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BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF

By Duane V. Maxey

(1) BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF MIGHTY WORKS ARE NOT DONE -- "And he did not many mighty works there **because of their unbelief**" (Matthew 13:58). Paul prayed for the Ephesians: "... that ye may know...what is **the exceeding greatness of his power** to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (Ephesians 1:18-19). Who would doubt that the reason **PAUL SAW GREAT WORKS DONE WAS BECAUSE HE WAS A GREAT BELIEVER**. He did his best to inspire that same quantity of exercised faith into his followers. Who also can refute the charge that often the reason why mighty works are not done among Christians today is because of their unbelief -- because of either a complete lack of faith for achieving great things for God, or because of a dwarfish and diminished amount of faith.

(2) BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF EVIL SPIRITS ARE NOT CAST OUT -- "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, **Because of your unbelief**: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:19-20). Like an imposing Mt. Everest, satan stands in the way of deliverance from evil, and sometimes does so in spite of many prayers for his removal. In such cases then -- according to Jesus' analogy -- the amount of faith exercised to cast him out must be smaller in size than even "a grain of mustard seed" or totally lacking altogether. Christ said that Mustard-seed Faith can move mountains, but He did not say that Microscopic Faith could even move a mole-hill! Therefore, because of unbelief, mole-hills loom as mountains -- as immovable as Mt. Everests, and the "yonder place" where evil should have been cast is still beckoning, but vacant.

(3) BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF CHRIST MARVELS -- "And he **marvelled because of their unbelief**. And he went round about the villages, teaching" (Mark 6:6). There was not the slightest trace of unbelief in Jesus. Therefore the exercise of faith to Him was as

natural as His very breathing, and probably more so. I venture to say that it would have been easier for Him to stop breathing than to stop believing. Because no unbelief dwelled within Him, He walked on water, turned water into wine, healed the sick with no medicine, and raised the dead -- all without marveling. Those who followed Him marveled when His mighty miracles WERE done; He marveled when they were NOT done! -- quite a difference -- and that same difference exists too often yet today between Christ and those who follow Him. When through faith He calmed the boisterous waves "men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" (Matthew 8:27). May I turn that around by way of illustration, and say, When through unbelief the winds of evil continue to impede the progress of the Church, can we not picture Christ saying, "What manner of Believers are these, that even the slightest puff from satan stalemates their faith?!!"

Perhaps one of the best indicators of one's faith, or lack thereof, is that at which he or she marvels. Even total unbelievers marvel at miracles. Spirit-filled believers marvel that more and greater miracles are not done. When a stagnated, discouraged, and woeful Church asks: "**Where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of?**" (Judges 6:13) -- is not the Lord's fair question in return: "**How is it that ye have no faith?**" (Mark 4:40). Five times in the New Testament, Jesus assessed people as having "**little faith**": Matthew 6:30, Matthew 8:26, Matthew 14:31, Matthew 16:8, and Luke 12:28. No doubt since His ascension, Christ has made that same assessment of millions who professed to be His. Men have measured Him by the size of His miracles, but He measures men by the size of their faith, and marvels when it is small, or missing altogether.

(4) BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF ISRAEL WAS BROKEN OFF -- "Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear" (Romans 11:20). The faith that links God with His present people is progressive. When time brought Israel to the point where they were required to believe something that had not been required before -- i. e., to believe that Jesus is the Christ -- their unbelief at that point severed their connection with God. The apostle here teaches the possibility of apostasy for any who are presently God's people -- if at any time, on any point, they fail to believe what He then requires.

In the case of Israel, the time came when they were required to believe in Jesus as their Messiah and as God's Son. Never before had they been required to believe this, but when the time came that they must believe this, they refused to do so, and were cut off from their union with God. However, it is not the THING one is required to believe that is the main point here; it is the FACT that failing to believe a thing, -- anything -- when God demands it, results in severance from God.

Further, it is not what one was required to believe yesterday only, but it is also the sum-total of what one must believe today -- including any new thing that God requires a person to believe now -- that constitutes the all-important point at which a person is

either continued in union with Christ or cut off therefrom. The message to many cocky-Calvinists today, who suppose that they stand by an unbreakable union with Christ, is: "Thou standest -- if at all -- by faith, an obedient and present faith in all that Christ now requires you to do and to believe. Be not highminded in your mistaken notions of security, but fear. For if God spared not the unbelieving Jews, take heed lest he also spare not thee" (Romans 11:20-21).

(5) BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF THOSE TO WHOM CANAAN WAS FIRST PREACHED COULD NOT ENTER -- "So we see that they could not enter in **because of unbelief**" (Hebrews 3:19) "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in **because of unbelief**" (Hebrews 4:6). Who did the first preaching about entering Canaan? The reference seems to be to the "good report" or "good news" (gospel) that was preached by Joshua and Caleb, who declared: "The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey" (Numbers 14:7-8). It was their minority report that was the "good report" -- the "good news" (gospel) that Israel COULD with God's help possess Canaan, and it was the majority report that was the "evil report" -- the "bad news" which declared it impossible to possess the land.

