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# Words of Truth

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## A Horrible Famine

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If you needed to find a new Bible it would not be difficult at all. You can obtain Bibles through stores locally, through mail orders, and over the Internet. While the King James Version is not as readily available as it was ten years ago on store shelves, you can still obtain a copy very easily. Thankfully, we live in a time period and in a country where we can obtain and use a reliable translation of God's word without fear of persecution. As we all know, this has not always been the case. We should also be aware of the fact that as our society continues down the road of darkness, we may begin finding difficulties in obtaining copies of the Scriptures.

So, what does the availability of the Scriptures and the subject of famine have to do with each other? Here is how the two subjects connect: *"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it"* (Amos 8:11-12). Did you read that? There was a famine of the word of God. What can cause such a famine?

### What Can Cause A Famine Like That Which Amos Spoke Of?

Amos prophesied of a period of time wherein God, by HIS choice, would not have His word available to people seeking it. His warning occurred during the time that Uzziah was the king of Judah and Jeroboam the son of Joash was the king in Israel (Amos 1:1). Uzziah allowed his heart to be lifted up against God (II Chronicles 26:1-16). Jeroboam was a sinful king (II Kings 14:23-24). Thus, Amos prophesied during a time of apostasy. God's frustration with His people can be clearly seen through Amos' inspired words (Amos 2:4-8, Amos 5:1-3, Amos 8:1-3, and Amos 9:8-10). God had reached a point wherein He HATED the worship His people rendered unto Him (Amos 5:21-27).

God wanted His word is available to His people so that they could repent and turn to Him (Amos 5:4-16). In fact, during the Old Testament dispensation, God was very longsuffering (Acts 17:30). However, once people refused to repent of their sins, He didn't just keep sending His messengers to preach to the lost (II Chronicles 36:14-16). Even now, under the Law of Christ, God does not want His word preached to those who have rejected it (Matthew 7:6, Matthew 10:14, and Acts 13:44-51). Simply put, there is an expiration date on God's patience with us (Isaiah 55:6-7).

Amos is not the only inspired Old Testament writer who talked about a famine of the word of God. Notice the following: *"And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision... We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long... And he went out to meet Asa, and*

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*said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law... Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients" (I Samuel 3:1, Psalms 74:9, II Chronicles 15:2-3, and Ezekiel 7:26).*

Like in the days of Uzziah and Jeroboam, when God's people went too far the word of God was not being preached unto them. King Saul had this occur to him when he transgressed against God and the Lord turned His back on him (I Samuel 28:3-18). Brethren, these things are written for our learning (Romans 15:4 and I Corinthians 10:1-12). We need to stop and think about these lessons very hard. There are applications for us in these Scriptures.

### **Some Applications For Us**

First and foremost, we should be thankful that God has been longsuffering with us (II Peter 3:9-14). God is our creator (Isaiah 40:28). He does not owe us anything. We were created to be His servants (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). We cannot live our lives as though God needs to just take what we are willing to give. I cannot speak for all who will read this article, but I can speak for myself. I know that I have tried the patience of my Lord. I am thankful that He has given me the time to make my life right and I certainly have learned my lessons (cf. Psalms 119:59). Let us all be mindful of the fact that God is merciful and longsuffering (Nehemiah 9:17), but that we should not try to take advantage of Him because He is such (Nahum 1:3 and Romans 6:1-2). There is a side of God we should greatly fear (Matthew 25:31-46, II Thessalonians 1:7-9, Hebrews 10:26-31, and Hebrews 12:28-29).

Secondly, we should be thankful that God's word is readily available to us. Without His word, we cannot be saved (Psalms 19:7, Mark 16:15-16, Romans 1:16, and James 1:21-25). So, don't take his word for granted. We may be able to quote John 5:39 and II Timothy 2:15, but we have to do more than just quote Scriptures about studying the Scriptures. Like Mary, we need to desire learning the truth so much that we allow the Scriptures to become a distraction from other things we're doing in life (Luke 10:38-42).

As a third point, and certainly not the last that could be made, we should realize that we will not always have the patience of God or our brethren. If you or I are in error and we refuse correction, God and our brethren will stop trying to reach us (Titus 3:9-10 and Revelation 2:14-16; 20-23). Therefore, if there is sin in your life you have to make it right NOW. Then, start living as though there is no tomorrow (Proverbs 27:1, II Corinthians 6:1-2, and James 4:13-16).

### **Conclusion**

When I think of the word "famine" I think of hunger and thirst. Brethren, let's be thankful that there is no famine of the word of God right now. However, let's learn to live with a hunger and thirst for the truth as though we were in a famine. Consider these Scriptures as our conclusion: *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled... As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (Matthew 5:6 and I Peter 2:2).*