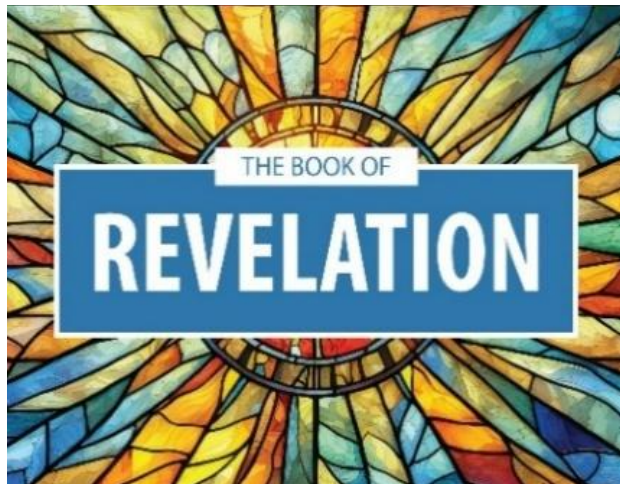




Silence in Heaven and the Prayers of the Saints

PART 19

Introductions

Let's get started by sharing our names and answering this question: *[Provide introductions as necessary and choose your own question].*

Songs of Praise

Let's begin our time singing to the Lord. *[Sing additional songs if you prefer. Contact the church office for copies of our church songbooks.]*

A Mighty Fortress

A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper he, amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
does seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,
were not the right Man on our side,

the Man of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth his name,
from age to age the same;
and he must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed
his truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure,
for lo! his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.

That Word above all earthly powers
no thanks to them abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours
through him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still;
his kingdom is forever!

Martin Luther, 1529

Church News

- Churchwide Prayer Night, Nov 2, 6-7PM

Study

[This guide utilizes the Sunday sermon notes, please [click this link](#) to access them.]

Q: Would someone read aloud Revelation 8:1-5?

Chapter eight begins with the breaking of the seventh seal in which heaven responds in silence.

Q: Why do we see this moment of silence in

heaven? What does this silence evoke?

We know that the believers to whom John wrote suffered for their faith. Many may have asked, "Where is God in all this?!" (cf. Ps 79; Rev 6:10). We learn here in Revelation that there will be a time when God finally rights every wrong in his final judgment. However, for us today there *appears* to be moments when God is silent amidst of our sufferings.

Q: How does this passage instill hope for Christians facing suffering today? How does it encourage you?

Generally, the western church can be affected by a dependence on material comforts and relative absence of high persecution.

Q: In what ways might a dependence on these hinder the western church from genuinely or fully appreciating that truth that there awaits a final judgment? Do you think you have been affected in any way?

We learned Sunday that there is a connection between high thoughts of God and godliness.¹

Q: What did this mean?

Q: Does your mind trend toward high thoughts of God or small thoughts of God? Explain.

New Testament scholar Richard Baukham writes during the silence, "the angel burns the incense on the altar to accompany the prayers of the saints... at the climax of history, heaven is silent so that the prayers of the saints can be heard, and the final judgment occurs in response to them."

Q: Why is prayer a privilege for Christians and not a burden?

The passages of Scripture which describe God's judgment require us to think about the ultimate

Notes...

¹ "High thoughts of God" conform to the Lord's full self-revelation in Scripture. It is to meditate on how he is revealed throughout his word and not simply on a few conveniently selected attributes which tend to reduce him to an idol of our own making; a merely better version of ourselves. A low view of God will always lead to impiety, ungodliness. A God without judgment or righteous wrath may generate warm thoughts but will never inspire repentance or awe or holy devotion. Small thoughts of God undermine the gospel and strip the cross of its power. A God who is loving but possesses no anger over wickedness would be our moral inferior for his love would be sentimental rather than substantive.

matters of life's end and what lies beyond this life.

Q: How has thinking about (meditating on) the final judgment of God increased your sense of urgency, and how has this led to change in your life?

Q: Are there any further questions or comments before we break for prayer?

Prayer

[Take time to pray - men with men, and women with women.]