

When Faith Becomes Unbelief

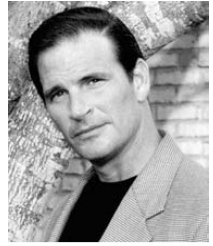
But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Heb 11:6)

Is your faith unbelief? Does your belief in God actually say more about what you don't believe, rather than what you do? It may seem an oxymoron to suggest that faith and unbelief can be synonymous, but it is true. Interestingly enough, this is precisely the point the writer of Hebrews was making in the preceding verse.

Most define faith as believing in God, which we cannot see. Many believe that if somehow they can just make themselves believe what seems improbable, if not impossible, then they have faith. Unfortunately, nothing could be farther from the truth. As the writer of Hebrews states above, that level of understanding is a given. As he rightfully states, "he that comes to God must first believe that he is." The writer here is not defining faith, but is actually using such a conclusion as an occasion for ridicule. He would suggest that such an infantile expression of faith is absurd. It is better rendered as a statement of sarcasm, as if to say, "of course those who come to God must first believe that he is there," that is a no brainer!

It is what the writer goes on to say next, that takes on real significance. The writer does not say faith simply believes God is, he goes on to say, "And that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him." The conjunction "and," used here, is for the connecting of two inseparable ideas. The first is, that faith acknowledges the existence of God as one might expect and secondly that those who acknowledge God are also acknowledging other things as well, in this case, namely that God responds to us in our actions, and in particular, the true nature of our hearts towards Him. This is the context of the entire chapter.

This is why the author of Hebrews would go on to say,



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These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. Now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. (Heb 11:13-16)

Able, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and all the rest, lived their lives the way they did, not because they simply believed God was, but rather because they also knew, he desired and rewarded their faithfulness. Without receiving any of the promises, they lived as though they had, in order to please Him.

If your faith is best described by the things you force yourself to believe, you have yet to experience true Biblical faith. If your faith amounts to your acknowledgment that God is, the truth is, you have no faith! What you possess is nothing more than a simple and infantile expression of logic. Biblical faith on the other hand goes a step further. It suggests that you cannot say you believe in God without also accepting all the other implications, which would naturally follow! As James said, a faith without works cannot and will not save you, not because one earns their way into heaven, but because a faith without them, is illogical, and is in fact unbelief!

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