

# Notes on Revelation

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon explores the significance of the incense altar, the role of the angel in Revelation 8, and the relationship between judgment and the secret separation of the Spirit.*

**Scripture:** Revelation 4:10, Revelation 7:3, Revelation 8:3-4, Revelation 9:4, Revelation 14:1, Revelation 15:2

**Topics:** "Judgment", "Prayer"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby explores the significance of the incense altar in Revelation, emphasizing that it is only mentioned in Revelation 8, where the angel offers the prayers of the saints alongside the incense. He notes that the elders do not possess censers or the altar, indicating that their role is to present prayers without adding efficacy to them. The sermon highlights the transition from the cleansing with water to a spiritual separation to God, marked by the sea of glass, and the importance of tribulation in the believers' journey. Darby also discusses the judgments in Revelation 9, distinguishing between the unrepentant Israel and the idolatrous inhabitants of the earth, illustrating the consequences of wickedness and false prophecy.

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## Transcript

Note the incense altar is found in Revelation only in Revelation 8, and the censer or incense vessel, libanotos; this not in chapter 4 where power and judgment - government is presented to us. Nor have the elders any censers, libanoton, in Revelation 5. This belonged to Him who was at the altar of incense. They might be given thumiamata (incense) for their bowls or saucers, but they had no libanoton (censer) or altar of incense. They are priests and offer the prayers, but they offer no prayer, no incense of their own. They add nothing and give efficacy to nothing. The angel in Revelation 8 do (give) to the prayers of the saints. There the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints, tais p.t.a. (to the prayers of the saints).

The action of the angel in Revelation 8 is quite a different thing. Further it would seem as if the sea being of glass marked that there was no more cleansing with water. Would it not show that though essentially holiness must be the same, namely consecration and separation to God, yet that it had formally a different character? This is separation to God while Christ is hidden and while it is His being all Himself for His own sake. It is not forcing out by excess and growth of wickedness but in the power of the Spirit because good is good. Hence when the last plagues are coming out they stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire. They have part in the necessary witness of the place but it is through the application of tribulation to them.

Judgment has the place of the secret separation of the Spirit in making Christ all within, through the result He produced (original priestly washing was not in the laver; that was when they were priests). In chapter 4 the holiness of heaven was fixed and stable as a result. It was not there washing for (or) in the wilderness yet according to the sanctuary. In Revelation 4 the elders are settled in their place around the throne according to that. In Revelation 15 it is only made good (as men say) by the tribulation. They have come through the fire and are there. The 24 elders peacefully there, as their place through grace. They had taken death as their portion, pilgrims and strangers on the earth. The 144,000 of chapter 14 come in as an additional chapter. They have not millennial quietness as their life but having suffered like (not with) Christ on earth they are with Him in His earthly glory wherever He goes.

221 Note in Revelation 9 the first woe applies to the body of unrepentant Israel, not the servants of God. Compare Revelation 9:4 and Revelation 7:3. The second woe applies to the Roman earth as I suppose, that is, the third part of men. The first: Satan's direct power and false prophecy; the second: more external but the false prophecy also. They are killed, not tormented merely as in the first woe. Idolatry and wickedness characterize the second class - inhabitants of the earth, apply to both, the unrepentant Jew and the idolatrous wicked dweller upon a Christless earth - the earth where Rome had its influence.

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