

# The Solace of Silence: In a Noisy World

*“The work of  
righteousness  
shall be peace;  
and the effect of  
righteousness  
quietness and  
assurance for  
ever.”  
—Isaiah 32:17*

## **IN THIS SCRIPTURE, THE**

Prophet Isaiah speaks of a future time when our Lord Jesus will establish his kingdom of peace and righteous quietness over a sin-sick and greatly disturbed human family. A thousand years has been set aside for “The Christ” to carry out this wonderful work of restoration. The prophet further proclaims our Heavenly Father’s ultimate purpose, “My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”—vs. 18

## **BE STILL**

This wonderful promise of God has been confirmed by the psalmist, who wrote, “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” (Ps. 46:10)

David spoke of our loving Heavenly Father's great power to carry out his ultimate purpose. "The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." (chap. 93:4) "Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people."—chap. 65:7

## **A GREAT CALM**

The restless sea and pounding waves symbolically illustrate the present noisy and jarring condition of our world and its people. Jesus employed these powerful symbols during his earthly ministry when he performed one of his great miracles. He was pointing to the far greater power and authority that he will exercise on behalf of the whole human family when his future kingdom is established.

It is recorded, "When he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful? O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"—Matt. 8:23-27

Matthew described the actions that were taken by Jesus when he was awakened from sleep. He immediately rose to his feet and then exercised the mighty power that his Heavenly Father had given him. By that authority, he could rebuke the stormy

winds and the violent sea, and was able to bring those who were with him in the boat to a place of refuge, peacefulness, and calmness. Matthew's use of the word "arose" points to Jesus' taking authoritative control over the violence that had overwhelmed his disciples in the boat. He then used the word "rebuke," which shows that Jesus was not only able to restrain the restless waters, but also to sharply curb their ferocity and power.

### **JESUS' POWER MANIFEST**

In Mark's gospel, the same word "rebuke" is used when describing our Lord Jesus' great power over evil. Mark records the incident when Jesus was in the synagogue at Capernaum with James and John, and was teaching on the Sabbath day. From the account, we read, "They were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him."—Mark 1:22-27

The prophet Daniel also speaks of the time when our Lord will arise to assume control over earth's

noisy and chaotic affairs. He wrote, “At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”—Dan. 12:1

The Psalmist David pointed forward to the time when God would give the command for the Master to arise and assume power over the affairs of mankind. We read, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.” (Ps. 110:1,2) In this scripture, the word “LORD” is written in capital letters to identify the Heavenly Father, whereas the word “Lord” written in lower case letters refers to our Lord Jesus, who was to wait for the Father’s command. The promises for a restored earth and its people will be made manifest under the establishment of a new order—the administration of Christ’s future kingdom. At that time, “The Christ” will share in stilling the noisy waters and in bringing peace and quietness to a chaotic world.

## **THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE**

When our earth and its natural surroundings were created, a loving God included in nature unique sounds that provide a further dimension of peace and tranquility. These sounds enhance our lives, and produce a sense of harmony, tranquility, and restfulness to earth’s inhabitants. Examples of these exquisite qualities include such sounds as a

babbling brook or splashing waterfall, a gentle breeze rustling through the leaves of the trees, or the melodious voices of singing birds. Among other comforting sounds within our natural environment are the gentle and rhythmic patter of warm rain drops as they land on the surface of flower petals during a refreshing spring shower, and the buzzing of bees, or the chirping of crickets at harvesttime.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUND**

Sound is produced by moving or vibrating objects that produce movements in the air, or other media. These reach our ears as waves. Without these vibrations, no sound can be produced. No sound is possible in a vacuum. When an object moves or vibrates it causes slight changes in air pressure. Sound waves contain energy, therefore they can move. This is what our ears detect and translate into distinctive sounds.

Harmonious sounds are in accord with one another and are marked by an agreement in the quality of tone that may be enjoyed as a tuneful melody. It is consistent and pleasing to the ear. Students of the Bible oftentimes speak of the Truth as being harmonious. There is no discord in the message, and it is thus pleasing to hear. Noise, or discordant sound, on the other hand, is a combination of in-harmonious tones sounded together in opposition and conflict. The lack of the essential concord produces a clash of sounds.

