

“The GOSPEL FAITH MESSENGER” Ministry
*“Equipping For Leadership In The Nations
Through The Power Of The Holy Spirit.”*

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UNBELIEF

*The Power That Needs
To Be Broken!*

By Rodney W. Francis

Introduction

The subject of this little book does not really need introducing! It seems to be able to introduce itself to us all on its own. When it comes to things to do with Bible Christianity, unbelief certainly wants “to get in on the act” and strip it of its real power. The devastation unbelief has caused to the Christian faith over the centuries has been enormous. For too long we have under-estimated its subtle, corrosive influence it has asserted within us. Our minds have been robbed of so much of the reality and power of God because of its cunning infiltration into the decision-making processes of our mind. When was the last time you heard a challenging attack on unbelief from the pulpit?

It is time we faced this enemy of our souls! Unbelief has had too much rule for far too long. It is time to put a stop to it! To do that we must consciously recognize its silent inroads and pilfering of our hearts that has relegated the mighty Gospel of Jesus Christ from an All-Conquering power to that of mere words. **“The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power”** (1 Corinthians 4:20). We must again rediscover the mighty power of believing faith in the Living Jesus Christ Who wants to rule and reign in us through the same Holy Spirit power that raised Jesus from the dead! If we look closely at the Scriptures we will soon see that the Number One enemy of the truth of Jesus and the supernatural of God is this little word simply called “unbelief.” Like a cancer it has filtered itself through every area of Christianity and robbed us of so much of what God wants to do today. May you be challenged and changed through recognizing your real enemy, and rise up against him in believing faith!

Rodney W. Francis.

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Chapter One

Unbelief - The Power That Needs To Be Broken!

Unbelief!

What a word!

It really should not have to be thrown at us like this!

But unfortunately, it has caused so much havoc in the Christian Church over the centuries that we really do need to have a look at it. So many promising people with tremendous potential have been wrecked from fulfilling their divine destiny because this nasty word has crept into their lives. And, what is worse, unbelief still works full-time trying to get Christ's followers to doubt, to question, and to disobey the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

Unbelief is a robber!

- It kills desire!
- It weakens ability to rise in faith to accomplish the purposes of God!

- It quenches the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives!
- It makes us believe man rather than God (the intellect instead of the Spirit)!
- It makes us settle for second-best!
- It causes us to believe lies and deny truth!
- It relegates us to the ranks of the “has-beens” where we no longer see the Living God at work in and through our lives in a vibrant and powerful way.
- In a word, unbelief “stinks”! (It certainly caused thousands of the children of Israel to be overcome and die in the wilderness! - what a stink that would have been! – Numbers 14:26-30).

All the above negatives make it look as though we cannot do much about unbelief – but we can. Just as much as believing is a choice, so is unbelief a choice. We decide whether to believe or disbelieve what we hear, see, read, etc. Every day we make those choices in virtually every area of life.

It's the same with believing God's Word: it is a choice we make. The result of that choice determines how – and the way – we live.

Unbelief is a power, a strong hold that gets a grip in our lives. It is a power that needs to be broken!

Let us, therefore, have a closer look at the word “unbelief,” so we can be as fully aware as possible of the consequences of it gaining a grip in our own heart and life.

Chapter Two

*What Does The Word
“Unbelief” Mean?
and
What Does
Unbelief Do?*

FAR TOO OFTEN we take many words in the Bible too casually. Unbelief is one of those words. We can accept it is a “problem” in other peoples’ lives, but we’re okay. That’s why it is good for us to look more closely at the meaning of words, because they can affect our eternal destiny – and that is very serious indeed! So, what does “unbelief” mean? “**Unbelief**” means:

- (1) “faithlessness, untrustiness; distrust, unbelief, applying to all, without regard to their circumstances, or opportunities of knowing the truth.”
- (2) “unwillingness to be persuaded, willful unbelief which opposes itself; hence, unbelief in action, disobedience, restricted to those

who have heard and know the truth, (a stronger term, therefore, than Point (1), and denoting an actual manifestation of it.)” – (Bullinger’s).

From the Greek word “apeitheia” meaning “disbelief (obstinate and rebellious): disobedience” – (Strong’s);

From the Greek word “apistia” meaning “faithlessness, i.e. disbelief (want of Christian faith), or possibly unfaithfulness (disobedience) – (Strong’s); “disbelief or rejection of belief” – (Collins’).

As you can see it is a negative word with negative consequences. It is an opposer of the truth. It undermines faith and destroys faithfulness and obedience to God.

WHAT DOES “UNBELIEF” DO?

If unbelief is a power – and it is - then that power seeks to control things within our lives. It seeks to rob us of all that God has promised us. Unbelief always seeks to keep us out and away from that which God desires for us. Please turn to Hebrews 3:7-19:

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as [happened] in the rebellion [of Israel] and their provocation and embitterment [of Me] in the day of testing in the wilderness,

Where your fathers tried [My patience] and tested [My forbearance] and found I stood their test, and they saw My works for forty years. And so I was provoked (displeased and sorely grieved) with that generation, and said, they always err and are led astray in their hearts, and they have

not perceived or recognized My ways and become progressively better and more experimentally and intimately acquainted with them. Accordingly I swore in My wrath and indignation, They shall not enter into My rest [see also Psalm 95:7-11].

