

## **Responding to the Intercession of Christ as the High Priest in His Heavenly Ministry**

Scripture Reading: Heb. 7:25-26; Rom. 8:26-27, 34; Col. 4:12; Exo. 30:1-10; Heb. 7:25; Rev. 8:3-4

### **I. We need to respond to Christ's intercession in His heavenly ministry:<sup>1</sup>**

- A. Christ as the kingly and divine High Priest is interceding for us—Heb. 7:25-26:
  - 1. Christ has been constituted our High Priest according to the power of an indestructible life (v. 16), which nothing can dissolve; this is an endless life, being the eternal, divine, uncreated life and the resurrection life that has passed through the test of death and of Hades (Acts 2:24; Rev. 1:18).
  - 2. Because Christ lives forever without any change, He is able to save us to the uttermost in extent, time, and space—Heb. 7:24-25.
  - 3. In Hebrews 7:25 the expression *to the uttermost* means “completely, entirely, perfectly, to the end, and for eternity”; this indicates that Christ as our High Priest is able to save us to the fullest extent, that is, to save in every kind of situation and condition.
  - 4. Christ is able to save us completely because He is interceding for us; He is our perpetual, constant, and eternal Intercessor—vv. 25-26:
    - a. God has appointed Him to take care of us, and He is now caring for us by interceding for us; He is interceding for us now, and He will save us to the uttermost.
    - b. He appears before God on our behalf, praying that we may be wholly saved and brought fully into God's eternal purpose—9:24; Eph. 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9.
    - c. Christ intercedes for us constantly, and eventually His intercession will overcome, subdue, and save us; we all will be completely saved by His intercession; His salvation reaches us to the uttermost.
    - d. Christ can save us to the uttermost because He is living not only in the heavens but also in us—Col. 3:1; 1:27; Rom. 8:34, 10.
- B. We need to respond to Christ's intercession in His heavenly ministry—Heb. 7:25-26; Rom. 8:34; Acts 12:5; Col. 1:9-11; 4:12:
  - 1. Christ's intercession requires our response; we need to participate in Christ's interceding life and become on earth the reflection of Christ's intercession in His heavenly ministry, praying the prayers of the interceding Christ—Rom. 8:26-27, 34; 1 Tim. 2:1; Col. 4:3; 1 Thes. 5:25; 2 Thes. 3:1; Heb. 13:18.
  - 2. Through our prayer Christ, the Head, is given a way to carry out His administration through His Body—Rev. 5:6; 8:3-5; Eph. 1:10, 17-23.
  - 3. In Acts 12 we have the intercessory prayer of the church, and in Colossians 1:9-11 and 4:12, the intercessory prayers of Paul and Epaphras:
    - a. When Peter was in prison, “prayer was being made fervently by the church to God concerning him”—Acts 12:5:
      - 1) Behind the scene there was a battle of spiritual forces, a battle between God and His enemy, Satan—vv. 4-6.
      - 2) By prayer the church fought the battle with God against Satan, the evil one—vv. 5-23.
    - b. Paul prayed that the saints would “be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding”—Col. 1:9.

- c. Epaphras struggled on behalf of the saints in his prayers that they would stand mature and be fully assured in the will of God—4:12.
- 4. The position of prayer is ascension, that is, a heavenly position—Eph. 1:3; 2:6:
  - a. If we leave the heavenly position, we lose the position of prayer.
  - b. With the position of prayer there is the authority of prayer; as the position of prayer is ascension, the authority of prayer is also ascension—Matt. 17:20; 18:18-19.

**II. We need to have the vision and experience of the golden incense altar—Exo. 30:1-10; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34, 26-27; Rev. 8:3-4:<sup>2</sup>**

