

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Newsletter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 KJV)*

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## Unbelieving Heart of the Believer

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This is the beginning of a new year for us and, like each year, there are many so-called prophets prophesying about the coming year. From what I have seen most of these are hype with very little substance. However, I do believe that this coming year is significant in the plan and purposes of God. I believe that this year the emphasis of the Holy Spirit has changed. We are moving from an individual expression of Jesus to a corporate expression of the one new man—the Ekklesia, the Body of Christ. This is part of the accelerating end time process to fulfill the season and prepare creation for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are on the verge of the manifestation of our spiritual promised land—the Kingdom of God. The last few years there have been some who have spied out the land for us and reported of its righteousness, peace and joy; of its rest, abundance and glory.

Now, the promise is before us of entering into His rest. The priests are prepared. It is time to assemble the people and enter in. This is a crucial time in our destiny. Let us not be as the Children of Israel who did not enter because of an evil heart of unbelief.

Hebrews 3:14-19 NASB

- (14) For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,
- (15) while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME."
- (16) For who provoked *Him* when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt *led* by Moses?
- (17) And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?
- (18) And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?
- (19) So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

These were people who saw the mighty miracles of God that delivered them from Egypt; who saw their enemies swallowed by the Red Sea where they, themselves, had just walked across on dry land; who partook of the provisions of food, water, and protection provided by God as they crossed the wilderness; who had direction and a visible manifestation of the presence of God in a column of cloud by day and a column of fire by night; who saw God come down on Sinai in majesty and power to speak with them. Yet, in spite of all of this, they did not enter in because of unbelief.

Now, the question is “Why?” After seeing the power of God manifested in every way imaginable, why did they have an unbelieving heart? We should pay attention to this question, because, if it can happen to the Children of Israel, it can happen to us.

## What Happened?

We need to understand what happened with the Children of Israel so that we can make sure that it doesn't happen to us.

### Hebrews 3:7-12 NASB

- (7) Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,
- (8) DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS,
- (9) WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED *Me* BY TESTING *Me*, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS.
- (10) "THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS':
- (11) AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.'"
- (12) Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

[NOTE: the NASB translation uses all caps when there is a quote from the Old Testament.]

These verses give us two reasons for their heart of unbelief:

1. they always went astray in their heart, and
2. they did not know His ways.

These two factors were the results of them hardening their hearts when they saw His works, even to provoking and testing the Lord.

Their first problem was a heart problem. The desires of Egypt were still in their hearts and constantly lead them astray.

### 1 Corinthians 10:6-11 NASB

- (6) Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.
- (7) Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT

DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY."

- (8) Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.
- (9) Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents.
- (10) Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.
- (11) Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Their heart condition was expressed in five ways:

1. Craving evil things
2. Idolatry
3. Immorality
4. Testing the Lord
5. Grumbling

We can assume then that if these things are in our heart, they make our heart to be an evil heart of unbelief. Why? Because all of these things fulfill our desires without regard for the Lord's will or purpose. The concern is for ourselves, our wants, our indulgences. We can harbor these because we do not really believe that God will judge us. That is the essence of an evil heart of unbelief—we can do what we want without any concern for God or His judgment. Are the people of God much different today?

Their second problem was that they did not know the *ways* of the Lord. They had seen His power, His work, His acts but had no understanding of His ways. Isaiah spoke of the results of people who don't know His ways.

Isaiah 29:13 NASB

- (13) Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*,

The result is lip service based on traditions learned by rote, memorized repetition. Jesus directly applied this to the Pharisees.

Matthew 15:7-9 NASB

- (7) "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:
- (8) **'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.**
- (9) **'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'**"

Without a proper heart, honoring or worshiping God with our lips is vain—empty, of no value. Those who do that, also teach as doctrines the precepts, the understanding of men because they

are devoid of spiritual insight and lack understanding of His ways.

## Our Warning

Both of these conditions, a hardened heart and a lack of understanding His ways, are found throughout the modern Church. The bulk of the institutionalized Church fits into the category of the Pharisees, which produces the results described by Jesus: *worship that is vain and teaching that is worthless*.

Why is the worship vain? Because of the condition of the heart. Why is the teaching worthless? Because they neither know nor understand the ways of God. I hear many cry out to God for miracles, for Him to show His power, for Him to bring revival. But, what we really need is to understand His ways. Without understanding His ways, we will never enter the promised land. Without understanding His ways, we can never trust His character. Without trusting His character, we can never accept His power that is for our good, but instead desire for Him to use His power to indulge every whim of our hearts.

We are in the same place that the Children of Israel were when the spys brought their report. Do we believe God and enter or do we become bleached bones in the wilderness?

### Hebrews 4:1-2 NASB

- (1) Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.
- (2) For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

A believing heart must walk in faith, otherwise, there is no way to please God. Hearing the good news preached Sunday after Sunday is not enough. We must come to a place of understanding the ways of the Lord.

## The Corporate Provision

The promised land was not provided to individuals, only to the corporate body. Although Caleb and Joshua were ready to enter the land and take it, the others were not. For 40 years Caleb and Joshua continued in the wilderness until the corporate body was prepared to enter.

While participated in the things of God individually, they experienced their journey as a body of people.

### 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 NASB

- (1) For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea;
- (2) and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
- (3) and all ate the same spiritual food;
- (4) and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.
- (5) Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid

low in the wilderness.

God was not well pleased with most of them. Do we think that we are different? That God will somehow make allowance for our unbelief?

When we enter in we cease from our own works—we rest in His works, before ordained that we should walk in them. While this can apply individually, it is primarily a corporate expression. The Body of Christ will do the works of Jesus and even greater works because He has returned to the Father and sent forth the Holy Spirit so the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Do we believe it?

Even though we have every advantage of modern society and technology we are still like the disciples who were full of unbelief when they heard of Jesus' resurrection, even though He had told them of it many times.

#### Mark 16:11-14 NASB

- (11) When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.
- (12) After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country.
- (13) They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either.
- (14) Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining *at the table*; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.

## The Work of God

It is time that we become obedient. We all want to do the works of God but we seem unable to do so. Why? Look at Jesus' answer to this question.

#### John 6:28-29 NASB

- (28) Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"
- (29) Jesus answered and said to them, "**This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.**"

There is only one work required of us—that we believe in Him whom He sent. The Father sent the Son so that that we could be restored to our potential as sons of God. The Son sent the Holy Spirit so that we might fulfill that potential and become mature sons of God revealing the glory of the Father. When we believe in the Son that was sent, we receive the benefit of the work that He did. When we believe in the Holy Spirit that was sent, we receive the benefit of the power to become sons of God.

Mature sons become an army ready to take the promised land—the rest of God. Some must enter. It is ordained of God. Why should it not be us?

Do you believe? Well, do you?

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