[Therefore beware,] brethren; take care lest there be in any one of you a wicked, unbelieving (“apistia”) heart - which refuses to cleave to, trust in and rely on Him – leading you to turn away and desert or stand aloof from the living God. But instead warn (admonish, urge and encourage) one another every day, as long as it is called Today, that none of you may be hardened [into settled rebellion] by the deceitfulness of sin – [that is,] by the fraudulence, the stratagem, the trickery which the delusive glamour of his sin may play on him. For we have become fellows with Christ, the Messiah, and share in all He has for us, if only we hold our first newborn confidence and original assured expectation [in virtue of which we are believers] firm and unshaken to the end. Then while it is [still] called Today, if you would hear His voice, and when you hear it, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion [in the desert, when the people provoked and irritated and embittered God against them]. [Psalm 95:7,8].

For who were they that heard and yet were rebellious and provoked [Him]? Was it not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was He irritated and provoked and grieved for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose dismembered bodies were strewn and left in the desert? And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who disobeyed – who had not

listened to His Word, and who refused to be compliant or be persuaded? So we see that they were not able to enter [into His rest] because of their unwillingness to adhere to and trust and rely on God – UNBELIEF (apistia) HAD SHUT THEM OUT (Hebrews 3:7-19, AMP). [See also Numbers 14:1-35].

- Unbelief breeds “**a hardened heart**” (verse 8) that prevents us hearing from the Holy Spirit.
- Unbelief grieves the heart of God (verse 10).
- Unbelief gives us “**an evil heart**” (verse 12) to err (verse 10).
- Unbelief causes us to “**depart from the living God**” (verse 12).
- Unbelief robs us of God’s inheritance (verses 11,18); (Hebrews 4:6).
- Unbelief destroys us in the end (verse 17).
- Unbelief “**shuts us out**” of our eternal inheritance (verse 19).

Chapter Three

The Children of Israel

LET'S TURN now to Numbers Chapter 13 and see what affect unbelief had on the Children of Israel in the Old Testament:

NUMBERS 13: -

(APPROXIMATELY 14 MONTHS AFTER COMING OUT OF EGYPT).

“And the Lord said to Moses, Send men to explore and scout out [for yourselves] the land of Canaan, which I give to the Israelites; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader or head among them. So Moses by the command of the Lord sent scouts from the wilderness of Paran, all of them men who were heads of the Israelites . . .

And they returned from scouting out the land after forty days. They came to Moses and Aaron and to all the Israelite congregation in the wilderness of Paran at Kadesh, and brought them word, and showed them the land's fruit. They told Moses, We came to the land to which you sent us; surely it flows with milk and honey; this is its fruit.

But the people who dwell there are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; moreover there we saw the sons of Anak [of great stature and courage]. Amalek dwells in the land of the South [the Negeb]; the Hittite, the Jebusite, and the Amorite dwell in the hill country; and the Canaanite dwells by the sea, and along by the side of the Jordan [River]. Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once and possess it; we are well able to conquer it. But his fellow scouts said, We are not able to go up against the people [of Canaan]; for they are stronger than we are.

So they brought the Israelites an evil report of the land which they had scouted out, saying, The land, through which we went to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the Nephilim [or giants], the sons of Anak, who come from the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (Numbers 13:1-3, 25-33, AMP).

Note that the twelve spies were all leaders or rulers in Israel (verse 2). They came back saying, **“It is a great land BUT . . .”** (verses 27-28). That **“BUT”** was unbelief!

- Unbelief caused them to fear man more than God (verses 28-33).
- They went by sight (**“we saw”**), not by faith in the promise of God (verse 28).
- Unbelief made them believe they were weaker than the enemy (verses 31, 33).

- Unbelief caused them to speak “*an evil report*” (verse 32).
- Unbelief gave them an inferiority complex – a defeatist “*grasshopper*” mentality (verse 33).

All the positives of that land faded into insignificance because ten of the spies saw **GIANTS!** Those giants caused them to doubt and fear, and fall into **UNBELIEF!** They got such a defeatist complex that their hearts failed within them, causing them to see themselves as lesser, inferior, hopeless, defeated **GRASSHOPPERS!** **Unbelief reduced men of God into grasshoppers!** Can you believe that? They were so convincing in their “believing” they saw themselves as grasshoppers - and the giants likewise saw them as grasshoppers.

- Unbelief defeated them first on the inside, and then on the outside!

NUMBERS 14:

“And all the congregation cried out with a loud voice, and [they] wept that night. All the Israelites grumbled and deplored their situation, accusing Moses and Aaron, to whom the whole congregation said, Would that we had died in Egypt! Or that we had died in this wilderness! Why does the Lord bring us to this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and little ones will be a prey; is it not better for us to return to Egypt?” (verses 1-3). [see also Acts 7:37-39].

“Because all those men who have seen My glory and My [miraculous] signs, which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have tested and proved Me these ten times

and have not heeded My voice, Surely they shall not see the land which I swore to give to their fathers; nor shall any who provoked (spurned, despised) Me see it.” (verses 22-23).

[see also Hebrews 6:4-11].

But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went; and his descendants shall possess it . . .”

And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, How long will this evil congregation murmur against Me? I have heard the complaints the Israelites murmur against Me. Tell them, As I live, says the Lord, what you have said in My hearing I will do to you: Your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; of all who were numbered of you, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against Me. (verses 24-29). [see also Hebrews 3:17-19].

