

The Half Hour of Silence

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NTEX6313.DR New Testament Exegesis: Revelation, Spring 2018-2019
May 23, 2019

Introduction

Imagine 30 minutes with no sound. No wind. No words. Nothing. For an average person living in today's society with all the constant bombardment of noise and entertainment, even the thought of that much silence might make them squirm a little bit. Unless they are living in a complete vacuum (spoiler: they'd die), it's impossible to escape sound. The hum of a computer, traffic in the street, people just breathing and living – noise is an ever-present companion. Who could even imagine a world with no sound?

But sometimes the attempt at creating silence has purpose in the world. In murder mysteries, one of the most dramatic parts of the movie, novel or play is when one of the characters reveals to the other characters that there's been ... "dun, dun, dun" ... a murder. There, the pause and lack of dialogue, creates anticipation for the big reveal. The use of this purposeful void of sound and dialogue is well known to actors and readers as the dramatic pause. Used to build great anticipation or generate excitement, it is a moment when there are no words spoken, and little to no music playing in the background. The audience, sitting on the edge of their seats, is left to wonder, "What's next?"

In Revelation 8:1, we see a Biblical dramatic pause. This study will take a closer look at the silence in Revelation 8:1, and why it is a significant moment in the events of Revelation.

Context

The book of Revelation was written by John on the Island of Patmos, according to Revelation 1:9, which states, "I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (NIV). John wrote the book to the seven churches in the Roman province of Asia.¹

¹ Bauckham, Richard. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (New Testament Theology), Cambridge University Press 1993. Kindle Edition, Page 2.

To give an overview of the book, Revelation addresses many areas of theology and is most recognized as the book that addresses important and key areas of eschatology. One could say that eschatology is a divisive topic among Christians, with many different views of how the end times will play out.

Many theologians have written or given verbal speculation about what God, through inspiring the book, is trying to convey through the events described in Revelation. As a result, there are several questions which surround the scenes and events described by John in the text. Common questions include: Is it allegorical? Is it fiction? Should it be taken literally word for word? One stance is that Revelation “cannot be read either as literal descriptions or as encoded literal descriptions but must be read for their theological meaning and their power to evoke response.”²

John authored Revelation “in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets, but understands himself to be writing at the climax of the tradition, when all the eschatological oracles of the prophets are about to be finally fulfilled, and so he interprets and gathers them up in his own prophetic revelation.”³

The book of Revelation brings us into John’s worship of God. John’s vision of God who sits on the throne is just one of the ways John displays God as the focus of worship. John’s knowledge and how he writes about God reminds us that as we learn about who God is, we also become closer in worship. Bauckham says through Revelation “we are thereby reminded that true knowledge of who God is inseparable from worship of God.”⁴

The book of Revelation also brings the subject of prophecy to the forefront and delves deeper into references to the Spirit within Revelation. While some authors may have gotten caught up in interpreting the prophecies and debating the meaning in the book, “Prophecy as the Spirit’s message

² Bauckham, R. (1993). *Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=290915&site=ehost-live>, 20

³ Bauckham, 5

⁴ Bauckham, *Climax*, 32

through prophets to the churches is designed to prepare and enable the churches to hear their prophetic witness to the world, inspired by the Spirit.”⁵

The purpose of Revelation, as with the Bible as a whole, is ultimately is to lead believers to a deeper understanding of who God is, why He is worthy of worship, and to reveal more about His character. While Revelation is rich in the depths of eschatology, it is an important text to study as believers in order to point Christians to godly worship and to ultimately renew our understanding of who God is.⁶ Evidence of who God is and how we should worship him is shown in Revelation 4:8-11:

Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (NIV)

Passages like this help believers to recognize their need for God-language that points to worshipping God and shows Christians that the worship of God will be non-stop in heaven for all of eternity. Heaven will be a place full of worship because God “created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” God is the creator of all things in heaven and on earth. There is no better reason than that to fall on your face in the presence of God. Through John’s imagery and explanations of worship in heaven, believers are left to recognize that his visions provide Christians with evocative language that expresses the transcendence of God, who He is, and why He is worthy to be worshipped for eternity.⁷

So, after that look at the background and topics covered within Revelation, let’s look at Revelation 8:1 and its significance for believers.

