

Faith Wasn't The Question

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

When we look back at Israel in the bible we see a nation that was favored of God. Israel was delivered from slavery in Egypt by the Lord and led through the wilderness. Their every need was provided for by God, and victory was given over larger and better armed armies. For all of the years of wandering in the wilderness, their clothes and shoes didn't wear out and even their food, manna, was given by the Lord. There was not a person in the thousands of Israel who would have said that they didn't believe in God. They saw his hand at work many times, both in Egypt, and in the years after.

The nation of Israel was a chosen nation and people. They were to show the other nations that they worshipped the true God and not the idols of other peoples. Generally speaking they, Israel, didn't obey God and walk in his laws. They went after the "so called gods" of the nations around them to such a degree that God said that they did worse than the nations that were there before them. So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

2 Chronicles 33:9 says Israel believed in God so faith was not in question, the problem was that they didn't believe God. There's a big difference between believing in God and believing his word.

It was only when the Lord brought punishment on the Jews and they were defeated by their enemies that they thought on the Lord. As long as they lived in sinful pleasures they were content to be like the people around them. It is a shame that it took a lot of suffering to make them think of God. They wanted the blessings of God, but they didn't want the God of the blessings. Sounds like many of the people of today, doesn't it?

Many folks that I've talked to are willing to say that they believe in God. Few will come right out and say that they don't believe in him. Yet, the majority of those who say they are believers are missing from his service. They don't come to church even though they say that they are believers. Likewise they don't support the Lord's work or do anything but say that they believe in God. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me," **Matthew 15:8**.

Like Israel of old, many people forget God until there is some tragedy such as sickness, accident, or death; then they often will say, "Why did God let this happen?" Just as those throughout the centu-

ries have offered cheap lip service rather than really serving the Lord, many of today have the same standards. That is not saving faith, but some phony thing that the devil has placed in the hearts and minds of people to keep them from coming to the Lord in truth. If Satan can trick folks into thinking that just saying they believe is good enough, then he keeps them in darkness and away from God. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, "I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak," **2 Corinthians 4:13**. This, and other scriptures, show that we speak, and act, according to what we believe. Our words and actions show what we truly are on the inside.

Then, if we truly believe, then it is not a question of faith, but of obedience if we do not serve the Lord with our lives. Satan doesn't mind if you say that you believe in God as long as that is all you do. In such a case it is only empty words, words without substance, or value. Jesus knew that there were those who offered such words in the days he walked among men. "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" **Luke 6:46**. It was a valid question then, just as it is today. What is the purpose of saying, "I believe," if there is no faith to obey and follow the Lord?

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This is a dramatized version of facts taken from the Book of 1 Samuel Intending to show some of the customs of these ancient and traditional times

SAMUEL AND SAUL

AT LONG LAST SAMUEL BRINGS SAUL BEFORE THE ASSEMBLED TRIBES OF ISRAEL TO ANOINT HIM KING, AS THE LORD HAS DIRECTED...

YE HAVE REJECTED THE LORD TO RULE OVER YOU AND HAVE ASKED INSTEAD FOR A KING!

NOW, EVEN AS THE LORD HAS COMMANDED ME TO DO, I BRING BEFORE YOU SAUL-CHOSEN BY GOD!

...AND SAMUEL PREPARES TO ANOINT SAUL WITH OIL...

NOW, AMIDST CRIES OF "GOD SAVE THE KING," SAUL STANDS BEFORE ALL ISRAEL, HANDSOME, MODEST, TALLER BY A HEAD AND SHOULDER THAN ANY OTHER MAN, IN THIS HIS GREATEST MOMENT-ALL OF WHICH HAS BEEN RECORDED IN 1 SAMUEL, CHAPTERS 8,9,10.

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