Surely none shall come into the land, in which I swore to make you dwell, except Caleb son of Jephunneh, and Joshua son of Nun. But your little ones, whom you said would be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised and rejected. But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall be wanderers and shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and shall suffer for your whoredoms [your infidelity to your espoused God], until your corpses are consumed in the wilderness.

After the number of the days in which you spied out the land [of Canaan], even forty days, for each day a year, shall you bear and suffer for your iniquities, even forty years; and you shall know My displeasure [the revoking of My promise,

and My estrangement]. I the Lord have spoken; surely this will I do to all this evil congregation that are gathered together against Me; in this wilderness they shall be consumed [by war, disease, plagues] and here they shall die.” (verses 30-35). [see also 1 Corinthians 10:10,11].

And the men whom Moses sent to search the land, who returned and made all the congregation grumble and complain against him by bringing back a slanderous report of the land, Even those men who brought the evil report of the land, died by a plague before the Lord. (verses 36-37). [see also Hebrews 3:17-19; Jude 5].

But Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among the men who went to search the land, lived still” (verse 38 AMP).

SO, WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT UNBELIEF FROM NUMBERS 14:1-38?

- Unbelief made the people miserable (verse 1).
- Unbelief made the people murmur (“grumble, complain”) against God’s appointed leaders (verse 2).
- Unbelief made the people to desire to go back to Egypt (the world) – to backslide (verses 2-4).
- Unbelief made the people to think that God had tricked and deceived them (verse 3).
- Unbelief bred rebellion against God in them (verses 4, 9).

- Unbelief filled them with fear (verse 9).
- Unbelief made the people persecute the men of faith and vision (verse 10).
- Unbelief made the people provoke (“despise, blaspheme”) God (verse 11).
- Unbelief brought the judgment of God (verses 12, 29-37); (only two -Joshua and Caleb - survived of the original company).

What devastating affect unbelief had on those ten spies! Their unbelief spread through the entire camp of Israel to the point that they wanted the only two men of faith – Joshua and Caleb – **DEAD!** Unbelief does not enjoy being in the presence of true believers! It convicts them, agitates, then aggravates and makes them feel uneasy. Church history is full of examples of men and women losing their faith in the promises of God and settling for intellectual logic in a historical rather than living Jesus.

Tragically, over the next 40 years, every one of those thousands in Israel died in the wilderness, except the two who chose to believe God – Joshua and Caleb!

Unbelief worked in the hearts of Israel to make them doubt God's promise, causing them to murmur, grumble and complain against Moses and God. They wanted to return back to Egypt (where previously they were grumbling slaves!) and generally resisted anything to do with going forwards to claim their God-given inheritance.

- Unbelief surely is a killer of faith!

ABRAHAM

Abraham triumphed over unbelief – Romans 4:20 . . . ***“He staggered not (“did not doubt, hesitate or waver”) at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God”*** (see also Genesis 15:6). His walk of faith endured over many years. When it looked as though he and Sarah would not be able to have a child, Abraham kept on believing God. He did not allow doubt and unbelief to rob him of His God-given inheritance. His faith in God was so strong that even after Isaac was born, and God asked for him to be sacrificed (Genesis 22), Abraham faithfully obeyed. He believed that God would provide – and He did!

MOSES

God revealed to Moses that he would triumph over the unbelief of the people through the doing of mighty signs and wonders with the rod of God in his hand (Exodus 4:1-5). The Israelites were so in bondage to their slavery that they could not believe that God could deliver them out of it. Because Moses had heard from God, and knew the voice of God, He received the word of God that caused him to believe that what God had promised He was also able to perform. Through that prophetic word received at the burning bush (Exodus 3), Moses rose above all the doubts and unbelief that were in the hearts of the people and Pharaoh. He brought them out of their bondage by mighty signs, wonders and miracles, demonstrating that believing God releases great power to conquer the works of the enemy!

Chapter Four

How Jesus Re-acted To Unbelief

UNBELIEF PREVENTED JESUS from doing His mighty works in some places (Matthew 13:53-58; Mark 6:2-6). Did you get that? It was **unbelief** more than anything else that prevented Jesus from doing His mighty works! It was not the open evilness, rebellion, or lawlessness of people in the community, **but unbelief right within the lives of those who confessed they knew God! The religious community!** Those very “Christian” leaders that many looked to for comfort, help and support in finding peace with God. Those very ones who should have known better. They had become caught up in the grip of unbelief, which prevented Jesus from ministering the way He should have been able to.

Unbelief amongst, and in, His disciples caused Jesus to rebuke them (Mark 16:12-14). Jesus is always looking for faith in His people. The Bible asks the question: **“Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”** (Luke 18:8, NKJV). Where is it at for us? Are we strong in faith, believing God and His Word to us, or are we struggling along in life in the grip of doubt and unbelief? Remember, it is a choice – our choice – as to whether we will believe God, or whether we will believe the word of secular humanity. I cannot believe for you, and you cannot believe for me.

Each of us has to choose for ourselves. Jesus publicly honoured those “outside of the faith” for their faith, causing rebuke to His own.

Examples:

- The centurion (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10).
- The Syrophenician woman (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30).
See also Luke 4:23-32.

Jesus honoured both these people for their great faith. They demonstrated a faith that even the followers of Jesus did not! Both received what they believed for. Both received on the behalf of someone else. Their faith was not kept selfishly to themselves, for themselves, but they released faith for someone else. They demonstrated a simple, yet persistent belief that Jesus could do what they requested of Him.

