

Belief Always Results in Action

Scripture

“So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered [himself] with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused [it] to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell [if] God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish? Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.” (Jonah 3:5-10 NKJV)

Commentary

It is easy to say, “I believe,” but saying you believe is no guarantee of faith. “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, ‘and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock’. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ‘and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.’” (Matthew 7:21-27 NKJV)

The proof that Nineveh had repented is seen in their actions not their words. As it is written above, “Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way.” Notice the works are defined as turning from their evil way; not philanthropic acts albeit true repentance will lead to such. They proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth. Even the king sat in ashes. The real proof of belief is seen in the behavior that follows. When someone yells, “fire,” you do not lay your head down to sleep unless you believe there is no real threat. At the very least, you will investigate the claim.

However, today many lay their heads down on their pillow of sin believing the lie that you can sin and not die. The serpent said to Eve, “You will not surely die” (Gen. 3:4). The lie continues today in the form of easy-believe-ism. The doctrine of easy-believe-ism teaches, directly or sometimes indirectly, that all one needs do to be saved is pray a prayer without any repentance.

It’s true that one need not clean himself up to be saved, but it is equally true that you can’t go on sinning willfully without a fear of judgment (Heb. 10:26-27). “Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:29 NKJV)

It is always a balancing act when one speaks of faith and repentance. So maybe a good way to think of the two is as opposite sides of the same coin, heads and tails, faith and repentance. You must have both to have a real coin. Anything less is a counterfeit.

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