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"WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO BRING YOU TO GOD?"

Rev. 21:1-8

INTRODUCTION:

This is one of the most heart-searching questions that I've dealt with in a long time.

It seems to have a challenge for all people.

For the (nominal) Christian, the one who is half and half. He doesn't really belong to God. What will it take to bring him to God 100%.

For the person who is (not) a Christian - what will it take to bring you to God.

Are you registered as a Christian. Today this is both a personal and powerful question, in view of the issue politically and socially in the world. Are you registered as (a citizen). We may be faced with a critical election November 7th. Every citizen of this country has a responsibility to exercise his vote. And to be a good citizen.

In (like) manner, every individual ought to be registered as a church member. It is important that you believe and that you forsake not the assembling of yourself together. But it is most important that you be registered as a Christian. Created in the image of God. And how awful it would be to be left behind with the Devil and his crowd. To be left out of Heaven and the Heavenly City. One's name needs to be registered in the lamb's book of life. And to share with the lamb which taketh away the sin of the world.

✓ I. There Are (Many Reasons) Why You Should Not Delay Coming To God

First, you are (indebted to God for life). God created you, God sustains you. God has blessed you with health.

God has preserved you through many dangers. It is really a wonder that some of you are alive today. When you think of all the dangerous experiences and places you have been through.

Second, (delay) is dangerous. You have no assurance of tomorrow. Death is certain. And the hour of death is unknown. All men are under sin and the penalty of death. Not only must man suffer the result of sin in his life, but he must face the judgement to come. And God is willing to cleanse sin in a three-fold way.

✓ There is (physical death) first. "It is appointed unto men once to die. Hebrews 9:27. The Bible teaches that there is a time to be born and there is a time to die. Ecc. 3:2. Psalm 89:48 asks, what man is he, that liveth, and shall not see death. The Bible is very clear that God has already made an appointment for each man for death. There is for each man a day, an hour, and a minute.

The Bible talks about the brevity of life. We are told that our physical lives are as a tale that is told. Of a flower that fades, grass that withers, one generation passes and another comes. If God had not given the judgement of physical death on the human race - we would have continued in sin as long as this world existed. And it would become Hell itself.

Now because of the briefness of life - God warns man to get ready to meet God. And seeing his days are determined and the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass. Job. 14:5. The Bible

exhorts man to meet and to get prepared to meet God.

✓ Second, there is spiritual death. There are many persons here now who are suffering spiritual death. Almost any day you pick up the newspaper and read and testify to the fact that they are lost. They were made for fellowship with God. But they are separated now from their maker. This is spiritual death. It is the separation of the soul from God. Jesus said, I am the life. And the Scriptures also speak of being dead in trespasses and in sin.

✓ Third, there is eternal death. The Bible has a great deal to say about Hell. No one spoke more about Hell than Jesus did. And he said, he came to save men from Hell and from Hell on earth. And it was not only some condition in which men are living today. It was from something to come. Jesus never taught that anyone on earth is living in Hell now. He always warned of the Hell to come. Whatever he meant by it - essentially it was separation of the soul from God. Which leads to a man's spiritual death. It is enough to warn men that Jesus said "and these shall go away into everlasting punishment". Matt. 25:46.

Jesus also said the son of man shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend. And then they shall be cast into a furnace of fire and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Matt. 13:41-42.

Sir Thomas Scott, a former lord chancellor of England said on his death bed, "until this moment, I thought there was neither God nor Hell. Now I know and feel that there are both and that I am doomed ^{for} predition by the just judgement of the almighty."

The Bible's position is that something happened to man. That is he became

something other than what God created him for. And what God intended him to be. Now, if man is to be recovered, then man must turn around. And he must get a new direction.

The need for spiritual (rebirth) is evident of the most casual observer of human nature. Man has fallen and is lost. And man's recovery must begin at the point of his fall. He chose himself rather than God. Now he must chose God over himself.

Now then, with this knowledge - and the knowledge that the return of the Lord is eminent - what will it take to bring you to God 100%.

II. It Took →

First, a wedding. When a young man in the service came to my study to make arrangements for his wedding - something happened. After he set the date and all had been arranged. I said this, sir, you are marrying one of our best Christian girls in the church. I talked to him about becoming a Christian. They were married on a Saturday. The next day, which was Sunday, he came to church and he made a public profession of faith.

It took that to bring him to God - and what will it take to bring you?

Second, a death. I met a woman here at the altar in our church one Sunday and with the tears streaming down her cheeks, she said, my mother died four months ago. And I want to be prepared so that I can meet her in Heaven.

It took the death of a mother and four months of delay to bring her to God -- what will it take to bring you?

Third, a persistant wife. A man 60 years of age said to me during a revival, preacher, I came to church on Monday night to please my wife. She nagged me so that I haven't missed a service since - but because I wanted to come. He was saved during that meeting. It took his wife to bring him to God. What will it take to bring you?

Fourth, a dangerous experience. A young man in 1948 came forward during a service I was conducting. And he said this, I promised God when I was in the Army that I was going to serve him. I had a dangerous assignment. I want my children to grow up in a Christian home. He told me briefly about his experience. And he said I have put this decision off - it was four years ago that I made that promise to God. It took a dangerous assignment - plus four years of delay to bring him to God. What will it take to bring you?

Have you made a promise and haven't kept it?

