



July 4, 2008

Thought For the Day

Then all the army officers, ... and all the people from the least to the greatest approached Jeremiah the prophet and said to him, ... "Pray that the Lord your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do."

"I have heard you," replied Jeremiah the prophet. "I will certainly pray to the Lord your God as you have requested; I will tell you everything the Lord says and will keep nothing back from you."

Ten days later the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah.

From Jeremiah 42:1 – 7

The Babylonian army had recently conquered Judah and Jerusalem. They had installed a client king who had just been assassinated. Fearing reprisals by the Babylonians the army officers and the people of the land were fleeing the Babylonian army. They asked Jeremiah to intercede for them and ask God what direction would be best for them to go. Jeremiah agreed to do so.

He prayed and waited for an answer.

The people waited to hear God's direction.

The Babylonian army drew closer.

One day passed.

Two days passed.

Three days passed.

Still they waited.

The Babylonian army drew even closer.

Four days ... five days ... Six.

Finally after ten days the answer came and they were given clear direction as to what they should do. Why did God wait to answer their prayer?



Perhaps it was to test their faith, to find if they were willing to wait and to trust God to provide an answer. Or perhaps God saw that their souls were not ready for His answer and He gave this ten day period for them to clear their hearts and minds, to confess and worship, to make their souls ready for His answer. Or perhaps God, who always knows more than we do, saw that the time was not right to give them an answer. Perhaps God needed to clear the path before He called them to walk on it. God in his wisdom knew when to best answer. Their part was to wait.

George Croly, in his prayer hymn *Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart*, has us sing this petition to God:

*To check the rising doubt, the rebel sign,
teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.*

Whatever the reason, we should learn that prayer does not fail just because the answer is not immediately given. The right answer will always come at the right time. God is not negligent. He will never wait beyond the very best season for acting. We must only trust.

Teach me to understand that you in your wisdom know best and my urgency is not yours. You will answer in the best way at the best time.