## **THE INTRUSION OF NOISE**

Peaceful sounds are more difficult to come by in our modern-day industrial and technical world, and are becoming increasingly endangered. They

are rapidly being replaced with jarring noises and confusion that intrude upon us from nearly every direction. Some people may be more able to cope with unpleasant sounds and become partially immune to such disturbances. They may endure noise as a mere nuisance, and accept it as the inevitable outcome of our generation's technological advances. There is mounting evidence, however, to suggest that jarring and aggressive sounds have a detrimental influence upon our general health and well-being. Many people must spend a considerable part of their everyday lives surrounded by an endless and unrestrained barrage of intrusive and offensive sounds.

Sounds that may be classified as intrusive are generally associated with loud or aggressive activity. They may include such things as blaring music, barking dogs, heavy automobile and truck traffic, screeching aircraft flying overhead, loud machinery, and a wide variety of other unacceptable levels of noise that often affect our sense of peace. There is a wide variation in the threshold of sound tolerance that enables some people to endure more of these kinds of noises than others. What might be an intolerable level of noise to one person may be more acceptable to someone else.

## **SURROUNDED BY SOUND**

It is becoming unavoidably clear that we are seldom really alone anymore—with only our own thoughts and the sounds of natural silence about us. Nearly everywhere we go nowadays, we are being involuntarily accompanied by noise of some kind or another, whether it is in the form of a music

sound track, radio or television, or the noise of traffic or machinery. Sound follows us to the grocery store, to the local coffee house, into the doctor's waiting room, when we go to the bank, while we are waiting for our car to be serviced, and even at the airport. In addition, there is the incessant ring of mobile phones. There are few options left to us in our modern society for peace and quiet.

## **NOISE POLLUTION**

Industrial, manufacturing, and other types of environments create excessive levels of noise, often referred to as "noise pollution." Some of these workplaces have become concerned about protecting their employees from the common occupational hazards that may lead to permanent hearing loss. Interference with speech communication is also a concern in noisy offices and various other business-type environments. Even low-level office noise makes it harder to focus and stay motivated. Researchers have found that noise reduces the ability to cope in problem-solving tasks, which, in turn, increases frustration.

Hearing problems are on the increase and affect many people in a variety of situations. Noise pollution now plays a considerable role in such health hazards as chronic insomnia. It has been linked to mental and behavioral disorders. Elevated levels of traffic noise, especially during the nighttime hours, have been found to trigger ulcers and other health disorders. Excessive or unnatural sounds may cause anxiety and depression. To counteract this condition, many have had to resort to taking anti-anxiety medications or anti-depressant drugs.

Studies have shown that aggressive and irritating noise can raise blood cortisol levels and keep them elevated. This condition, if not attended to, may lead to high blood pressure, heart disease, and impaired mental performance. Simply finding moments of silence in our hectic lives can undo some of the damage done by noise pollution.

## **PEACE AND QUIETNESS**

There are increasingly few silencing techniques in our modern world that may help provide a few moments of peace and quietness in our everyday lives. When first awakening in the morning it has been suggested that we do something relaxing before starting out for the day. Students of the Bible often include the reading of the *Daily Manna* scripture and comments in their morning routine as a source of inspiration and meditation for the day.

It is important that we learn to appreciate the recuperative qualities of peace and quietness. Silence enables us to get more deeply acquainted with our own bodies, such as our muscles, breathing, and posture. With no outside interference we may be able to think more deeply and to reconnect with ourselves. Finding silence within allows positive thoughts to help relax us into a gentle inner peace. True silence is found when those worrisome and frantic elements begin to fade away.

Finding a natural approach to inner peace amid a noisy and boisterous world may also include a simple exercise routine such as taking a short walk. Putting ourselves in tune with our natural surroundings may help free us from the frenzied world of noise and unnatural sounds.

## **HEALING POWERS OF SOUND**

An interesting perspective in connection with the study of sound waves and their positive effects on mankind was submitted in an article published by *Woman's World* magazine (August 24, 2007) under the title, "The Amazing Healing Power of Sound" from which we quote in part. "Scientists are finding out that some sounds we hear every day are more than just relaxing—they actually have the power to heal broken bones, cure life-threatening heart ailments, fight depression, and even prevent disease.

### **A KITTEN'S PURR**

"Scientists think they now know the secret behind a cat's nine lives: 'Their purrs are the same frequency already being used by orthopedists to strengthen bones, and the sound can even help speed healing of fractures!' says Elizabeth von Muggenthaler, Ph.D., of the Fauna Communication Research Institute. Experiments are already under way to see how this sound can benefit humans, preventing osteoporosis and fractures. The music of a harp has such powerful vibrations, it can reduce blood pressure and calm the nervous system—and studies show the resonate notes harps produce can normalize irregular heartbeats."

