

The Marvel of Unbelief—Part 3

Simply Teaching the Word Simply—Pastor Chuck Smith



This article was edited by permission and taken from the book *Faith by the late Pastor Chuck Smith of CC Costa Mesa, CA*.

Too Good to be True?

I'm always leery of an offer for a free lunch. I just know they want to sell me something or they're going to push some fundraising program. There's always some sort of hitch. And TV offers usually seem too good to be true—and that's because they really are too good to be true. Most of the time they're selling junk.

When the Bible says God made the sinless Jesus to be sin for me, that I might be made the righteousness of God through Him—that sounds too good to be true. Why would Jesus take all of my sin upon Himself and give me His righteous standing before the Father? He was rich, yet for my sake He became poor—that through His poverty, I might obtain the promises of eternal life in the kingdom of God. This all seems too good to be true. It challenges our intellect.

But when we come to Jesus, we're no longer talking about free lunches or TV gizmos. We're talking about Someone who made all kinds of outrageous promises—and then kept them all.

The disciples of Jesus mourned and wept after the crucifixion because they thought the man they had considered to be the Messiah had perished forever. Even when Mary came to them with news that He had risen, they didn't believe her. It was too good to be true—men don't just rise from the dead!

Remember when the disciples had accompanied Jesus to the little town of Nain? As they approached, they heard people wailing in a funeral procession. The grief of one pitiful woman seemed unbearable because in the coffin lay her only son. Stopping the procession, Jesus commanded the corpse to rise. Incredibly, the young man's eyes flittered open, he sat up, and Jesus presented him to his mother—alive.

You'd think they would have remembered Lazarus. After all, that event had taken place only a few days earlier. They all saw Lazarus come out of the tomb, still wrapped in his grave clothes. But again, it seemed to have slipped their minds.

Jesus had told them repeatedly, "They're going to crucify Me, but on the third day I

will rise again." Now here it was, the third day after His crucifixion. You'd think they'd be all excited, waiting with anticipation and joyful expectancy. But no. They've given up. They're weeping and they're wailing ... all because of their unbelief.

Jesus had asked them to believe something clearly supernatural. But He had also claimed to be more than a mere man—and then He proved it by His works. Still, they didn't believe. At the very moment when they should have had tremendous rejoicing and unutterable happiness and joy, they

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had grief, wailing, and hopelessness. Why? Because of unbelief.

Do you see what unbelief does? It robs you of the joy you should have. It puts you in the slough of despondency and despair. The day Jesus rose from the dead should have been the happiest moment of the disciples' lives. The tomb was empty; the stone was rolled away. Jesus had triumphed over death, hell, and the grave. He had risen from the dead to live forevermore. That should have been the most exhilarating day they had ever known. But instead, it was a day of sorrow and gloom.

A Point of No Return

A man can come to a place where he has said no to God's grace so many times that finally God just confirms it. Some have refused the gospel so regularly that the invitation to eternal life is no longer extended to them. It isn't because they will not believe; it's that they cannot believe.

But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD

been revealed?" Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them." JOHN 12:37-40

It is tragic when a person has gone so far in his rebellion against God that God allows him the blindness of his own folly. He shuts

the man's eyes so that he cannot see. It is possible for a person to reject the Lord so much that he'll come to a place where he cannot believe. This is a tragic place—the point of no return.

*There is a time, we know not when,
a place we know not where,
that marks the destiny of men
to glory or despair.
There is a line by us unseen,
that crosses every path;
the hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath.¹*

What Will You Choose?

To believe or not to believe—that is the question. Will you believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who died to save you from your sin so that you might enter a life of confidence, joy, blessing, and peace? Or will you continue to battle the tides, doing your best to keep your head above the water, living from day to day in fear and anxiety because of what's happening in the world around you?

It's your choice. What you choose makes all the difference in this world and in the world to come. ☞

¹"Life's Boundary Line" (*The Doomed Man*), words by Dr. J. A. Alexander, 1860.