Fifth, an awful car accident. In a mid-city a doctor's car killed a two and a half year old girl, who dashed out into the street between two parked cars. A Baptist preacher heard about it and offered sympathy. The wife was a Roman Catholic. The husband was a member of the Syberian Orthodox Church. This problem developed. Little Annie had never been baptized. Therefore the Catholic priest refused to conduct the service. And the priest in charge of

the Orthodox Church could not bury her. So neither church would do it.

So this Baptist minister accepted the invitation to conduct the service. He used much Scripture in the service. He showed God's love for children. And giving the Bible as the authority for repentance and salvation. This was on Tuesday. On Wednesday the husband and wife attended the prayer meeting at the Baptist Church. On Sunday the two openly received Jesus Christ.

They said, at last, after all these years we are going to get things straightened out in our lives." It took the death of Little Annie to bring them to God. What will it take you to come to God.

Sixth, it took a Scripture, on the front of our church, you will read Psalm 100:4. One night a man who had gone to get a drink called me and he said I want to talk to you. He was 69 years of age. I want to talk to you about becoming a Christian and uniting with your church. I went by - he said. I had gone down the street to get a drink but it began to rain and I walked up the church steps and I looked at the Scripture on the wall. When the rain stopped - I went back home and I don't intend to touch another drop. Can you baptize me? Can I get my life right with God? He made the decision. It took that to bring him to God. What will it take to bring you.

III. In The Bible

Now I have given you a few illustrations at random, of people that I have talked with and I could go on for hours telling you about folks who have found their way to God. Now lets look in the Bible.

First, Jacob. a young man. Here is a young man who schemed against his brother - he took away his birth-right, he fled his own family, and stayed away for years. Life for him was up and down. Everything went wrong and it wasn't until his hip was knocked out of joint - that he really dedicated his life to God. There wrestling with the angel at midnight - Jacob was brought to God. What will it take to bring you to God.

Second, Joseph. He had some jealous brothers who were wicked in their hearts. They sold him to a group of foreign men. They told their father that Joseph, his son, was dead. This was a falsehood - they told a lie. After years had past, this family was in need of food. And in Egypt, there was plenty. These boys were sent and they stood before their brother Joseph. And as they recognized and as he revealed who he was -- all their sins flooded their souls. The Scriptures say they were troubled at his presence. It took that to bring those brothers to God. What will it take to bring you.

Third, Sampson. There is a story of this strong young man able to meet lions. Able to hold off armies alone. But bad women led him astray. But standing in a heathen temple - with his eyes put out - he prayed for God to remember him once more. He prayed for that spirit to come. He wanted to get near to God. It took his way of sin, the putting out of his eyes, the grinding at the mill -- all of this to bring him to God. What will it take to bring you.

Fourth, Isaiah. This young man went down to the temple and there he had a vision of God. He was lost, he was undone. But this brought him to God.

Fifth, a sinful woman. A woman came to a well at an odd hour. And there she met Jesus face to face. The other women got their water in the morning and in the afternoon. But she came at a different hour because she was sinful. And Jesus told her about her sin and he explained to her about the water of life. And he brought her to God. It took this for this woman to come to God. What will it take for you?

Sixth, a personal witness. Explaining to the Eunuch that Isaiah was speaking of Jesus - Phillip brought this man to God, riding in a chariot. What will it take to bring you to God?

Seventh, it took a sermon. One man stood up and delivered a sermon on Jesus. He talked about his death and he talked about his resurrection. And he brought 3000 people to God, on the day of Pentecost. It took a sermon. What will it take to bring you?

Eighth, it took singing, the praises of God and prayer, to bring the jailer. At the midnight hour an earthquake was produced. This experience brought the jailer to God. He believed and was saved. What will it take to bring you to God?

These illustrations on death, near death, sorrow, illness -- but now honestly, what is it going to take to bring some of you to God 100%. I am bringing to you the truth of God. You can't fool God. He knows where you stand today.

IV. The Thought Of Heaven Should Be Enough

Some day the gates will open and we will stand in the presence of Jesus.

For me, that will be greater joy than when --

Abraham received his son, Isaac back.

Jacob, when he made peace with his brother, Esau.

David, when his sins were forgiven.

Esther, when her people were spared.

Mary and Martha when Lazarus was restored.

Just the thought of Heaven, John Jasper said, when I get to Heaven and the angel will come with a crown. I will say, no, not that. He will come with a robe, and I will say, no. He will say come on let me show you - and you can see Moses. And you can go over and talk to Abraham. And Jasper said, I will say "no" and just stand aside. I want to see Jesus. I want to bow down at his feet. And I want to worship him for a thousand years. That ought to be enough to bring anybody to God. I trust that it will be enough to bring you.

There was a young man who was a prisoner and was taken sick. His mother lived a long way off.

A Christian woman in that city visited the prison. And she visited this man. And she helped him to find his way to Christ. And he was near death and he requested to see his Mother.

He said to this Christian woman, if I am dead when Mother comes, oh, I broke her heart many many times with my wicked life.

Tell her when she comes to say out loud - I forgive you with all my heart.

Mother came. And he was dead. The mother entered the cell and looked down upon this face and said, Joe dear, Mother is here. And she forgives you with all her heart.

Now today it is not mine to look on dead faces and to say to you - Jesus will forgive. But it is my privilege today to look into live faces - people who are living and say to you, God will forgive, until Jesus comes back again.

Those nail-pierced hands open the gates of glory some day for you. What will it take to bring you to God?

Won't you use this invitation to come to him now and settle this important matter in your life?