

James Goll: Can You Move God's Heart?

Are there preliminary conditions that must be met in order for the prophetic promises of God to be unlocked? Are there things that believers can do to speed up the purposes of God? Are there clauses requiring man's response, or is everything sovereignly predetermined? These questions have been debated throughout Jewish and church history, and have affected people's world-views, with resulting practical applications in almost every area of life.

How do the lost get saved? Is it Arminianism or Calvinism; free-will or divine election? Ideas have consequences. What we believe about these things will ultimately play out in our actions, for good or for bad.

So what role do we play in revival and movements of the Holy Spirit? Can man move God's heart?

Lessons from the Pool at Bethesda

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, which in Hebrew is called Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great crowd of invalids, blind, lame, and paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water. After the stirring of the water, whoever stepped in first was healed of whatever disease he had. A certain man was there who had an illness for thirty-eight years (John 5:2-5).

This passage describes how at appointed seasons, there was a supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit that shifted the atmosphere from the natural to the supernatural. In between these strategic seasons, there was a time of testing. This certainly seems to be true in our lives as well.

How we respond in times of waiting is critical. Will we get frustrated and move into doubt and unbelief? Will we lower the bar of our expectation in order to avoid disappointment? Will we push our prophetic promises all over into a pile labeled "the providential will of God?" Will we take on false responsibility, acting as though the outcome all depends on our performance? Or will we look through different eyes and see the waiting as a divine invitation to press into something more?

As I see it, there seems to be a period of time—an opportunity given by God during the waiting—for us to become so desperate that we turn our frustration into hunger instead. Hunger rightly expressed becomes a cry before the Lord, a form of intercession that calls for the fulfillment of prophetic promises. Hunger becomes a magnet that draws forth the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit to invade the natural realm.

Every circumstance is subject to change, and God invites man to co-labor with Him in the birthing of a new dawn, a new day and new beginnings—where prophetic destinies are unlocked and answers finally come tumbling forth! These seasons are often referred to as revivals, renewal, awakenings, and outpourings both for individuals and entire cities and nations.

When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had been in that condition now a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"

The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred. But while I am coming, another steps down before me."

Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk" (John 5:6-8).

One greater than an angel came and declared that the waiting

was over and a new period of time, not just a new season, had come. Everything changed then—and everything changes today—when Jesus, the Messiah, steps into the scene. We no longer look to the limitations of man, but rather to the unlimited power of the Son of God.

So, what is our role in this process of prophetic promises fulfilled? Hunger expressed as a heart-cry of prayer! Many of our forefathers have experienced the fruit of this connection between intercession and outpouring. Let's therefore continue to ask that the Holy Spirit be released into the pool of our lives to bring forth a mighty visitation.

Famous Quotes on Prayer and Revival

Charles Finney—Evangelist with Logic on Fire

“Revival is no more a miracle than a crop of wheat. Revival comes from heaven when heroic souls enter the conflict determined to win or die—and if need be, to win and die.”

Matthew Henry—Scholarly Commentator

“When God intends to do great mercy for his people, the first thing he does is to set them praying”.

Leonard Ravenhill—Prayer Revivalist

“At God's counter there are no sale days, for the price for Revival is ever the same—Travail.”

E.M. Bounds—Prayer Pastor and Teacher

“The wrestling quality of importunate prayer does not spring from physical vehemence or fleshly energy. It is not an impulse of energy, nor mere earnestness of soul. It is a wrought force, a faculty implanted and aroused by the Holy Spirit. Virtually, it is the intercession of the Holy Spirit in us.”

Jesus Christ the Lord—The Ultimate Example

Matthew 11:12, "... The kingdom of heaven has forcefully advanced, and the strong take it by force."

As in the Days of Elijah

The Scriptures are full of examples of what happens when the frustration of waiting becomes a hunger that is turned into intercession. But one of the most vivid examples is demonstrated in the life of Elijah.

Elijah said to Ahab, "Get up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of a heavy rainfall." So Ahab got up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and he threw himself down on the ground and put his face between his knees.

And he said to his servant, "Go up now, and look toward the sea."

And he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing."

And he said, "Go again," seven times.

On the seventh time, he said, "A small cloud as small as a man's hand is rising out of the sea."

And he said, "Go up and say to Ahab, 'Mount your chariot and get down, so that the rain does not stop you.' "

In the meantime, the sky turned black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. The hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel (1 Kings 18;41-46).

Description of the Times

There was a prolonged season of desperation, barrenness, dryness, and desolation in the land. For three and half years

there had been no rain. Elijah, captivated by a heavenly prophetic vision, declared, "There is the sound of a heavy rainfall" (1 Kings 18:41).

A Response to the Times

In this season, Elijah was moved more by the unseen realm than he was by the natural realm. He locked in on the supernatural sound of an outpouring of rain! It is called *revival*. He heard God's sound. The prophet of God declared change was coming, and he sent his servant out seven times to look and see what was happening. Initially the servant did not see anything unusual in the natural, except that when he came back to give his report he saw Elijah crouched to the earth with his face between his knees.

What Was Elijah Doing?

In humility and desperation, Elijah was in his birthing place—kneeling on the prophetic promises of God. It was an act of desperation. It was an act of prayer. He was meeting the conditions in order to unlock the divine destiny.

What Was the Result?

There were small beginnings of an obscure cloud that could have been easily overlooked. But Elijah persisted that the fullness of times had arrived and that the drought was over and a new season had begun. It was the time of a heavy rain!

Today, we must learn from those who have gone before us and not lose heart. Our hearts must be consumed by a prophetic vision of God's grand purposes in our generation and beyond.

Prophetic prayer always precedes revival and God's latter day heavy rain. God always gives man an invitation to partner with His process through prayer. These lessons bear true in Scripture, Jewish and church history, and in my personal

experience as well. God does nothing but by prayer and everything through it. *Prophetic prayer does precede prophetic promises—and this is how man moves God's heart!*