

The Gospel of John tells us, *“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light... He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”* (JN 1:6-9).

Jesus is the Light who's being described here. We're told that Christ is the Light of the world, *“that all men through him might believe”* (JN 1:7). Yet, we then read, *“...the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not.... He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”* (JN 1:5,11).

Unbelief has always grieved the heart of Jesus. When our Lord came to earth in the flesh, He brought incredible light into the world. And that light was meant to open the eyes of men. Yet, in spite of Jesus' amazing show of light, Scripture speaks of incredible examples of unbelief in the very face of such light.

John 12 contains one such example. **Jesus was at Bethany, having supper in the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary.** Christ had already performed the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. And now people were curious to see Jesus. At the time, crowds were passing through town on their way to the Passover feast at Jerusalem. They wanted a glimpse of the man being called Messiah, and the man he'd resurrected, Lazarus.

In the same chapter, we find these same people waving palm fronds and singing hosannas to Jesus as He enters Jerusalem on a donkey. They were seeing the fulfillment of a prophecy they'd heard all their lives: *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and*

Faith For The Supernatural

A Call to Believe in Christ's Supernatural Light

upon a colt the foal of an ass.” (ZECH 9:9).

Finally, in the same chapter, we're told a voice came thundering from heaven, as the Father glorified His own Name. Jesus turned to the amazed crowd and said, *“This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.”* (JN 12:30).

Perhaps no other chapter in the Bible contains as much proof of Jesus' deity as we see here in John 12. We see a man who'd been raised from the dead by Jesus' command. We see the visual fulfillment of a centuries-old prophecy known to every Israelite. And we hear a literal voice speaking from heaven.

Each of these things happened before a huge throng of religious people. God had given these people His law, His covenant and His promises. Yet, even after witnessing these wonders, the people had the audacity to question Jesus. *“The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?”* (JN 12:34). They were saying, “You claim you're going to be crucified. But we know the true Messiah is going to live forever.”

Then the people asked a question that absolutely stunned Jesus: *“Who is this Son of man?”* (JN 12:34). Christ must have been incredulous at their blindness. In fact, He didn't

even attempt to answer the question. Instead, He warned, *“Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you... While ye have light, believe in the light...”* (JN 12:35-36).

We have to **consider the seriousness of Jesus' statement here.** He had revealed to these people His strong arm. He'd performed miracles before them. He'd given them the “good report” prophesied by watchmen from Zechariah to Isaiah. Yet they still didn't believe in Him.

The light had shone into their darkness. But their darkened minds didn't comprehend it (see **John 1:12**). The Greek word for “comprehend” means “to seize it, to lay hold of it, to possess the truth producing life and power.” These people had been given a life-changing truth. But they didn't seize it or lay hold of it. **They didn't understand the truth of Christ, because they didn't seek to possess it.**

“These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.” (JN 12:36). In this one verse, we find God's attitude toward unbelief. **Indeed, from cover to cover in the Bible, God never has sympathy or pity for unbelief.** And the same is true in this scene. Jesus simply walked away from the unbelieving crowds. As a result, those people would leave Jerusalem in darkness, because

they didn't walk in the light they'd been given. There was no more hope of light for them, because of their unbelief.

"Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you..." (JN 12:35). **Darkness here means "spiritual blindness, confusion, loss of clarity, gloom."** Day by day, a cloud of uncertainty would settle over these people. Confusion would influence their everyday affairs. Eventually, it would totally envelop them. The end would be a heart of darkness.

When I read this awesome warning of Jesus, the Holy Spirit told me, "This is also for my people today."

At first I was dumbfounded. I wondered, "Darkness on a people who love Jesus? Who pray and study His Word? How could such darkness come upon God's people?"

I readily admit, I personally have been flooded with the light of Jesus. In my fifty years of ministry, **I've witnessed the Lord's power to raise the spiritually dead. I've seen many Lazaruses walk out of the tombs of drug addiction and alcoholism.** My book, 'The Cross and the Switchblade' was all about God's miracle-working power. I've had a lifetime of watching the walking dead come alive through His resurrecting power.

