

Silence in Heaven

Revelation 8:1-5

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- **"Silence is golden!"**
- But sometimes "silence is NOT golden!"
- **Heaven is ordinarily a very noisy place.**
 - Revelation 4:8-- "four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come.'"
 - Revelation 4:11-- "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; For you created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."
 - Revelation 5:9-10-- "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For you were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."
 - Revelation 5:11-12-- "heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing.'"
 - Revelation 5:13-- "every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, saying" 'Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever.'"
 - Revelation 6:1-- "heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, 'Come and See.'"
 - Revelation 6:10-- "with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'"
 - Revelation 7:9-13-- "a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.' All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen.'"
- **Earth will also be very noisy when Jesus unroll the sixth seal, and the day of the LORD begins!**
 - Revelation 6:16-- "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb."

Silence in Heaven

- Revelation 8:1-5 -- "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Then 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 was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake."

A. Stillness and Silence Observed

- Revelation 8:1-- "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour"
1. The seventh seal contains the full sweep of the remaining divine judgments during the Great Tribulation, for it contains the seven Trumpet Judgments. The seventh Trumpet contains the seven bowls of God's wrath which will finish God's judgment of the earth and usher in Christ's kingdom.
 - Revelation 10:7-- "in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets."

- Revelation 15:1-- *"Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete."*
 - Revelation 16:1 -- *"heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, 'Go and pour out the bowls of wrath of God on the earth.'"*
 - Revelation 11:15-- *"There were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'"*
2. **Silence is the only proper response to divine judgment.**
- Psalm 76:7-9-- *"You, Yourself are to be feared; And who may stand in your presence when once You are angry? You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; The earth feared and was still, when God arose to judgment, to deliver all the oppressed of the earth."*
 - Zephaniah 1:7-- *"Be silent in the presence of the LORD God; For the day of the LORD is at hand, for the LORD has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests."*
 - Zechariah 2:13-- *"Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation."*
 - Habakkuk 2:20-- *"But the LORD is in His Holy Temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."*
3. For 30 minutes (our time), everything stops in heaven. Everyone is still and silent in God's presence.

B. Stillness Broken-- Revelation 8:2-4

1. The *"Seven angels before God...were given seven trumpets."*
- Revelation 8:2-- *"And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets."*
- a. These seven angels are distinct from the other angelic beings John encountered. Some have called them "presence angels" for they stand in the presence of God.
- Luke 1:19-- *"Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God"*
- b. **Trumpets will play a significant role in end time events.**
- 1) Trumpets will announce the return of Jesus Christ for His Bride at the rapture.
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17-- *"For the Lord Himself will descended from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*
 - 1 Corinthians 15:51-52-- *"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."*
 - 2) Some seek to equate the "last trumpet" of 1 Corinthians 15 with the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11, and thus teach that the rapture of the church occurs at the end of the tribulation. And thus, we as believers in Christ would go through the tribulation period.
 - 3) The trumpet of Revelation 11 is an "angel's trumpet" whereas the trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15 is the "trumpet of the Lord"-- different trumpets
 - 4) Trumpets are also associated with signally the Day of the Lord.
 - Zephaniah 1:14-16-- *"The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the Day of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers."*
- c. **The Seven Trumpet Judgments are of greater intensity that the Seven Seals, but not as intense as the last seven bowls of God's wrath.**
- 1) First four trumpets-- focus on the earth and creation, producing ecological havoc
 - 2) Fifth and Sixth trumpets-- unleash demonic harassment and destruction of mankind
 - 3) Seventh trumpet-- contains the final seven bowls of God's wrath
2. The *"angel...with the golden censer"*
- Revelation 8:3-4-- *"Then 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 was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hands."*
- a. **The prototype of the earthly tabernacle built by Moses is in Heaven.**

- Hebrews 8:1-2 -- *"Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man."*
- Hebrews 8:5 -- *"serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, 'See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.'"*

1) The heavenly tabernacle has two compartments like its earthly counterpart: A Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, plus all the fixtures that the earthly one had.

2) **Jesus Christ serves today as our Heavenly High Priest.**

- Hebrews 2:17-18 -- *"in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."*

a) As our High Priest, Jesus Christ offered His own blood on the altar as the sacrifice for our sin once for all.

- Hebrews 9:11-12-- *"Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."*

- Hebrews 9:24-26-- *"For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another...but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."*

- Hebrews 10:12-14-- *"But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting until His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."*

b) Today, Jesus Christ, our High Priest, is seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven where He is interceding with the Father on our behalf.

- Hebrews 7:25-- *"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."*

c) As our High Priest, He makes it possible for us to come directly before the Father and bring our petitions and request to Him.

- Hebrews 4:14-16-- *"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly before the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."*

3) John was given a glimpse of this heavenly tabernacle made without hands.

b. The Identity of the "another angel"

1) Some believe that the "another angel" is the Lord Jesus Christ.

- a) Due to his present ministry as our High Priest
- b) Jesus' pre-incarnate appearances in the Old Testament as the "angel of the Lord"

2) The "another angel" is one just like the seven who were given trumpets.

- a) Jesus is already identified in the heavenly scene as the "Lamb"
- b) Jesus is nowhere identified in the New Testament as the "angel of the Lord"
- c) The Greek word for "another" is "allos", which means, "another of the same kind"

c. The angel is holding a "golden censer"

- 1) A censer was used to transfer coals from the outside brazen altar to the inside altar of incense.
- 2) The smoke for the incense symbolized the prayers of the saints ascending to heaven.

- Luke 1:8-9 -- *“So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of people was praying outside at the hour of incense.”*
- d. **God gave the angel “much incense”-- the prayers of all the saints rising from the altar.**
 - Revelation 5:8-- *“four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”*
 - Revelation 6:9-10-- *“When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth.’”*
 - e. **God is about to answer their cry of “How long...until You judge and avenge our blood”**

C. The Silence Broken

- Revelation 8:5-- *“Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there was noises, thunderings, lightnings and an earthquake.”*
1. The angel hurls a divine firestorm upon the earth.
 2. The people living on earth had experience a reprieve from God’s judgment during the time of silence in heaven. They probably thought that the worst is over for everything was calm for a short period of time, and that life was returning to “normal”.
 3. Then BOOM! Silence is broken! Peals of thunder, flashes of lightning, and the earth is shaken again. The worst is yet to come as the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets and open up the seven bowls of God’s wrath on this world!

Applications for us today?

1. **There are times when we need to be still in God’s presence.**
 - a. There are times for celebration and praise.
 - Psalm 100:1-- *“Make a joyful shout to the LORD...and come into His presence with singing”*
 - Psalm 100:4-- *“Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise.”*
 - b. But there are also times for us to be still and silent in His presence.
 - Psalm 46:8-11-- *“Come, behold the works of the LORD, who has made desolations in the earth. He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire. Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted on the earth!”*
 - Psalm 37:7-8 -- *“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret--it only causes harm.”*
2. **But it is also important for us to speak in God’s presence.**
 - a. We’ve been commanded to *“come boldly before the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need.”* (Hebrews 4:16)
 - b. We’ve been commanded to *“to pray and not lose heart”*.
 - Luke 18:1-- *“spoke a parable to the, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart”*.
 - Luke 16:6-8-- *“Hear what this unjust judge said. And shall not God avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”*
 - c. God answers one of three ways: Yes, No, and Wait.
 - d. God loves to give good things to His children.
 - Matthew 7:7-11-- *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Of if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”*