THE DISCIPLES

Unbelief robbed them of power over Satan and satanic diseases (Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29). Jesus gave the answer to this as being prayer and fasting.

Unbelief caused them to struggle with the fact of the resurrection (Mark 16:12-14; Luke 24:36-45) (Thomas – John 20:24-29). People still struggle to accept the resurrection of Jesus Christ today, just as they struggle to accept that they must be born-again to see and enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:1-11).

Chapter Five

Hebrews

Chapter Four

HAVING DISCOVERED what unbelief did to the children of Israel under the Old Covenant, we now turn to Hebrews Chapter Four and discover that we, today, are strongly challenged to watch that we do not fall into the same thing. We are to fear (“be frightened, to tremble”) lest we come short of God’s purpose for us.

“Therefore, while the promise of entering His rest still holds and is offered [today], let us be afraid [to distrust it], lest any of you should think he has come too late and has come short of [reaching] it. For indeed we have had the glad tidings [of God] proclaimed to us just as truly as they [the Israelites of old did when the good news of deliverance from bondage came to them]; but the message they heard did not benefit them, because it was not mixed with faith [that is, with the leaning of the entire personality on God in absolute trust and confident in His power, wisdom and goodness] by those who heard it; neither were they united in faith with [Joshua and Caleb] the ones who heard [did believe]. For we who have believed – who have adhered to and trusted and relied on God – do enter into that rest, in accordance

with His declaration that those [who did not believe] should not enter when He said, As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest; and this He said although [His] works had been completed and prepared [and waiting for all who would believe] from the foundation of the world . . . ” (verses 1-3). [see also Psalm 95:11].

“Seeing then that the promise remains over [from past times] for some to enter that rest, and that those who formerly were given the good news about it and the opportunity, failed to appropriate it and did not enter because of disobedience (“apeitheia”),

Again, He sets a definite day, [a new] Today, [and gives another opportunity of securing that rest,] saying through David after so long a time, in the words already quoted, Today, if you would hear His voice, and when you hear it, do not harden your hearts. [Psalm 95:7,8.] [This mention of a rest was not a reference to their entering into Canaan], for if Joshua had given them rest, He (God) would not speak afterward about another day. So then, there is still awaiting a full and complete Sabbath rest reserved for the [true] people of God; For he who has once entered into [God’s] rest also has ceased from [the weariness and pain of human labours, just as God rested from those labours peculiarly His own. [see also Genesis 2:2.]

Let us therefore be zealous and exert ourselves and strive diligently to enter into that rest [of God] – to know and experience it for ourselves – that no one may fall or perish by the same kind of unbelief (“apeitheia”) and disobedience [into which those in the wilderness fell].

For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power - making it active, operative, energizing and effective; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [that is, of the deepest parts of our nature] exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart. And not a creature exists that is concealed from His sight, but all things are open and exposed, naked and defenceless to the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do” (verses 6-13, AMP).

SO, WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT UNBELIEF FROM HEBREWS 4:1-33?

- Unbelief causes us to fall short of God’s promises (verses 1-2).
- Unbelief prevents us from mixing faith with the Word of God (verse 2). Unbelief stops us from entering into God’s rest of faith (verses 6-11).

Three times in Hebrews Three and Four we are told about hearing God’s voice, and warned against the hardening of our hearts (Hebrews 3:7-8, 15; Hebrews 4:7). The Bible does not withhold from us the terrible effects that unbelief and the hardening of our hearts has upon us. **We must listen to, and hear from God!** Once we have stopped hearing from God we are in trouble. Unbelief sets out to take us away from God and will eventually destroy us if we do not break its hold over us. Unbelief is the devil’s and the world’s Number One strategy to take us out of, and away from, the purposes of God. All he has to do is to make us doubt what God says to us!

The devil used that strategy successfully against Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3) simply by getting her to doubt the positive statement of God, **“God has said.”** The devil came along, twisted those same three words around, and turned them into a questionable doubt, **“Has God said?”** Eve believed the doubt; the rest is history. Right up to this very moment the human race is still suffering the affects of Eve’s doubt and unbelief when she listened to the serpent that day. When Jesus was baptized by John in the River Jordan, the voice of God was heard from Heaven, declaring Jesus as the Son of the Living God. A few verses later the devil is tempting Jesus in the wilderness by again turning a positive declaration of God, **“This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased”** into a questionable doubt, **“If You are the Son of God . . . ”** (Matthew 3:13-17; Matthew 4:1-4). Jesus did not fall for the devil’s doubt (like Eve did) and rebuked him with the declared and written Word of God! How do we respond to the questionable doubts of the devil when they come our way (for they surely do)?

Chapter Six

Zacharias The Temple Priest

IN LUKE 1:5-80 we have an amazing event recorded of Zacharias, a priest whom the Bible describes as **“righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless”** (v. 5). What a powerful and positive testimony that was regarding that man and his wife, Elizabeth. Yet, when we get to Verse 20 of the same chapter, we read that Zacharias was struck dumb by God because he was so full of unbelief. It is hard for our natural minds to comprehend that such a **“righteous, blameless before God”** man could also at the same time be so full of unbelief! Yet that is what we are told. For years he and Elizabeth had prayed for a child, and when God spoke to him that He would answer those prayers, he could not believe it. God had to strike him dumb so he would not get in the way of the purpose of God (God’s plan for John was far larger than Zacharias could take in).

