

THE SIN OF UNBELIEF— Part I

By: Alan Caudle

From the beginning of time, man had a problem with unbelief in regard to the commands and warnings of Jehovah. The first man and his mate ate of the forbidden fruit, even after God instructed them NOT to. Apparently, they preferred the words of Satan rather than those of the Almighty. They simply did not believe God meant what He said.

The Israelites found themselves wandering outside the Promised Land for forty years. Why? Because they refused to believe what they had been told by their Heavenly Father. In fact, the sin of unbelief continued to plague God's people throughout Old Testament history. Their falling away was a direct consequence of not believing God and His promises and warnings. Things were no different during the days of Christ and the Apostles.

From the early beginnings of Christianity to the Lord's warnings for five of seven churches of Asia, to modern-day congregations that choose to ignore the Bible pattern of worship and it's teachings on grace, faith, and fellowship, many of God's children still disbelieve Him in regard to what will happen if they continue to depart from His Word.

THE CAUSE OF ALL DEPARTURE FROM GOD IS UNBELIEF

Unbelief is the rejection of testimony, even though the testimony is supported by sufficient evidence. It is the closing of our eyes against the truth and refusing to accept the Word of God as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. More often than not, unbelief arises from a desire to shift responsibility placed upon us by the Word of God, which in turn, leads us to do whatever we desire, regardless of what the Bible says. Unbelief is the occasion of all sin and the very bond of iniquity. It darkens and destroys. It makes the world a moral desert wherein no divine footsteps are heard. Unbelief on the part of anyone closes to that person the door of Heaven, even as the door of Canaan was closed to the Israelites, "*who could not enter in because of unbelief.*"

UNBELIEF AND DISOBEDIENCE ARE THE SAME

The Bible is very clear concerning the future of those who do not believe God's word. Referring to "*them that had sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness,*" the writer of Hebrews continues by saying, "*And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believe not (were disobedient, NKJV)? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief*" (Heb. 3: 18, 19).

Furthermore, it is said in Hebrews 4:6 in regards to those who shall not enter into His rest, *“Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief”* (disobedience, NKJV.) It was unbelief that brought sin into the world that filled the world with violence that brought the flood and the downfall of Israel and will close the gates of heaven against all that disbelieve God and any of His commands. *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God”*, (Heb. 3:12).

CAUSES OF UNBELIEF

1. An evil heart – The heart can become so set on evil as to refuse to accept the truth. The heart is evil when it cherishes evil. *From the heart come forth evil thought’s* (Matt. 15:19).
2. Ignorance or blindness of mind – Those guilty of such were the murderers of Christ, along with all who close their eyes, stop their ears, and harden their hearts to the truth. It is not the case that they cannot believe – they simply refuse to accept that which they know to be right. Israel had an abundance of evidence. They had seen the power manifested by God in many ways. But they were bent on evil and desired to turn back, in spite of all that Jehovah had said and done.
3. The love of sin – The Gospel demands the full obedience of every human for Christ. Those who profess to be Christians must come out of the world and be lovers of God rather than lovers of pleasure. But because some do not want to give up the pleasures of sin, they refuse to believe and continue in unbelief. The reason so many are out of Christ is because of their love of sin and refusal to believe that God means what He says.
4. The influence of the Devil – The parable of the sower presents a powerful lesson as it explains the seed that fell by the way side: *Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their heart, lest they should believe and be saved”* (Luke 8:12). It is not that they could not understand. They chose to disbelieve and let the devil fill their heart. They heard the truth, but turned away and refused to believe.
5. The pride of human nature – All those who love the truth believe the Bible doctrine of faith and the fact that it humbles the soul. But the love of honor and social standing leads to a refusal to accept the truth. God’s word has much to say about the harmful consequences of sinful pride. The writer of Proverbs delivered divine truth when he penned, *“Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him”* (Proverbs 26:12). Guided graciously by the Holy Spirit, James quoted from the same Old Testament book that *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble”* James 4:6). And if there be any doubt as to the

plight of the proud, 1 John 2:16-17 should convince us, *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”*

EFFECTS OF UNBELIEF

Many, many years ago, God pronounced that *“Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them”* (Deut. 27:26). And, “cursed,” also is he *“that continueth not in all things which are written...to do them”* (Gal. 3:10). Christians are also to understand that if we profess to “part” of the law, we are “debtor to the whole law” (Gal. 5:3). It is taught in James 2:10 that if one keeps the whole law, and yet offends in one part, he is “guilty of all.” Yet, so many seem to disbelieve that we are to accept and do “the whole council of God.” They shut their eyes and close their ears to the reality that a refusal to accept and practice even one of God’s laws will result in their being rejected by Him in the last day.

Those who are guilty of unbelief (including both those outside the body of Christ and those who profess to be His children) are joined together with those to whom Christ said, “Ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). And what a terrible death that will be. Because, to die in sin (even one unpardoned sin) is to die without God and facing an eternal torment in the horrors of hell.

Failure to believe that God means what He says is the biggest mistake a responsible person can make. One can lose his soul by simply ignoring the consequences of not personally bringing others to Christ or forsaking the assembly, or going beyond God’s teachings on fellowship, acceptable worship, instrumental music, marriage and divorce, and all other commandments given to us by our Heavenly Father.

