

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

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What Will It Take To Bring You To God?

Amos 4:6-12

In these verses we have a number of calamities which the Lord had visited upon Israel in the hope of inducing them to repentance. The lesson to be derived from such events is one which has proved very difficult for the human race to learn. An example is found in "Geneses 3:17-19 "And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and has eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken, and unto dust shalt thou return."

These calamities spoken of, were the result of man's disobedience. The very same thing that called for the events spoken of by Amos in our text. The warning chastisements sent by God were: famine v.6, drought v. 7-8, mildew v.9a, locusts v9b, epidemic v.10a, war v.10b, and earthquake v11. After each one came the divine statement: "and ye have not returned to me." There was still time for Israel to repent and turn to God in order to avoid the impending judgment; but they never heeded it. They overlooked the truth that God will not indefinitely warn and threaten; for those who are incorrigibly wicked and unrepentant, there remains the final and ultimate confrontation with God.

What Will It Take To Bring You To God?

We all have known people who have sat and listened to the power of a gospel message, who appeared to have been stirred by what they heard, yet they either failed or refused to respond and remained unchanged. For some reason, and who knows what:

- they refused to respond to the gospel invitation
- they rejected the opportunity to be saved from sin
- they renounced the necessity of salvation
- they refuted the message of eternal hope
- they repelled the idea of personal repentance
- and remained unchanged in heart, mind an soul.

It may be that they felt:

- that the change would be too drastic
- that the decision would be too humiliating
- that the commitment would be too demanding
- that the opposition would be too great
- that the problems would be too challenging

that the obligations would be too numerous
Or that he lifestyle would be too rigid
Hence they refused to submit and obey.
That raises the question: What will it take to bring some people to God?

I. It Took A Nervous Breakdown To Bring Nebuchadnezzar To God.

King Neb. had a dream in which he saw a great tree in the midst of the earth. The tree grew and became strong until it reached to heaven. The eaves were lovely and fruit abundant it produced food for all. The beasts sheltered by it and the birds nested in its branches, and all flesh fed from it.

Someone from heaven cried "chop down the tree and cut its branches. Strip the leaves and scatter its fruit but leave the stump and roots. Bind it with a band of iron and bronze, in the grass of field. Let it be wet with dew of heaven and let him graze with the beasts on grass. Let his heart be changed from that of a man to heart of a beast, till seven times pass over him."

The king did not understand the dream or its meaning. Hence, Daniel was called to interpret the dream:

The tree you saw is you, O king. You have grown and become strong and your dominion extends to the end of the earth. They shall drive you from men, your dwelling will be with beasts of field, and you shall eat grass like oxen. You will be wet with the dew of heaven, till you know the most high rules in the kingdoms of men. Therefore, accept this and repent of your sins. Show mercy to the poor. Twelve months pass, but Neb. does not repent. Read Daniel 4:28-34 However, when the calamities come upon him, he realizes that Jehovah is God and admits the same. This man who became insane and fed with the cattle was finally brought to his senses. What about you? Will it take some sickness or breakdown for you to come to God?

II. It Took A Storm And A Great Fish To Bring Jonah To God.

Jonah told by God to go to Ninevah and cry out against the city. Instead he goes to Tarshish where he found a ship at Joppa he paid the fare and left. The ship encounters a storm, and Jonah is eventually cast over board and swallowed by a great fish. He remains in the belly of the fish for three days and when he emerges God is waiting for him. He is told to go to Nineveh, which he does and is successful in getting the inhabitants to repent. Note: Jonah ran from God, but was not successful, no one can flee the presence of God. He could not hide in the ship, nor the belly of the fish. The message of God was the same as before, running did not change a thing. We must all face God, now and in the judgment.

To run away is foolish. Are you running today? Are you trying to hide from God and your duty? If so, it is a great mistake.