- A. The incense altar signifies Christ as the Intercessor to maintain the relationship between God and His people—Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34.
- B. The incense altar is the place from which the activities at all the other places in the tabernacle and the outer court are motivated; Christ's interceding life motivates us to experience the altar, the laver, the table, the lampstand, and the Ark—Heb. 7:25.
- C. Christ's interceding life, His prayer life, is the center of the divine administration and of the execution of His government on earth—Rom. 8:34; Rev. 8:3-4:
  - 1. The executing of God's administration is motivated by the prayers offered to Him from the incense altar.
  - 2. The prayers offered at the incense altar govern the universe.
  - 3. It is crucial for us to see that the execution of God's administration is motivated by the prayers offered to Him from the incense altar.
- D. After His resurrection and ascension, the individual Christ has become the corporate Christ; thus, today before God not only is the individual Christ interceding, but the corporate Christ, the Head with the Body, is interceding as well—1 Cor. 12:12; Acts 12:5, 12:
  - 1. Today the intercessor is not merely Christ Himself but is Christ with His Body.
  - 2. Christ the Head is interceding in the heavens, and the church the Body is interceding on earth.
  - 3. As the members of Christ and parts of the Body-Christ, we cooperate with Christ in His ministry of intercession, carrying out His intercession in our prayers of intercession—Rom. 8:34, 26-27; 1 Tim. 2:1.
- E. We need to participate in Christ's interceding life—Eph. 6:18-19; Col. 4:3; 1 Thes. 5:25; 2 Thes. 3:1; Heb. 13:18.
- F. If we would intercede with Christ at the incense altar, we need to see three crucial matters:
  - 1. When we pray, we should be in the tabernacle; that is, we should be in God—John 1:14; 14:2-3, 20, 13-14; 15:4a, 7; 17:24, 26.
  - 2. When we are about to pray, we should first be satisfied by eating holy food; that is, we should pray with God within us as our energizing supply—v. 29; 6:53-56.
  - 3. When we pray, we should offer incense to God; that is, we should pray with Christ as the incense—Exo. 30:34-38; Rev. 8:3-4.
- G. When we pray at the incense altar, it is very difficult for us to be occupied with ourselves—Rom. 8:34, 26-27:
  - 1. The reason self is not involved at the incense altar is that in order to pray at this altar, we must first become ashes.
  - 2. At the incense altar we pray for God's economy, for God's dispensing, for God's move, and for God's recovery.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### *Able to Save to the Uttermost Those Who Come Forward to God through Him, Seeing He Is Always Living to Intercede for Them*

Hebrews 7:25 tells us that Christ "is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them." Here the expression to the uttermost means "completely, entirely, perfectly, to the end, and for eternity." This indicates that Christ as our High Priest is able to save to the fullest extent, that is, to save in every kind of situation and condition.

He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for us. Christ as our High Priest undertakes our case by interceding for us. He appears before God on our behalf and prays for us that we may be saved and brought fully into God's eternal purpose. We should believe that Christ is always interceding for us. By interceding for us, He takes care of us. He can take care of us much better than we could ever take care of ourselves. Most of the time we are foolish in the way that we care for ourselves. Instead of trying to take care of ourselves by our own efforts, we should simply give ourselves to Him and rest, knowing that He is always caring for us.

#### *Being Able to Save to the Uttermost*

Verse 25 tells us that Christ is able to save to the uttermost. Because He lives forever without any change, Christ is able to save us to the uttermost in extent, in time, and in space. Hence, His salvation reaches to the uttermost.

Christ can save us to the uttermost because He is living not only in the heavens but also within us. While He is living in the heavens, He is transmitting Himself into us. He is living in the heavens to intercede for us and take care of our case, but the reality of this is transmitted into our spirit by His Spirit. We must learn to see this heavenly vision and enjoy our High Priest. Then we will receive mercy and find grace at the throne of grace for timely help. We will be delivered and saved to the uttermost. This is the work of our divine High Priest.

#### *Always Living to Intercede for Them*

Christ is able to save us because He intercedes for us (Heb. 7:25b). As our High Priest, Christ undertakes our case by interceding for us. He appears before God on our behalf, praying for us that we may be saved and brought fully into God's eternal purpose. We need to simply rest in His intercession, trust in it, and enjoy it. Be assured that our divine High Priest is continually interceding for us. Many times we have been saved by His intercession. We have a perpetual, constant, and eternal Intercessor.

Our divine High Priest intercedes for us constantly, knowing how easy it is for us to fall and, once we have fallen, to remain in our fallen state. Sooner or later His intercession will overcome, subdue, and save us. We all will be completely subdued and saved by His intercession. God appointed Him to take care of us, and He is now taking care of us by interceding for us. Although we may forget that we have called upon His name, He will never forget it. He is interceding for us, and He will save us to the uttermost.

Since we have such a High Priest interceding for us, we should "come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help" (4:16). We need to keep coming forward to God. Morning and evening, day and night, we should come forward to Him, saying to Him, "I am open to You. You are rich. I need You. I want to stay open to You all the time." (The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 375, pp. 3777-3778, 3782)

## **INTERCEDING FOR US IN OUR NEED**

How much we need Him!

I need Thee, Oh, I need Thee;  
Every hour I need Thee.

