

The Book of Revelation: “The Sound of Silence”
Revelation 8:1-5

An Incentive to Prayer

- Where we’re at in the book...

- The 7 seals of Rev. 6-8 trace the history of the world, from brokenness to blessedness.
- Revelation 8:1-5 is the opening of the last seal, the final act of salvation and judgment.

Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. (Revelation 8:5)

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.... Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. (Revelation 11:15, 19)

The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” ¹⁸ And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. (Revelation 16:17-18)

- The 7th seal is marked by silence and awe.

- There is a gravity to God.
- Silence and awe are appropriate before the God of the Bible.

But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him. (Hab. 2:20)

Be still, and know that I am God. (Psalm 46:10)

The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent. (Exodus 14:14)

Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but will proceed no further. (Job 40:4-5)

- Vindication and judgment are connected with the petitions of the saints.

- The prayers of the people go up, and the judgments of the Lord come down.
- Revelation pictures the elements of v. 5—thunder, rumblings, lightning—at the disposal of God and unleashed in response to the prayers of the saints.

From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder. (4:5)

- God is not bound by the prayers of His people...

For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? (Romans 11:34)

- But God certainly uses the prayers of His people.

The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from prayer. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.... Prayer turns ordinary mortals into men of power.... It brings fire. It brings rain. It brings life. It brings God. There is no power like that of prevailing prayer. (Samuel Chadwick)

The prayers which ascend, unremarked by the journalists of the day, return with immense force as "reversed thunder." Prayer reenters history with incalculable effects. Our earth is shaken daily by it. (Eugene Peterson)

Out of the silence of Heaven, actions are prepared. Prayer is the most practical thing anyone can do. It is not mystical escape; it is historical engagement. Prayer participates in God's action. God gathers our cries and our praises, our petitions and intercessions, and uses them. (Eugene Peterson)

Exhortations to Prayer

- Pray cosmically.

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9-10)

Life is war. That's not all it is, but it is always that. Our weakness in prayer is owing largely to our neglect of this truth. Prayer is primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the church as it advances against the powers of darkness and unbelief. It is not surprising that prayer malfunctions when we try to make it a domestic intercom to call upstairs for more comforts in the den.... Until you know that life is war, you cannot know what prayer is for. Prayer is for the accomplishment of a wartime mission. (John Piper)

- Pray continually.

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:8-9)

- Pray confidently.

And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:2)