III. It Took An Earthquake To Bring The Philippian Jailer To God.

After receiving the Macedonian call Paul sought immediately to go Acts 16:10. Arriving in Philippi, they discover some women by the river where prayers were made

v.13, the Lord opened the heart of Lydia and she and her house were baptized v. 15. As they went to prayer, a certain girl possessed with a spirit of divination met them. This girl provided her masters much profit by fortune telling. The girl followed them saying "that these men are servants of the Most High God." Paul being provoked cast the demon out of her.

Realizing that their source of profit was gone, her masters seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the authorities. Whereupon they charged, before the magistrates, that these men exceedingly trouble our city. "And teach customs that are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." The magistrates, in response to the mob, tore off their clothes and beat them with many stripes, and threw them into prison. The jailer was commanded to guard them securely, hence he put them into the inner prison (there were three compartments) and also fastened their feet with stocks. At midnight Paul and Silas sing and pray. The other prisoners listen. Suddenly a great earthquake happens and the foundations of prison shaken, all the doors opened, and chains of the prisoners were loosed. The keeper awaking out of sleep, supposed everyone had escaped and was about to kill himself (his life for theirs) but Paul called out "do yourself no harm for we are all here" The guard then calls for a light, runs in and asks the most important question ever asked by man "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" He was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because at that time he was an unbeliever. When one believes, as those did in Acts 2:38 they are told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins." The fact that the jailer was told to believe, did not in anyway exclude the commands of repentance and baptism. In fact we are told that he took them that night and "washed their stripes" (repentance) and was baptized "he and his house."

It took an earthquake to bring this man to God. What will it take to bring you?

IV. It Took Rags, Poverty, and Moral Bankruptcy To Bring The Prodigal To God.

This young man left home with luggage and money in hand, and set out to enjoy everything the world can give. When he reached his destination, he settled into a life style with which he was neither familiar nor adept. It wasn't long until his money and friends were gone. Had one tried to get this young man to go home while the money and fun lasted, they probably would have failed. But soon the hunger and waste of sin set in. Friends and fun vanished. The empty feeling in his stomach reminded him that it was either eat or die. He secured a job from a "citizen of the country" And while feeding hogs, "he came to himself" and resolved to go home where there was "bread and to spare." Some people have to hit rock bottom before they come to God. The alcoholic, the depraved immoral individual, the drug addict, the thief etc. Will it take that to bring you to God? Are you in that condition today?

V. It Took The Bitter Cup of Sorrow To Bring David To God.

David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Realizing that she was to have his child, he had her husband Uriah placed in a position so as to be murdered. "...the thing that David had done displeased the Lord" 2Sam. 11:27 Sin always compounds itself in our lives. It never just stagnates, but always grows. The sin and cover up left David empty,

reflective, and dissatisfied. "My sin is ever before me," he said. It bothered him day and night. There was no escape from it. Then one day the Lord sent Nathan to David. Nathan told the following story: there were two men, one rich one poor. The rich man had many flocks and herds, the poor man had one little ewe lamb. He nourished it, and it grew up with him and his children. A traveler asked help of the rich man, but he refused to take from his own flock, but took the one lamb of the poor man and prepared it for the traveler.

When David heard of the incident he was greatly angered and cries "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die." "Then Nathan said to David you are the man..." Read 2Sam. 12: 7-15.

Just as the Lord said, the child born to David and Bathsheba died.

David could not eat or sleep during the sickness of the child. The weight of his sin bore heavily upon him. The sadness and sorrow of the occasion brought this great man to his knees in repentance for his sin. Will it take a broken heart, a broken life, a broken circle to bring you to God?

Today do you refuse:

- to bend your knee and bow your head
- to repent of your sins and iniquities
- to ask God for forgiveness
- to accept the grace of God, by obeying the gospel
- to allow God to take control of your life?

Jesus came into this world, not just to stir us up, but to change us.

Jesus came to change...

- our attitudes, from bad to good
- our heart, from one of stone to one of flesh
- our lifestyle from ungodly to holy
- our standards from worldly, to spiritual
- our countenance, from sad to joyful
- our conversation from filthy to godly

And, our destination from hell to heaven.

Don't allow yourself to become "hardened"

Stay sensitive to the word of the Spirit. Come to God in obedience, while time and opportunity are still yours.