⁵ Bauckham, 118

⁶ Bauckham, 118

⁷ Bauckham, Richard. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (New Testament Theology), Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition, 45

Exegesis

After the Lamb opens the seventh seal in 8:1, one might expect that there would be this amazing reveal, or an event like what had occurred after the opening of the previous seals. To get the full picture, one must look at the context surrounding this passage. Revelation 8:1 comes at the end of the opening of the seven seals. The opening of the other six seals were all followed by anything but silence.

As shown in Revelation 6:1-7 (NIV), the author shows the Lamb opening the first four of the seven seals. Each seal is followed by a horse and a rider, called the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.”⁸ The first rider rode out on a white horse, and the rider held a bow. According to Revelation 6:2, the rider was given a crown and he “rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.” The second seal was followed by a fiery red horse, and the rider was empowered to “take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword (Revelation 6:4)”⁹. The opening of the third seal was followed by yet another rider, this time the rider came out on a black horse, and the rider was “holding a pair of scales in his hand (Revelation 6:5).” The fourth rider came out on a pale horse. As described in Revelation 7, “its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him.¹⁰ They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth (Revelation 6:8).” These horseman “bring terror and suffering, dearth and death”¹¹ to people on earth.

When the fifth seal is opened, the martyrs who were killed for their belief and testimony cry out under the altar in heaven.¹² These martyrs cry out in Revelation 6:9 for God to “judge those who live on the earth and avenge our blood.” (NIV)

The sixth seal is opened, and a reign of terror up overtakes the earth. As the text says in Revelation 6:12-17, after the seal was opened there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black like sackcloth of goat hair, and the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth

702. ⁸ Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide: An All-in-one Introduction to the Book of Books* (United States: Lion Books, 2013),

⁹ Ibid
¹⁰ Ibid
¹¹ Ibid
¹² Ibid

like unripe figs dropping from a tree shaken by a great wind. The sky receded like a scroll being rolled up and every mountain and island was moved from its place.” (NIV)

While the events after these seals are opened are very specific and bring about their own separate events, what they have in common is action and judgment being cast down on the earth. At this time, people aren't quiet. The earth must have been quite a loud place with people crying out in their suffering and fear. The opening of the scroll has “revealed the sufferings which will afflict and eventually engulf the world. These are: military aggression, human bloodshed, shortage of food and death by starvation and disease. Far from being excluded from the suffering of humankind, God's people will be caught up in it and even suffer martyrdom as well.”¹³

In contrast to these events, the seventh seal is followed by a quieting of everything on earth and heaven. As Revelation 8:1 describes, “When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.” (ESV) While one might expect a whoop or a shout, or maybe the contents of the scroll would be revealed or read out loud that is not the case. Instead, “the first thing up after the Lamb opens the seventh seal is silence (v.1), after which John introduces seven angels who stand in the presence of God and who are given seven trumpets (v.2)”¹⁴ The half hour of silence has left many biblical scholars to extrapolate its meaning from surround texts and scholarly research because it was unexpected.¹⁵

“Rather than the immediate continuation of the chaos created by the opening of the first six seals, a pregnant pause of half an hour is introduced. Since the text does not present an exact explanation of this parenthesis, commentators are left to speculate about its significance.”¹⁶

One thing that many people may not consider about heaven, is that it will be full of noise. As Greg Laurie vividly describes in one of his sermons:

Here is what I want you to consider about heaven. Sometimes we think of heaven as sort of this laid-back lazy place. Where we are just plunking a little string. That is not heaven.

¹³ Knowles, 702

¹⁴ Fee, G. D. (2013). Revelation : A New Covenant Commentary. [N.p.]: The Lutterworth Press., 119

¹⁵ Page 205

¹⁶ Page 205

Heaven is rocking. Heaven is hopping. Heaven is happening. Things are going on. There is worshipping. There are announcements being made. There are victory shouts going up every time someone gets saved. Heaven is a busy place. We are serving the Lord. All of a sudden in all of this noise. Silence. For a half hour. Why? Because a big announcement is going to be made.¹⁷

Other than Revelation 8:1, the events described in the book are full of non-stop noise and action. One commentary describes the scene in heaven: "Besides magnificent worship, apocalyptic thunder and turmoil are heard. Only in 8:1 is there silence. Commentators have given several, albeit unsatisfying, explanations for this silence."¹⁸

