

The dangerous sin of unbelief

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Basics

As I completed a 1 day fast and meditation time in December last year, it became clear to me that I must warn and teach others about the dangerous sin of disbelief.

God revealed to me the following:

The children of Israel witnessed at least 5 daily miraculous encounters with God:

- The physical presence of God through a cloud (by day) (Exodus 13:21);
- The physical presence of God through a column of fire (by night);
- food in the desert – *manna* (which tasted like wafers made with honey) falling daily, every morning from heaven (Exodus 16);
- Their clothes or sandals never wearing out for 40 years (Deuteronomy 29: 5); and
- Their feet never getting swollen (with exhaustion) for 40 years (Deuteronomy 8: 4).

It is estimated that the population of Israelites who left Egypt was 2.4 million¹, this means that over 40 years:

- Each person experienced at least 73,000 miracles over this time period (5 miracles per day x 365 days per year x 40 years); and
- The estimated 2.4 million people in total experienced at least 175 billion miracles (175,200,000,000) over this time period. The rationale being that 2 people don't experience a miracle the exact same way.

In addition to the above, then over 40 years they also experienced some of the following miracles:

1. **10 miracles of God – the plagues to Egypt** which God rescued his people from (*Exodus 7:14 – Exodus 11:36*) (water turns to blood, frogs, lice/gnats, flies, diseased livestock, boils, thunder and hail, locusts, darkness and death of first born son(basis for Passover).
2. The miracle of **God parting the Red Sea** so they could cross and be safe from the pursuing Egyptians (*Exodus 14*);
3. **Bitter water at Marah turning sweet** (*Exodus 15: 22 – 26*);
4. **Quails from heaven** when they complained for meat (*Exodus 16: 11 – 13*);
5. **Water came from the rock in the desert** (*Exodus 17:1-7*). That rock was Christ (*1 Cor 10:4*);
6. **Hearing the physical voice of God on Mount Sinai** when he gave them the 10 commandments (*Exodus 19 – 20*);
7. **Moses' face shining like the sun** when he came back from meeting God (*Exodus 34: 29 – 35*);
8. **God giving leprosy to Miriam** for 7 days after she (and Aaron) complained that Moses had married a Cushite woman (*Numbers 12: 1-15*);
9. **The cloud of the presence descending on the location of the ark** (in the tabernacle) every time Moses met and spoke with God "face to face" (*Exodus 33: 7 – 10*);
10. **They received healing from snake bites** after the complained against Moses. The healing when they looked on a bronze snake on a stick represented Christ (*Numbers 21: 4- 8 and John 3: 14 - 15*);



11. **The ground opening and destroying a rebellious section** led by Korah after they challenged Moses' leadership (Numbers 16). This Korah's lineage was later redeemed. His sons were psalmists and wrote psalms 42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87 and 88; and
12. **Victory over the Amalekites** by Moses raising his hands as the battle took place. (Exodus 17: 9-13).

Despite experiencing God's power in all these things rather than fearing him, they despised him in their hearts. They worshipped him with their mouths but their hearts were far from him. ⁱⁱ

In their hearts - they were still enslaved, still craving the order and structure of slavery from 400 years of Egyptian culture and rules and being in a fertile region with cities and roads and water rather than being with God in tents, not knowing what next - but being free and holding on to his eternal promises.

A lesson for our generation

The sin of disbelief at its core trivialises the majesty of God. It treats the honour of seeing God's glory with contemptⁱⁱⁱ and replaces it with the mundane business of life - the worries of this life then consume us rather than the majesty of the King who asks us to behold Him and as we do these worries get solved. Because we do not choose to prioritise God over this life's worries our roots never go deep, and we are swept away by every whim and storm^{iv}.

This sin of disbelief in God made Him get so angry he declared this to the Israelites who had seen all his miracles:

***Numbers 14:30-34:** "Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. But you "your bodies will fall in this desert. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. For forty years "one year for each of the forty days you explored the land "you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you."*

It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the Living God^v - to be opposed by Him.

So what model do we have to overcome this sin?

1. We just sit and wait on God

Joshua daily waited in the tent after Moses was finished speaking with God. This is a daily "waiting" "listening" or "training" , perhaps included taking down the notes of what God said to Moses and then spending the time editing, summarising the words and putting them on scrolls, for Joshua, this was most likely his daily bread. As the bible says:

"Joshua, son of Nun, did not leave the tent." (Exodus 33:11b)

His time came over 40 years later when just before his entry God promises to be with him - and commands him to be courageous (Joshua 1: 9).

Similar to this, Martha was complaining to Jesus, that she was doing all the work (preparing a meal for Jesus and his disciples) while her sister, Mary simply sat at his feet to listen. See how Jesus addressed her complaint:

Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."^{vi}

Rather than running about in "ministry for the Lord" or "busyness of life", Mary unlike her sister let the Lord minister to her spirit.

So - we start by intentionally prioritise sitting at the Lord's feet and quiet our spirits – so we hear from him.

2. We repent for departing from our first love for in fear we hear the Ancient of Days' clear warning:

"If you don't repent I will take away your lampstand."^{vii}

This lampstand could be your church, your blessings, the presence of God - the spirit and life, the breath of God. It is this presence that Moses so craved he refused to go into the Promised Land unless this lampstand, in fact more than a lampstand went with them.^{viii}

So - you must repent, you must straighten that which is crooked, you must return to your Lord.

Take comfort - through it all even if God rebukes, he also comforts those who return to him and he declares:

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD's hand Double for all her sins."^{ix} Isaiah 40:1-2 NKJV

3. We open ourselves to the surgery of the Holy Spirit.

Who gives this new heart which turns from disbelief? It's the Holy Spirit who does this transformation work. As God himself said:

"This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife," says the Lord. "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days," says the Lord. "I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, 'You should know the Lord.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already," says the Lord. "And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins."^x Jeremiah 31:32-34 NLT

So in conclusion, the sin is conquered by repenting and then spending time with God so that He (the Lord the Spirit) bit by bit and piece by piece replaces your heart of stone with a heart of flesh.

Personal Post script

As I read the initial message God had given me last December and prepared to write about this sin, I felt afraid. I was afraid that I could be a child of unbelief and hence lose my salvation but- just at that moment the Spirit, who is the Lord comforted me:

He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful" (1 Corinthians 1:8-9).

Amen and Amen to him who is my Lord and saviour for he has promised to keep me safe Like Joshua, serving him always - me and my household. ^{ix}

A message for the church from Jesus: Look I'm doing something new!

"For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland." Isaiah 43:19 NLT

Your turn

1. What areas of unbelief in God do you struggle with?
2. What busy activities do you need to cut out to create time to sit at Jesus' feet (reading the bible) with a quiet spirit?

ⁱ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Israelites-exodus.html>

ⁱⁱ Isaiah 29: 13

ⁱⁱⁱ Extract from Number 14:22 - 23

^{iv} Extract from Matthew 13: 20 - 21

^v Hebrews 10: 31 (NASB)

^{vi} Luke 10: 38 – 42 (NIV)

^{vii} Revelations 2: 5 (NIV)

^{viii} Extract from Exodus 33: 15

^{ix} Reference from Joshua 24: 15