

If

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Straight Paths Bible Church

(2 Chr 7:14) If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

- I. The word “if” is very important and is the defining word in this verse.
 - A. It puts the responsibility directly on God’s people.
 - 1. It completely takes the responsibility off of God.
 - 2. Revival, healing, restoration, and forgiveness will only happen “if...”
 - B. Without this word the verse would have a completely different meaning.
 - C. God uses the word “if” – not the word “when.”
 - 1. It is a possibility – not a certainty ...that God’s people will do these things.
 - D. It is a negative promise as well as a positive promise.
 - 1. If my people willthen I will ...
 - 2. Likewise, “if my people will not ...then I will not...”
 - E. It sets the conditions for receiving the promises God gives in the end of the verse.
- II. Most people would like to strike this word out of the Bible.
 - A. They want the promises of God unconditionally.
 - B. Many have been taught that the promises of God are unconditional.
 - C. But there are many “if’s” in the Word of God.

(John 8:31) Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

(Rom 11:22) Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

(Col 1:23) If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

(Heb 3:14) For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

- D. A lot of people are so focused on the sovereignty of God that they fail to see that God holds us responsible for so much.
 - 1. They come to believe that we are responsible for nothing but to wait and see what God does.
 - 2. The truth is that God is waiting to see what we will do.
- III. If MY PEOPLE, WHICH ARE CALLED BY MY NAME ...
 - A. WHO is responsible?
 - 1. Upon whose shoulders does the responsibility lie for the condition of our world?

2. Who will answer to God for the world that our children are growing up in?
- B. It is not “if” the wicked will turn, but “if” the people of God will turn.
- C. The answer is ...the people of God ...those who are called by his name.
- D. Are you one of them? Are you a child of God? Are you called by his name? Do people identify you as a Christian?
 1. If you are, then this “if” is aimed directly at you.
- E. Let it sink into your heart the potential that lies with God’s people and with YOU ...if you are one of them.
 1. “If my people...will, then will I...”
 2. If we willthen God WILL!
 3. That is the promise of God!

IV. God is limited by our unbelief and stubborn refusal to recognize our responsibility and live up to it.

(Psa 78:41) Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.

(Mark 6:5-6) And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*. {6} And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

- A. Men will do ANYTHING but the things that God requires in this verse.
 1. They will build empires and accumulate property and buildings in the name of the Lord.
 2. They will do many great and marvelous works in the name of Christ.
 3. It is even true that many are willing to suffer great persecution for the Lord, but still not fulfilling the requirements of this verse.
- B. God didn’t say “if” we build great buildings and accumulate a lot of real estate for the church He would bless.
- C. God didn’t say “if” we would do great things and have great evangelistic meetings and win many souls He would bless.
- D. The focus is always put on works that men can do of their own power and ability – instead of on matters of the heart.
- E. What God asks us to do is not impossible or out of our reach or ability to do.
- F. It is not a work of the flesh, but a turning of our hearts back to God.
- G. God cannot do anything unless He has some people to work with and through.
 1. When the people who are called by his name are living in pride and wickedness and coldness and indifference toward God then He has nothing to work with.