Even so it is regarding spiritual Canaan: **THE MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO PREACH DECLARE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO BE SANCTIFIED WHOLLY IN THIS LIFE and THE MINORITY PREACH TWO WORKS OF GRACE:** viz., that following one's deliverance from the Egypt of sin, he or she can and should promptly enter into the promised Second Rest. Or, to put it in other words: after one is born again, it is his or her privilege and duty to promptly go on and obtain the second work of grace, which is denoted in various terms, such as: Entire Sanctification, Heart Purity, The Second Rest, The Second Blessing, Perfect Love, Christian Perfection, and The Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Only 2 out of 10 -- or 20 % -- of those who first preached about earthly Canaan thought it possible for Israel to possess it, and perhaps an even smaller percentage of professedly Christian ministers today preach that it is possible for a born again child of God to obtain a Pure Heart in this life. Sadly, they "to whom Canaan was first preached" believed the Majority Report -- the "evil report". That majority was dead wrong, and the belief of their preaching resulted in the wilderness wandering and death of an entire generation of Israelites. Likewise, tragic consequences always follow the preaching of those who fight holiness, declaring to their people that "The Perfection Crowd" are "off their rockers" -- "Heart Purity is not possible until death," "Holiness Folks are Fanatics," and a number of other such falsehoods.

Some Holiness fighters declare spiritual Canaan, or Heart Purity, to be entirely impossible to possess in this life; others of them say that the Christian must "grow into it" through a gradual maturing process. The fact is, "growing into heart purity" is no more

possible than it would have been for Israel at Kadeshbarnea to "grow into Canaan"!! Utter nonsense!! They had to "go into it" -- not "grow into it" -- and, they had to "go into it NOW" or "go in circles till they died". Instead of allowing those "to whom it was first preached" to mature into Canaan over a long, drawn out period of years, God demanded their obedient-faith entry into Canaan within days (not years) after they left Egypt.

Under the heated anti-Canaan preaching of the 10 spies that newly redeemed, but next forlorn, generation of Israel disbelieved the Truth, hesitated, and forever forfeited their privilege of possessing the Land. After that forfeiture, their entire congregation from 20 years old and upward never "grew" nor "drew" one step closer to Canaan for 40 long years! The same thing happens to those who reject the "good news" of the Second Rest today:-- you cannot find even one of those who believe in "growing into heart purity" who ever mature themselves into the experience -- 40 years, 50 years, and even longer, finds them no closer to that grace. Just as after the crisis those "to whom Canaan was first preached" wandered 40 years in the wilderness, never once again aiming to enter the Land, even so, those who say they believe in "growing into" Spiritual Canaan wander in endless circles throughout their lifetime, never really intending to enter the experience! They neither "go into it" nor do they "grow at all spiritually".

Far from Second-Rest heart purity coming as a result of one's own sweaty efforts to grow spiritually, the Word says in Hebrews 4:10 -- "**he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works**, as God did from his."

Why, then, does the Word also say at the same time: "**Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest**, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:11)?

The answer is simple: On the one hand the Christian must "**cease trying to GROW into Spiritual Canaan**" while on the other hand he must immediately "**labour to GO into it.**" The only WORK God allows and demands to be sanctified wholly is the Work necessary to GO into that grace, and that labor is to be done promptly and quickly -- not across long decades of one's life. It is a crisis-work -- a labor to meet the conditions of death to self and a spiritual striving to throw off every weight of unbelief so as to believe God NOW for the cleansing of one's heart from all sin. The only "growing" involved in it is a "growing sense of urgency" to press into the experience, and, while this urgent seeking does not "grow" the giants of impossibility in the mind of the seeker, it does cause one to "grow smaller and smaller" in his or her eyes.

Further, none of the quick and earnest labor of seeking to Go into holiness makes one deserve or merit heart purity, nor does it admit of a self-flagellation that hopes to kill itself and thus qualify for a pure heart. The labor of going into God's Second Rest is, rather, a determined and desperate act of one's will which places one's self immediately, entirely, and eternally, upon the Spiritual Altar, Christ Jesus, while trusting His blood as the only merit and means whereby one's soul can be cleansed. It is also, after one has

placed his all on the altar, a "work of faith" (1 Thess. 1:3), a definite exertion of one's faith that instantly brings the victorious seeker into the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

Thus, we should see that while -- on the one hand God demands a "cessation from all works" to GROW or merit one's self into entire sanctification -- on the other hand and at the same time He demands that the Christian immediately "labour to GO into that grace." Many a Holiness preacher has used Deuteronomy 6:23 to describe the two steps in God's full salvation: "And **he brought us out** from thence, **that he might bring us in**, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers." In fact, God saves people that he might sanctify them wholly, and He purposes that one be "brought into" the second work of grace soon after he is "brought out" of sin in the first work of grace.

The sight of "brought out" Israel circling 40 years in the Wilderness "short of" Canaan was a sad sight in God's eyes, but what is even more pathetic in his vision today is the sight of "brought out" Christians wandering for an entire lifetime, ever seeking heart purity and never coming into the experiential knowledge of that truth! Some such seem to YEARN and to LEARN about the experience for long decades when what they really need to do is TURN toward the border, make straight paths for their feet, and plunge into spiritual Canaan NOW!

Those whose determined and desperate plunge has taken them instantly into the Second Rest can joyfully sing:

**"I'm over the Jordan tide,
The waters did there divide;
I'm in the Land of Canaan,
Abundantly satisfied!**

**"And now with joy and gladness
I'm singing along the way,
In fellowship with Jesus,
I'm happy night and day!"**

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THE END