

Vain Faith

Is there such a thing as vain faith? There must be, because God, through Paul and James speak of it. I would say in the broadest spiritual context, that it is any form of faith that doesn't lead to salvation and eternal life with God. This of course, applies to all faiths, beliefs and religions that fail to recognize Jesus as Lord and Savior. However, here we will limit our discussion to those who claim to be Christians.

In this vast world community that calls itself Christian, and even among those who claim to be born-again, I am convinced that vain faith is not prevalent as compared with genuine saving faith. How can that be? First, we might consider that throughout Scripture, we see the word "remnant," as representing the saved souls among the vast world of the unsaved. Remnant, meaning a small part or a fragment, or scrap. The second is because Jesus said that many would be called but few would be chosen. Many would hear the call and actually respond, but only a few would respond in true faith. That is because many of the respondents would only engage in the superficialities of belief, such as filling pews and engaging in the social aspects of fellowship. They would be professing, but never possessing the saving faith. Third, it is because of the numerous precautionary verses in Scripture that speak of the many false deceitful teachers, pastors and others that will lead the many under the banner of "Christianity" into false or vain faith, and eternal damnation.

For instance, statistics from a Barna poll regarding graduating pastors from seminaries indicates that at least half do not believe in the virgin birth, or the deity of Jesus. As if biblically "challenged" and misguided evangelicals were not enough of a problem, we find here that false teachers and pastors are being manufactured by the very schools that should be producing genuine Christian leadership. These professionally trained apostates and heretics are already out there in droves preaching the more carnally attractive, but false "gospels" to the biblically ignorant and gullible who think that they are true shepherds leading their flock to salvation.

Fourthly, informed observation of what is called “Christian” preaching and teaching on TV, radio and in the churches, especially those who are “user friendly”, well attest to the fact that there is a large, well organized, and insidiously implemented program of misinformation and perversion of biblical truth bent on condemning souls rather than saving them. Added to all of this is the bloated Trojan horse of ecumenism, and one begins to wonder how there can remain very long, even a remnant of those having the true saving faith.

The fact is, there can't be, and won't be! Scripture makes this quite clear, for in 1Thessalonians chapter 4, we read of the “Harps” or “Rapture.” That is when every redeemed soul who ever died in Christ will have their bodies returned to them in perfect incorruptible condition, and all the redeemed who are alive at the moment, will have their bodies made incorruptible, and they all will be caught up and taken to heaven in the “twinkling of an eye” (1Corinthians 15:51) A moment later, there will not be a single redeemed soul on earth. All who remain, that is, those who call themselves Christians, will, or should then know that theirs was a false, a vain faith. I believe that this moment will come when God, in His omniscience, knows that the number of His remnant has stopped growing, and that to continue with the present dispensation will no longer bear fruit. That will end the church age, and mark the beginning of another dispensation that will extend through the Great Tribulation.

In the meantime, during these current end-times, gross deception regarding the economy, politics, health, morality, religion, etc. are being inflicted on multitudes. These deceptions are tailored to fit the pleasure loving, easy living, struggle avoiding, dumbed-down generation that is so easily manipulated into believing anything that is said often enough by seemingly sincere intelligent voices. With such an onslaught by the powers of darkness, how else could vain faith proliferate so extensively? It couldn't be otherwise, because Scripture long ago made it plain that this is exactly how it would be in these end times!

What can anyone do? We can do absolutely nothing on the broad scale. Individually, each, who are true Christians are called to be strong witnesses by walking as closely as we can in the likeness of Christ, so as to be agents through whom the Holy Spirit may turn others to repentance. If something in the way of a grand revival, back to the truth and Godly living, were to be believed at this time, it would be contrary to what Scripture says about the end times. Scripture speaks clearly of the fact that unbelief, false belief and all the evils of which man is capable will continue to grow until there is nothing but evil. At that time God will pronounce the final judgment. As we read of the times of Noah and of ancient Israel, we find God had allowed man to reach a certain level of depravity before His wrath descended on him. This final wrath by comparison, will make those earlier wraths against Israel seem like the tickling of a feather.

To repeat, what is near at hand is the “end time wrath” when God will “clean house” on a worldwide basis. While it’s increasingly evident that very difficult times are already at hand for everyone, and real Christians in particular, God has promised by means of the Rapture, to remove the Church, that is the Body of Christ. This will occur before He begins that final great purging of the world which is referred to as the Great Tribulation. Right now, in 2016 it seems likely that this country is already in a tribulation-like period, that from an economic perspective, will be first called a severe “depression.” Later, after the total collapse of the system, there will be pestilence, disease and starvation where billions will die. Soon after that all begins, the Rapture will remove the entire “Body of Christ.” They will never suffer the Great Tribulation. I believe that this is God’s wake up call, for this ever increasingly godless decadent and perverse generation. A study of the latter half of the Book of Revelation is where the source of the above predictions can be found.

