What Will It *Take*?

By **Eitan Shishkoff**

We are entering the tenth month of a seemingly endless war against the Hamas terrorists. Simultaneously, we are pounded daily by Hezbollah's bombardments that have emptied our northern communities and turned that border into one long army base. Our heart's cry is:

"*ENOUGH! Lord, where are you? We're longing for life where we see death. Wouldn't this be an ideal time for the outpouring of your power, while souls are parched and thirsty for hope beyond human means?*"

I'm asking, what will it take to bring the great "latter rain" revival we see in the prophecies of Joel, Isaiah, Ezekiel and others? On our part, I mean. Certainly, it is in the hand of the Sovereign Lord to do the pouring.

"*And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh…I will pour out my Spirit in those days…before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD*" (Joel 2:28,29,31).

But what's our part? Yes, we need to be pure of heart, exercising faith, praying, fasting, and humbling ourselves before our God. Is there a missing key? A human factor God requires?

Upper Room Posture

Yeshua's disciples give us a simple, disarmingly achievable condition that brought the original outpouring 2000 years ago around this time of year. The Master told them to wait in Jerusalem until they would be clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49). They obeyed. In Acts 1 and 2 we see the 120 gathered, praying "in one accord." A mighty wind fills the place, tongues of fire appear above their heads, and they begin praising God with languages they never knew.

Not long before, they argued about who among them was the greatest (Luke 22:24). Some chutzpah, right? Squabbling over position in front of the Perfect Man. The barrier blocking that initial outpouring of the Spirit was their disunity, jealousy, and comparison. To our dismay, these issues remain among us.

Sobered and rejoicing over their Master's resurrection, they now waited, fully available. Seeking the Lord with open, surrendered, united hearts – they eagerly anticipated what He would do next. Aha! That's it. They were available. They'd opened their lives, saying in effect:

"*Here I am Lord. Do what you want with me. You've more than earned my total trust by dying an excruciating death and rising from the grave. I'm yours. 100%.*"

We know that they went on to "turn the world upside down" with a powerful proclamation of the gospel. In Israel and beyond, tens of thousands were swept into the Kingdom by the magnetism of the Ruach operating through them, because they were unconditionally available.

HINENI!

This declaration "Here I am" zaps me back to Isaiah's experience of seeing the LORD high and lifted up. Not only were the door posts of the temple shaken, the prophet was shaken to the core. He cried out in despair, realizing the depth of his own impurity, confronted with a heart-stopping vision of God's unstained glory. To the rescue comes an angel with fire from heaven's altar. "***Behold…your iniquity is taken away, and your sin atoned for***" (Isaiah 6:7). Now, there's an unlikely question for the freshly convicted sinner. God asks "***Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?***" Isaiah's response also answers the question "What will it take?"

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"***Here I am, send me***" (Isaiah 6:8). In Hebrew it's only one word – *Hineni*. Friends, could it be any simpler? God is looking for a messenger. In the ancient world carrying messages for a king was a position of honor and considerable responsibility. Are you available? Am I?

Yeshua raises the stakes even higher. Post-resurrection He tells the disciples "'*As the Father has sent me,* ***I also send you****.' And He breathed on them and said to them 'Receive the Holy Spirit*'" (John 20:21, 22). You and I are also Yeshua's disciples. That must mean that Israel's King is also sending us as His messengers, with the "fuel-injection" of God's Spirit.

Isaiah had a barrier that had to be dealt with before he could say "*Hineni – I'm unconditionally yours.*" That barrier was his inward uncleanness. Not a polite image, but like impacted bowels. His soul was fouled within. As the man confessed his state in that Holy Presence, the atonement of the LORD washed him clean. Now, he was available. Not through anything he achieved by self-effort. But in surrendering all. So it is with us.

History's Quiet Turning Point

Some seven centuries after Isaiah, a Jewish maiden in an obscure village in the Galilean hills has an angelic visitation. Gabriel blows the poor girl away. "*Rejoice, highly favored one, the LORD is with you, blessed are you among women*" (Luke 1:28). Miriam is acutely distressed. Adding to the weirdness, the angel tells her that she's going to conceive and bring forth a Son and call Him YESHUA. "*He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end*" (Luke 1:31-33).

Her reaction is "Say WHAT?" (only more respectful). "*This is not natural. I've had no intimate relations with a man. I have no grid for what you're talking about.*" Is this not a barrier similar to what we say when God gives us an assignment that far exceeds our known capacity?

"*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you…for with God nothing will be impossible*" Gabe replies. Pause. The text moves on without skipping a beat. But we must imagine Miriam digesting all of this in that moment. "*O.K. Even though he just told me it would be by God's power, I have NO idea how this could possibly be. What's more, I'm betrothed and this will be one major scandal that we'll never recover from. This is way beyond me.*" Her barrier is human limitation. Nevertheless, she says…

"***Behold, the maidservant of the Lord!*** *Let it be according to your word.*" In other words, "*Here I am. Use me. I am entirely AVAILABLE for your purposes.*"

You know the rest of the story. Miriam is the human vessel through which divinity takes on the cloak of humanity to redeem all mankind and reign forever from Jerusalem. Weighty assignment, eh? What did it take? It took simple, total, trusting AVAILABILITY.

What Will It Take?

The disciples were available. They changed the world. Isaiah was available. He prophesied the coming of the Suffering Messiah. Miriam was available. She brought forth the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

Are you available? Am I? Or are we afraid to say "*Yes, I'm available. No preconditions. No escape clauses.*" Here's the problem. We don't like losing control. I hate not being in control. But God says:

"*My grace is sufficient. My strength shows up best in weak vessels that freely acknowledge their need.*"

What will it take for the Lord to POUR out His Spirit upon us and upon all flesh before the coming of the great and terrible Day of the LORD? What can possibly prepare the way? The disciples, Isaiah, and Miriam all reveal the answer. It is making our heart, our plans, our resources, our thoughts, our relationships, and all that we are AVAILABLE, totally YIELDED to Him.