OBEDIENCE TO GOD IS THE KEY:

It was not until after the birth of John the Baptist that Zacharias got set free of his dumbness. And that only happened after Zacharias was obedient to the Word of the Lord. When he obeyed God, **“his tongue was loosed,”** he was filled with the Holy Spirit and broke through into a whole new spiritual dimension. He then prophesied

one of the most beautiful prophecies recorded in the Scriptures (Luke 1:67-79).

How sobered and challenged we should all be, when we consider that such a righteous and blameless man in full-time ministry could also be so full of unbelief that God had to strike him dumb. Being in full-time Christian ministry is not a guarantee against unbelief, nor against our interfering in the purposes of God.

One of the big tragedies within Christendom today is that **unbelief invades us like a cancer.** It seems ludicrous that leaders can come down hard on other areas that bring disgrace upon the testimony of the church, yet unbelief is allowed to spread through our ranks unchallenged. For the Christian, unbelief is every bit as bad as other sins. Zacharias represents a life that many Christians get caught up into. We pray for years for God to do specific things for us, and when He responds and says the petition is granted, we don't believe it! I have seen this with Christians praying for revival. Yet when revival comes to their church, they don't, or won't accept it, because it didn't happen the way they thought it should!

UNBELIEF ROBS US!:

From a Scriptural point of view unbelief robs us of every positive thing God wants to do for us. It robs us of accepting and entering into the supernatural. It robs us of the promises of God, kills the vision and call of God to our lives. It reduces us to mere natural-thinking people who finish up accomplishing very little in this life that is of eternal value. **The reality is that unbelief is an insult to God. Unbelief in our life does not allow God to be GOD to us – or in us.** Unbelief is a “cancerous curse” and needs to be rooted out before it destroys us. Zacharias was reduced to a “dummy” because of his unbelief, even though he was a man in public

Christian office. Unbelief is no respecter of persons, and unbelief loves nothing more than to latch itself on to those who call themselves “Bible-believing Christians.”

- **What can we do about this spiritual cancer of the soul?**

First of all, we must start with examining our own self, to see how much it is affecting our own life. How can we do this? Ask yourself:

- **Is there anyone or anything that comes between Jesus and me?**
- **How do I respond to the teachings of Jesus Christ? (Do I know them?)** (John 14:21-24).
- **Do I really believe what He says in His Word?**
- **Do I really believe what He declares about me as a new creation in Christ, or do I believe more how I feel and what I think or say about myself?**
- **Do I believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit?**
- **Do I seek to be filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit?** (Galatians 5:22-26).
- **Do I believe and accept the supernatural of God as being a big part of the Christian faith and life?**
- **Do I eagerly pursue and exercise the spiritual gifts?** (which are the Christians “tools of our trade”?) (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

- **Do I believe God's promises relating to Divine healing as being part of our inheritance?** (Isaiah 53 & Matthew 8:16-17).
- **Do I seek to listen to – and obey – God more than people?**
- **Am I willing to step out and glorify God, even though most others are not prepared to take any risks?**

All of the above questions need to be answered positively and honestly. Any negatives are because of unbelief, wrong teaching, or fear.

Chapter Seven

John The Baptist

ONCE ZACHARIAS was delivered of his unbelief (through his obedience to God, which, to him, meant defying his relatives in the naming of John), he was released into a new – and the best – season of his life. He became a Spirit-filled prophetic man who nurtured and ushered in one of the most powerful ministries we have ever known – that of John the Baptist (his son). John fulfilled the prophecies of Zacharias and impacted millions of lives through his radical new approach to Christian things. John was so powerful that he most likely emptied many of the religious churches of their people, for they were drawn to him out into the wilderness to listen to his message of repentance and water baptism. If we stop to think about it, John’s ministry was so different, so “far out” to anything anyone else was doing in that day that many would have reacted strongly against him through unbelief. However, his ministry was so powerful and convincing that the masses flocked to him and were publicly baptized in the river Jordan by complete bodily immersion (a total new thing).

In John 1:19-34 we are told that John the Baptist was seriously questioned by the Jews. Their question was, “**Who are you?**” John was so different to anyone they had ever encountered before. The only answer he gave them was to quote from the Prophet Isaiah, “***I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: make straight the***

way of the Lord” (v. 23 – Isaiah 40:3-5). They struggled to accept John’s baptism in water. **“Why do you baptize?”** they asked (v. 25). John’s answer to them was that it was to bring the revelation of Jesus to Israel (v. 31). His testimony was, **“He Who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon Whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, this is He Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God”** (v. 33-34). John clearly spoke of receiving his commission to baptize in water from God. But not everyone accepted John’s water baptism ministry as being from God. The chief priests, scribes and elders certainly did not.

When Jesus came on to the ministry scene, He also was questioned and challenged as to His authority to do what He did. The reply Jesus gave to them was in the form of just one question, **“The baptism of John – was it from heaven, or from men?”** (Luke 20:1-8). Jesus effectively trapped them and, because they would not answer Him (even though they knew it, but did not believe or accept the truth of it), Jesus left them further bewildered by not answering their question of the source of His authority. Like with John and his water baptism they knew Jesus had to have His authority from God. The evidence was there for all genuine enquirers to see!

