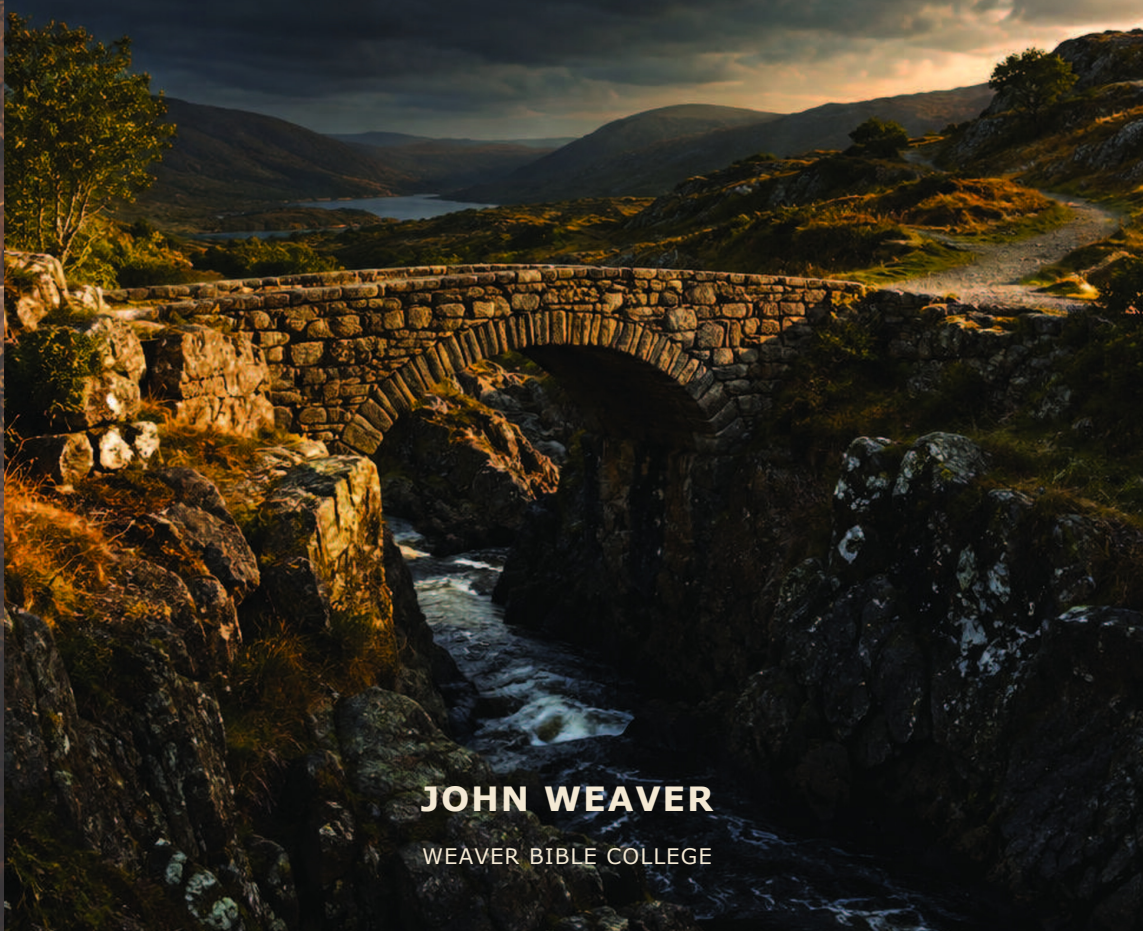
WEAVER BOOKS

BIBLICAL STUDIES

The Difference Between
Fear And Faith

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

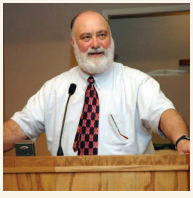
What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

PSALM 56:3

Fear and faith shape the way people interpret danger and responsibility. John Weaver examines trust in God's Word, the demands of obedience, and the difference between prudent action and retreat into unbelief. These messages ask how the believer's response to difficult circumstances can express dependence on God rather than surrender to anxiety.

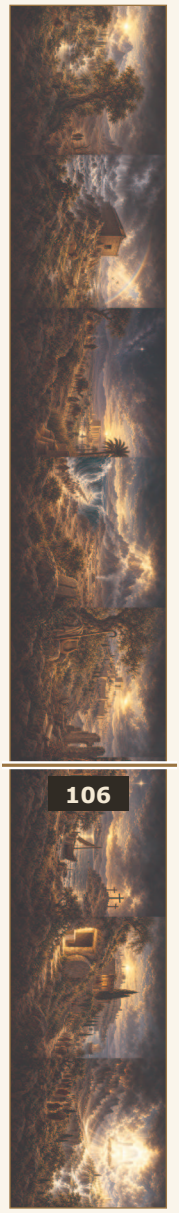
“If you cannot do something in absolute good conscience, giving honor and glory to God, then do not do it.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.



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The Difference Between Fear And Faith

Old Testament Studies

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The Difference Between Fear And Faith

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CHAPTER 1

The Difference Between Fear And Faith

Part One of Three

The Difference Between Faith and Fear

Introduction to the Series and Scripture Reading

Numbers chapter 13. We are going to read verses 1–3, and we will be reading other passages. I encourage you in the next couple of weeks to read over this passage, these two chapters, several times. I want to begin a message today which I have entitled, “The Differences Between Faith and Fear.” I am going to give you three differences, one today and one each for the next two Lord’s Days.

Numbers chapter 13, verses 1–3: “Now the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel. Of every tribe of their fathers shall you send a man, every one a ruler among them. And Moses, by the commandment of the Lord, sent them from the

wilderness of Paran. All those men were heads of the children of Israel."

I want to emphasize one truth. Look in verse 2 again: "Send thou men that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel." Verses 3–15 name each of these men. In verse 16 we read, "These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua."

The differences between faith and fear may surprise you. There are more references, or more passages, in the Bible dealing with fear than with faith. It is absolutely natural for man to fear, but it is supernatural to exercise faith. God must give us faith. Faith is His gift. God must enable us to exercise faith.

The Nature of Fear and Faith

Remember that passage in John 15 where our Lord said it very plainly: "Without me you can do how much? Nothing. Without me you can do nothing." Exercising faith is something, so without Him we cannot even do that.

Usually, the first response to the unknown is fear. You receive a phone call in the middle of the night, at one, two, or three o'clock, and the ringing wakes and rattles you. The very first thing you think is, "Oh no, something has happened." That is absolutely natural. We are told in 1 John 4 and verse 18, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." There is no fear in love. Just as God's love casts out fear, equally does faith cast out fear. Faith and fear cannot coexist or abide together. Fear has torment, and faith does not.

Faith rests in peace. When the disciples were fearful because of the storm, our Lord said to them in Mark 4:40, "Why are you so fearful? Have you no faith?" In other words, if you are fearful, you are not exercising faith; if you are exercising faith, then you are not fearful. Faith is absolutely vital and necessary to the child of God. Without faith, we would not be children of God at all. Moreover, Hebrews 11:6 tells us, "But without faith, it is impossible to please Him. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him." As children of faith,

we are to live by faith. There are a multitude of passages, but we must not only live by faith; we must fight our battles by faith.

The Necessity of Faith in the Christian Life

In 1 Peter 5:8-9, the Word of God says, “Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith.” It continues, “knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.” We are not only saved by faith; we are to live by faith. The Bible teaches that “the just shall live by faith.” Galatians 3:11 and Habakkuk 2:4 likewise say, “the just shall live by his faith.” We live by faith and walk by faith.

There is one very important and vital principle in Romans 14:23. In Romans 14, with its parallel passage in 1 Corinthians 8, the Apostle Paul deals with meat sold in the shambles, or meat sacrificed to an idol. There is nothing wrong with the meat; the meat has not changed, and an idol is absolutely nothing. But some, with conscience, still eat in reference to that idol. Therefore, we must be absolutely sure in our convictions. The verse says, “And he that doubteth is damned if he eat,” or condemned if he eat, “because he eateth not of faith.” The latter part is this: “for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” So whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Here is the principle.

If you cannot do something in absolute good conscience, giving honor and glory to God, then do not do it, because whatsoever is not of faith is sin. That which you cannot do in good conscience, in obedience to God, do not do, because you cannot do it in faith. A good illustration is found in Proverbs 21:4: “A high look and a proud heart and the plowing of the wicked is sin.”

We understand a high look, an arrogant, haughty attitude, and we understand a proud heart. But then the Bible says, “the plowing of the wicked is sin.” God has commanded man to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; basically, God has commanded man to work. Then we have to ask, Is work in itself a sin?

