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The Resurrection and our Unbelief

Gospel of John, Part LXXI

John 20:24-31

Stuart W. Bryan

I. Introduction

II. He is Risen!

- A. Discovering the Empty Tomb (1-10)
- B. Appearances of the Risen Lord (11-29)
 - 1. To Mary Magdalene (11-18)
 - 2. To the Disciples sans Thomas (19-23)
 - 3. To the Disciples including Thomas (24-29)

C. Conclusion: Purpose of the Gospel (30-31)

III. How the Resurrection Reshapes our Unbelief

A. The Pervasiveness of our Unbelief (Ps 53:1-3)

Paul warns us in Hebrews 3:12 to "*beware lest there be in any one of you an evil _____ of unbelief.*" Unbelief emerges from our fallen hearts.

"1 The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; There is none who does good. 2 God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. 3 Every one of them has turned aside; They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one." (Ps 53:1-3)

By nature we are all prone to unbelief. In Adam's fall, we sinned all.

B. The Folly of our Unbelief

The Scriptures proclaim that our unbelief is _____. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* Consequently, to reject the Triune God revealed in the Scriptures and in the Person of Jesus is to plunge ourselves into folly. Paul describes the folly of unbelief in Ephesians 4:

"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." (4:17-19)

1. God Knows our Unbelief (Job; Ps 33:13-15; 94:7-11; Jer 23:23-24)

First, unbelief is _____ because God knows our unbelief. Like Thomas, Job struggled with unbelief. He demanded a hearing with God. Yet when God appeared and granted Job's demand, Job laid his hand over his mouth (40:4) and declared, *"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes"* (42:5-6). Unbelief is foolish because God does exist; and when we are brought face to face with him in judgment, we will repent in dust and ashes.

"Yet [the proud] say, "The LORD does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob understand." Understand, you senseless among the people; And you fools, when will you be wise? He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who formed the eye, shall He not see? He who instructs the nations, shall He not correct, He who teaches man knowledge? The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are futile." (Psalm 94:7–11)

2. God Challenges our Unbelief (Isaiah 41-42; John 5:22-30; Acts 17:30-31)

Likewise, unbelief is _____ because it ignores the resurrection as God's demonstration that Jesus is Judge of the Living and the Dead.

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance [proof] of this to all by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:30-31)

As Jesus declared earlier in John's Gospel:

"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me." (John 5:22–30)

C. The Blessedness of Belief

Faith in itself is not a _____; it is the object of one's faith, the one in whom one believes, that makes the belief either praiseworthy or blameworthy. Jesus summons all to turn from our "unbelief" – from our refusal to trust in the Living God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and to put our confidence in the death and resurrection of Jesus for peace with God.

IV. Conclusion