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Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

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“ In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am, And my heart it doth dance at the sound of His name.” Spurgeon

The Speaking Voice

A.W. Tozer, from the ‘Pursuit of God’

When God spoke out of heaven to our Lord, self-centered men who heard it explained it by natural causes: they said, “It thundered.” This habit of explaining the Voice by appeals to natural law is at the very root of modern science. In the living breathing cosmos there is a mysterious Something, too wonderful, too awful for any mind to understand. The believing man does not claim to understand. He falls to his knees and whispers, “God.” The man of earth kneels also, but not to worship.

He kneels to examine, to search, to find the cause and the how of things. Just now we happen to be living in a secular age. Our thought habits are those of the scientist, not those of the worshipper. We are more likely to explain than to adore. “It thundered,” we exclaim, and go our earthly way. But still the Voice sounds and searches. The order and life of the world depend upon that Voice, but men are mostly too busy or too stubborn to give attention.

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Evangelism (missions) is not about convincing people to buy some fire insurance with a moment of prayer. It is about calling individuals by the gospel of Christ to turn from idols to love and serve the true and living God - to exist for the praise of His glory. This is true salvation, and nothing less.

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The prevailing winds of *the thoughts and intents of the heart* are a greater measure of the work of the Holy Spirit than momentary excitements, emotional inclinations, or demonstration of overt power.

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Through the Bible in 2011: Part 8

Rise Up and Enter In!

Then they [told Moses], We went into the land... It truly flows with milk and honey, and here is the fruit. Nevertheless, the people who dwell there are strong... We saw the descendents of Anak there. ...We are not able to go up. ...We saw the giants, ...and were like grasshoppers in our own sight. Numbers 13:27-33 (selected).

So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest. Heb 3:11 (Ps 95:11)

And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Heb 3:18-19

The Children of Israel had been delivered from bondage to go forth and become a covenant nation which was to receive the land God promised to Abraham. In the big picture they were to go from being slaves in a strange land to being, under God, masters in their own land. From a land in which they lived on a borrowed subsistence to a land flowing with milk and honey. The Lord had already vividly demonstrated His faithfulness and power in delivering them from Egypt. Now they have come to the very border of the Promised Land, to the brink of receiving the full promise—’Enter in and take the land.’

Twelve spies are sent into scope out the land and bring back a report. Unquestionably, what was should have happened is that the spies would see the superabundance of the land and bring back a report that would greatly encourage the people to go in and possess it. Indeed, they saw a land flowing with milk and honey; a land whose fruit exceeded all expectations. But they also observed the current inhabitants of the land—giants!

Having witnessed the reality of the exceeding abundance of God’s promise, the reasoning of faith *should* have prevailed. They should have remembered the God who, in faithfulness to His promises, spared them in the Passover, and parted the Red Sea; Whose glory descended upon Sinai with terrifying power; Who brought water out of the rock, and delivered to them food from heaven. Surely, the presence of giants was no obstacle to the living God—their God!

But such was not the case. Though they were commanded to launch out *by faith*, and seize the land, they still refused to trust in the faithfulness and power of Jehovah. They were in their own sight, grasshoppers, against these great giants. *The word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith...* (Heb 4:2). They *saw and tasted*, but refused to enter in, and their judgment was final—they would perish in the wil-

derness (*Heb 6:4-6*). At the pronouncement of judgment they sought a place of repentance but found none (*Num 14:40-45; Heb 12:17*). *So I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest' (Heb 3:11). They could not enter in because of unbelief (Heb 3:19).*

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (1Cor 10:11). Paul makes a direct correlation between the history of Israel in the wilderness and those who have made a *profession* of faith in response to the gospel. The writer of Hebrews (possibly also Paul) presses the point: *Therefore, since a promise of entering His rest continues, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it (Heb 4:1).*

This is a message today's church desperately needs. A large portion of professing Christians have received a false, and potentially fatal, understanding of the gospel, as regards faith. To them saving faith is no more than a *mental acknowledgment* that they are sinners and that Christ is the (or a) savior. They have embraced a teaching that insists that anything more than this is a '*works salvation*'. 'Fighting giants to enter into rest' does not compute with them in any meaningful way. On the other extreme, there is a much smaller segment of the professing church that, unable to ignore passages like *1 Corinthians 10* and *Hebrew 3 & 6*, find in these and similar passages a stern warning about *losing* one's salvation. Both of these views fail to grasp two important non-negotiable realities of faith.

