

## REVELATION 8

There is silence in heaven for half an hour. It has to find its place in the preparation for worship. In our reckless attempts to become entertainment churches instead of places of worship, we might be horrified at the thought of spending a half hour of silent meditation, yet Zephaniah 1:7 says, "Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is at hand." In Habakkuk 2:20 we read, "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him," and in Zechariah 2:13. "Be silent all people before the Lord, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling." Silence is induced here to prepare us for the terrible character of his judgments. Silence makes the judgments more impressive. There can also be the silence of amazement or awe. Stillness can be more effective than thunder or lightning. Others have suggested that silence allows breathing space in the narrative, the silence may have provided a moment of spiritual refreshment before a new series of calamities take place. In addition to all of this, some suggest that there is something of beauty in these thirty moments. The prayers of the saints are about to go up to God. Everything halts in heaven so that the prayers may be heard, that God may catch even the whispered prayer!

ERLING W. HANSEN, REVELATION LECTURE #4, p. 1, CHAPTERS 8-11

Read Revelation 8:1,3-5

1. What do you make of the combination of incense and the prayers of all the saints?
2. The prayers of the saints may be the words spoken in chapter 6:10, "Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?" If so, what might be the significance of verse 5 where the angel mixes the censer with fire and throws it on the earth?

Read Revelation 8:2,6-12

3. Describe the four trumpets and their judgments.

Read Revelation 8:13

A word about God's judgments. Many of the catastrophes are labeled "judgments" but should be seen as a lifting of God's hand of protection rather than natural disasters coming from God. The eagle's cry is better translated as "Alas" versus "Woe." God and the rest of heaven are mourning the lawlessness and evil. God and the rest of heaven want all mankind to repent and join the saints. As we shall see, those who are not marked for the Lamb are willful in their rejection of God. No one is rejoicing in the death and destruction.