Obviously, the answer is no. How, then, can work be sin? If God has commanded us to do it, the answer is that it is sin if it is done without faith. The unbeliever does not plow in faith; he plows in

unbelief. That is why it is said that even the plowing of the wicked is sin: whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Fear is absolutely not in the essence of faith. Fear has nothing to do with faith. In fact, fear is the opposite of faith. Scripture tells us that fear has torment, and he that fears is not exercising faith.

Fear as the Foundation of Rebellion

Let me make a statement: before I finish this brief series, I am going to show it to you from the Bible. It may shock you, but here it is: Fear is the foundation of rebellion. Fear is the foundation of rebellion.

In Exodus 14, Moses was trying to quell the anxiousness and fear of the Israelites. They were hemmed in by the wilderness, the Red Sea was before them, and Pharaoh and his host were hot on their tracks. Pharaoh was coming, and they were absolutely scared to death. “And Moses said to the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you today. For the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall see them again no more forever.”

"The Lord shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." I like to paraphrase this so everybody can really understand it. Here is what Moses said: “Just shut up and trust God.” Basically, that is what he said. Quit bellyaching. Fear not; God is going to take care of the situation. So actually, what he is saying is, have no fear. On the other hand, you are to have faith. And, of course, God did indeed take care of the situation. But note what he said: "Fear not and stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." I believe that some of the plainest and clearest differences between faith and fear are given to us in the book of Numbers, chapters 13 and 14.

The Old Testament as Our Example

Before I even begin the message, I want to tell you a truth that I have probably enunciated many times before, but I want to call your attention to it. I want you to listen to it carefully. Someone will usually say, when you are preaching, “But that’s in the Old Testament.” We have one Bible, not two. We have one God, not two. The Old Testament is just as much the Word of God as the New

Testament. Now listen carefully. In Romans 15:4, the Apostle Paul said, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime," speaking of the Old Testament, "were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope." I do not know how much plainer it can get. Whatsoever was written aforetime was written for us.

If you say that it does not matter what happened to Israel in the Old Testament, you are in direct conflict with the Word of God, because God says that it does matter. In 1 Corinthians 10, verse 1, Paul says, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant." I do not want you to be ignorant either. I do not want to be ignorant. He continues: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, and they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." Thus, Christ is in the Old Testament. But watch: "with many of them God was not well pleased for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

Now look at verse 6: “Now these things,” that is, everything that happened to Israel and those people, “were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” Here is your example of something to avoid: do not act like these people.

“Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them, as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Here are two passages in the New Testament that say very clearly that everything in the Old Testament is for our admonition, our learning, and our examples; we are to learn from them.

We can go back to Numbers chapter 13 and begin to learn the differences between faith and fear. In verses 1 and 2, the Lord said unto Moses, “Send thou men that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel.” God told Moses to choose twelve men, one from each of the tribes, and send them to search out the land. Joshua and Caleb were the only two who came back with an honest and true report. The other ten spies brought back an evil and untrue report.

The First Difference: Faith Regards God's Promises, Fear Disregards Them

Two of the twelve walked in faith; ten of the twelve walked in fear. That is probably about the same ratio we have today, even among professing Christians. Most Christians live a life of absolute horror and absolute fear, which is ridiculous. But that is exactly what has happened.

Faith regards the promises of God, while fear disregards them. Faith regards, or thinks highly of, God's promises; fear disregards and disrespects them. Indeed, fear goes further: it reverses the promises of God. Fear forgets, denies, and despises God's promises; fear actually lies against God.

God had promised to give Israel the land. In verse 2 He said, “Send thou men that they search the land of Canaan which I give to the children of Israel.” God first gave this promise to Abraham, then to Isaac, and then to Jacob; now it had been passed down to these people.

This is the point I want to emphasize: faith regards the promises of God, but fear disregards the promises of God. The people were not facing an uncertain possibility. They were standing before what God had already promised to give them, yet fear would cause them to forget, deny, despise, and reverse that promise.

God had promised to bring these people into a land that flowed with milk and honey. Numbers 13:23 gives a true and accurate account of the land: “And they came into the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes. And they bare it between two upon a staff, brought of the pomegranates and of

the figs. And the place was called the brook of Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh, and brought back word unto them, and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him and said, We came into the land where thou sentest, and surely it floweth with milk and honey."

"And this is the fruit of it." I like grapes. I like figs. I have seen plenty of clusters of grapes, and some very nice clusters of grapes, but I have never in my entire life seen a cluster of grapes so huge that two men had to bear it on a staff. That was some cluster of grapes. Obviously, here is the good land.

Now look back to Exodus chapter 3, verse 8. God had promised to bring them into such a land. He said, "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good land and large into a land flowing with milk and honey unto the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites."

Now skip down to verse 17: "And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites unto a land flowing with milk and honey."

Here are a few questions. Does fear brand God as a liar? Does fear disbelieve God's promises? Is fear actually the foundation of rebellion? Look back in Numbers 13 at the report of the ten spies. In verse 31, the men who went up with Caleb said, "Be not able to go up against this people; for they are stronger than we."

They brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, "The land through which we have gone to search it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof. And all the people we saw in it are men of great stature." Now, it was a land that eateth up the people thereof. How could they truthfully say that when they had brought back all the fruits of the land and said, Here it is right in front of you?

Stop and think what is going on at this particular point. God had promised to bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey. Now the ten spies said, God lied to us. He deceived us. This is not a land flowing with milk and honey; this is the land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof. If we go there, we will die. These ten spies were despising the promises of God. Do not limit the despisement of this promise just to the ten spies. If you do, it is because you have not read far enough.

Biblical Evidence of Despising God's Promise

In Numbers 14:31, God says, “But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, then will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.” It was not just the spies that despised the land; it was the people as well. In verse 34 He says, “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.” God said they would wander in the wilderness for forty years, a year for a day. “Ye shall know my breach of promise” means alienation from, opposition to, and enmity, or strong hatred, against His promise. How did they breach God's promise? They were opposed to it; they were alienated from it.

Faith Regards the Promises of God

They hated it. They despised it. In Numbers chapter 20, we see how they despised God's promise. Beginning in verse 1, the Bible says, “Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month. And the people abode in Kadesh.” Miriam died there and was buried there. There was no water for the congregation, and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. The people chode with Moses and spake, saying, “Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! And why have you brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?”

They continued, “And wherefore have you made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? It is no place of seed, or figs,

or vines, or pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink." What are they saying? Moses, you and Aaron lied to us; God lied to us; everybody lied to us. You are a liar.

Psalm 106 shows how the people continually provoked God. "They soon forgot his works. They waited not for his counsel. They lusted exceedingly." "They envied Moses also in the camp." "They made a calf in Horeb." "They forgot God their Saviour." Then, in verse 24, the Bible says, "Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word."

Here is what they were doing: they were disbelieving and despising the Word of God because they were fearful and not moving in faith.

Now consider Hebrews chapter 11. I want to show you the difference between faith and fear. Here is the first point I am emphasizing: faith regards the promises of God, and fear disregards the promises of God. Hebrews 11:1 gives us a definition of faith. God basically tells us what faith is: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

The Foundation of Faith: God's Word and Promises

"Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Think about that for a moment. Faith is not some nebulous, abstract thing that might exist somewhere in a vacuum, floating around somewhere in the universe, from which somebody somehow grabs a little piece of faith. No, not at all. Scripture tells us that faith has a substance and an evidence. The Greek word for substance is hypostasis.

Everybody has heard of hyperthyroidism, which means the thyroid is overactive, and hypothyroidism, which means it is underactive. The word hupo comes from the Greek word hupo, which is translated in our Bible as hupostasis, as confidence, confident, and substance. This word is a compound word and means a foundation, or literally a firm foundation—something that has actual existence or substance. It literally means a thing put under, such as a substructure or foundation.

So, if you look in verse 1, he says, "Now faith is the confidence," or faith is the foundation of things hoped for. Faith then has a foundation. What is the foundation? The foundation is the Word of God. Listen to me: if one does not believe the Word of God, it is impossible to have faith. Biblical faith does not and cannot exist apart from the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." It is true that God sovereignly gives faith; faith is His gift. But God has also ordained that its origin and its increase be by the Word of God. Those who do not believe the Word of God—more specifically, those who do not believe the promises of God—cannot possibly exercise faith, at least not biblical faith.

Look back in verse 1: "Now, faith is the substance," or the foundation or confidence, "of the things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The word evidence there is elegos, and it literally means a proof, or that by which a thing is proved or tested. I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament, right before Matthew. Look in Malachi chapter 3, and I want to show you something.