Some say that the half hour of silence is the beginning of an eternal sabbath that will take place in heaven. Today, Christians keep a sabbath by setting aside one day each week for worship. However, in heaven, worshipping God corporately will be the top priority and focus of every day. The opening of the seventh seal could be the beginning of that eternal state of worship, as Robert Jamieson writes:

The half-hour silence is the brief pause given to John between the preceding vision and the following one, implying, on the one hand, the solemn introduction to the eternal sabbatism which is to follow the seventh seal; and, on the other, the silence which continued during the incense-accompanied prayers which usher in the first of the seven trumpets (Rev 8:3–5). In the Jewish temple, musical instruments and singing resounded during the whole time of the offering of the sacrifices, which formed the first part of the service. But at the offering of incense, solemn silence was kept ("My soul waiteth upon God," Ps 62:1; "is silent," Margin; Ps 65:1, Margin), the people praying secretly all the time. The half-hour stillness implies, too, the earnest adoring expectation with which the blessed spirits and the angels await the succeeding unfolding of God's judgments. A short space is implied; for even an hour is so used (Rev 17:12).¹⁹

Alford agrees with the idea that the silence is the start of "eternal sabbatism" as he sees "the silence as the beginning of the sabbatical rest for the millennium."²⁰

However, the word used for silence here is *sigē*, a feminine noun, which comes from the root word *Sizo*, which means, to hiss, as in hist or hush.²¹ Strong's Concordance defines *sigē*, as "to

¹⁷ Laurie, Greg, and Al Janssen. *The Final Cry*. Eugene, Or.: Harvest House Publishers, 1987, 35.

¹⁸ Peter Wick, "There Was Silence in Heaven (Revelation 8:1): An Annotation to Israel Knohls "Between Voice and Silence", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 3 (1998): , doi:10.2307/3266447. 513

¹⁹ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan). 571

²⁰ Fee, 206

²¹ "Lexicon :: Strong's G4602 - Sigē," Blue Letter Bible, , accessed May 25, 2019, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4602&t=ESV>.

command silence by making the sound 'st' or 'sch.'"²² *Sigē* is used only twice to describe a hushed crowd in the New Testament.²³ Once in Revelation 8:1 and one other time in Acts. The instance in Acts is found in Acts 21:40 when Paul stands to preach Jews who had tried to kill him and had him dragged out of the temple. Finally, when he was allowed to speak to the people, he stood up and had their attention. As the scene is described in the passage: "And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying ..." (KJV).

From this use of this word for silence in other texts one could conclude the seventh seal, when it was opened, made a sound that was loud or prominent enough that it grabbed the attention of everyone, and they hushed each other. While the text is not specific as to what that sound is or even if a sound was actually made, the opening of the seventh seal was highly significant and was enough of an event that everyone and everything just stopped making any sound for thirty minutes.

As one commenter writes,

In light of its significance in chapter 5, one might expect that the scroll itself would now be read. But no, not only does John not do anything so pedestrian, he never mentions the scroll itself again – although another little scroll will appear in chapter 10, whose meaning is a matter of considerable debate among interpreters. In the present case, one is also caught by surprise that the opening of the seventh seal is not accompanied by loud sounds of various kinds, as in earlier moments (trumpet blasts, shouts, etc.); rather the reader is caught up short with silence in heaven for about half an hour. This is mostly likely intended to arouse awe and wonder, not to mention anticipation.²⁴

Revelation 8:1 is just one passage where the response to God's presence is silence. In Habbakuk 2:20, it says, "The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him." (NIV) Habbakuk 2:20 takes place just prior to the Babylonian exile.²⁵ In this passage, "the prophet Habakkuk called the people of Judah to a similar experience. Given the impending invasion of King Nebuchadnezzar and his marauding hordes, Habbakuk encouraged the people to gain perspective on God's plan for Israel and the nations by acknowledging his presence in his holy temple and revering him in silence (Hab. 2:20)."²⁶

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Fee, 119.

²⁵ Holmes, Michael W. The NIV Application Commentary. London: Zondervan, 1999, 663.