The sin of unbelief (in any or all of God’s Word) continued in this life, will surely lose one’s salvation and hope of heaven in the eternal life to come. Scriptures that were used and referenced in the above study, by Brother Alan Caudle, are hereby listed in the order of use: [Hebrews 3:18, 19; 4:16; 3:12] [Matthew 15:19] [Luke 8:12] [Proverbs 26:10] [James 4:6] [1 John 2:16, 17] [Deuteronomy 27:27] [Galatians 3:10; 5:3] [James 2:10] [John 8:24]

The Sin of Unbelief—Part II

By: Bill Richardson

I want to dwell on this subject because of my thoughts of how very important it is for us to know of and to guard against the sin of unbelief. I want to make mention of some scriptures which show us when unbelief is manifested:

1. When God's power is questioned. Note and study, Psalm 78:18-20, where Israel tested God and spoke against Him.
2. When we turn or depart from God. Note and study, Hebrews 3:12. [Unbelief cuts us off from the true God and brings judgment].
3. When we resist the Spirit. Note and study, Acts 7:51-52. Read about the "stiff-necked", betrayers, and murderers.
4. When we oppose the Gospel. Note 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16. Please read and study this section.
5. When we reject Christ. Note and study, John 12:47. Please read this scripture...it is red-letter print. Note and study also, John 16:9...It too is red-letter words. In your continued studies of the scriptures listed below you can note the consequences of unbelief as seen in: Hindering miracles; Exclusion from blessings; Condemnation; Rejection Judgment; Death; Destruction; God's wrath. To aid in continued study of this serious subject, listed below are more Scriptures that address the, "The Sin of Unbelief." The scriptures are listed in Book, Chapter, and Verse order as they appear in the Bible. My dear friend and Brethren, the seriousness of unbelief must be emphasized. Study not only this presentation, but also some scripture that are listed below. May God bless you and me in our studies is my prayer! [Exodus 4:1] [Psalms 78:19, 20, 22; 95:8-11; 106:7, 24] [Isaiah 7:9; 58:3] [Numbers 11:21-23; 20:12, 13] [Malachi 1:2, 7] [Matthew 10:14; 17:20; 21:32] [Matthew 11:16-18 with Luke 7:31-35] [Matthew 13:13-35, 58 with Isaiah 6:9, 10] [Mark 6:2-6; 9:24; 16:14] [Luke 13:34] [Luke 22:67] [Luke 24:11, 21-54] [John 1:10, 11] [John 3:7, 11, 12, 18, 19, 32, 36] [John 4:48] [John 5:38, 40, 43-47] [John 6:36, 60- 71] [John 8:24, 25, 43-47, 53] [John 10:25, 26, 37, 38] [John 12:37, 39-40, 47-48] [John 20:27] [Acts 28:24] [Romans 3:3; 4:20; 11:20] [2 Corinthians 6:14] [2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9; 2:11] [1 Timothy 1:13] [Titus 1:15] [Hebrews 3:15-19]

Dear folks please give much, much, thought and prayers to the sin of unbelief. Thank you very much, Alan Caudle, for a great lesson, and God bless!

Note: one enclosure, Page 5, title "Where Will You Be"? Thanks to Bill Irby and I also express my thanks and appreciations to have studied with you.

Bill Richardson

Member, Hartselle Church of Christ, Hartselle, AL

Where Will You Be?

By: Bill Irby – Minister West Hobbs Street Church of Christ, Athens, AL

Have you thought about the possibility that Jesus could return in your lifetime? Where will you be when Jesus returns? What will you be doing? What will your spiritual condition be at that time?

These are good questions for which there are plain and good answers. If Jesus returns in my lifetime, we will be here on this earth. If He returns on the Lord's Day during a service time, we will be in that church service. If He comes at some other time of Christian service, we will be right there too. What will we be doing?

Whenever He comes we will be living the Christian life, pure and simple. Since He has died for all of us and left us the gospel (Romans 1:16), our spiritual condition will be just fine. But I can hear objections. Someone says, "We don't know when He is coming!" That's the point. We don't know. All we know is that He is coming (2 Peter 3:1-15) and that it will be "*as a thief in the night.*" I (and you) might die before He comes! In light of this the only thing to do is to be ready all the time (Matthew 25:1-13). If we are ready all the time, we will be faithful in attendance and in all other manifestations of service to God within the scope of our abilities. *If I am ready all the time, I will be just fine!* I can hear someone else say, "But I am not ready just yet." Well, that changes some answers, doesn't it? Yes, it does. So...where will you be?

Bill Irby

P.S. My last remark in this study: Good and precious folks, read that again! Well, read both or all thoughts given in this study lesson, "The Sin of Unbelief". It is a blessing to all to have our thoughts challenged for our soul searching needs. I confess the deep need to search my heart, my mind and spending more, much more time in "Holding God's Unchanging Hand" and preparing my readiness for Christ coming. I don't think there is such a thing as "over preparation"; is there?

Bill Richardson

Thanks to Bill Irby for his good and strong lesson. What a blessing it was to my heart! Bill, you are used lots by me in my efforts to write.