Here is a passage about testing God. Remember that the word tempt in the Bible has both a good and a bad connotation. In “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,” it has the bad connotation. In Genesis 22, “now it came to pass that God did tempt Abraham.” Then James says, “let no man say when he's tempted, I'm tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.”

The Greek word is peresmos. Its good connotation simply means to test or to try. Its bad connotation means to seduce or entice someone to evil or sin. When the Bible says, “God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man,” God is not enticing anyone to sin, neither can man entice God to sin. When it says, “now it came to pass that God did tempt Abraham,” it means that God tested him. That was when He told him to offer up Isaac.

I said that to show you this. Malachi chapter 3, beginning with verse 8, gives the context: “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even

this whole nation." They refused to give God His tithes and offerings. Now watch what He said in verse 10: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

The word prove means to test Me, to try Me. So when our Lord said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," He was saying that we are not to do anything that would challenge God. Yet here He says, "Here's a way that you can test me. Here's a way that you can prove me. Here's a way that you could try me." What way is that? It is the way of obedience. That is what He was getting on to them for: their disobedience. God says, because of your disobedience, you are cursed with a curse.

Now, he said, if you want to prove me and to prove my blessings, obey me. I'll open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that you will not be able to receive. The word prove literally means to test or try. Obedience to God is a way to prove God's veracity and the accuracy of His promises.

I tell people that sometimes I get exasperated and sometimes tickled at what you and I would call armchair quarterbacks. I do not watch football; I do not even have a television, so you cannot watch it. I have never cared for any sport that had a ball in it.

An armchair quarterback sits there and says, "Boy, I do not believe that. If I had been there, I would have done something different. I would have done it this way." We always second-guess everybody and everything. People have tried to tell me, "You cannot trust the Bible," or, "This is not true." I have done this for over fifty years. I know it is true. I know it has been proved in my life. Do not tell me that something is not true when I have lived my entire life and proven that it is true. I have proven it over and over and over.

So this is what God is saying: If you want to test Me, if you want to try Me, the way to do it is by obedience to My Word. May I remind you of Psalm 138:2, where David said, "I will worship toward thy holy temple and praise thy name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: because thou hast magnified thy word above thy name." God's

Word cannot fail; if it did, God would not be God. Moreover, in Hebrews 6, God swore with an oath. He said that the oath is the end of all arguments. Here is another immutable truth: God cannot lie. So we have this. In light of this, turn to 2 Corinthians, chapter 1, verse 20. We are considering faith regarding God's promise. Fear disregards it. Watch what the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 1:20.

2 Corinthians 1:20 says, “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us.” Notice: “all the promises of God,” not some of them, but all the promises of God are in Jesus Christ yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us.

I am not going to take time to preach another message that I have preached many, many, many years ago, but let me just say something about amen. Probably most of you know that amen means verily, verily; truly, truly; or so be it, so be it. What many people do not know is that one of the names of Jesus Christ in the Bible is the Amen. He is the Amen, the faithful and true witness. If Steve, while I am preaching, and I say something, and Steve says, “Amen!” when Steve says that, he is doing two things.

First, he is agreeing with me that what I am saying is true. Second, he is calling Jesus Christ, who is the Amen and faithful and true witness, to verify and testify that what I am saying is His Word and His truth. All the promises in Him are yea and amen to the glory of God the Father.

That means all the promises were true, they still are true, and they are valid to us today, for Jesus Christ confirmed them. Romans 15:8 says, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." Jesus Christ confirmed them. That is why all the promises in Him are yea and amen. Jesus Christ is proof that the promises of God are true, real, and accurate.

There was a woman named Eliza E. Hewitt who wrote a beautiful hymn, one of my favorites, titled "My Faith Has Found a Resting Place." If I could sing, I would sing it to you, but I will read it: "My faith has found a resting place, not in device or creed, I trust the ever-living one."

"His wounds for me shall plead." And then the chorus goes like this: "I need no other argument. I need no other plea. It is enough that Jesus died and that he died for me." The second stanza is this: "Enough for me that Jesus saves. This ends my fear and doubt. A sinful soul, I came to him. He'll never cast me out. My heart is leaning on the word, the living word of God."

"Salvation by my Savior's name. Salvation through his blood." And then the last stanza: "My great physician heals the sick. The lost he came to save. For me his precious blood he shed. For me his life he gave." Now, every stanza of that hymn is true. Every stanza is real. So here's my question. Where did Eliza derive the words of that hymn? Where did she derive these truths and these facts?

And the answer is from the Word of God. Now, listen to me carefully. If you understand that Jesus Christ came to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, that means everything in the Old Testament. And all the promises of God are in Him, yea and amen to the glory of God. Then you have to understand, listen carefully, that the promises of God which are revealed in His Word, which is the totality of it, is the foundation of our faith. If you destroy the foundation, you destroy the building's foundation. And the foundation sinks and all of the house is gone. That is why there are so many people that are attacking the Word of God. That is why these people in the Old Testament were living in fear and refused to believe the Word of God.

By their lives, actions, and sometimes their words, they were effectively calling God a liar, saying He was not bringing them into the land flowing with milk and honey. Many people today who profess to be Christians are unbelievers in that sense because they live in fear instead of faith.

I never want to do something foolish, and I certainly do not want to do anything stupid. Recently, there were seven tornadoes not far from us, and the weather was bad. I prayed, asked the Lord’s protection, and went to sleep. That was it. What if a tornado had come by, thrown a tree down on my house, and killed me? What could I have done about it? I could not have stopped it.

I can trust the Lord, go to sleep, and understand that when I die, it is my time to die. I am going to die in faith, believing. But I am not going to die in fear, sit up all night twiddling my thumbs, and listen to the weather report. I am simply not going to do that. So what does the Bible say?

The Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 3 and verse 4 says, "God forbid, let God be true and every man a liar." You cannot call God a liar. If you live in fear, you are calling God a liar. One may live in fear or one may live in faith. Fear has torment; faith has peace. Fear is unbelief in practice, while faith is belief in practice. Faith believes God; fear calls God a liar. Faith rests in God's promises, while fear rebels against God and denies His promises.

One of the greatest reasons to read, study, learn, and know the Word of God is because of everything God has revealed in it. You cannot know God's promises, nor can you know His warnings, apart from the written Word of God. It is impossible to claim a promise that you do not know, avoid a danger that you do not see, or heed a warning of which you are totally and completely ignorant.

Applications: Knowing and Adding to Faith

The Word of God is filled with promises, warnings, and dangers, just as we read in 1 Corinthians 10. If faith is our foundation, or the substructure upon which the superstructure is built, the foundation is only the beginning. Consider 2 Peter 1, beginning with verse 3.

Here it is, plain and simple: 2 Peter 1, verse 3. “According as His divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, are you looking through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue.” How has God given us all things that pertain to life and godliness? It is through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue. “Whereby are given us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” Besides that faith, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity. If these things be in you and abound, you shall

neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind.

"and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." Faith is the foundation, but upon that foundation we must build virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. We have to add all of these things to faith.

The promises of God lead us to holiness as well as to obedience, enabling us to escape the corruption of the world and the flesh. In 2 Peter 1:4, he says, "Whereby are given in us exceeding great and precious promises that by these, by these promises, ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Then 2 Corinthians 7:1 says, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Conclusion and Illustration of Stonewall Jackson

"Having therefore these promises." You need to read 2 Corinthians 1–6 so you can find out what all these promises are. These promises lead us to a life of holiness and obedience.

Let me boil it down: You can either live in fear or live in faith. It is very simple. Faith respects God's promises; fear despises them.

Stonewall Jackson, at the Battle of First Manassas, received a severe, very painful wound in his hand. Yet he continued, sitting on his horse, commanding and directing the battle. Afterward, while his wound was being attended, Captain John Embleton came to him and asked, "Major Jackson, how could you sit on your horse so confidently in so much pain, with bullets raining around you, and continue to commend your men?"

Stonewall Jackson answered, "Sir, God has appointed the time of my death. That is not my concern. My concern is to be ready for it whenever it may overtake me." Then he paused and said, "Captain Embleton, if all men believe that, then all men would be equally brave."

That is true. We can either live in fear or live in faith. Faith regards the promises of God.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee. We thank you for your word. We thank you for your promises. We thank you for Jesus Christ, who is the amen and the true and faithful witness. Help us not to live in fear, but to live in faith. We ask, amen.