²⁶ Ibid

In this verse, the response to the Lord's presence is silence, which agrees with the above interpretation of the silence – it was a response of awe and wonder, most likely at the presence of God. In Zechariah 2:13 a similar response is noted as it says, “Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.” (ESV) In this passage, Zechariah's vision “concludes with the awesome admonition, ... Man has had his say long enough, with complaints against God's ways, with mockery, with threats against God and his people. But now, God comes forth to take action. Man will be utterly silenced!”²⁷

There are five possible interpretations on how the half hour of silence can be viewed. The first, as explored above, is that the silence was showing the awe and anticipation created by the opening of the seventh seal. The second view, as Walter Scott asserts, is that it was not a literal silence. He believes that the singing in heaven would continue.²⁸

The third view, as interpreted by H.B. Swete, is “that there was apparently a temporary suspension of heavenly revelations imposed upon John.”²⁹ So, John is not referring to a literal silence in heaven, he is referring to a silence in the revelations given to him. Swete says the suspension “could have been caused by any number of factors, including time for John to write what had been given to him thus far or perhaps even a period of rest before the intensity of the remaining visions unfold.”³⁰ These two views are speculative, and have little basis on the context of the surrounding text, however.³¹

The fourth view, which is held by R. H. Charles, “links the pause with the text that follows, which focuses on the prayers of the saints.”³² Patterson agrees this is a more plausible explanation of the text and has an advantage because “it takes into careful consideration the actual text that follows.”³³

The fifth view, which the majority of theologians agree upon is that “The dramatic pause is ‘to symbolize the awe and dread with which the heavenly hosts await the events about to happen.’”³⁴

²⁷ Elwell, Walter A. *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989, 690

²⁸ Patterson, Paige. 2012. *Revelation: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*. New American Commentary. Nashville, TN: Holman Reference.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1048840&site=ehost-live>, 206

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

With the use of seven seals, the number seven is used several significant events in the Bible, such as the seven days of creation, where on the seventh day, God rested.³⁵ Using this model of rest on the seventh day or after the seventh event is paralleled here with the opening of the seals.

Seal 6 covered the end of history; and though we have learnt to beware of treating the sequence of John's visions as the historical sequence of the events they portray, it is hard to imagine that Seal 7 would cover anything other than the events which follow the end of history. When Seal 7 is actually broken open, however, there is silence—a silence which confirms our interpretation of Scene 2. For in this scene Christ is revealing to John what will be the experience of the church in the world; so concerning what will happen after the end of the world, he naturally at this point has nothing to say. There is a seventh Seal; that is, there is another world to come; but the revelations dealing with it are reserved for later Scenes. Meanwhile we are to learn that the church need never expect to be preserved from the common ills of mankind, as long as this world endures; but that God is still on the throne, Christ is still at the centre of all things, and his people are indestructible.

So begins a half-hour of silence. In terms of actual history and eternity, half an hour is nothing. But in terms of a drama depicting them, it is a lengthy interval, in which John can meditate on Scene 2 before Scene 3 begins.³⁶

In a spiritual setting, the use of silence helps those studying the Bible to focus and builds an environment of reverence for a time of worship. In church services, when the pastor wants people think and ponder their spiritual state or how they will apply the message for that week, he will ask everyone to bow their heads and close their eyes, so they are free from distractions and they can focus on their reflections. Some theologians view the half hour of silence in a similar light: "But suddenly an intense silence—the only one noted in the whole book of Revelation—seems to overwhelm the whole creation. It does not last long. John timed it as about half an hour. But it will seem like an eternity. In fact, it gives opportunity once again for all to consider eternity. Those in heaven meditate and pray."³⁷

In his commentary, Fee agrees, that the silence was meant for reflection for believers: "The time before the appearance of the kingdom of Christ will be short, for the opening of the seventh seal indicates the dissolution of the earthly city ... and the beginning of the eternal rest ... Even though the second

³⁴ Patterson, 206.