As far as I am aware, there was no precedent in the Old Testament Scripture prophecies about John’s ministry including the act of water baptism. It was a total new thing. Many of us really struggle with the “new things” of God. Yet the Bible has a number of “new things” that were never specifically prophesied. **It is very important we judge new things by their fruits more than by their methods, as the Holy Spirit is doing a lot of new things today that we need to embrace if we want to be a part of what He is doing.**

Do not allow yourself to be limited because the exact specifics are not mentioned in the Bible. Was John wrong in baptizing because it had never been done before? No, of course not. The Holy Spirit wants to lead us all into refreshing new things today to help us break free of all the religious “hang-ups” that have smothered the Christians in their walk with God. Many of those “hang-ups” have been crippling the Christians and the Christian message for generations.

Even today, there are still many religious people who cannot, or will not, accept water baptism by full immersion (as revealed by John the Baptist), nor the Holy Spirit baptism (as revealed by Jesus). Both are essential requirements of obedience for us to get launched into New Testament Christianity. So it all comes down to who and what you believe. If we do not believe the truth – the revelation – of what John and Jesus brought us from heaven, then we are once again the victims of that ugly word “unbelief!” That unbelief robs us of moving forward in the righteousness and purposes of God. The promises of God are to those who abide (“remain through believing”) in His spoken and revealed Word. That is what makes us His disciples. No one is ever a disciple who cannot believe the word of their master! Jesus said it is the knowing of the truth (of what He says) that makes us free (John 8:31-47). The Jews could not accept His Word. Why? **Unbelief!**

HEBREWS THREE AGAIN:

Let us be reminded again of what Hebrews 3 tells us about unbelief and what it does to a person.

- It creates hardness of heart against the voice of God (v.7-8).
- That leads to rebellion against the will of God (v.8).

- It causes people to “test and try” God – to challenge Him arrogantly (v.9).
- It provokes the anger of God, because they have gone astray (through their unbelief) and demonstrate they do not know the ways of God (v.10-11).

The result is they cannot enter into God’s rest (that rest of faith and knowing the security of God’s truth in our hearts). You would think that what has been written in the first eleven verses of Hebrews 3 is bad enough, but it goes on to warn us:

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” (v.12).

- Unbelief produces an evil heart. What a person’s heart is, that is what he is. Unbelief corrupts the Christian believer at the very core of his/her being. When the heart is sick or evil, the person is sick or evil as well. Unbelief strikes at the very root of our being and renders us useless and powerless.
- Unbelief is evil, for it causes us to turn away (or depart) from God Himself. Why? Because it is deceitful and hardens our heart against the ways and word of Jesus Christ. “Deceit” or “deceitful” means: “self-deception” (Bullinger’s); “the act or practice of deceiving; a statement, act, or device intended to mislead, fraud or trick; a tendency to deceive” (Collins). That’s what unbelief does to us!

“The deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:13) is such that it works to undermine our lives. It eats away the very foundation of what the Christian life is, which is “a conscious believing” in the word of

Jesus Christ that comes to us through the voice of the Holy Spirit (the reason why the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is so important). That voice is confirmed by the principles of the written Word of God, the Scriptures.

It is to be noted that the warning in Hebrews Three is followed by the example of the Israelites who came out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses. They came out because Moses heard the voice of God and walked in the authority of that word. He received the prophetic word from heaven for them and that word brought them their great deliverance from their bondages. However, the Scriptures tell us those same people later died in the wilderness (v.16-19). The reason given is **unbelief!** We would wonder how could anyone who had experienced such miraculous, supernatural things (against all the odds), see the mighty hand of God at work on their behalf setting them free, to then fall into such a state? **The answer is they became victims to unbelief – an evil heart of unbelief. It destroyed them – spiritually and literally. Let us not under-estimate this cancerous thing called unbelief.** All those people who fell prey to an unbelieving heart did not give up on being religious. No, their unbelief did not prevent them from being religious and still attending “the house of God.” That is why today there is so much religion blinding people from the truth of Jesus. **To follow Jesus we have to make conscious decisions to believe what Jesus says, because He is contradictory to what is acceptable to our natural, unbelieving minds. Unbelief is an enemy of God and a destroyer of our souls!** No wonder Hebrews Three tells us to *“hold fast to our confidence, to beware, to exhort one another daily (in the things of God), to remember we are partakers of Jesus Christ.”* But those things are all dependent upon holding on to our confidence, remaining steadfast in the faith of Jesus Christ. Believing is not “automatic” for the Christian. And

even though we may start well in the faith, we still have to guard against the “falling away process” that unbelief causes. On the basis of Hebrews Three, the “once saved, always saved” teaching dies in the wilderness.

THERE IS DECEPTION WHEN WE DON'T BELIEVE JESUS:

I am writing this in Rome, Italy, where I have been preaching. The strong religiosity of the city has challenged me. There are huge churches and institutions, but they are places where people pray to Mary, Peter, Paul and a more recent “Padre Peo.” It is a huge tragedy that for centuries ignorance and unbelief in the Word of God has produced millions of “worshippers” who do not know the simplicity and power of a personal relationship with Jesus. This ignorance and unbelief has taught people to approach God in the name of good saints, but it is all to no avail. The Scripture is clear: ***“Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel (and Rome, and all the world), that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom you crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, by Him this (healed) man stands here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”*** (Acts 4:10-12, NKJV). (Read also Peter’s message recorded in Acts 3:11-26). Mary, Peter and Paul never ever invited people to pray to God through them! How ironic that the millions who “worship” them have never taken the time to listen to what they said! I have been in the catacombs and seen the written prayers to Peter and Paul – all contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture – yet the churches continue to deceive the generations because they can’t believe the truth Jesus, Mary, Peter and Paul taught. Millions believe that what they are doing is Christianity, and acceptable to God, when they

