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**The Sin Of Unbelief**  
**Num. 13**

The sin of unbelief is not just refusing to believe God's word but failing to trust what He has promised to do or able to do.

This was the sin of the children of Israel which brought upon them a life of leanness to their souls, a life of wondering in the wilderness and the longest death march they have ever experienced.

***Faith and doubt #1496***

Doubt sees the obstacles,

Faith sees the way!

Doubt sees the darkest night,

Faith sees the day!

Doubt dreads to take a step,

Faith soars on high.

Doubt questions, "Who believes?"

Faith answers, "I!"

There are many things that the scriptures teach about the sin of unbelief but this morning we want to confine ourselves to the thirteenth chapter of the book of Numbers and observe six things about the sin of unbelief.

- I. Unbelief does not believe God's word by faith but seeks to verify it by sight. 13:1-2
- II. Unbelief does not accept the evidence of God but ignored the evidence. 13:23
- III. Unbelief does not deny the promises of God but reasons them away. 13:27-29
- IV. Unbelief does not reside in the minority but the majority. 13:30

- V. Unbelief does not encourage God's people but discourages them. 13:31
- VI. Unbelief does not see accurately but distortedly. 13:32-33

- I. **Unbelief does not believe God's word by faith but seeks to verify it by sight. 13:1-2**
  - A. The text tells us that God commanded Moses to send out the men to spy out the land. vs. 1-2a.
    - 1. The book of Deuteronomy tells us that the people were the ones to request the search party. Deut. 1:19-22.
    - 2. The book also records that the man Moses was pleased with the request. Deut. 1:23
  - B. The text tells us that God was giving them the land. vs. 2b
    - 1. The Lord had promised it to Abraham and describes the boundaries as having given it already, a completed fact. Gen. 15:18-21
    - 2. The Lord told Moses that He was going to use him to deliver the children of Israel and give them the land. Ex. 3:17
    - 3. The people were warned to not follow the practices of the land of Canaan where God was bringing them. Lev. 18:3
  - C. The word of God was not believed by faith but was sought to be verified by sight.
    - 1. The twelve were chosen, one of each tribe. vs.3-16
    - 2. The objective was to survey the land in three ways; the strength of the people, the strength of the cities and the strength of the land to produce. vs. 18-20

3. The entire procedure was unnecessary because none of those things mattered for God had already proclaimed it was theirs.

*Unbelief does not believe God's word by faith but seeks to verify it by sight!*

**II. Unbelief does not accept the evidence of God but ignores the evidence. 13:23**

- A. They saw with their own eyes the fertile and abundant land at the valley of Eshcol which means cluster.
  1. They cut down one cluster of grapes and carried it between two poles because it was so big.
  2. They also took back some pomegranates and figs.
- B. The three fruits would be used by God for Israel's privilege.
  1. The vineyard is used to portray the nation of Israel's rebellion and unbelief. Is. 5, Mk. 12
  2. The fig tree that Jesus cursed also symbolized the nation of Israel as fruitless in unbelief. Math.21, Mk. 11
  3. The pomegranate was on the hem of the High Priests' robe of the ephod representing fruitfulness through entry. Ex. 28:33

*Unbelief does not accept the evidence of God but ignores the evidence!*

**III. Unbelief does not deny the promises of God but reasons them away. 13:27-29**

- A. They acknowledged that the land had an abundance of food, "It truly flows with milk and honey". vs. 27
  1. They agreed with God.
  2. They agreed with what they saw.
- B. They objected by their subjective observations. vs. 28
  1. The people who dwelt in the land were strong.
  2. The cities were fortified and very large.
  3. The descendants of Anak were there.
- C. They saw themselves surrounded by the enemy. vs. 29
  1. The Amalekites on the south.
  2. The Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites in the mountains.
  3. The Canaanites by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan.

*Unbelief does not deny the promises of God but reasons them away!*

**IV. Unbelief does not reside in the minority but the majority. 13:30**

- A. The man Celeb was a man of faith and quieted the people before Moses as a faithful witness. vs. 30a
  1. The primary responsibility of a witness is to testify to what he or she has seen.
  2. The caution for a witness is to make sure that he or she is not intimidated or altered from their stern conviction regarding the truth.
- B. The man Celeb was a man of action because he trusted God. vs. 30b-d

1. He encouraged the people to seize the land immediately, "Let us go up at once and take possession".
  2. He declared that they were well able to overcome it because he believed God and His word by faith.  
\* 38 years later he is the same man of faith.  
Josh.14:10-15
- C. The ten who went out with Joshua and Caleb gave the bad report of unbelief.
1. The two were the minority among the ten.
  2. The two were the minority among the 600,000 men of war.
  3. The two were the minority among the 2-3 million people in the camp.
  4. The majority were in unbelief.