³⁵ Weinrich, William C. 2005. *Revelation*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=787504&site=ehost-live>, 117

³⁶ Yeatts, John R. Series: Believers Church Bible Commentary. Scottsdale, Pa : Herald Press. 2003. eBook., Database: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)

³⁷ Michael W. Holmes, *The NIV Application Commentary* (London: Zondervan, 1999), 663.

coming of Christ is unknown even to the angels ... when he comes every supernatural power will be silent out of awe over the exceeding greatness of the glory of the king of creation..."³⁸

Later in the same commentary, he once again states that the silence was a response to who God is and His glory. "Therefore, when the seventh seal was loosed, "there was," it says, "silence for about half an hour," since the king of creation was coming and every angelic and supernatural power, astounded at the exceeding greatness of the glory of him who was coming, for that reason became silent."³⁹

DeVillie in his journal article about Revelation 8:1-6, says that the silence was explained in Isaiah 47:8, which said the silence was where the "widowhood and loss of children will take place 'in a moment in a single day.'"⁴⁰ He goes on to explain that the silence was used to bring attention to the meaning of the passage. He writes: "If a day and an hour is an important and dramatic indication of a short time, half an hour is even shorter: there is a brief silence in heaven to dramatize the moment at which the vision of the seventh seal is given. As a result, attention on what is to happen next in the introduction, is intense. The audience, listening to the presentation of the text, would have been acutely focused on what would be revealed to them in Rev 8:1-6. This enhances the significance of the introduction and its contents."⁴¹

Bauckham, also ties the silence to the judgment that follows with the trumpet blasts later in the chapter. "The silence in heaven (8:1) allows the prayers of the saints to be heard (8:4), to which the divine response is the judgment indicated in 8:5, and spelled out in detail in the judgments of the trumpet-blasts, as is indicated by the interlocking device which introduces the angels with their trumpets already in 8:2 and by the expanded repetition of the imagery of 8:5 at the blast of the seventh trumpet (11:19)."⁴²

³⁸ Fee, 117

³⁹ Fee, 118

⁴⁰ Michael Bland Simmons, "Eschatological Salvation," *Universal Salvation in Late Antiquity*, 2015, 78, doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190202392.003.0009.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 250.

Conclusion

While Christians can glean many lessons from Revelation 8:1 and the silence following the opening of the seventh seal, here are just a few that Christians should consider.

The first is that the response of silence in Revelation 8:1 shows believers an appropriate response to God. Too often, it seems Christians lose sight of the appropriate response and how they should be approaching God and faith on a daily basis. In other words, Christians need more awe for God in their lives. When sitting down for daily devotions or prayer, they should make every effort possible to make the environment set aside for God. This means, no distracting music, looking at the phone, or television in the background. There should be peace and quiet, and time for learning, talking to God through prayer, and making an effort just to dwell in his presence.

While some might point out that Christians won't fully experience God's presence until we are in heaven, dwelling with God for eternity (and that is true), one can experience God through the means given to believers now. As John Piper writes in one of his blog posts responding to a question about what it means to experience God's presence, "The presence of God or the nearness of God is a metaphor from two sides. One, our experience of it and the other, God's expression of it. Our experience of it means that we taste or feel or realize the reality of God more directly, more authentically, more intimately, more effectively — that is, producing more effects in our lives — more certainly, more satisfyingly, or more terrifyingly, and so on. In other words, his presence as we experience him is the heightening of his reality in our lives either for good, if we are in his grace, or for ill, if we are under his wrath. Which is why Jesus makes all the difference here to shield us and make God a welcoming reality or presence for us."⁴³

As Christians, the idea of being able to dwell in God's presence should excite us. However, too many times, the idea of dwelling in God's presence can also be terrifying. What if a Christian is listening to God, and he asks him or her to do something they are uncomfortable with, or he reveals sin the Christian is comfortable keeping "hidden." While those realities are possible, Christians should focus on

⁴³ "What Does It Mean to Live in God's Presence?" *Desiring God*, May 25, 2019, 1, accessed May 25, 2019, <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-does-it-mean-to-live-in-gods-presence>.

the fact that God is worthy of being worshipped as the powerful creator of the earth. He is God. As shown in Revelation 8:1, his presence demands silence and awe among believers and all of his creation.

Sometimes, pride gets in the way of attempts to spend more time with God and dwell in awe at who He is. Jonathan Dodson, pastor of City Life Church in Austin, solution to getting rid of our pride is to focus more on Jesus's death on the cross.

