

If you have a minute, here's a thought from Scripture. AB

"Then Manasseh knew that the LORD He was God." 2 Chronicles 33:13

There was a lot of pain behind that word "then". And it was all because the Word of God had not been enough for Manasseh. A few verses before this we read that the Lord had spoken directly to the king but he would not listen. So God (in mercy!) decided to take stronger measures. He had Manasseh picked up by the Assyrians and hauled off as a slave to Babylon.

Then, and only THEN, do we find him learning the lesson. But why did it take so much? Why didn't he learn before? Why the need for humiliation and defeat? The answer to that mystery can only be found in the black depths of his (and our) sinful soul.

Our fundamental state of rebellion makes us very slow learners before God. We need far more powerful lessons than logic would expect. Whereas it should be natural for us to recognize Him for who He is, we don't. And God often has to resort to painful procedures to get us to do just that. Unfortunately, sometimes the only thing that will wake us up is an accident, a sickness, or an emotional trauma.

But is it really necessary? Do we have to go through the rebellion stage? No! The Bible says, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." (James 4:8) God invites us to know Him without the struggle of a humiliating defeat. However, it is critically important that we know how to draw near to God. It must be by going to His Word and listening for His voice with humble, sensitive ears.

God will always speak to us first, giving us the opportunity to listen, learn, and live. He did to Adam and Eve in the garden, to the children of Israel at the edge of the desert, and to many others before and after King Manasseh. We now have those records and are totally without excuse. But will we learn? Will we have sensitive hearts that stir quickly at the sound of His voice? Will we approach the Word with the confidence that our Lord will speak to us and then do what He says?

Surely this is how we should read the Scriptures.

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