*Unbelief does not reside in the minority but the majority!*

**V. Unbelief does not encourage God's people but discourages them. 13:31**

- A. The ten discouraged the people from trusting God by contradicting God's word.
1. They were defaming God's character and accusing Him of endangering them, "*We are not able to go up against the people*".
  2. They were calling Celeb a false witness.
- B. They were seeing the enemy through the eyes of unbelief, "*They are stronger than we*".
1. They were trusting in themselves for the victory.
  2. They were not including God in the equation.

*Unbelief does not encourage God's people but discourages them!*

**VI. Unbelief does not see accurately but distortedly. 13:32-33**

- A. They declared the land devoured the inhabitants.
1. They could of been referring to the war life people that ravaged the land and made it infertile.
  2. They were generalizing as well as a contradicting their proclamation that the land was a land of milk and honey.
- B. They declared that all the people they saw were men of great stature.
1. They put fear in the people to cause them to respond in unbelief.
  2. They were exaggerating out of unbelief.
  3. They did not include God in the equation, therefore no hope was in sight.

*Unbelief does not see accurately but distortedly!*

**VII. Unbelief does not have to be in our lives.**

- A. Unbelief will keep us from God's full rest. Heb. 3:7-4:16
1. The example of Israel's unbelief of a hardened heart is reviewed. 3:7-11
  2. The warning against an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God is exhorted. 3:12-19
  3. The application is four-fold.
    - a. Let us fear lest we fall short of entering into His rest. 4:1-10

- b. Let us be diligent to enter into His rest, lest anyone fall short after the example of disobedience. 4:11-13
  - c. Let us hold fast our confession of Jesus our great High Priest. 4:14-15
  - d. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need. 4:16
- B.** Unbelief will lead us to sin, inspite of our past privileges. 1Cor. 10:1-13
- 1. All experienced the same privileges. vs. 1-4
  - 2. Most did not please God and died in the wilderness. vs. 5
  - 3. These are examples and types for our learning so that we not sin after their manner. vs. 6-10
  - 4. These are lessons for each of us as a caution against pride lest we think we could never fall or that we can excuse ourselves by saying that God tempted us beyond our ability to endure. vs. 11-13
- C.** Unbelief can result in God's permissive will in contrast to His perfect will resulting in second best due to the consequences.
- 1. It was not God's will that they search out the land yet He allowed them to send out spies.
  - 2. Saul was not God's will but the peoples' yet He allowed them to reject Him as their King and be as all the other nations.
  - 3. Hezekiah was given 15 more years to live yet Mennassah was born, the most wicked King, it was the rejection of God's wisdom.
  - 4. The people were to eat Manna only yet God gave them their desire and sent leanness to their souls.

- D.** Unbelief is not to mark the believer, the believer is to live by faith which results in hope and trust in God.
- 1. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen but it is based on the God's word not mans. Heb. 1:1
  - 2. Faith was the basis by which the elders, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah and many others came to receive and experience the benefits and blessings of God. Heb. 11
  - 3 The Bible tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Heb. 11:6
- \* A man one day was walking along a narrow path, not paying much attention to where he was going. Suddenly he slipped over the edge of the cliff. As he fell, he grabbed a branch growing from the side of the cliff. Realizing that he couldn't hang on for long, he called for help.
- Man:** Is anybody up there?  
**Voice:** Yes, I'm here!  
**Man:** Who's that?  
**Voice:** The Lord.  
**Man:** Lord help me!  
**Voice:** Do you trust Me?  
**Man:** I trust you completely, Lord.  
**Voice:** Good. Let go of the branch.  
**Man:** What???  
**Voice:** I said, "Let go of the branch."  
**Man:** [ after a long pause] Is anybody else up there?

### Conclusion

- I.** Unbelief does not believe God's word by faith but seeks to verify it by sight. 13:1-2  
\* Are you being impatient in your marriage living by your feelings, emotions and sight rather than faith in God's word?
- II.** Unbelief does not accept the evidence of God but ignores the evidence. 13:23  
\* Are you ignoring all that God has done for you because your will has become pre-eminent?
- III.** Unbelief does not deny the promises of God but reasons them away. 13:27-29  
\* Are you reasoning away God's power to forgive and restore your love for your mate?
- IV.** Unbelief does not reside in the minority but the majority. 13:30  
\* Are you best described as one of the ten with the evil report or one of the two with the good report as you are living out your life?
- V.** Unbelief does not encourage God's people but discourages them. 13:31  
\* Are you a model of faith or unbelief to others in life?
- VI.** Unbelief does not see accurately but distortedly. 13:32-33  
\* Are you failing to enter God's rest because of eyes of unbelief and wondering in the wilderness, then believe God and occupy and possess the land He has given to you in Christ.