CHAPTER 2

The Difference Between Fear And Faith

Part Two of Three

Introduction: Faith and Fear as Opposites

Faith and fear are opposites. If you are exercising faith, you are not in fear; if you are fearful, then you are not exercising faith. The Bible teaches us that not only does love cast out fear, but faith casts out fear as well. In Mark 4:40, when the storm was on the sea, Jesus said to His disciples, "Why are you so fearful? Have you no faith?" Obviously, if you are fearful, you are not exercising faith; and if you are exercising faith, you are not going to be fearful.

The Foundation and Evidence of Faith

It should be evident to everyone how vital and important faith is to each child of God. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek

him." The Christian is to walk by faith, live by faith, and even fight by faith. Everything he does is to be done in faith.

Faith does not exist in a vacuum. It is not some little abstract thing floating around somewhere in the universe. Faith has a substance and an evidence. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." The word substance literally meant a foundation, a substructure on which the edifice rests. It is translated sometimes in our Bible as confidence. Faith does indeed have a foundation, and that foundation is the Word of God. Faith also has an evidence: we test God, try God, and evidence God by our obedience.

Faith Respects the Power of God

In Malachi chapter 3 and verse 10, God asks, “Will a man rob God?” Then He says, “Yea, you have robbed me.” They ask, “Wherein have we robbed you?” He answers, “In tithes and offerings.” Then, in verse 10, He says, “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open unto you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, so that you cannot contain it.” God said, “Prove me.” The word prove literally means to test or to try. But this is not tempting God. The way we prove God is by obedience to His Word and obedience to His law.

Faith regards the promises of God, and fear disregards the promises of God. Faith and fear are opposites. Fear not only despises God's promises; fear actually calls God a liar.

Faith Respects God's Power; Fear Disrespects It

Fear is the foundation for rebellion. We will see that in greater detail next Sunday. When one fears, he does not act; he reacts. The only possible outcome of a failure to obey is disobedience, which is, in its essence, rebellion.

Faith respects the power of God, and fear disrespects the power of God. One could accurately say that fear not only disrespects the power of God, but also distrusts God and His power. Because fear is the opposite of faith, it does not believe God's promises or the power

of God. According to fear, God either cannot or will not do that which He has promised. If He will not do it, then He is a liar. If He cannot do it, then He has no power. Thus fear literally denies the omnipotence of God, as well as His veracity and faithfulness.

Now look at Numbers chapter 13. Caleb is speaking from an accurate heart, a whole heart. Joshua and Caleb were the only two of the twelve spies who brought back a true report. When you come to Numbers chapter 14 and also to the book of Joshua, the Bible tells us that Caleb followed the Lord with his whole heart. Notice verse 28. Here is what Caleb says: “Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great.”

Caleb's Example of Faith in God's Power

And moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south, and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the mountains, and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and by the coast of Jordan.

Caleb stilled the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and possess it. For we are well able to overcome it.”

God’s promise and God’s power go together. Caleb believed God’s promise. In verse 2 of Numbers chapter 13, God said, “Send thou men that they may search the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel.” God had promised them this land. Faith believed that promise, and now faith is saying in verse 30, “I believe God’s power as well. We’re well able to overcome it.” Caleb is saying, “I believe that God is able to accomplish that which He has promised.”

Caleb's Enduring Faith at 85

In Joshua chapter 14, Caleb makes an amazing statement. I would really love for this to be true concerning myself, but I think it’s not. Joshua chapter 14, beginning with verse 6, says: “Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua and Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite, said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses, the man of God, concerning me and thee in Kadesh Barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land,

and I brought him word again as was in mine heart. Nevertheless, my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people to melt. But I wholly followed the Lord my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. Now behold the Lord has kept me alive as he said these forty and five years ever since the Lord spake this word into Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness. Now watch: and now, lo, I am this day four score and five years old"—85 years old—"verse 11 as"

"Yet I am as strong this day as was in the day that Moses sent me, as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain where the Lord spake in that day, for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims, that is the giants, were there, and that the cities were great and fenced. If so be the Lord will be with me, that I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said." Here is a man eighty-five years old who says, "I want my mountain. I don't care if the giants are there."

God said I could have this land, and I believe His power will enable me to have it. Remember this today: God's promises and God's power go together. You cannot have one without the other, and you cannot deny one without denying the other.

God's Promises and Power Are Inseparable

In Genesis chapter 18, Abraham entertained these visitors; one of them was the Lord, and two of them were angels. Our Lord promised Abraham a seed, although they were already old. The Bible tells us that Sarah laughed in her tent. Genesis 18:13–14 says, "And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child which am old? Then God asked Abraham this question, Is there anything too hard for the Lord? As the time appointed I will return unto thee according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." Here is what God said: "I promised it, I will bring it to pass."

It is just that simple. The promises of God and the power of God are hand in glove.

Now I want to show you another example. Turn to Jeremiah chapter 32. This is an amazing passage, and at the same time it will make you smile as well as scratch your head, because God even rebukes Jeremiah in the same way that He rebukes Sarah.

Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet. He was witnessing the destruction of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar and his armies had encompassed the city. The people were being slaughtered and captured; everything was being destroyed and stolen. Yet God told Jeremiah to buy some land in Judah. God had promised to bring the people back in seventy years, so He told Jeremiah to buy land during this time of war.

In Jeremiah 32:24, Jeremiah says, "Behold the mounts, they are coming to the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence; and what thou has spoken has come to pass, and, behold, thou seest it." Jeremiah was reminding God, "You told us this was going to happen, and it is happening." Then, in verse 25, he says, "And thou hast said unto me, O Lord God, Buy thee a field for money, and take witnesses? For the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans." What was he going to buy a field for? They were losing everything.

Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" In other words, "Jeremiah, buy the land. I am going to bring you back just as I said I was. Is there anything too hard for me? I am the Lord God of all flesh." The power of God goes along with the promises of God. Arthur W. Pink said, "Nothing is too hard for Him. If God were stinted in might and had a limit to His strength, we might well despair."

Seeing that the Lord is clothed with omnipotence, no prayer is too hard for Him to answer, no need too great for Him to supply, no passion too strong for Him to subdue, no temptation too powerful for Him to deliver us from, and no misery too deep for Him to relieve. "The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?" Ephesians 3:20–21 says, "Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to

the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all the ages, world without end. Amen."

We have to grasp this principle: the promises and the power of God go together. They cannot exist without the other. If one believes the promises, he must believe the power. If one denies the promises, he must deny the power.

We are given an example of this in Romans 4. God promised Abraham and Sarah a child, and when God brought that promise to pass, Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety. The Bible tells us concerning Abraham, "And being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform." Abraham considered neither his body, now dead, nor the fact that Sarah was barren. He was fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able to perform. His power would bring His promise to pass.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said it this way: "God's power is like Himself, self-existent, self-sustained. The mightiest men of earth cannot add so much as a shadow of increased power to the omnipotent One. He sits on no buttress throne and leans on no assisting arm. His court is not maintained by his courtiers, nor does it borrow its splendor from its creatures. He is himself the great central source and originator of all."

One of the names of God in Scripture is power. In Mark 14:62, when asked, "Art thou the Son of God?" Jesus said, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power." He calls God the Father the right hand of power. Psalm 62:11 says, "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God."

God is indeed omnipotent; that means He has all power. In light of this truth, we may sing with the psalmist in Psalm 89:13, "Thou hast a mighty arm, strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand." Here Caleb is saying, "Let us go up at once. We are able to conquer." Faith respects God's power; fear denies God's power. Joshua and Caleb knew that God was far stronger than their enemies, and they believed not only His promise but His power.

The Unreasonableness and Magnification of Fear

Look in Numbers 13, beginning at verse 31. The ten spies said, “But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof. And all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature, there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants. And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so were we in their sight.”

Fear is unreasonable. It rages in spite of obvious facts. Truth, facts, and evidence mean absolutely nothing to fear. Fear regards anything and everything except itself. It seemed, if you read Numbers 13, almost impossible for these people to deny the greatness and graciousness of God. Not only did they have the testimony of Joshua and Caleb, but they had the fruit of that land before their eyes. In verse 27 they admitted, “And they told him and said, We came into the land which thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it.”

Go back to verse 24. The place was called the brook Eshcol because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from fence. They brought one cluster of grapes, and it was so great that they had to tie it to a pole; two men carried it on their shoulders. How can you deny facts? They could see the evidence, but they said, “No, this is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof.” They brought this evil report against God and against the land. Fear is unreasonable. Fear denies facts and perverts truth. It is impossible to reason with an individual who is full of fear. Logic, reason, understanding, and comprehension are all replaced with fear and fear alone.

