

## Silence

Zechariah's message was sprinkled with hope of a coming Messiah but the bulk of his prophecy was decidedly negative. He issued a stiff warning to a people with *"hearts like flint, refusing to hear the Law"* (Zechariah 7:12) and his indictment was: *"they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear"* (v. 11). Rebellion is not difficult to distinguish in God's people.

They refused to heed (Zechariah 7:11). There is no mention here of an inability to understand, receive or incorporate the Words of God, just an unwillingness to take God at His word; they rejected what they knew was true. They shrugged their shoulders (Zechariah 7:11). This response evinces a total lack of respect for God, as if to say, "Who is God that we should obey him?" (cf. Exodus 5:2). They stopped their ears so that they could not hear (Zechariah 7:11). One would be hard put to find a better manifestation of intentional ignorance. The rebellious refusal to listen to God, the cavalier and casual dismissal His Word and the willful disregard of Divine warnings makes it hard to pity the person who reaps the consequences of his/her poor choices and bad decisions. And, consequences there were!

*"Therefore it happened, that just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so they called out and I would not listen," says the Lord of Hosts* (v. 13). The theory that our Lord God will always be there for us if we continue to ignore Him, despise His Word and close our eyes to truth is flawed; and that comes as a shock to most religious people. The popular theory among the misguided is that one can live as they wish, by their own rules, and still call on God in a panic, expecting sympathy. The contrary response from God was certainly a shock to the Israelites. When the Babylonian war machine marched through Canaan like a steam roller, decimating everything in its path, there were many cries for mercy but there was no help from on high. God would not hear!

Make no mistake, when the Lord comes in the clouds, this same shocking reality will signal too late for souls who have chosen to reject God (2 Thessalonians 1:8-10). And, the only thing those poor souls will hear from Heaven will be a deafening silence.