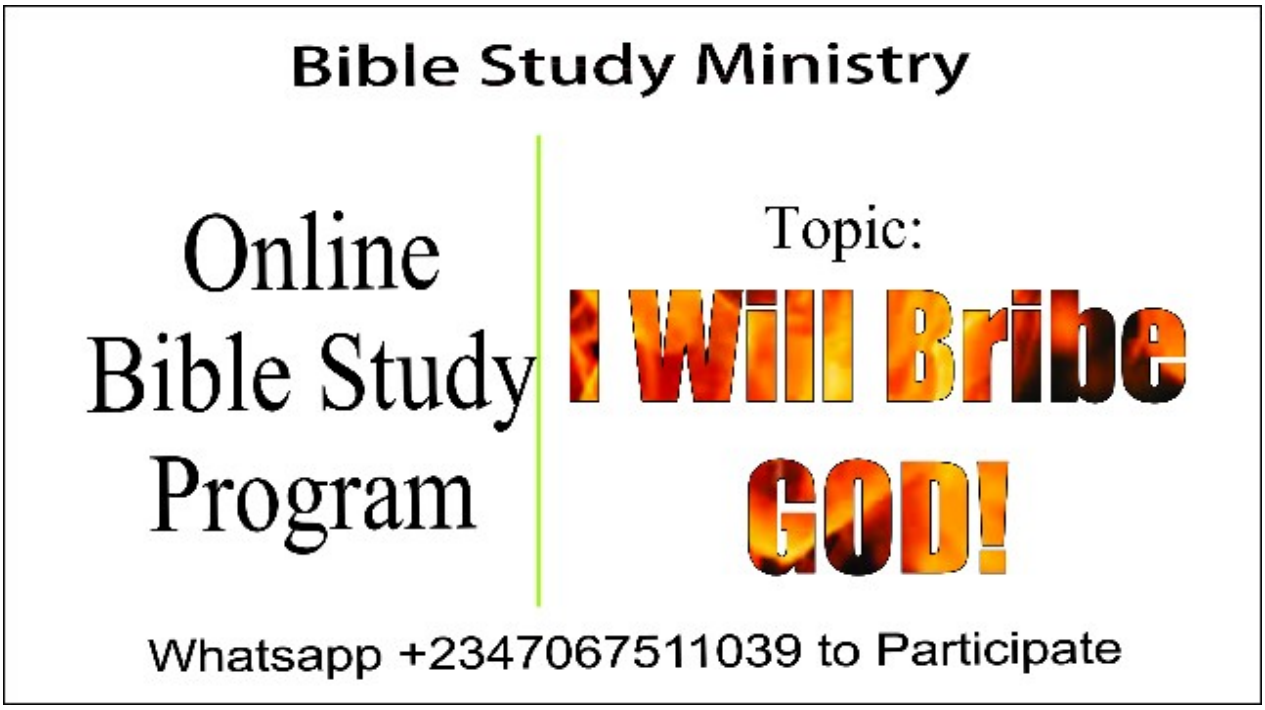


Topic: I will bribe God

Bible Text: Zechariah 7:5-7

Teacher: Adewuyi S. Oluwatobi

Let us pray, dear Father, we thank you for another moment such as this. We pray that as we go into your word, you'd teach us by yourself in Jesus name.

The topic of tonight's study is "I will bribe God". Some of you might be thinking that what kind of topic is that, that can a man bribe God?, but it is of a truth that as we go on with this study tonight, the Holy Spirit would give us understanding of His word.

If you are here, I would like you to concentrate on this as we go into God's word together carefully, it would be good to also have your jotting materials with you as we go on. Amen!

Zechariah 7:5-7 KJV

Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? [6] And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves ? [7] Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?

From the above text it is seen right from the verse one of the above chapter that the people of Bethel (a town) sent delegates to the priests in the temple and also to the prophets to ask them some questions. And the question is to confirm if they are to fast and weep in the fifth month as they have been doing for 70years.