Fear exaggerates, and fear magnifies. In verse 31, the men that went up with Caleb said, “We be not able to go up against this people, for they’re stronger than we.” Wow. So you have to ask yourself, really? These ten men now assumed to know the power of the enemy and assumed to know the power of their own people.

May I remind you that 2 million Israelites came out of Egypt, including over 600,000 men of war? And so now they were saying, 600,000 is nothing: "We are not able to go up against this people." They were discounting the leadership of Moses and the leadership of Joshua, because he was a servant to Moses. They were discounting their own military might, and they were certainly discounting the power of God.

Caleb was the one who said, "Let's go up and take it. We are well able to take it." They said, "Oh no, no, no, we are not able to do this." Now look at verse 31: "For they are stronger than we." Really, they are stronger than we? That is, they said they were stronger in stature and stronger in numbers. So here they wickedly questioned the power, truth, and goodness of God.

Let me show you something else. Go back to verse 28. They admitted this in verse 28: "Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land"—that's a fact—"and the cities are walled and very great. And moreover we saw the children of Anak there."

Now I want to show you how fear magnifies and how fear exaggerates. We know that there were walled cities. Turn, if you would please, to the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 1 and verse 28. Watch this, and then we are coming right back. Remember now, they are walled; now look how it changes, showing you how fear magnifies. The Bible says, "Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, The people is greater and taller than we. The cities are great, and walled up to the heaven." Moreover, they had seen the sons of the Anakims there. So they went from being walled to walled up to the heavens. Wow!

Go back to Numbers chapter 13 and look again at verses 32 and 33, beginning with the latter part of verse 32: "The land through which we have gone to search it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof. And all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants."

Fear Magnifies Enemies and Minimizes Self

"And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." Fear always magnifies obstacles, and fear always magnifies the enemy. What they were saying was this: These cities are walled up to heaven. These giants are there. There is absolutely no way that we can conquer these people. These men were either cowards, timid, or maliciously misrepresenting the truth out of fear. Their fear was enhanced by the children of Anak.

In Numbers 13:22, three sons of Anak are listed: "And they ascended by the south, and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, and Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak were." Arba was the father of Anak. In Joshua 15:13, Arba, the grandfather, was the founder of Hebron, which Caleb took. They had seen some very tall and obviously very strong men. But just because you have a family, or several families, of very tall, muscular, and strong men does not mean that the entire country is made up of such individuals.

The family of Goliath was a huge family—not in numbers, but in bulk. Goliath had several brothers, and they were all what we would call giants. Goliath himself was almost nine feet tall, which would be unusual; he would be the exception. Largeness or bigness really depends upon the perspective from which you are looking.

Years ago, when I was in university, I drove each Sunday to Spartanburg, South Carolina, where I preached. It was about thirty to forty-five miles from where we lived. Dr. Fred Afman, one of my friends and instructors, also preached there, and many times he rode with me. I would drop him off at a certain point, someone would pick him up, and then I would pick him up that night and we would ride back home together. Dr. Afman was six, six and a half.

At that time I had a little Dodge Dart. I drove, Dr. Afman rode on the passenger side, and Alice and our oldest daughter, who was about four, rode in the back seat. One Sunday morning, I stopped, and Dr. Afman had to get out. He had to bend over and turn himself to get out of that little car. Then he worked himself upright and stood straight. He had to bend back down to get his briefcase, with his Bible in it, and straighten back up. As he did, the little voice from the back seat said, "Daddy, is that what the Bible means when it says

there were giants in the earth in those days?" To a four-year-old girl, a six-foot, six-and-a-half-inch man would be a giant. If you are afraid of someone, that person gets bigger, larger, and stronger. Fear always magnifies.

When you stop and think about tall people, everybody has heard of the Watusi tribe in Africa. All those people are over seven feet tall; that is how they grow. I went to school with a young man—notice, David, I said young man—whose father was seven feet two inches tall. Whenever you asked him how tall he was, he would say, "Oh, six feet fourteen inches." That was a tall man, seven feet two inches. There were a lot of big people.

Look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 2. By the way, all of those big people were conquered; their size did not keep them from being conquered. Deuteronomy 2, beginning with verse 10, says, "The Emons dwelt therein in time past, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakims, which also were accounted giants as the Anakims, and the Moabites called them Emons. The Horems also dwelt in Seir before that time, but the children of Esau succeeded them when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead Israel did in the land of the possession which the Lord gave to them." Here were people great and tall as the Anakims, but they were defeated and destroyed. These people saw very tall men, probably what we would call muscle bound: big and strong. Now look in Deuteronomy 3 and verse 11. Here is Og, the king of Bashan.

Evidently, Og was a pretty good-sized man himself. In Deuteronomy chapter 3, notice verse 11. In fact, let us read verse 10: "And all the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, and Salchah, and Edre, cities of the kingdom of Og and Bashan. For only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of giants. Behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron. Is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? Nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man." Nine cubits—and the cubit was eighteen inches. So you can figure out how big this bed was: four cubits wide.

You could say, "He must have been a mighty big man." Really? I could build myself a bed twelve feet long and six feet wide. Would that make me any larger? No. One commentator said, "A bed is

always larger than the man who sleeps in it. But in this case, this commentator suggested that Og intentionally exceeded the necessary size in order that posterity might be led to draw the more magnificent conclusion from the size of the bed as to the stature of the man who was accustomed to sleep in it." You leave such a wonderful bed, and somebody says, "He must have been a big guy." He probably was a big guy, but he was not necessarily all that big.

Now go back to Numbers 13 and look at verse 33. Here are the ten unbelieving spies, filled with fear: "And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, so were we in their sight." Fear magnifies obstacles and enemies while minimizing one's own position and strength.

Every one of us probably remembers being afraid as children. There was always a monster under the bed or in the closet. A little boy once checked under his bed after hearing a preacher say that we were made from the dust of the earth. When his mother came running after he hollered and screamed, he said, "Mama, I looked under my bed and somebody's either coming or going." So: made from dust and returned to dust.

He had plenty of it there. Well, in your mind, everything is magnified, and this is exactly what these men are doing. They are full of fear, magnifying their enemies. They said, "We were in our sight as grasshoppers, which is what we were compared to; and so were we in their sight."

How did they know what the enemy was thinking? How did they know the perspective of these people? They did not, and they could not. By the way, remember Joshua chapter 2: when you get to Rahab, she said, "When we heard what the Lord God did into Egypt and how He dried up the Red Sea, all of our hearts sank and we melted; we were afraid."

They were more fearful than these spies. The truth of the matter is that they were saying, "These people are so huge, so big, and so strong. We are so little; we are like grasshoppers. They can just step on us and smash us, and that is all there is to it. We would be gone."

Thus, they were magnifying their weakness and their position, and magnifying the strength of the enemy.

Listen carefully: fear destroys and devastates.

Here is what these ten faithless and fearful spies were actually saying. They represented the land as unconquerable. In essence, they were saying that attempting to conquer this land was extremely impractical. “We cannot succeed—not with 600,000 warriors, not with the power of God. It is impossible. It is impractical. The people there are strong. The men are of a great stature. They are stronger than we are. Their cities are impregnable fortresses. There is no way that we can conquer those cities. They are walled up and very great. And there we saw the giants.”

Here were men of prodigious size and muscular strength. And where is Grasshoppers? all probability they were trembling as they talked about the sons of Anak. Fear terrifies, fear magnifies, and fear incapacitates. Every one of us has heard and used the expression “frozen with fear.” A person who is fearful cannot act; he is incapacitated.

Here is what is happening in Numbers chapter 13: fear is vilifying God. Fear is calling God a liar. Fear is saying that God is not omnipotent, that God is unable to keep His promise and fulfill His Word. Fear is Denies, not only the promise of God, but the power of God. Fear then forces someone not to act but to react. Fear forces us to turn from God’s way to our way.

The Consequences of Fear: Rebellion and Death

When a person is afraid, instead of obeying God, what does he do? “I’ve got to protect myself. I’ve got to look out for myself. I’ve got to do what I think best under the circumstances.” Really? When you do what you think best, in reality you are disobeying God instead of doing what He tells you to do.

How did fear work out for these people? How did unbelief work out for them? It did not work out too good. Why? God killed them all in the wilderness.

Here is an assessment of this situation. Hebrews 4 warns us:

“Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into this rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, he said, I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place on the seventh day on this wise, and God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest, seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief.”

They did not get into Canaan land. God killed them all for their sin, rebellion, and wickedness. It is just that simple. It did not work out too well for them. They were looking out for themselves.