I've seen many other rays of light – from the life-giving Names of God, to His New Covenant Promises, to the fulfillment of His prophecies. **In a sense, I've witnessed everything John 12 describes, and much more as well.** Indeed, God has revealed to His people today what the eyes of those Jews couldn't see. We know not just from Scripture, but by experience, that God has prepared great things for those who love Him. We've been given a New Testament to instruct us in this. And we've been given the Holy Spirit to teach us. Likewise, we have "better promises", so we can become partakers of His divine nature.

We've also been given anointed teachers, pastors, evangelists and prophets to flood our hearts and minds with the light. They immerse us in truth, fill us with glorious promises, and remind us

of God's faithfulness to deliver us time after time.

I ask you, with all these wonderful blessings, how could we possibly have clouds of darkness over us?

Usually, when we think of spiritual darkness, we think of atheists. Or, we think of jaded, sin-satiated sinners groping about in sorrow and emptiness. It's true, sin is "the land of darkness." And the devil is the prince of that darkness. The apostle Paul speaks of the *"unfruitful works of darkness."*

But that isn't the kind of darkness Jesus describes here in John 12. **No, this darkness is a cloud of confusion, a spiritual blindness, indecision, a gloom of spirit and mind – and it comes upon believers.** Note that Jesus doesn't aim this warning at unbelieving people or apostates. He speaks it to the holy brethren. He's talking about a darkened state that **comes upon Christians who refuse to mix the Word they hear with faith.** They neglect to grasp, embrace and walk in the light they've been given. And one day, they wake up and realize, *"God doesn't speak to me anymore."*

I wonder how many Christians reading this message right now are in a cloud of confusion. **Does this describe you?** Perhaps your prayers go unanswered. You're constantly downcast. You face things in your life that you can't explain. You're disappointed in your circumstances and in people. You continually doubt yourself, you're plagued with questions, and you constantly examine your heart to see where you went wrong. You feel gloom, despair, indecision, and you can't shake any of it.

You may be a mature believer. For years you've sat under pure gospel preaching. But now **you doubt yourself, and you feel inadequate.** You don't sense the joy of the Lord the way you once did. So now you wonder if the Lord has a controversy with you.

This is the darkness that Jesus warned would come upon us, if we don't seize and walk in the light we have received. Let me ask you: do you trust His promises? Do you embrace His precious Word? Do you go on the offensive against satan with the Word you've heard preached? Or, do you ignore

the Lord's past faithfulness to you? Do you not trust that He stands with you, in control of everything pertaining to your life? **If so, then you've opened yourself to darkness.**

Jesus describes the person who lives in darkness, saying, *"He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."* (JN 12:35). In other words: "Such a person has lost his way. His steps are confused, he's indecisive, he walks in blindness."

The prophet Isaiah describes just such a people. The Israelites had magnified God's law and made it honorable. But they didn't appropriate what they knew of it. God said of them:

"Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD's servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not. The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable. But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore. Who among you will give ear to this? Who will hearken and hear for the time to come?" (ISA 42:18-23).

Who gave these people over to such darkness? Isaiah tells us in the next verse: *"Did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned?"* (ISA 42:24). What sin did these people commit, to be given over to such darkness? **It was their unbelief, plain and simple.** Isaiah says they wouldn't walk in the light of the Word they heard. *"For they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart..."* (ISA 42:24-25).

I know what it's like to enter such a cloud of darkness. Things get confusing. You can't hear a clear word from God. **You want answers quickly,** crying out to God, "Oh, Lord, I'm not seeing or hearing you like I used to." You end up asking him to be more sympathetic, more pitiful toward your condition.

But the truth is, the Lord has no pity for outright unbelief. He's grieved by it. He expects us to walk in the light we've received. We're to trust in His Word and lay hold of His promises. Only as we come back to our knowledge of His Word, and to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, do we exit this darkness.

A deep darkness comes upon those who focus on their own supposed weaknesses and inabilities

Do you know Christians who always complain about how stupid or inadequate they feel? They constantly belittle themselves and put themselves down. They compare themselves to those they admire, thinking, "I'm nothing like him. It's hopeless for me."

You may remember the Old Testament story of the Israelite spies sent to scout out the Promised Land. They came back saying, *"Yes, it's a land flowing with milk and honey. But it's also full of giants and walled-up cities. We're not able to go up against these people. Compared to them, we're mere grasshoppers..."* (see **Numbers 13**).