I would like you to understand some things from the above verses, these people who fasted and mourned for 70 years in Babylon just came back to their land. There was a reason God made them to be taken away by the Babylonian king, and the simple reason was disobedience. Israel was always disobedient to God. They did not want to listen to God's instruction and God allowed them to go into captivity to learn their lesson. For good 70 years they were under serious oppression, wait, what was even good in the 70 years of pains and regrets?

Their bondage in Babylon was so severe that we can see the account in Psalm 137:1-6 KJV **By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. [2] We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. [3] For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. [4] How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? [5] If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. [6] If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.**

With these verses we could see how oppressed they were before they were delivered by God in His mercy and they got back to Bethel. Do you know what it means to sit in the cold beside a river when you remember your home?, they remembered Zion that was flowing with milk and Honey, they missed enjoyment to gain torments just because of their disobedience. It was after they had been carried into captivity that they began to realize the enjoyment they had gotten in their own Land, that is how many of us are today, it is until when we lose a good thing before we value it.

So because of their pains and torments they lamented in psalms 137 then they began to fast in the fifth and seventh months, always weeping for their sorrows were much, God remembered them after 70 years and delivered them. But I would like you and I, probably the mathematicians in the house to calculate 30 days of the fifth month and then another 30days of the seventh months, let's just assume its approximately 60days, now 60X70 is what? After doing your calculations convert it to months and years you should be able to arrive at **eleven and the half years.** Which means that during their stay at Babylon they fasted and wept for **eleven and the half years** out of the seventy years they spent there. If you calculate and try to convert the years you have used to pray and fast would it have even gotten to a year in relation to your current age?

That is to tell you that, these people really meant business in other to be set free. But wait o, do not forget that I said it was disobedience that placed them in hot soup o. But something now happened after they got to Bethel, their own Land after God had mercy on them this was what they asked, Zechariah 7:3 KJV **And to speak unto the priests**

which were in the house of the Lord of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?

You see the question???

From this question above, it could be seen that the fasting and weeping done by them during the period of that 70 years did not come from their hearts, they now started asking questions like, now that we have left Babylon that we are now fine, should we still continue fasting and weeping? That is to say that it is their problems that made them to seek after God, if they were not afflicted they would have placed God at a side and lived their lives the way they wanted. Just imagine someone fasting for such a long time and he should not be doing it for a pure reason, just imagine the self afflicting pains. The surprising or should I call it unfavourable thing for them was that, God was watching them with all what they were doing and was just quiet until they came to ask questions. Now see the reply God gave them

Zechariah 7:5. "**Speak to all the people of the land and to the priests, saying, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years [that you were in exile], was it actually for Me that you fasted? 6. When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves [to satisfy your own needs]?**

Can you see the heart breaking reply God gave them? So all the years that they had been fasting and weeping, the Lord did not accept it nor even bothered. And for them to know that he saw everything clearly, look into the reply he gave them.

In their question, they mentioned that they fasted and mourned in the fifth month, but in God's reply he told them them that for the **fifth and seventh** months they fasted. That is to confirm to them that he was aware of their fasting and mourning but they were only doing it for themselves not for him as he did not accept it. Now ask yourself this question, you have been fasting and praying for a long time, why haven't you been seeing results? Its simply because its either your heart is not right with God or you are not an obedient child to him. Now we are getting to where we are going to, do not forget that I said, it was their disobedience that caused problems right from the beginning o.

Is somebody following me?

Zechariah 7:7. **Are these not the words the Lord proclaimed through the earlier prophets when Jerusalem and its surrounding towns were at rest and prosperous, and the Negev and the western foothills were settled?'"** Look at what the Lord told them, He asked them and reminded them that is it a taboo for them to keep His commandments which He gave to them through His prophets before they went into captivity? Which means that they did not keep His commandments before they were taken captives.

And what were the simple commandments?

Zechariah 7:9. "**This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy**

and compassion to one another.10. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other."