Suppose David had taken the same attitude toward Goliath. What if he had looked at that big old rascal, nearly nine feet tall? You must remember that David was probably around fifteen years old when this fight took place. Even Saul said, “You can’t fight this man, you’re but a youth. And he’s a man of war from his youth.” David was a shepherd, not a warrior. He could have stood there and said, “Look at that big knocker. I don’t think I want to tangle with him. Look at all the armor. Look at the sword. I’m not trained in warfare.”

Those things never even entered David’s mind. All the other Israelites were afraid of Goliath, but not David. Why? David told Saul, “When I was keeping my father’s sheep, a lion came up and I killed the lion, and a bear came up and I killed the bear, and God will enable me to kill this uncircumcised Philistine.”

David's Fearless Faith in God's Power

When the Philistine taunted David, saying, “Come to me, and I’ll give your flesh to the fowls of the air,” David picked up those stones and ran toward him, saying, “God will deliver you into my hand, and I’ll take your head from you this day.” Why was David unafraid? He knew the power of God. He knew that God was able. He was unable, but God was able.

Let us turn to two passages: Isaiah 12 and Psalm 27. Isaiah 12 is one of my favorite passages, and I have quoted it a number of times in my life. Verse 2 says, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."

Look at that: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid." When our oldest daughter was about two, going on three, she was afraid of the dark. I taught her this verse, and she memorized it. Sometimes we would wake up during the night, and she would walk into the bathroom or go into the kitchen. You could hear her as she went down the hall toward the light switch, saying over and over, "I will trust and not be afraid. I will trust and not be afraid," until she got to that light switch. It is good to trust and not be afraid even when the light is on, not just when it is off.

Now look at Psalm 27, beginning with verse 1. Here is a man who understood faith. David said, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell."

Watch what he says: "Though an host, an army, should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: the war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." David said, "I'm not going to be afraid, even if a host encamps against me. Even if war breaks out, I'm not going to fear, because the Lord is the strength of my life."

Application: God Gives a Spirit of Power, Not Fear

If you are fearful, you must remember this: your fear does not come from God. It may come from the flesh, the world, or the devil, but it does not come from God. Second Timothy 1:7 says, “For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” God does not give us a spirit of fear. He gives us a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind. Faith quietens the heart. Faith rests in God's promise and in God's power. Fear causes consternation and heartache.

Conclusion: Fear Prevents Possessing God's Blessings

Fear will allow you to see the fruits of victory, but will stop you from possessing and enjoying them. These people saw the pomegranates. They saw the grapes. Undoubtedly, some of them probably tasted what was brought. But none of them got into Canaan land. They saw, but they did not possess. Fear will keep you from receiving those blessings that God has for you. We must learn not to fear, but to exercise faith and obey God regardless of the consequences. Faith cannot be separated from the promises of God or the power of God. If you believe one, you must necessarily believe the other.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to you this day. We thank you for your word, your truth, your grace, and your mercy. We pray, Father, that you would make us men and women of faith. May we not fear. May we understand that thou hast not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. May we understand that, regardless of the situation or circumstance, we must be obedient unto thee and trust thee.

Help us to do that. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

The Difference Between Fear And Faith

Part Three of Three

Introduction and Review

Numbers chapter 13 gives us a prime example of the difference between faith and fear. Numbers chapters 13 and 14 are prime examples of the differences between faith and fear. In the first two verses, the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, “Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.” The remainder of the passage down to verse 16 lists the names of the individuals sent to spy out the land.

Faith and fear are, in reality, opposites. If you are exercising faith, then you are not living in fear. If you are living in fear, then obviously you are not exercising faith. The Bible teaches us that perfect love casteth out fear, and it also teaches us that faith will cast out fear. In Mark chapter 4 and verse 40, when the disciples saw the storm on the sea, our Lord said to them, “Why are ye so fearful?

Have ye no faith?" In other words, if they had faith, they would not be fearful; but since they were fearful, it was obvious that they were not exercising faith.

Faith is imperative to us because Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him." For he that cometh to God must first believe that He is, and then second that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him.

In the first part of this series, the point was that faith regards the promises of God, while fear disregards the promises of God. In fact, fear basically despises the promises of God. Fear even calls God a liar. Fear is the foundation of rebellion because when one is in fear, he does not act; he simply reacts. The only possible outcome of a failure to obey is disobedience, and disobedience is, in essence, rebellion itself.

In the second message, faith respects the power of God, while fear disrespects the power of God. We could accurately say, then, that fear does not believe God—not either His promises or His power—because fear is indeed the opposite of faith. According to fear, God cannot do that which He has promised.

Fear basically denies the omnipotence of God, that God is all-powerful. It also denies His veracity and truthfulness. Joshua and Caleb were the only two of the twelve spies who spoke truthfully concerning the land. They said, "Look, we are well able to go up and take this land; let's do it right now." They not only believed God's promise that He had given them the land; they believed that God would enable them to conquer it. But the ten spies said, "No, no, no, it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and it's a bad land."

Moreover, they saw the children of Anak, the giants, and said, "No, we can't do that. We were as grasshoppers in our sight, and so were we in their sight as well." Fear always magnifies your enemies and obstacles. At the same time, while fear magnifies obstacles and enemies, it minimizes the strength that you have. They said, "We are as grasshoppers." In other words, all those people had to do was step on them and mash them, and that was all there was to it. They were

totally discounting their own power. Israel at this point had over 600,000 men of war.

Moreover, they were totally discounting the power of God as well. Fear disregards not only the power of God, but also facts and evidences. They did bring back the fruit of the land. There it was in front of them. The people could see that it was indeed a land full of milk and honey, just as the Lord promised.

But fear is unreasonable. You cannot reason with fear or argue with it. Fear does not listen to logic; it simply reacts. Fear declares that God is either not God, or that He is unable or unwilling to fulfill His promises. It forces us to turn from God and God's way to our own way. In fear, we come back and do what we think is best under the circumstances, rather than simply obeying God. Fear and faith are basically opposites.

Faith Rejoices in the Providence of God

Defining Providence

Fear is the foundation for rebellion. Faith rejoices in the providence of God, while fear ridicules the providence of God.

Providence may be defined as that continued exercise of divine energy, or the power of God, whereby the Creator preserves all of His creatures, is operative in all that comes to pass in the world, and directs everything to its appointed end.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks, "What is providence?" The answer is: "God's works of providence are His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing of all His creatures and all their actions." God's providence includes the governing of all His creatures and all their actions.

The Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith says: "God the good Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto His infallible foreknowledge, and the free, immutable counsel of His own

will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy."

When we are talking about God's providence, we are talking about whatever comes to pass in time and in history. We are also talking about an aspect of God's sovereignty and an aspect of His omnipotence. If God were not sovereign and did not have all power, He could not control everything and work everything out according to His own counsel and His own will.

Faith Rejoices in Providence

Most of you know Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." How then do we know that all things work together for good? We know it because God is sovereign, God is all-powerful, and God is in control. Regardless of what happens, God is in absolute control.

If you understand divine providence, then you understand that Christians—and really anyone, but especially Christians—are never in the grip of what we would call the blind forces of fate, chance, luck, and fortune. Let me say this again: There is no such thing as luck, chance, fate, or fortune in a world ruled by God. You either have God's providence or you have luck, chance, fate, and fortune. I do not know about you, but I will take God's providence every time. Everything that happens in this world and everything that happens to us is divinely planned.

Each incident summons us to trust in the Lord, teaches us to obey Him, and teaches us to rejoice in His work in bringing things to pass in our lives. If you understand divine providence, there is no such thing as an accident; there are only incidents. God allows them to happen for our good and His glory. Therefore, to despise God's providence is to despise God. When you and I bellyache, whine, and complain about our circumstances, we are basically attacking the providence of God. As we attack God's providence, we are actually attacking God Himself. Our attack becomes, in essence, rebellion, and we find ourselves fighting against God. We are provoking Him and challenging Him.

Here is what happens. We may say, "I have no problem believing that God is sovereign. I have no problem believing that God is omnipotent. I have no problem believing that God is in control of everything." Yet, even as Christians, we rejoice in what we call good or blessed providence and praise God. Then, when something bad or hurtful happens to us, we do not praise God. When we think about good and bad, or good and hurtful, from our perspective, we are the ones determining what is good and what is bad, or what is good and what is hurtful. In other words, we are placing our definition upon the work of God. Thus, we pass judgment upon God and upon His work. Now stop and think about that.