Now, these men didn't accuse God. They never said, "God isn't able. He isn't strong enough." They dared not voice such unbelief. **Instead, they focused on themselves, saying, "We're not able. We're like little bugs in our enemies' sight."**

Yet that is not humility. And it isn't innocent, harmless talk. Rather, it's an affront to the One who is the light of the world. This light commands us to believe, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* (PHIL 4:13).

You see, when you complain of your inabilities and weaknesses, you're not putting yourself down. You're putting down your Lord. How? **You're refusing to believe or walk in His Word.** That is sin against the light. And it brings on darkness.

The Israelite spies were so focused on their inabilities, **they were ready to quit.** They even talked about going back to Egypt. What was God's response to their fears and unbelief? *"The LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be*

ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?" (NUM 14:11). God charged them with one sin: **unbelief.**

Today, the Lord is asking His people the same question He asked Israel: "When will you believe what I promised you? I said my strength would come to you in your times of weakness. You're not to rely on the strength of your flesh. I told you I would use the weak, the poor, the despised of this world to confound the wise. I am Jehovah, everlasting strength. And I'll make you strong through my might, by my Spirit. So, when will you act on this? When will you trust what I say to you?"

God becomes outraged when His people don't walk in the light of His covenant promises

We think that when we fail to trust God in our daily situations, we only harm ourselves. We think we're simply missing out on His blessings. But that isn't the whole story. **First of all, we hurt and anger our blessed Lord.** And, He warns, "If you don't trust me, you're going to develop a hardened heart."

We read in Hebrews: *"Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest."* (HEB 3:8-11).

What reason is given for why God's people were unable to enter His rest? Was it because of adultery, covetousness, drunkenness? No, it was because of unbelief alone. **Here was a nation exposed to forty years of miracles, supernatural wonders that God worked on their behalf.** No other people on earth had been so loved, so tenderly cared for. They received revelation after revelation about the goodness and severity of the Lord. They heard a fresh word preached regularly from Moses, their prophet leader.

But they never mixed that word with faith. Therefore, hearing it did them no good. In the midst of all those blessings, they still didn't trust God to be faithful. **And over time, unbelief set in.** From that

point on, darkness covered their wilderness journey.

Beloved, unbelief is the root cause behind all hardness of heart. Hebrews asks, *"With whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?"* (HEB 3:17). The Greek word for "grieved" here signifies "indignation, outrage, anger". Simply put, the people's unbelief kindled God's anger against them. Moreover, it hardened them into a continual spiral of unbelief: *"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God... lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."* (HEB 3:12-13).

Unbelief is the mother of all sins. It was the first sin committed in the Garden of Eden. And it's at the root of all bitterness, rebellion and coldness. That's why Hebrews 3 is addressed to believers (*"Take heed, brethren"*). The writer concludes with these chilling words: *"To whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief..."* (HEB 3:18-19).

Unbelief is most dangerous when it is voiced

God told Israel, *"You didn't believe me when I said you had nothing to fear, that I would fight for you. You completely forgot that I bore you up like a child and cared for you. You never did trust me, even though I went before you, gave you a cloud to shelter you from the blazing sun, gave you a fire by night to light your way and bring you comfort in the black night. Instead, you voiced your doubts, slandered me, and made me out to be a liar..."* (see **Deuteronomy 1:27-35**). John repeats this last phrase in the New Testament, stating, *"He that believeth not God hath made him a liar."* (1.JN 5:10).

The Lord says to His people, "I've heard you talking. You've been saying how inadequate you are, how abandoned your life is. I tell you, this angers me. In fact, it so angers me that I won't let you go forward into my rest. **I'm about to give you over to a lifetime of wilderness wanderings.**"

You can be saved, Spirit-filled, and walking holy before God, yet still be guilty of unbelief. You may think, "I don't have any unbelief." **But do you get upset when things go wrong? Are you fearful of failing God? Are you restless, afraid of the future?**

The believer who has unconditional faith in God's promise enjoys complete rest. What characterizes this rest? **A full, complete confidence in God's Word, and a total dependence on His faithfulness to that Word. Indeed, rest is the evidence of faith.**

You may wonder: how does a believer's heart become hardened in unbelief? We see a shocking illustration in **Mark 6**. The disciples were in a boat headed for Bethsaida, sailing in the darkness. Suddenly, Jesus appeared, walking on the water. The twelve thought He was a ghost and shook with fear. But Christ assured them, "*Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.*" (MK 6:50). Then He stepped into the boat, and the wind ceased.