pray to dead saints! It is religious deception of the worst kind, when it is perpetrated and encouraged by the so-called “Christian Church.” Just because a religion has impressive buildings, magnificent altars of incense, and a large following, etc., does not make them right – or acceptable to God. Every religious organization seems to be able to find the money to build their buildings from which they peddle their false teachings. No wonder Paul felt the way he did when he saw the idolatry and false religions in Athens (Acts 17:16-34). It made him angry. I must confess I felt angry in Rome when I saw what “the church” and religion has done to the people. The recognized church leaders have missed the truth of what Jesus came to give us and have stuck with the “*old wine*” rather than embracing the truth of Jesus and the Holy Spirit “*new wine.*” Jesus said they prefer the old wine as being better (see Matthew 9:16-17 & Luke 5:36-39).

FEAR AND UNBELIEF ARE SOUL-MATES:

When we are willing to break with tradition, church customs (habits), and obey the Holy Spirit, we will get delivered from the curse of unbelief and see God do wonderful things in and through our lives. Until we deal with this cancer our lives will be weak and fruitless in comparison to what God has ordained we should be. It is interesting that the breaking of the dumbness and unbelief in Zacharias’ life came at the time he took his stand against the advice of his blood relatives. They expected him to name his son Zacharias (a family tradition), but Zacharias named him John (a non-family name) in obedience to the voice of God (Luke 1:59-66). How often we can allow the strong wills and opinions of family members and relatives to stop us from obeying the Lord. Through the spiritual gifts I have seen those in high church positions “set free” to flow in God once certain family members or relatives had been ministered to through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and the

word of knowledge. People can bind us and make us afraid to step out beyond “their area of approval.” Unbelief and fear are soul mates, and we need to have their hold broken off us through our believing truth and obedience. It is a very sad thing when we cannot obey God because we are afraid of family, friends or relatives – or worse still, because we are afraid of those in church leadership positions. Let’s be clear here: Our first Christian duty in life is to God Himself, not those of lesser position. We are called to **“obey God more than men”** (Acts 4). Look at what happened to Zacharias when he obeyed God rather than the opinions and traditions of his religious relatives. John became the first to be named John in the Zacharias lineage, and Zacharias’ obedience in doing that gave him a mighty infilling of the Holy Spirit that released him into the prophetic. **Unbelief is defeated when we obey God and let the Holy Spirit fill us through and through. When that happens the prophetic ministry is released to flow out of us like a river of living water to dry and thirsty souls.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPHETIC:

That is why the prophetic ministry is so important. The true prophetic comes in the name of the Holy Spirit of Truth and challenges those things that do not please or glorify God. It directly challenges unbelief. The prophetic ushers in God’s “new day” or “new season” which enables us to break free of the old ways and systems we so easily get locked into. It sees unbelief for what it is, a deadly cancer that eats away the life, love, joy, enthusiasm for Jesus and His supernatural ministry.

If a righteous and blameless man such as Zacharias could be so full of unbelief that it made him get in the way of the purposes of God, how much more should we be aware of the subtleties of unbelief and guard our lives against it? It means we should

be making ourselves available to God for Him to speak to us and use us any time He wants to. That means a commitment to obey whatever He tells us. And it is our obedience to God that demonstrates that we are not bound by unbelief. Let's be more obedient to Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

WHAT SENT THE RICH MAN TO HELL?

In Luke 16:19-31 we have recorded the stories of two men who lived very close to one another in life, but in death were eternally separated. One went to heaven, the other to hell. The poor man covered in sores finished up in an eternal heaven, while a very rich man (who despised the poor man begging outside his gate day after day) finished up in hell. It could be easy to conclude that the rich man went to hell because he trusted in his riches rather than God. If we read the story, however, we discover the rich man had made a decision to reject the claims of God's Word. He chose not to believe the message of salvation that had been given him via Moses and the prophets. Even though the rich man wanted his brothers still living on earth to be spared the torment that he now was in (by pleading that someone return from the dead to convince them), **Jesus said they still would not believe if someone did return from the dead.** In reality Jesus has risen from the dead and sinful mankind still does not believe the truth of the Scripture. While riches do make it hard for people to enter into heaven (Matthew 19:23-24), **it was the rich man's heart of unbelief that condemned him into an eternity in hell. Yes, unbelief sends people to hell!** Yet we treat it like it is not important, that it is something quite harmless, a personal thing.

- **But unbelief has eternal consequences!**
- **Unbelief means the difference between heaven and hell! Let us be in no doubt as to its detrimental effect**

upon us. The reason people do not believe the power of the Gospel is because they choose to not believe it!

- Believing is a choice, and unbelief is a choice.
- We will live eternally according to how we choose.
- Unbelief is a power that needs to be broken!

Chapter Eight

Know The Word Of God

Hebrews 4:12-16 gives us the answer to dealing with unbelief. Let's read it from the Living Bible (TLB):

“For whatever God says to us is full of living power: it is sharper than the sharpest dagger, cutting swift and deep into our innermost thoughts and desires with all their parts, exposing us for what we really are. He knows about everyone, everywhere. Everything about us is bare and wide open to the all-seeing eyes of our living God; nothing can be hidden from Him to whom we must explain all that we have done. But Jesus the Son of God is our great High Priest Who has gone to heaven itself to help us; therefore let us never stop trusting Him. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, since He had the same temptations we do, though He never once gave way to them and sinned. So let us come boldly to the very throne of God and stay there to receive His mercy and to find grace to help us in our times of need.”

