

“The Seventh Seal and the Prayers of All the Saints”
Revelation 8:1-5

Last Sunday: He Will Shelter Them with His Presence

Today: The Seventh Seal and the Prayers of All the Saints

8:1/ “When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.”
Some possibilities:

- Preterist (past): Related to Israel’s Hour of Prayer in the destruction of Jerusalem
- Historicist (timeline): A period of peace between barbarian invasions of the fourth century
- Idealist (spiritual): The lull before the storm of God’s judgment
- Futurist (future): Silence of expectancy between the sixth seal and first trumpet

Could this thirty minutes of silence also be a sort of worshipful waiting?

Ps. 62:1, “For God alone my soul waits in *silence*; from Him comes my salvation.”

Ps. 13:1-2, “*How long*, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? *How long* will you hide your face from me? *How long* must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? *How long* shall my enemy be exalted over me?”

8:2/ The Purpose of Trumpets:

1. Gathering for worship or feast days
2. Movement of the tribes in the wilderness
3. Announcement of an attack, war, or victory
4. An appearance of the Ark
5. Coronation of the king
6. Coming of the Lord
7. Divine judgment

8:3/ There were two altars at the tabernacle/temple:

- Brazen altar: the animal would die for your sins (cover your sins)
- Incense altar: the incense would go on this altar (symbolic of prayer)
- Rom. 8:26-27, “Likewise the Spirit *helps us* in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”
- Can you by prayer change God’s divine will?
“I don’t want to be insensitive ... but what could I possibly say to God that would change His mind? Would I give Him information that He didn’t have before I talked to Him? Could I give Him counsel ... that He lacked before I talk to him? ... We are not God’s guidance counselors and we don’t change His mind. *If we don’t change His mind, why pray?* First of all, because He commands us to pray. And second of all, through the

instrument of prayer we enter into communion and dialogue with our Heavenly Father and it is an unspeakable privilege to be able to pray and let Him know our burdens and what's on our mind. He knows what we are going to ask before we ask it (Mt. 6:8) and yet he encourages us to ask Him, not for His benefit, but for ours." – R. C. Sproul

- Besides the importance of you obeying, enjoying communion with God, and unburdening yourself by praying, if God is sovereign (Is. 46:10), then why should you pray?
"God answers these questions in this (text). He says that we are to view our prayers as included in the eternal decrees of God. God has not only decreed from all eternity what **will happen**, but has also declared that our prayers should be **a means** by which these things happen. He has ordained the end, but also the means to the end. And prayer is a very important means." – Joel Beeke
- So, can your prayers change things? Jm. 5:16b-18, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit."
- How it works: Our prayers are part of God's ordained **means** whereby He fulfills His decreed **end**.
- End? The desired goal
- Means? The tools used to achieve the desired goal