

## **Silent Before Him**

*"But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him" (Habakkuk 2:20).*

In some churches, this text is often quoted or sung at the beginning of the worship as if it meant that people must be "quiet in church." But being "quiet in church" just is not the point of this verse at all. In the context, Habakkuk contrasts the dumb wooden idols created by men with the true God who sits on His throne. His point is that God, the Creator, is in His holy temple, the place from which He speaks; His creatures must therefore shut up and listen to Him! Men do not have the authority to command, nor do the idols that they have created. God is the One - the only One - who speaks with authority; He is the only One who has the right to command, and we (His creatures) must listen to and obey His voice.

You see, the point of this text is not related to our demeanor in church services. It has to do with God's authority - to which men must quietly submit. Man must not rebel against God, nor must he try to speak for God. What man must do is humbly listen to and obey the voice of God - and that's all.

When you see this as the real point of the verse, you will see that it relates a lesson that modern religious men need to hear.

This, and many other Scriptures, makes it clear that we cannot have God's approval unless we're willing to be quiet while He speaks. Jesus, for example, taught that we must submit to the authority of God in order to reach heaven; He said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Note that it is the Father's will that must be done, not my will or your will or the will of some dumb idol. And, according to the New Testament, we cannot know God's will without His revealing it to us, which He has done in the written Word (1 Cor. 2:11-13). The written Word, then, because it accurately relates God's will to us, becomes that which must be obeyed. And without obeying His will we cannot have His approval.

And so, when we start trying to figure out how to acceptably serve God, we must have His Word on it. When we start doing things that we do not have His permission to do, then we are not being silent before Him.

And right here is where most people in our religious world today get in trouble: They do not want to be silent before the Lord. They will not shut up long enough to hear what God wants, because they're too busy inventing their own way of serving Him. Hundreds upon hundreds of examples could be given of how man has added to and subtracted from what God has said, and all of them prove that men are not listening to God. When will modern men learn that our additions to and subtractions from His Word are all our own creations, and are therefore no better than the idols carved by the ancient pagans? These inventions will not bring us closer to God; they will only serve to separate us further.

Indeed, God "is in His holy temple." And if we would be wise creatures, we had better be quiet and listen to Him. We are His creation; therefore "let all the earth be silent before Him"

**- by Rick Ligin**

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## **What Needs Changing?**

When you look into the mirror and your face appears dirty, it is your face, not the mirror that needs attention. The Bible is the mirror of the soul. It reveals our imperfections and shows us how to make corrections. However, some try to rework the Bible instead of reshaping their lives. Don't make that mistake. When you look into the "*perfect law of liberty*", continue in it. Don't be a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work (James 1:25). Don't try to change the word; let the word change your life.

**- by Lloyd Atherton**

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## **Sin Is Not a Smart Investment**

- Adam and Eve, for a bit of fruit when they were not even hungry, brought suffering, shame, and death upon themselves and us (Genesis 3).

- Lot's wife, revealing her longing for the things that pertain to earth, took one last look back and became a pillar of salt (Genesis 19).
- Achan, for a garment he could not wear, and for silver and gold he could not spend, paid all his possessions, family, and life (Joshua 7).
- Samson, for the caress of a hypocritical woman, lost his will, his strength, his liberty, his eyes, and finally his life (Judges 15).
- David, to enjoy another man's wife, handed to posterity a tale of adultery, shame, and tears (2 Samuel 11, 12).
- Ahab, coveting a vineyard he'd never enjoy, permitted his wife to have its owner killed (2 Kings 23).
- Judas, for thirty pieces of silver which he had no occasion or conscience to use, took his own life in shame and despair (Matthew 27).
- Demas, loving the transient world more than a permanent future, forsook and provoked the wrath of heaven (2 Timothy 4).
- A Christian who leaves Christ forfeits his ticket to heaven for joys that are only temporary (2 Peter 2:20-33; Hebrews 11:25).

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## ***Will You Be Missed?***

When Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat became king over Judah, he secured his position on the throne by killing all of his brothers (2 Chronicles 21:4). This was just the beginning of his horribly wicked reign. He made shrines to various idolatrous gods and coerced God's people to worship the idols (vs. 11).

Finally, because of his great wickedness, Elijah the prophet sent him a letter foretelling of his death by a terrible intestinal illness. The prophecy came true, and Jehoram died in "severe pain" (vs. 19).

As a final footnote on this terrible life, the inspired record says that the customary burial proceedings of a king were not performed and that he departed "to no one's sorrow" (vs. 20). What a sad commentary on a mis-spent life.

In Acts 9 we read of the death of a woman named Dorcas. She was "abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did" (vs 36). When the apostle Peter came to the place, the room was full of people who were "weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them" (vs. 39). Her obviously good life left a positive and lasting impression on all who knew her - and they mourned her passing.

As Jehoram and Dorcas, we, too, will one day pass from this life. We wonder: Will we be missed? Will anyone mourn when we are gone?

The answer to these questions, of course, is to be determined by how we spend our time here and now. If we are faithful and dedicated to both God and man; if we are busy serving the Lord and others; if we live less for self and more for family, friends, and neighbors; and if we keep our eye firmly fixed on what is really most important in this life – then there is a good probability that our passing will be more like Dorcas', and not like Jehoram's.

When you die, will anyone miss you? Think!

- *by Greg Gwin*