The next verse says everything about the disciples' hearts in that moment: "*They were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.*" (MK 6:51-52). (The Greek meaning of "hardened" here indicates "stone-like, blindness, stubborn disbelief.") We're being reminded that these men had just experienced an incredible miracle. They'd seen Jesus feed five thousand people with only five loaves and two fishes (with twelve baskets of leftovers taken up afterward). And He'd used the twelve to do it. When Mark tells us the disciples "considered not" this miracle, he means, "They couldn't put it all together."

Was this because they had no "afterglow service", to reflect on the miracle they'd just seen? Why is there no record of the disciples falling before their Master and worshipping Him as God? Why no awe, no trembling, no godly fear? **Evidently, they simply left the scene, got in the boat and began rowing.** Then, just after they'd

witnessed this incredible miracle, they were amazed that the wind was calmed by Jesus' command.

I tell you, hardening comes when you take the "super" out of the supernatural. These men didn't have the faith to believe what they'd just seen Jesus do. Within twenty-four hours, they'd dismissed His miraculous feeding as some kind of natural event. They still had doubts about Christ's supernatural power.

The Power that Keeps Us in Christ is Supernatural

In Mark 8, Jesus once more fed a crowd – this one numbering 4,000 people – with just seven loaves and a few fish. Again, the disciples took up several baskets full of leftovers (see **Mark 8:5-8**). Yet Christ discerned that the disciples still didn't accept His miracle-working power. So He asked them, "*Have ye your heart yet hardened?*" (MK 8:17).

I believe there was yet another issue at the heart of the disciples' unbelief. That is, these men simply couldn't believe God Himself would choose to spend such time with them. Moreover, He was using them to shine forth His divine power.

I picture the disciples after this second feeding, sitting dumbfounded. They must have thought, "This can't be happening. If Jesus truly is God, **why would He choose us to share in such incredible power?** Why would He eat and sleep with us? We're just fishermen, uneducated, with no abilities. Why would He walk out onto the water to get into our little boat, instead of revealing this miracle to a group that's more worthy?"

You've probably wondered the same things at times, about yourself: "There are billions of people on this earth. Why did God speak to me? Why did He choose me?" **I'll tell you why: it was an absolute miracle.** Your conversion was totally supernatural. It wasn't just one of those unexplainable natural events that take place. No, there was nothing natural about it.

Why? **Because there is nothing natural about the Christian life.** It is all supernatural. It's a life dependent upon miracles from the very beginning (including your conversion). **And it simply can't be lived without faith in the supernatural.**

Think about it: the angels who camp around you are supernatural beings. The power that keeps you in Christ is totally supernatural. The world lives in darkness, but you have the light. Why? It's all because you live in the realm of the supernatural. There's nothing natural about your body being the temple of the Holy Ghost. Nothing is natural about being the abode of the supernatural God of the universe.

Yet this is often where hardening occurs. People begin to attribute God's supernatural workings in their lives to the natural. No, never! It's dangerous to forget His miracles. It's frightening to look back at divine wonders and say, "It just happened." Every time you take the super out of the supernatural, your heart hardens a little more.

Dear saint, you simply have to accept this by faith: the same supernatural God who fed crowds of thousands with just a few loaves will work supernaturally in your crises also. **His miracle-working power will deliver you from all bondages. It will empower you to walk in freedom. And He'll use your weakness – indeed, your very lowest state – to show the world His miracles of keeping power.**

That's where our belief comes in. Hard times are guaranteed to come upon all who follow Jesus. Yet when those times come – when we're besieged by temptation or despair, and a miracle is needed – we're to say with confidence, "**Do it again, Lord. You've worked miracles before in my life. You've delivered your servants supernaturally throughout history. Do it again, and be glorified. Let your strength be made perfect in my weakness.**"

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