

GNITN

#565

The Coming Reckoning

Silence Isn't Always Golden

This phrase is often used when a noise or action that is loud, boring, or tedious for whatever reason stops and those bothered by its breath for the first time without hearing it. It could be a buzz or vibration from a machine or an insect. It could be a vibration from pieces of metal rubbing against each other or it could be from someone snoring. You get the point. All anyone cares to see is if that irksome sound stops and, when it does, the resulting silence is like a heavenly moment. However, silence can be anything but golden if you want to get a response from God and all you get is silence. It's happened before and how we react to it is telling. Silence can mean a lot of things. Let's take a quick look at some examples of silence in the Bible.

Silence When The Death Angel Came

In the last plague to convince Pharaoh to let His people go, there was silence in the homes of all of Egypt wondering what would happen after word of that Moses and the God He served would kill all the firstborn of all those who didn't have the blood over their door posts. It was a test of obedience by the Jews and even gentiles who could have done the same thing if they wanted to avoid certain death. It was silent for a time, but then the crying and wailing began as death did indeed visit as promised. But even as the night wore on, no one knew when it would be over and those who obeyed could only wait until it was safe to leave their homes. In this instance, silence was a test of faith in a God who performed as He said 9 times before. And it was silence until judgment came for those who didn't believe in God or worse, hardened their hearts against Him.

Silence When Moses Was On Mt Sinai

"Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil. 23 They said to me, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.' 24 So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!" (Ex 32:22-24, NIV)

Moses told the Israelites to wait while he met with God and, as we know was given the 10 Commandments. To be fair, waiting was not something these people wanted to do. They cried out to God for hundreds of years to be delivered and now they want to get to the promised land, not wait while Moses is on the top of what looks like an angry mountain. Talk to them is cheap and they were impatient. The silence from God and Moses became an opportunity for dissention and grumbling and the creation of the golden calf that miraculously sprang out of melted gold. Aaron told Moses that and it was one of those, "that's my story and I'm sticking to it" excuses people who are hiding what really happened give. In this case, silence became a license to sin.

Silence When Daniel Was Asking For An Answer

So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

17 A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed.

(Dan 6:16-17, NIV)

We know all about when Daniel prayed and asked for an interpretation of the dream he was given. Those three weeks tested his faith, but the difference was that this man of God knew how to wait on God in dire circumstances. After all, he spent a long night in the lion's den with lions who were starving and wanted to devour him. One can only imagine being in total darkness for hours and hours smelling the hunger of these ferocious predators and waiting for morning to come. We aren't told the details of what happened during that time, but we know the end of the story. Even the unrighteous king was praying for Daniel's deliverance. A person who experiences great deliverance is a person who can wait a little longer for an answer from God. In this case, silence is an opportunity to increase your faith in a God who sent an answer and fights to get it to you.

Silence After Jesus Died

The scene is set by the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus. Our savior died and was buried in a tomb guarded by Roman soldiers whose only job was to make sure that Jesus stayed silent in there. And to keep anyone from taking the body to make it look like a resurrection occurred. While all this happened, His disciples and followers wanted to hear from God, but all they got was silence. Jesus did tell them He would rise again in three days and did bring Lazarus and others back from death so they knew from that and the stories from their scriptures that it could happen. But the waiting was difficult and for Thomas, a bridge too far to accept:

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John 20:24-25, NIV)

Thomas was likely not alone in his doubt. However unlikely, the stone was rolled away and they did see Jesus again. In this case, silence led to doubt and stress and long nights without the one who was their total source for faith.

Silence Is Demanded Now

We need to address the seeming silence from God after at least 4 years of predictions and prophecies about exposing darkness and evil and overturning plans that have been "hidden" for quite some time. People, even seasoned believers have begun to doubt and are telling others that it is over. Things will continue just as they have for decades and we need to just accept that the words are from those who call themselves prophets when in reality they are not. Critics are saying they are taking advantage of digital technology to get their 15 minutes of fame and should close up shop and let this whole prophecy thing to those who aren't given to outlandish predictions of cities being destroyed, national capitals being moved and leaders dying who won't repent. In this case, silence would be a great thing when it means silencing these nonsensical words and to stop saying they came from God.

Silence Is A Test Now

I can speak from experience on this silencing as some in the infancy of these words from Him, demanded I give up on these flights of fancy and apologize for them if I want to have any credibility in ministry going forward. One person said I needed to distance myself from these words and quit sullyng the reputations of true prophets and the gift of prophecy overall. National leaders even wrote a document and all but said if you don't agree with it, you are part of the problem and not the solution. The document is not filled with hatred and actually is quite

conciliatory overall, but there are statements that basically say that God doesn't deal with men the same way He did in the Old Testament when He said that judgment will fall on them if they didn't repent. In interviews with the chief sponsors, they basically state that those who don't sign it will be seen as not approved and are to be dismissed until they apologize. This is to keep true prophets and prophecies from being criticized and accepted.

Silence Is Warranted, But Limited

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1, ESV)

While it is true that there are those who demand blind fealty to them as prophets, the vast majority of people giving strong prophetic words are mostly servants who fully admit they don't want the spotlight to be put on them and avoid public venues unless God calls them to do it. It is true that if people are using the title of prophet for fame and even money it is to be strongly addressed, but the same is true of anyone who uses their title to lord over people. And when saying words are coming from God it raises the proverbial stakes rather than just saying it is one's opinion. I am not saying that prophets shouldn't be accountable in any way, shape, or form. Their words and their lives should be examined to see if they comport with the Bible and if not, they are to be held to the high standards of any leader whether it be a pastor, evangelist, teacher, or prophet and to answer for it. As we come up on the 2024 election so many words are going to be put to the test. How will the prophetic community and prophecy overall fare?

A Quenching Silence

Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. (1 Thess 5:19-21, NKJV)

Paul the Apostle gave us sage advice when he told the Thessalonians not to quench the spirit. The word for "quench" means to extinguish, quench, suppress or thwart. The Thessalonians obviously were doing this for him to mention it. And note that it is mentioned to not despise prophecies as well. The word for "despise" means "to count as nothing, to treat with utter contempt, i.e., as zero; set at nought, despise utterly; to regard something as lacking any standing (value). And since we need to balance this, Paul uses a word for "test" that means to try (test) to show something is acceptable (real, approved); put to the test to reveal what is good (genuine). Putting this all together we see that we must not suppress the Holy Spirit from moving nor treat with utter contempt prophecies. We should also test both using the Bible as the standard while not quenching either. This is an acceptable standard and one that can and should help us in these turbulent times we live in when God is there, and He is not silent.