The Word of God is there for us. It is still the only authoritative guide on matters relating to eternal things, of heaven and hell. **We ignore it to our own peril.** The fact we may say we do not believe it to be the only way any more, is an expression or statement of unbelief. Remember, unbelief is a choice, just as believing is a choice. Therefore:

- Know what the Word of God can do – and **BELIEVE IT!**
- Know that the Bible is true – and **BELIEVE IT!**
- Know that God is Bigger than every man and devil – so put your **FAITH** in God!

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16).
Why? Because *“FAITH (the opposite to unbelief) comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”* (Romans 10:17).

The *“hearing by the Word of God”* is the spoken Word. We must hear God’s voice; we must hear how He speaks to us. God has given to His people all that is necessary to please Him. The choice is ours as to what we do with the promises of God.

- **We choose to BELIEVE, or we choose NOT TO BELIEVE.** The result of our choice will be shown in our life-style.
- Be encouraged to **BELIEVE GOD’S WORD!**

If you have taken time to look up the given Scripture verses and passages, and have endeavoured to digest what they are saying, **you will see that unbelief is a plague that works against every true believer, seeking to rob us of our inheritance contained in**

the promises of God's Word.

Unbelief is a giant! It is a giant that, because of its very size and nature, thinks it can scare its opponents into submission through the use of fear tactics.

In Jesus' mighty name, we do not have to be afraid of any giant! We need to see the giant of unbelief for what it really is and resist it steadfastly in the name of Jesus! **We resist it through a conscious accepting, and believing, that God's Word is the truth! It is the truth – and it is the knowing of the truth that sets us free** (John 8:31-36). **Let's believe the truth!**

- Unbelief does not believe truth - it always doubts, questions and disobeys the truth.

Look around you today:

- What has unbelief accomplished?
- What has it done to many good people?
- Right now, What is it doing to you?

See unbelief for what it is and turn away from it. Recognize the truth God has given to us in the Person of Jesus Christ, and believe Him! God declared Jesus Christ as “*the way, the truth, and the life*” (John 14:6) (and He still does, and Jesus still is!).

- **Believe God today!**
- **Believe the truth He has given us in Jesus!**
- **Do not let the giant of unbelief hold you back any longer.**
- **Break its hold in the All-Powerful Name of Jesus!**

God bless you.

“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and BELIEF of the truth: Whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

A Prayer for you to pray: “Dear God, I come to You in the Powerful Name of Jesus Christ Your Son. I ask You to speak clearly and deeply into my heart so that I might receive and believe Your Word. I confess to You all unbelief in my life and release it to You. Repair all the damage that it has done to me. I repent of it. Cleanse me from its evil affects that it has had on me. I now consciously make a decision to believe Your Word and to seek to live by it every day. I thank You for hearing my prayer, for cleansing my heart, for accepting me as Your follower. In Jesus’ name, from this day, I will believe and confess You as the Truth of my life, Amen.”

**Materials Available Through
“The Gospel Faith Messenger” Ministry:**

By Rodney W. Francis

BOOKS and BOOKLETS:

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OTHER AUTHORS:

By Kerry Wright and Tim Garnier (Hamilton, N.Z.).

- Prophetic Music Manual

By Kerry Thompson (Hamilton, N.Z.).

- Reflections On Life (23 Prophetic Poems).

What is “The GFM” Ministry?

It commenced in April, 1964. “The Gospel Faith Messenger” Ministry was launched with 27 names and addresses for a monthly Bible study. The Bible studies have increased to including 3 Bible Correspondence Courses with the answers being sent in for marking. A personal letter of reply goes back to the people with their marked Bible Lessons. “The GFM” is a literature prophetic/teaching/preaching Ministry that has been developed to bring individuals to personal faith in Jesus Christ, instruct them in the foundations of the Christian faith, and to equip them to repeat the process. Scores of people in many nations have and are being ministered to through “The GFM.”

“The GFM” has grown into an International Ministry, to help people be equipped and released in God. The Head Office of “The GFM” is in Hamilton New Zealand, and there are several other Offices that are involved with the processing of the Bible Correspondence Courses.

Rodney W. Francis is the Founder/Director of this ministry. He was converted in 1959 at 17 years of age into an Independent Pentecostal Church. In 1986 he became an ordained minister with the “Elim Pentecostal Churches of New Zealand,” and served on the National Executive of that movement for over 10 years (1987-1997). He resigned from that Movement at the end of 1999 to become fully

involved and focused in “The GFM” developing ministry teams. He is credentialed with the “Elim Church Incorporated” (ECI) in Great Britain, and “The GFM” Ministry in New Zealand. Rodney has a number of Timothy’s in full-time ministry, both in New Zealand and overseas. His heart is to see others equipped with the love of God, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and a passion to release the reality of Jesus into the lives of others. Today he is released to minister in the wider Body of Christ world-wide, working out from Hamilton, New Zealand.

Rodney and Jean live by faith and “The GFM” is a faith ministry.

“The GFM” Magazine: Every few months we publish a Magazine to inform people of what is happening in the Ministry, and also to give some good teaching articles. This 12-page Magazine is posted to over 60 nations.

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Thank you.

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We look forward to hearing from you soon.