Whenever we begin to bellyache and complain, we are saying, "It ought not to be like this. It shouldn't be like this." I laugh because I heard about one church that was praying against, I think it was a tavern and a gambling house. It was close to the church and they were praying against it. And a tornado came by and just totally wiped it off the map. And the Christians were saying, "Praise the Lord. The Lord took care of that old liquor house and that gambling house." Well, the next month the church building burned down. And now they're saying the devil did it. Really? Really? Well, if you believe that God is sovereign, God that allowed that gambling house to be torn apart by a tornado is the same God that allowed that church building to be burned down as well.

So, you have to understand: There are things that happen to us, and things that happen in this world, we may not understand them, we may not comprehend them, we may not like them, but that's immaterial. It is still the hand of God that brings things to pass. And He does so for His glory and our good. So faith then rejoices in God's providence. Faith rejoices in God's providence regardless of the situation and regardless of the circumstances. Let me show you.

I want you to hold Numbers 13. We're coming back there. But if you would turn right over to the book of Job chapter 1. Job chapter 1. And I want you to look, if you would, at verses 20 through 22. Watch this carefully. Job chapter 1, beginning with verse 20. And before I read the passage, let me just remind you that Job would be what you and I would call a multi-millionaire. And Job was an extremely wealthy individual. And in one day, Job went from a

multi-millionaire to a pauper. One day. In one day, he lost everything he had. And in that same day, he lost ten children, all ten of his children, all his cattle, all his camels, all his sheep—he lost everything. And if you look in Job 1 in verse 20, when Job found out that all of his children were dead, all of his animals were gone, verse 20: "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Now, can you fathom what Job must have been going through? To have lost everything in one day, and yet he bowed and worshipped and blessed God. And the Scripture said, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

Job said, “Womb and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Can you fathom what Job must have been going through—to have lost everything in one day, and yet he bowed and worshiped and blessed God? The Scripture said, “In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”

Here is another illustration in 2 Samuel chapter 12. You would not like this providence, but here is what David did. David had sinned with Bathsheba; a child was conceived and born, and then God took the child.

“When David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.”

His servants asked what he had done, since he had fasted and wept while the child was alive, but rose and ate bread when the child was dead. David answered, “While the child was yet alive, I fasted

and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?”

"But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." When David found out the child was dead, he arose and worshipped. David did not like the circumstance and would have preferred it to have been different, but it was not different. So he worshipped God regardless.

You remember Eli? God had a problem with Eli because he did not restrain his own sons, Hophni and Phinehas. God came to Samuel and told him exactly what He was going to do to Eli and his house. The next day, Eli called little Samuel and said, "Everything that God told you." Samuel said, "Okay, here is what is going to happen. God is going to take the priesthood away from your family. And the iniquity which you and your sons have committed will never be purged with sacrifice." In other words, they were not going to be forgiven. Moreover, God was going to kill both of his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, in one day.

In 1 Samuel chapter 3 and verse 18, Eli's response was this: "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good." Isn't that amazing? Here was a man who had lost the priesthood, whose family had lost it, and whose sons were going to die: "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good."

The Extent of Providence

Since we are talking about divine providence, look in Proverbs chapter 16 and verse 33: "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." This powerful verse demonstrates not only the providence of God, but also His absolute control and sovereignty over all things.

The casting of lots, the rolling of dice, or any such thing seems very casual to man. Yet the Bible tells us that the outcome is directed and determined by God's counsel and providence. It is not chance, luck, fate, or fortune. It is God's providence. Think of all the dice thrown in this world and all the lots given. According to this verse, there was no randomness about it.

It was all at the disposal of God Himself. In 1 Samuel chapter 14, Saul, King Saul, had cursed everyone with a curse if they ate anything before the enemies were destroyed. Jonathan did not hear that. He took his rod, dipped it in some honey, touched it to his tongue, and his eyes were enlightened. Everyone said, “Jonathan, your daddy gave a curse.” Of course, the army was now at a standstill, and Saul wanted to know what had happened. He prayed in 1 Samuel 14:41, “Therefore Saul said unto the Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped.” So the lot was cast between Saul and Jonathan and the people, and Saul and Jonathan were taken. The lot was cast again, and Jonathan was taken.

In Acts chapter 1, everyone knew that Judas had gone out and hanged himself. He had been one of the twelve. Therefore, one who had companied with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that He was taken up from them, must be ordained to be a witness with them of His resurrection. Those were the qualifications to be an apostle.

They appointed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. They prayed, “Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” Then they gave forth their lots; the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Matthias was chosen by lot. Thus, in the Old Testament, lots were cast.

Even the high priest had the Urim and the Thummim in his vest. When someone asked a question, he would put his hand in and pull one out. One was a yes, and the other was a no. In the New Testament, they cast lots. No, we do not cast lots today. The reason we do not cast lots today is that we have the full, final, and complete revelation of God.

We have it all written out for us. All we need to do is read it, study it, and apply it, and we will understand God's perfect will. They did not have this book when they were casting lots. The soldiers even cast lots for the robe of Jesus Christ. But we do not cast lots today.

The point in Proverbs 16:33 is that God is in control of all things, even the rolling of dice or the casting of lots. That is God's providential control.

John Trapp, one of the old Puritans, said this on Proverbs 16:33: "This sentence at first seems light and unworthy of the place it holds in this book. But as every line in the Holy Bible is pure, precious, and profitable, so this sets forth a matter of very great moment." In other words, the providence of God extends to the disposing of all things, even those things that are merely contingent or casual. If you took a couple of dice in your hand, shook them up, and threw them out on a table, you would think that was something very casual. The outcome, you would think, would be contingent on how you held them in your hand and how you rolled them. But Proverbs 16:33 says no. The outcome is in the providence of God.

Matthew 10:29 is another passage that deals with God's providential control. Our Lord says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." A farthing was not much, and a sparrow is not very precious. There are multitudes of them. Yet it says, "Not one of them shall fall to the ground without your heavenly Father."

When you hear the phrase "fall to the ground," you automatically think of a little sparrow that has been shot or hurt and falls to the ground. That would certainly be included, but the word "fall" there literally could be interpreted as "lights." A sparrow cannot even light on the ground without your heavenly Father.

If you have ever noticed sparrows, we have a bird feeder in the front of the house, and I had one behind our house. I would look at it out my office window, and all of these sparrows would go up and down, up and down, a thousand times an hour. Here is what this verse says: not one can light or fall on the ground without your heavenly Father. He controls it. Look, if you would please, in verse 30. He goes farther. He says, “But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” So you cannot even lose a hair without the providence of God. When He says the very hairs of your head are numbered, God has to take better care of some folks than others.

See, Marshall, He has to watch out for him. Me, I do not have many hairs, so. That is the way it goes. But notice, if you would please, He is talking about what you and I would call insignificant. When you brush your hair, comb your hair, there are a few hairs there. They cannot even come out of your head apart from God's sovereign providence.

Thomas Boston, an old Puritan, said this concerning Matthew 10:29: "Our Lord here is encouraging His disciples against all the troubles and distresses that they might meet with in their way, and particularly against the fear of men, by the consideration of the providence of God, which reaches unto the meanest of things, sparrows and the hairs of your head. Sparrows are of a mean price and small value. And yet as far as mean as they are, God preserves them, guides and disposes all things concerning them, so that one of them cannot fall to the ground by shot or any other way without His sovereign ordering and disposal."

Fear Ridicules Providence

Faith understands that nothing happens apart from God's sovereign providence. Fear, on the other hand, despises and ridicules God's providence. Fear refuses to listen to God. Fear refuses to obey God. Let me go further. Fear provokes God. Fear refuses to believe even that which it sees. Fear deprives us of God's blessings.

I want you to go back in your Bibles to the book of Numbers chapter 14, because I am going to show you—I have been saying that fear is the foundation of rebellion. I want you to look in Numbers chapter 14 at verses 22 and 23. Look what God says. Numbers 14:22.

"Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it." In verse 22 God says these people tempted Him ten times, and in verse 23 He says they provoked Him. Ten is the number of completeness; that is why we have the Ten Commandments. God is telling us that He is fed up with His people, their wickedness, and their rebellion, and therefore He is going to destroy them.

Some commentators say that number ten here is a certain number given for an uncertain amount. They say we do not really know how many times they tempted and provoked God, and that God simply said ten since it is a number of completeness. However, if you count how they tempted God, there were twice at the sea, Exodus chapter 14; twice concerning water, in Exodus 15 and 17; twice concerning the manna, in Exodus 16 and Numbers 11; twice concerning the quail, in Exodus 16 and Numbers 11; once by the calf, in Exodus chapter 32; and once in the wilderness of Paran, Numbers chapter 14. That amounts to ten times—ten provocations or ten temptations.

Fear provokes God. Fear basically despises God's providence.