There is an antidote to pride, and it is not to think less of ourselves. Instead we out to dwell upon the God who did become one of us, who gracefully withstood our scorn and self-adulation. Jesus is the God who, in the face of pride, calls us to the cross. How can we be proud there, where our evil pins our God to a tree? ... The way out of pride is worship, to look upon a God who is greater than ourselves. We recover awe when we acknowledge the greatness of his sacrifice, the depth of our sin, and the height of his love – all in the person of Christ.⁴⁴

As referenced in the introduction to this paper, sometimes silence can make us uncomfortable and make us squirm. Why is that? Brian Croft, Senior Pastor of Auburndale Baptist Church, says silence in our time focusing on God makes us uncomfortable because it exposes sin, a lesson he learned through spending time with God while going through a hard time in his life.

... I learned if my emotions are the gateway to my soul, then it is silence that exposes the soul. I was not ready to face the ugly things that got exposed. But God in his amazing grace met me in a sweet, powerful way and began a healing journey that has brought a consistent peace in my soul. It was through silence in a quiet place, meditating on truth, and prayerfully asking the Lord's help that I experienced this deeper level of God's grace and presence within my soul. It is the same place that every pastor must expose and reach with the power of God's grace for us to experience his love deeply and, as a result, have a long ministry."⁴⁵

However, silence is not a spiritual discipline most people are working into their lives. In the post by Croft, he gives four reasons it is important to practice silence in our lives. The first reason, as referenced above, is that "silence exposes the soul."⁴⁶ Christians can use noise as a means to escape the

⁴⁴ "Recovering Awe," *Desiring God*, May 25, 2019, 1, accessed May 25, 2019, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/recovering-awe#modal-607-n1vI0ldp>.

⁴⁵ Brian Croft, "4 Reasons Every Christian Needs Time in Silence," *Southern Equip*, July 18, 2018, accessed May 25, 2019, <http://equip.sbts.edu/article/4-reasons-every-christian-spend-time-silence/>.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

hard things that are happening in our lives. By keeping a life in a constant state of chaos, then one never has to stop to reflect on what's going on or heal from past pain and hurts.⁴⁷

The second reason he gives is that “silence confronts the voices.” The voices he’s referring to are the lies Christians believe about God and the way Satan likes to feed negative thoughts into the heads of believers. Silence, he says, is a way to separate and weed out those thoughts by dwelling on the truths God gives us. Croft writes that his inner voices tormented him. “These voices tormented me. Abusive voices from my past, lies from the enemy, and painful words of criticisms in the present all created these messages of failure and self-loathing that were loudest when I was alone in silence. So, I ran from silence to try and escape these voices. I needed silence to confront these voices and speak powerful, gospel truth against the lies I heard and had believed for so long.”⁴⁸

His third reason is that “silence teaches us to listen.”⁴⁹ Many people are so preoccupied by formulating their next sentence, they forget to actually listen to what the person they are with is saying. Croft says his time practicing the discipline of silence taught him to be present in conversations, and to “learn to listen without a need to respond.”⁵⁰

Croft’s fourth reason brings to light the dependence on noise in today’s world. “Silence exposes the soul and can test how much we have grown to depend on noise to block out the pain of our lives.”⁵¹ It is a strange thought to think how noise can have addictive properties, however, anything that is used to keep people distracted from worshipping God is one more thing vying for their devotion to the one true God.

David Mathis, executive editor for DesiringGod.com and pastor at Cities Church in Minneapolis, agrees that technology and advances in society may be stealing the quiet Christians need to reflect on God. “And so the excesses and drawbacks of modern life have only increased the value of silence and solitude as spiritual disciplines. We need to get alone and be quiet more than ever before.

Because silence is an often-overlooked discipline, it is fascinating to see how God, in the midst of chaos, brought focus to himself through silence in Revelation. While only for a short time, it was enough

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Croft, 1

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid

to help people focus their prayers and thoughts toward God, and to revel in his greatness as the events of the end of the world had unfolded. In Revelation, the unfolding of God's ultimate plan for the end of the world was coming to light. Death was being defeated and sin was finally being put in its final resting place. God knew people were distracted by all the events going on. He knew that they needed a break from the chaos. They needed a dramatic pause.

The question Christians need to ask themselves today is when will they do the same?

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