But we'll pause here and take our break.