The first reality of biblical faith is that *saving faith* comes with the *transformative power of the indwelling Christ*; it is the infallible result of the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit. Faith is *both* the gift of God *and* the work of God (*Eph 2:8-9*). Grace that *saves* is grace that *effectually works* in the believer (*Titus 2:11-12*). It is the faith of Joshua *that rises up, enters in, and leaves dead giants in its wake. 'The just shall live by faith, but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him' (Heb 10:37).*

In particular view, here, is the one who has been 'partaker' of the Spirit's witness and power, and has *tasted* of good things to come (*Heb 6:4-5*), but has never been *willing* to confront the *Giants of Resistance* in the heart. The giant, *Beloved Sin*, knowing that Christ would cut him down sooner or later, stands in the way of *turning* and *following* Christ (repentance). The giant, *Intellectual Objection*, demands to be entirely placated before Christ is 'permitted' unconditional reign. The giants, *Love of Kin* and *Love of Friends*, being greater in the heart than *Love of Christ*, is not willing to suffer ridicule or rejection because of Him. The giant, *Love of Pleasure*, will not tolerate the prospect of suffering for

Christ. The giants, *Love of Riches*, and *Cares of This World*, choke out any lasting fruit of the word. The giant, *Ambitious Pride*, cannot let go of its own purposes and goals. These 'Anakims' are a prolific breed, with seemingly innumerable kin. But when the call comes to 'rise up and enter the land', faith *must* move forward, *trusting God* for the courage and strength to defeat these giants. God is amazingly longsuffering, as he was with the children of Israel; but there comes a point when the Holy Spirit has been blasphemed by the repeated resistance and rejection of His clear and persistent witness. Only God knows when that point is reached; but once that line is crossed it is irrevocable (*Heb 6:4-6; 2Pet 21-22*).

Similarly, **the second important reality of faith** is that *assurance* of salvation is *never* based on a simple profession of faith. Assurance — **New Covenant Sabbath Rest** — is promised (*Matt 11:28-30; Heb 4:9:10; Isa 11:10 (KJV); 28:11-12; 30:15*); but this rest of assurance is only gained in the *process* of rising up and following—as *we take His yoke upon us*. It emerges as one takes seriously the admonitions to *examine yourselves whether you are in the faith (2Cor 13:5); ...give diligence to make your calling and election sure (2Pet 1:10); ...be diligent to enter into that rest (Heb 4:11)*. As one actually follows Christ with his life, assurance is delivered by *the witness of the Spirit (Rom 8:14-16; 1Jno 4:13)* and bolstered by the *fruit of the Indwelling Christ (Jno 15:1-6; Gal 2:20; Phil 1:6; 1Jno 2:5; 2:29)*. The realities of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, and His abiding faithfulness in and through our trials, add the *witness of experience* to our assurance (*Rom 5:1-5; 1Jno 3:14*).

No one should be resting in a mere profession of faith? The Gospel call is, '*Rise up in faith and follow—enter in!*' Following Jesus and living for God's glory is not *optional* for the Christian. It is what being a Christian *is*. Having seen and tasted the fruit of the Kingdom, having tasted and seen that the Lord is good (*Psa 34:8*), one must then be *willing* to face any Giant of Resistance standing in the way, and enter in. For those who do, there truly *remains a Sabbath rest to the children of God (Heb 4:9)*—and His rest is glorious! (*Isa 11:10 KJV*).

A final note to believers. This side of glory, these giants will persistently rise up to stop you from following your Lord, stealing your peace. Has He led you in the path of unexpected change, and your resisting? Has He called you to a particular ministry or mission? Remember quickly that your God is greater than any giant you face. Rise up and follow! ●ejr3

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