These were the commandments, but I would like you to know that, just like the Israelites, this generation has refused to obey God's commandments but always thinking that if His wrath comes, we would appease Him with fasting and prayer, just the way they thought they could bribe God with fasting and weeping which still made God turn His back at them for 70years. Despite the fact that God sent prophets to them to warn them yet they continued in their sins, saying don't worry if the Lord's anger come upon us, we know how to fast and weep/mourn very well we'll just bribe him with that. I want to ask someone reading this, have you not been thinking of ways to bribe God instead of obeying Him strictly?

Oh, what is the motive behind your fasting and prayer program, is it not to prove to people around you that you know how to fast and pray?, Any fasting and prayer that does not come with strict obedience to God's word, such is just a waste of time, God will just keep asking the person if he really fasted for Him, or for himself. He has been warning you to do away with sin yet you refused and continued fasting and praying saying I will use this to bribe Him after I commit sin, see, I'm officially telling you now that you have been fasting your energy and time away. See what is written in 1 Samuel 15:22. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of ram**s.

Obedience to God pays off than trying to appease Him

When Jerusalem was fine they could have just obeyed God and continue to live peacefully but instead they chose the wrong way thinking in their hearts that they would go back to bribe Him. Are you not like that? How many times have you recognised that something is sinful and yet you still do it saying you would go back to ask for forgiveness and go to church with a big offering, saying after all he is a merciful God, wait, is that not bribery?

You know the Lord has been telling you to stop premarital sex but sister grace brought an "opportunity" of free sex as you call it. You now begin to think in your heart that sister grace of all people whom all the brothers in the fellowship want to have around because of her beauty and commitment to the things of God is now offering you her body at no cost, you are now imagining that would you now miss this "golden" opportunity because it is a sin? And opportunity comes but once o, then you decide to give in, saying I would go into seven days marathon fasting and prayer to appease God, are you not trying to bribe God? Or you are planning to go for twenty one days dry fast to appease Him. Wait, are you not wasting your time? Look at those who fasted for eleven and half years what came out of it? If not just for God's mercy after they have faced the music of their foolish decision for 70years. They now had to come back to the initial point of obedience. I want you to know that what God requires from His children is strict

obedience to his words, because you are broke you quickly lied to get money from your parents saying you will ask for forgiveness later, who are you deceiving?. Every act of intentional disobedience only brings severe punishment and returns one to square one.

Just the way their weeping by shedding crocodile tears did not move God that is how it is even till now. Every form of sin is disobedience and every disobedience to God is a sin. They hardened their hearts, blocked their ears from listening to the word of God they chose to remain stubborn. You have always been hearing true words such as this haven't you been blocking your hearts from them, you have now hated all those who warned you to stop sinning and does not want to have anything to do with them because you feel nobody knows how you and God settles matter and have believed that your fasting and prayers, good deeds, offerings and tithes can take the place of obedience, what a pity!

You know that abortion amounts to killing yet you went to abort, or you gave consent to abortion, and you thought you'd settle things with God through other means other than repenting and obeying Him. Listen to what Isaiah 1:19 says **If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land**: Change your ways today, stop thinking you'd bribe God for **GOD CANNOT BE BRIBED AND WOULD NEVER TAKE BRIBE FROM NO MAN**. Total obedience is the key to walking with God therefore amend your ways to avoid severe punishments and regrets. May the Lord lead us into total obedience of His word in Jesus name. Amen

If you are ready to repent and begin to live your life in strict obedience to God, please place your right hand on your chet and **say** this prayer with your mouth

Say,

Lord Jesus, I accept you as my personal Lord and Saviour, I believe that you died for me and took away my sins so that I will not face the penalty of them. I make a decision to obey and follow you tonight. Thank you for saving me, in Jesus name I pray Amen.

Congratulations, now you are saved. If you prayed this short prayer please WhatsApp **07067511039**, I want to have a word with you.

God bless you.

Note

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