### **RESTFUL WATERS**

The article goes on to say, "Hearing the rhythmic crash of ocean waves along the surf can fight anxiety and depression! In a recent study, students who listened to ocean sounds had less stress and anxiety than students who didn't hear the crashing surf sounds. Sea sounds are an especially

relaxing form of ‘white noise’—background sound that subconsciously induces serenity and calm. Scientists have found that dolphin vocalizations vibrate so powerfully, they can strengthen your immune system. ‘Dolphins emit frequencies that stimulate tissue repair and blood circulation,’ says acoustic therapist Laurie Seligman. No wonder dolphin songs help fight headaches, chronic fatigue syndrome, depression, and more.

“Can the gentle patter of rainfall make you sleepy? Yes! People who went to bed in a room with the sound of a rain shower fell asleep 50% faster than those with no noise at all! This is a sound the Earth makes naturally. Humans are hardwired to calm down when we hear this sound. Researchers discovered that patients in pain found relief from listening to a waterfall. Another study found that patients with chronic pain had a 20% to 30% drop in stress hormones after listening to rushing water sounds.”

## **DAVID’S CALMING HARP**

The Scriptures provide a most revealing account of the benefits of soothing and calming sound. One time when King Saul was troubled by an evil spirit his servants suggested that he call for someone to come and play a harp to calm him. Thus instructions were given, “Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.” (I Sam. 16:16) The scriptural account continues, “And David came to Saul, and

stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”—vss. 21-23

## **MUSIC THERAPY**

David was a musician, and he represents our Lord Jesus. (II Sam. 7:12-17) This wonderful account of David’s comforting music depicts the greater David—our Lord Jesus—who will bring peace and contentment to the whole human family under the administration of his future kingdom of righteousness.

In our present day, there are trained professional therapists who have been accredited by approved programs to work in hospitals, schools, prisons, and in private practice. These people work closely with clients to achieve positive therapeutic goals. They emphasize that music directly affects health and helps cope with grief, illness, depression, and stress in our everyday lives. Among music’s many interesting benefits, they point out that harp and piano music can reduce chronic pain. They have also found that music can enhance heart health, affect brain development and improve memory. Gentle singing makes sick babies less irritable and less likely to cry.

## **A TROUBLED WORLD**

The human family has lived in a turbulent world ever since sin and death were introduced by our

first parents—Adam and Eve—in the Garden of Eden. Although there have been noble attempts from time to time to help alleviate some of the suffering associated with the sentence of death, nevertheless fallen man has had to deal with its reality. The Scriptures make plain the fact that the only solution for man in this sin-sick and dying world is through the promised future kingdom of our Lord Jesus that will ultimately bring peace, quietness, and the blessings of life to all the families of the earth.

However, before this righteous rule over the affairs of the earth can begin, the present social structure, based on selfish practices and pride, must give way to the approaching new world order under Christ that will be established in its place. We believe that we are now living during the closing scenes of this present Gospel Age, and that the nations and peoples of the earth are being prepared for that grand day so near at hand.

## **TURBULENT WATERS**

We read the prophetic words of Isaiah, who wrote in symbolic language to illustrate the preparation work necessary for that wonderful world of tomorrow. It was the Father's purpose to gather the nations at this end of the age for their destruction, that the way for the promised kingdom could be prepared. In our day in prophesy, Isaiah likened this gathering together of nations and peoples as the clamoring sound of rushing, mighty waters.

He said, "Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like

the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing [thistledown, *Marginal Translation*] before the whirlwind. And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.”—Isa. 17:12-14

The Apostle Peter also spoke of our time and called it the “day of the Lord.” We read, “The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”—II Pet. 3:7

The faithful little flock of the Lord’s people, however, were to continue to abide in the assurance of the Father’s care for them. He continues, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”—vs. 10

## **CALM IN A STORMY SEA**

The Lord’s people are now witnessing the closing scenes of this present Gospel Age. Yet, we have the inner peace of which the Apostle Paul spoke. “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:7) The followers of Jesus have much advantage in every way. They can trust him not only as respects the life that now is, but also for the life which is to come. “Commit thy way

unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”—Ps. 37:5

As we continue to wait upon the Heavenly Father for the peace and quietness of his promised kingdom, let us hold fast the confidence of our faith. “These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit’s end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.”—Ps. 107:24-30

### **GOD’S PROMISE**

“The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”—Isa. 32:17,18 ■