*Hymns, #371*

Surely every hour we need Him. From hour to hour we do not know what situations will confront us. We may say Hallelujah or Amen in the meeting, but when we get home, our joy may vanish, and instead of Hallelujah and Amen there will be silence and a long face. A problem has arisen. Or we may get chilled and catch cold. Whatever the problem is, Christ is there taking care of our case. He bears us when we have a long face or are ill. His interceding never ceases. His ability to take care of us is unlimited because He is the almighty God. His priesthood is an interceding ministry in the heavens, in the Holy of Holies, before God for us.

You are often unaware of His interceding, but sometimes you do realize that He is thus caring for you. You may be in the midst of an argument with your wife when suddenly your words fail. Why do the angry words no longer come tumbling out? Before you were saved, did you ever have such an experience? In my own case I used to go into a rage that could last the whole day, even overnight. Since I have been saved, however, I have never been able to get fully angry. The most my anger has lasted, as far as I can recall, is a few minutes. How about your case? How long can you stay angry? Not very long, because Christ is there interceding for you at the throne of God, and His interceding is heard.

Sometimes troubles come to us, and we get anxious. Before we were saved, these worries were endless. Now, when anxious thoughts arise, we soon sense a soothing comfort, saying to us, "Why don't you pray? You don't need to worry." Christ has begun to intercede for us, and this is the effect it produces. Then we respond to Him, "Thank You, Lord. You bear my worries. All my cares are in Your hand." We pray just a few short words, and the anxiety is lifted. We can enjoy Him. This is Christ's priestly intercession for us. It is unending.

In Romans 8:34 Paul asks, "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." There is no one who can condemn us. Christ surely does not; He died for us, was resurrected, and is now in the heavens interceding for us. His heavenly ministry is to take care of us.

We have all had many experiences of our faithful High Priest's care for us. Many times we have been reminded, comforted, strengthened, and even carried by Him. If we had time, we could hear testimony after testimony of how the help has come, not so much from the outside as from within. The help comes also from the heavens. There is something within and something from above that strengthens, sustains, comforts, and enlightens us. Without this support from our High Priest's intercession, we would long since have been gone. We have been preserved not by ourselves but by our High Priest. (*The Heavenly Ministry of Christ*, ch. 7, pp. 53-56)

### **THE NEED FOR INTERCESSION**

If it were not for Christ's intercession, no one would accept His death, experience His resurrection, or be one with Him in His ascension. In order for people to be motivated to experience Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, His intercession is necessary. Without the interceding of Christ and the church, sinners will not receive the death of Christ. Moreover, those who have received Christ's death will not go on to experience His resurrection, much less know what it means to be with Christ in ascension, sitting with Him in the heavenlies. All these experiences are dependent on the motivation that comes from the interceding Christ and the interceding church. This is the significance of the incense altar.

The Bible first shows us the altar, the cross of Christ, and then the laver, the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Following this, we have Christ as the life supply, as the light, and in the

Holy of Holies as the ark. Finally, in the book of Revelation, a book of God's executing, we see that the divine administration, the divine executing, is always carried out by the incense altar.

As those who are seeking the Lord, we in the recovery both individually and corporately must learn one thing—to pray. We need a praying life. The real praying life is always a life of interceding. Genuine prayer is not mainly to pray for ourselves; it is continually to pray for others. Praying for ourselves is not intercession. But to pray for others is to intercede for them. Thus, prayer for others is intercession.

The proper prayer life is a life of praying for others, of interceding for them. We need to pray for the churches throughout the earth and for all the saints. We need to pray for the older ones, the younger ones, and the opposers. Day by day we need to pray not mainly for ourselves, but for others. We need such an interceding life. The intercession offered at the incense altar should daily be increasing.

If we consider the diagram of the tabernacle and the outer court, we shall see that the incense altar is the center. If there were no incense altar in the tabernacle, the tabernacle would not have a center. The executing center of God's administration is not the ark; the executing center is the incense altar. It is very important that we all see this.

In our experience we need to come to the altar, the laver, the table, the lampstand, and the ark. According to my study of the Bible, after we come to the ark in the Holy of Holies, we need to come back to the incense altar. The incense altar is not one item on the passageway through the tabernacle. On the contrary, it can be compared to a motor which causes everything to operate. Hence, the incense altar stands by itself as a turning point. Again and again we must come back to this turning point. This means that in order to experience any aspect of the outer court or the tabernacle, we need to pray. When we pray, everything works. When we pray, in our experience the altar, the laver, the table, the lampstand, and the ark are all effective. However, when the motor stops, everything else stops also. When the motor operates, everything else operates. This is the reason that we need to have a motor—the interceding Christ—operating within us. We need to have a prayer life, a life of prayer.

