

The Loudest Silence

by Jay C. Wingard

In my study of Scripture I am always in awe of the description of the throne room of God. The very place He is said to sit on His throne in all His glory and majesty. The Old Testament book of Ezekiel and the New Testament book of Revelation both describe God on His throne in such amazing ways all the while never giving us enough detail to be able to break the second commandment and make a graven image.

Scripture gives us these stunning images of our Lord on His throne reigning and ruling in His sovereign and majestic power. We definitely get the sense that the vision is beyond human description - unfathomable. These glorious images Scripture gives us should cause us to pause and remember who our God is - the God of all creation - the one and only true God. He is above all and Creator of all. He is sovereign, He is Lord, He is King!

The imagery that the Holy Spirit gives us in the Word of God is stunning...

Ezekiel 1:26 Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. 27 Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. 28 As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking.

Revelation 4:2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. 3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. 4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. 5 Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; 6 and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass,

like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

One thing that has always struck me is the constant worship God receives. At this very moment as I type this article and as you are reading it there is constant worship at the throne of God directed towards the triune God - the Father, Son (the Lamb who was worthy to be slain) and the Holy Spirit. There at the throne of God the four living creatures or seraphim incessantly sing out the trihagion, the three-fold song of holiness to our Great God...

Isaiah 6:1 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. 2 Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called out to another and said, " Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory." 4 And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.

Scripture goes on to teach us that all the angels join in worship to the Lion and the Lamb as well as the 24 elders on their thrones. The throne room of God is an ear piercing non-stop jubilation of praise and honor to the One who deserves nothing but praise, honor and glory. He alone is worthy of praise, for as Revelation clearly tells us Jesus Christ, the Lamb who was worthy to be slain, is surrounded by constant singing:

Rev. 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

So in heaven at the very throne of God there is constant sound - the constant sound of praise, adoration that has the three fold trihagion setting the tempo as sung by an angelic order that Ezekiel nor John could describe with fullness using human words for the very vision was overwhelming and beyond description - just as our Great God is.

But there is a moment in time when something will happen that has never happened and never will happen after it. There will be a moment in time when heaven will have the sound of silence. There will be a moment in time when the four living creatures will close their mouths in awe. There will be a

time when the 24 elders will be silent. There will be a time when all of the angels - all of them, the innumerable army of angels will not utter a sound. The book of Revelation paints this amazing picture for us in the beginning of chapter 8:

Rev. 8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

You see God has been patient, desiring that no one perish but that all come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9) Even in His judgments that are summed up in the breaking of the first through the 6th seals we see mercy as opportunity to repent and turn to Him. But as the Lamb of God breaks that final seal it is done. Time is up. The sun, moon and stars fall from the sky no longer to meter the days and define time. All of heaven and all created order stops what they are doing and watches in awe as God symbolically stands up from His throne to render final judgment. The cries of the martyred souls no longer cry out (Rev. 6:9-10) - for they also see that the time has come. The time only the Father knows has come as the number of their fellow servants who would join their martyrdom was complete. (Rev. 6:10)

All of heaven is silent in absolute awe in anticipation of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Scripture teaches us that all of the angels of heaven will appear with Christ in the sky. Picture this: all of the angels, all myriads and myriads of them are silently arraying themselves while focused in silent awe of the Lamb who was worthy to be slain in preparation for the sky to split apart to display the Lord of lords in the glory of the Father. Those in Christ will be caught up in the air to meet Him while His wrath, the wrath of the Lamb (Rev. 6:16), will be poured out on all who are not found in Him.

As Revelation teaches us, there is a moment of about one-half and hour where heaven is absolutely silent. The Creator of All, the Almighty Judge has stood to righteously deliver judgment upon the earth. Scripture teaches us that angels look intently at the church of Jesus Christ and peer deeply at the unsearchable riches of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now they see the culmination of all that the Lion and the Lamb has ushered in and bought through His obedience to the Father. Jesus Christ has saved His elect, has purchased a kingdom of priests for Himself who will reign upon the earth. Satan and his demons and all his children - all of the ungodly who have turned from God and denied Him are thrown into the lake of fire along with

death itself. Let us never, ever forget that Christ experienced that very hell on the cross as He stood condemned in the place of sinners - His elect. Oh our gracious and merciful Lord! Our great God then ushers in a new heaven and a new earth - a restoration of Eden - when all "was good". The bride of Christ will spend eternity with Him and will "see His face" (Rev. 22:4) in the new earth. This my friends is a true description of "heaven".

While Revelation can be a challenging book to interpret, the overall theme and message is plain. God has won. It is that simple. God is on His throne and He will be glorified. He is equally glorified by the saints as well as those who will spend eternity in hell. The idea of their being silence in heaven is actually one of the loudest scenes Scripture portrays for us.

May we never forget who our God is. May we learn from the throne room of heaven in our own worship here on earth and remember that the Lion and the Lamb is our focus of worship just as it is in the heavenly throne. Do not miss that Christ is described as the Lamb who is slain - heaven never leaves the cross and nor should the Church! Let this silence described in Scripture bring you comfort as a Christian knowing that judgment has been passed on your Substitute and you are safe and secure in Him. However, let this silence bring about terror and conviction to anyone who is outside of the love of Christ. Today is the day of salvation for when the silence is heard it is too late.

The cross of Jesus Christ exemplifies in absolute beauty beyond description both the *perfect love* and *perfect justice* of God. Yes, God is love but He is also a God of perfect justice. We see both of those attributes displayed simultaneously at Calvary. The wrath of God abides on all those who are outside of Christ as their Lord and Savior - for the Lamb of God took our place and satisfied the requirements of the Law and the wrath we deserve. He receives all of the glory and rightly so for He is God!

Soli Deo Gloria!