

PRAYING DOWN

F I R E

REVELATION 8:1-5

Big Idea: Justice is coming in conjunction with our prayers.

1.) These verses depict the **END** of human history (v. 1, 5).

-- *Two indications these verses depict the very end of human history:*

a.) Verse 5 is the language of God's **APPEARING**

- Language about peals of thunder, lightning, and earthquakes always marks the very end when God appears on the scene.
- All of this all upheaval takes place for one reason: God is making His presence known (Ex. 19, Rev. 4:5, 8:5, 11:19, 16:18).
- Each time we encounter this language, John has arrived at the end of the sequence and the end has come.

b.) The **SILENCE** here anticipates final judgment.

- The half-an-hour of silence experienced by John in today's text is a climactic pause anticipating the final scene.
- It is the calm before the ultimate storm of God's ultimate judgment against sin on earth.

2.) We are **SPEECHLESS** before Christ's coming (v. 1).

- Silence is the only appropriate response to God's coming judgment against sin (Job 40:1-4, Hab. 2:20, Zeph. 1:7).
- The vision of Christ coming to judge the world in glory is so awesome and glorious that the entire universe closes its mouth in awe.

-- If your understanding of God never renders you speechless, then your view of God is too **SMALL**

-- To think you can talk your way out of the coming judgment is to overestimate yourself and underestimate the wrath of God.

-- *Does your understanding of God ever inspire speechlessness and awe?*

3.) **PRAY** for justice (v. 3-5).

-- The **INCENSE** here symbolizes the prayers of the saints (Rev. 5:8, Psalm 141:2).

-- God takes pleasure in the prayers of His people; they rise up to heaven like fragrant incense.

-- When the fire from the censer falls upon the earth (v. 5), we know the end has come, because we see the language of theophany.

-- God brings about His final judgment as a result of His people's **PRAYER** (Rev. 6:9-17).

-- *Do you pray for God's justice to come upon the earth? Do you pray for Christ to come and bring about the end of this world?*

-- The wickedness and injustice of this world will only end when Christ returns and judges it with perfect righteousness.

Application

1.) Please God by **PRAYING** to God.

-- Both in this passage and in Revelation 5, prayer is compared to fragrant incense that rises before God.

-- One of the clearest ways to please God is one basic activity that is so often missing: prayer.

2.) Prayer makes a **DIFFERENCE**

- God has sovereignly chosen to orchestrate His purposes in conjunction with our prayers (James 4:2, James 5:13, Luke 11:9-10).
- God wants us to want to pray, because we can't imagine missing out on the power and possibilities of prayer.

3.) Pray with **PERSEVERANCE**

- Justice is coming, and it is coming in conjunction with our prayers, so don't give up!
- Even more than blessing His people, God delights to bless His people in response to their prayers.