Look in Numbers chapter 14, beginning with verse 1: "And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

First, look at verse 1: “And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.” It is not just the ten spies now who are despising God and God’s land; it is the fear they brought that the people have absorbed. Now the whole congregation is weeping and crying and saying, “Woe is me, we are in an awful lot of trouble.”

Secondly, look at verse 2: “And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron.” How in the world could their situation be the fault of Moses and Aaron? Stop and think about this. It was the spies who sinned and conveyed their fear. The people absorbed that fear and disobeyed God. Why, then, are they murmuring against Moses and Aaron? Certainly, Moses and Aaron were their leaders and guides. But murmuring against them shows their insolence toward these leaders and their base ingratitude to God, as well as their fear and defiance.

Once you are absorbed with fear, you are not afraid to strike out at God or man. Usually, when you are afraid, you strike out at someone. Take a man who is drowning while someone dives in to rescue him. The rescuer must be exceedingly careful, because the drowning man, in fear, will often try to drown the one who comes to rescue him.

You have to be trained. The point I am trying to make is this: These people were in fear and therefore they were blame shifting. It was Moses' fault. It was Aaron's fault. They were condemning and accusing someone. Usually, when someone moves in fear, the accusations, condemnation, and blame shifting fall on someone who is absolutely, totally innocent.

Let me tell you something: neither Moses nor Aaron could keep the people in faith. Neither Moses nor Aaron could keep the people in obedience to God. I cannot keep you in faith. I cannot make you believe, make you obey, or keep your heart. Neither could they keep the hearts of these people. But fear is not afraid to condemn man, and it is certainly not afraid to condemn God.

Now look at the rest of verse 2: “And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them,” Listen to what they said to Moses and Aaron: “Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt!”

“Or would God we had died in this wilderness!” The Hebrew word for “would” can literally be translated, “Oh, that it might be,” “Oh, I wish it could have been,” “If only,” or “Would that.” Can you believe this? They said, “Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt.” They wished they had died in the land of Egypt. They would rather have died as slaves in great destitution, hated and despised, than live free. Then they said, “Would God we had died in this wilderness.”

What are they talking about? Look back in Numbers 11, beginning with verse 1. This may surprise you. “And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched.” Here the people were bellyaching and

complaining, and God sent fire and consumed them in His judgment and wrath. Yet here the people were saying, “Would God that we had died with them?”

How irrational can you be? How could anyone say, “I’d rather have died a slave in Egypt than to live free,” and, “I’d rather have died of the wrath and judgment of God and be burned to death than be alive right here in this wilderness”? Yet that is exactly what they were saying. I don’t know about you, but I think I would refer to these people as fearful idiots. They had to be idiots to want to die under God’s wrath and judgment rather than live and die as slaves. That is bad, but it is not as bad as fear can make it.

In Numbers chapter 14, verse 3, they said: “And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?”

The Bible says in Proverbs 29:25, “The fear of man bringeth a snare.” They were ensnared right there. In fearing man, they did not fear God. They asked, “Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land?” They concluded that He had brought them there to fall by the sword, that their wives and children should be a prey, and that He had brought them out to kill them. The insanity of their fear demonstrated itself when they accused God of deception and cruelty, as if He were betraying them to the Canaanite nations and leading them forth to slaughter. Their fear of their enemies led them to believe that God had deceived, betrayed, and confounded them by bringing them into their deaths.

They were going to repay all the miracles and mercies God had shown them by calling Him a wicked, cruel, desperate tyrant—even a traitor.

You and I can say, “I’m glad I’m not like that.” Really? When we bellyache, complain, and whine that God does not love us because, if He did, He would not let such and such happen to us or to our family, what are we doing? We are doing exactly what these people did in Numbers chapter 14. We accuse God of being a wicked, cruel despot and tyrant, saying that He does not love us and that He did this to destroy or hurt us. Like these unbelieving Israelites, we

accuse God wrongfully and wickedly. They said God brought them out there to kill them. He did not.

Fear as Foundation of Rebellion

But that's what fear said. Fear is not afraid to condemn God. Fear is not afraid to challenge God. Fear is not afraid to blaspheme God. I want you to see the height of their impiety. Look at the latter part of verse 3: “Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?” And they said one to another, “Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.” Here is a formal renunciation of the authority of Moses and their flat-out rebellion against God.

You have to remember that in Egypt their lives were made bitter with rigor and suffering. God had provided for these people. He gave them manna. He gave them meat. The shoes of their feet did not wear out. Their clothes did not wear out. And now they're saying, “We had it better off in Egypt under Pharaoh than we have it here under God. So what we need to do is go back to Egypt. Let's appoint a captain and go back into captivity. Let's go back into slavery.”

According to Nehemiah 9, they did exactly what they said. “But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, and refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.” They appointed a captain to return to their bondage. Fear refuses to obey. Fear refuses to be led by God's man. Fear refuses to recognize the office of authority.

Moses was not going to take them back into Egypt. Neither was Aaron. And here's what fear says: “Fine. If you don't want to take us back into Egypt, we'll appoint someone who will. We don't have to listen to you. We'll do what we want to do.”

Fear was the foundation of rebellion. Nehemiah chapter 9 points this out: “But they and our fathers dealt proudly,”—there is pride—“hardened their necks, hearkened not to thy commandments, refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst

among them, but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion, appointed a captain to return to their bondage." They refused to obey. They were not mindful of God's wonders, God's miracles, God's grace, or God's mercies. They forgot all of them. They were not interested in those things; they were going to do what they wanted to do. They hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to Egypt.

Moses, the man of God, also pointed this out in Deuteronomy chapter 1. He said, "And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come."

"And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe: and they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out. And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the Lord our God doth give us. Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God: and ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us."

"Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there." What? Did you read that? Verse 26: "Notwithstanding," said Moses, "ye would not go up, but rebelled against the Lord." Why would they not go up? Because of their fear—fear of the giants and fear of fighting them. They said, "We're not going to do it. We're just not going to do it." Fear is the foundation of rebellion. When you are fearful, you're not going to obey. You're going to do that which you think is going to save your hide, regardless of what God says.

Applications and Closing

Faith regards the promises of God; fear disregards them. Faith respects the power of God; fear disrespects the power of God. Faith

rejoices in God's providence, whatever it is; fear ridicules God's providence. Fear is not afraid to blaspheme God.

There are three verses that you ought to memorize. The first is 2 Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." If you are filled with fear, it did not come from God. It may come from your flesh, the world, or the devil, but it did not come from God. The second is Isaiah 12:2: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." I will trust and not be afraid. The third is Psalm 56:3: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."

If you're trusting in God, fear will be dispelled. Memorize those three passages. We also need to be very careful what we wish for. These Israelites said, "Oh, I wish I'd died in Egypt. Oh, I wish I'd died in this wilderness." God said, "Okay. I'll fulfill that wish." For forty years, they died in the wilderness. You remember in Psalm 78 how they bellyached against God, saying, "We're tired of this manna," although manna was perfect.

"We want meat, we want meat." Guess what Psalm 78 says when God sent the quail: He gave them the desires of their hearts. While the meat was in their mouth, He slew the fattest of them. You better be careful what you wish for, because God may just allow you to have it. The third application is this: God's providence must be bowed to and submitted to regardless of the circumstances.

Since we are human, frail, and weak, there are things that are grievous to us. Some folks have lost a mate or spouse; some have lost children, brothers, or sisters. I just found out this week—I did not know the young lady personally, but I know the family—that a twenty-year-old in school in Colorado was raped and murdered by an eighteen-year-old boy. That's got to be difficult. That's got to be hard.

Why would God allow something like that? The answer is, for His own honor and glory, and ultimately for our good. I may not understand it or be able to comprehend it, but I must believe that God is in absolute control, regardless of the circumstances or situation in my life. The easiest and quickest way out of a very trying

circumstance is by yielding and submitting to God and giving Him the honor and glory. It is just like when Job lost everything that he had.

He bowed and worshipped and said, "Blessed be the name of the Lord. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away." In all this, Job sinned not with his lips, nor charged God foolishly. God is in control in our lives, in the lives of His people, and of everything, even the wicked. God will only allow that to come to pass which will glorify Him and ultimately be for our good. Whatever God brings into our lives is good. It may hurt, but it is still good because it is His providence. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we thank You for Your love, grace, and mercy.

Lord, we must admit that Thou art sovereign, Thou art omnipotent. Thou art in control. We trust Thee. We do not trust luck, chance, fate, or fortune. We trust Thy divine providence and we bow to Thee. We do not want to be like these wicked people and ridicule Your providence. We want to rejoice because we know that You're too loving to be unkind and too wise to make a mistake. Help us to be holy and godly. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

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