### **CHRIST AS THE INTERCESSOR**

The incense altar signifies Christ as the Intercessor to maintain the relationship between God and His people (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). Without such an interceding Christ, the proper relationship between God and us could not exist. This relationship could not be maintained. Therefore, for the maintaining of our relationship with God, we need prayer not only from Christ individually, but also from His Body corporately. (*Life-study of Exodus*, msg. 148, pp. 1601-1604)

### **THE CENTER OF GOD'S ADMINISTRATION**

According to the diagram of the tabernacle and the outer court, the ark is the focus. However, in actual practice the center is the incense altar. This indicates that Christ's interceding life is the center of the divine practice, the divine administration. In the universe there is something that may be called God's economy, God's administration, God's practice. We may use different terms to describe this one matter: economy, administration, practice, dispensation, move, government. All these terms may be regarded as synonymous, as referring to the same thing. This means that God's economy, dispensation, administration, government, move, and practice all refer to the same thing. God is not idle: He is a God of purpose. He has a purpose, and He is moving, working, acting, dispensing, administering. This diagram of the tabernacle is a very accurate and detailed picture of God's administration, God's economy, in this universe.

When we study the incense altar, we are studying the greatest matter in the universe. There is nothing more central than this. Although we are not politicians, we surely are heavenly

statesmen. Furthermore, we are studying universal “politics,” that is, God’s politics. The ark in the Holy of Holies is the central government, our heavenly Washington, D.C. The incense altar may be regarded as our heavenly White House. This means that everything is executed, motivated, and carried out from this divine center. The intercession of Christ is God’s White House. Christ’s interceding life, His prayer life, is the center of God’s administration.

The book of Revelation is a book of God’s administration, a book of divine execution. This book reveals the throne of God and the administration of God throughout the universe. However, the executing center actually is not the throne; the executing center is the incense altar in Revelation 8. Revelation 8:3 says, “And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him that He should add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.” On this altar the prayers of the saints are offered to God, and Christ’s incense is added to these prayers. When the prayers of the saints ascend to God with the incense of Christ, God executes the policies of His administration.

### **THE PRAYER LIFE OF THE CORPORATE CHRIST**

The prayer life of Christ is the center of God’s execution of His government on earth. Revelation 8 indicates this. But some who read chapter eight of Revelation may say, “In Revelation 8 we cannot see Christ’s prayer. We can see only the prayers of the saints.” The saints, however, are one with Christ. The prayers in Revelation 8 no longer are merely the prayers of the individual Christ, but have become the prayers of the corporate Christ. In the matter of the execution that takes place at the incense altar, the saints truly are one with Christ. Therefore, when we speak in this message of the prayer life of Christ, we mean the prayer life of the corporate Christ.

Furthermore, we need to realize that whenever we pray in the spirit, Christ is praying in our praying. The New Testament speaks of praying in the Lord’s name. To pray in the name of the Lord Jesus is to pray in Christ. When we pray in this way, Christ is actually the one praying. For example, suppose you go to a bank to carry out a transaction in the name of another person. Will the bank honor your name or the name of the person you represent? To be sure, the bank will not recognize your name; instead, it will recognize the name of the person represented by you. In a very real sense, because you are representing that person, you are that person, for you are acting in his name. In like manner, when we pray in Christ’s name, we pray in Him. Also, when we pray in Him, Christ is actually the one praying. He prays in us; He prays in our prayer. In the sight of God, all the proper prayers of the saints and of the churches are prayers of Christ and are included as part of Christ’s intercession. (*Life-study of Exodus*, msg. 147, pp. 1593-1595)

### **PRAYING CHRIST**

In light of what we have covered in this message [149], we all need to see three matters. First, when we pray, we should be in the tabernacle. Second, when we are about to pray, we should first be satisfied by eating holy food. Third, when we pray, we should offer incense to God. This means that when we pray, we should pray in God, we should pray with God within us as our energizing supply, and we should pray with Christ as the incense. Then we shall burn incense to God. I believe that if we have this view concerning prayer, our prayer life will be revolutionized. May we all see this view and experience such a revolution. (*Life-study of Exodus*, msg. 149, pp. 1616)

### **References and Further Reading:**

1. *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, msg. 375
2. *The Heavenly Ministry of Christ*, ch. 7
3. *Life-study of Exodus*, msgs. 147-149.

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<sup>1</sup> International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones' Outlines, Spring 2017, "Cooperating with the Heavenly Ministry of the Ascended Christ," msg. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Crystallization-Study Outlines, "Crystallization-Study of Exodus (3)," msg. 5.