

Unbelief

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From Everywhere in Scripture:

UNBELIEF, PART 1.

#1. Biblically qualified faith is always under assault by unbelievers. Main thesis: PEOPLE BELIEVE WHAT THEY WANT TO BELIEVE.

#2. For many centuries observers have noticed an undeniable feature of human existence. Knowledge of external realities comes to us through *Representational Phenomena*.

#3. This feature is noticeable because that is just how we are created. Genesis 3:1-13 demonstrates how representational phenomena works. Equally interesting is the recorded exchange between "the serpent" (v.1) and "the woman". He appealed to revealed representations: Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" v.1.

#4. That statement puts two distinct kinds of representations into contradiction. One is the quoted words of God and the other are representations derived by the central nervous system.

#5. ..."the woman saw that the tree was good for food" v.6. Incident light fell on the forbidden tree and deflected into Eve's eyes. A picture or *an icon* of the tree was generated in her brain. This is not new. It is a natural process, being the case from the very beginning of creation. #6. Eve had a visual experience. The icon and the tree are two different things. Her only awareness of the tree came through the *representation of it*. But then she *mapped* her own words on to it. Her words represented the tree in contradiction to the words of God.

From Everywhere in Scripture:

UNBELIEF, PART 2.

#1. Main Thesis: PEOPLE BELIEVE WHAT THEY WANT TO BELIEVE. We are screened from direct access to things themselves by the representations of those things in our minds. A certain amount of contemplation of this arrangement will confirm it.

#2. This created order of knowledge inherently demands the *necessity of belief*. One must believe that the representation, in the mind, tells us something true about the nature of Goliath, 1Samuel 17:1-7. One must believe that the representation of the boulder in the road tells us something true about its size and location.

#3. These are *naturally processed representations*. They are important factors in everyday life. We are *impaired without them*.

#4. But those who *believe that God does not exist, or believe that if He does it matters little*, will accept only such natural representations. Therefore, they can *believe only what natural representations can detect*.

#5. The serpent (Genesis 3:6) approached Eve on this assumption. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate".

#6. Exclusive reliance on natural representations is not obligatory. It is a desired *way of mapping one's experience, one's world*.

#7. A believer in God or an unbeliever both map their world. *And they believe the map they draw*.

From Everywhere in Scripture: UNBELIEF, PART 3.

#1. "Mapping" is a usable term. Everyone "maps" their experience; believer or unbeliever. The central nervous system only generates experience. The things and circumstances present themselves to the nervous system and out comes the awareness of them.

#2. But we have an independent capability: language. And language is the primary way we have of mapping understanding on to experience. The central nervous system produces experience.

#3. Mapping linguistic representations on to human experience is the attempt to understand it.

#4. Numbers 13 and 14 reveal this pattern. The awareness of things and circumstance is involuntary. Believers and unbelievers alike have the same experience. But mapping language is strictly voluntary.

#5. Ten of the spies had the same experience as Joshua and Caleb, 13:25-29. However, the ten spies mapped their own ideas on to that experience. "But the men...said, 'We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us' 13:31.

#6. Those people *believed what they wanted to believe*. Joshua and Caleb heard the promises of God. A very different language manifold. Their map of reality looked very different. And they believed it. "If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us--a land which flows with milk and honey", 14:8.

From Everywhere in Scripture:
UNBELIEF, PART 4.

#1. Throughout the Bible there is evidenced *a representational structure*. There are the natural representations generated by the relation between the universe of things-->and human awareness of them. The link between the two of them is the source of experience. Independent of that, there are two different linguistic kinds of representations. One of those is rational language and the other is the revealed language of the word of God.

#2. Contradiction reigns between revealed language and the rational capacity of man. Both belief and unbelief rest upon this representational structure.

#3. *Two distinct maps of reality and two different maps (understanding) of experience* come forward.

#4. Abraham is the crystalline demonstration of all this, Genesis 22; Hebrews 11:17-19. Rational language would never underwrite the sacrifice of Isaac. The patriarch first mapped the word of God upon rational language and *moved it aside*. "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son" v.17.

#5. The term "by faith" refers to this pattern. Abraham mapped "the promises" upon his experience and dismissed the limits of rational language.

#6. Why? Because "He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type" v.19.

#7. We believe what we want to believe.

From Everywhere in Scripture:
UNBELIEF, PART 5.

#1. Peter Watson, a famous author, refers to the present era as "the positive hour". This unbeliever opines that *a common story is being told and believed by many. The Story: The central proposition of the age is that science, psychology, sociology, philosophy and education all converge on atheism and universal development by evolutionary theoretics*. This is the common story. It is largely believed.

#2. Young people, reared to believe in God, attend the university and can find themselves unable to resist a forceful presentation of unbelief.

#3. Unbelief is not a privileged way of reasoning. *People believe what they want to believe*. This has always been true.

#4. Paul cited the ancient Israelites in these terms: "Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved" 1 Corinthians 10:6.

#5. We map experience according to our purpose in time. Here is the compulsion driving both belief and unbelief. The issue is: what does one seek?

#6. Human limitation figures into this. After the Lord's death and resurrection angels appeared confirming the events, Luke 24:6-8. This being reported to the disciples they thought "these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them" v.11.

#7. Unbelief is not inarguable. It is preferred.