There are many Christian groups that believe that we are called to affect a grand revival, to make the world “better” in preparation for Jesus’ second coming. Nothing is further from scriptural truth! Careful study of Scripture clearly reveals that we are in the end times when it is now too late for such universal repentance to occur. Such a revival did occur in the previous Philadelphia church age. However, that eventually degenerated into

the current final church age, known as the church of Laodicea, of which Jesus has nothing good to say. (Revelation 3)

Today's church, using the word "church" most broadly, may be well characterized as the church of vain faith. In every instance where this Laodicean church typifies a particular congregation, Jesus tells us He has "spewed it out of His mouth," He is not in that church at all, but only outside of it knocking on individual hearts, seeking to enter them. Those who open their hearts to Him are part of the redeemed remnant out of the vast majority of the lost, which are those who believe in vain. There is also a remnant, that small group of saved souls in many, if not in all of these apostate congregations. However, their spiritual growth is severely and affectually hampered in such an environment. They should flee from such places, if serious efforts to restore Gospel truths fail to manifest.

There are many causes and characteristics of vain Christian faith. IGNORANCE, MISINFORMATION, APATHY, and FEAR are among them. We might rightly call these major causes as "Satan's False Gospel Quartet". They are the "guys" that Satan uses to instigate vain faith, and to form the pathetic army of those who claim to be Christian, but whose quality of faith will not save them. While wickedly infamous in the celestial realm, hardly anyone on earth is aware of their existence, much less who they are, who controls them, and what their purpose may be. They can be seen joining together in well-orchestrated works where Satan is their composer, arranger, conductor and business manager. He walks the earth and especially in the isles of the lukewarm churches seeking his prey, or might we say setting up "gigs" for his quartet. IGNORANCE of what constitutes a saving faith, combined with the MISINFORMATION preached as gospel, leads to a complacent belief that is difficult to breach.

This is because there is no one more difficult to reach with the truth than someone who believes that he already has it. APATHY is that soft, soothing, comforting, sleepy-time background voice that harmonizes so well with IGNORANCE. They sing that currently very popular sleepy-time song titled "Don't Know, Don't Care". FEAR can often sing

solo in its service to Satan by debilitating its victim, and leading him to works which he believes are necessary supplements to any sort of belief. In most of the pseudo-Christian belief systems, fear often leads the QUARTET, especially where works are already an essential factor in the structure of the false faith. Constant FEAR as to the adequacy of one's works is a major diversionary characteristic. It serves to solidify that deviant faith as soon as IGNORANCE of Scripture and MISINFORMATION have set the tone and the melody. Where genuine faith is concerned, the quartet never has any cancelling influence after the advent of redemption. However, the quartet can still be effective as retardants or stumbling blocks in the process of sanctification, and of effective service to others seeking the truth of Jesus' work on the cross.

If you have been wondering as to whether or not there is a point to be made in this particular musing, yes, there is. However, it is the same one I keep trying to make almost each time I'm prompted to write. It is simply this. We live today in a world of ever increasing depravity and sin, a world ever more jaded and accepting and even embracing this condition. Those who hope for spiritual rescue, and to have eternal life in the presence of God, must struggle with even greater resolve to turn away from the world.

They must turn to the One and The Only One who is the Rescuer, Christ Jesus, and do so in no other way but as God's word directs us. Everyday the world of depravity grows more powerfully tempting, pervasive and persuasive, while at the same time, true Christianity is under 24-7 assault by the forces of evil who are bent on its total elimination. Of the many techniques being applied even more viciously toward this end are the infusion many more false gospels, and false doctrines. When these are believed and followed, they lead to false vain faith, faith that is powerfully convincing for those who place their reliance on what they are told and taught. What makes it so easy for Satan's agents is the natural laziness of man, his innate gullibility, and his conditioning in a dumb-down, relatively prosperous easy-does-it culture.

He prefers to listen and be convinced by those who promise what he wants to hear and what does not require changing his life-style or reduction of his pleasures. This reminds

me of a few of the men who have “passed” through a cancer support group that I attended for over 10 years. They were willing to submit to anything the medical profession suggested, but they refused to change their life-style, a change that could have greatly extended their lives, as it alone did mine. Until very recently the conventional medical profession saw little if any need to change life-style, yet it is being proven daily that certain changes can not only prevent, but can cure cancer and many other afflictions. While life-style changes will not heal the sinful soul, or bring about salvation, such changes are essential, and are powerful evidences, of one having truly received Jesus as Lord and Savior. These are evidences of that person having been saved.

My purpose, as ever so poorly I may be expressing it, is to awaken, in any way I can, those who sleep in the comfort of their ignorance, apathy, and false sense of eternal security. I pray that they awaken before it is too late. That is to awaken to the whole truth of God’s Word regarding His prescribed way to a heavenly eternity. I pray, to shake them of their complacency, which stems from the trust that they have already placed in false or inadequate teachings that lead not to heaven, but only to hell. I pray for a faith in Jesus that includes humility, a realization that they need a Savior, along with repentance, and a life-long ever-growing abhorrence of sin. This is only evidenced by a growing and unceasing effort for obedience to Jesus’ laws, as Scripture requires. There is no other path to a saving faith regardless of how persuasive, or “godly” are those who preach otherwise. Anyone who dismisses or subordinates these tougher, but essential precepts is simply selecting out of Scripture what, absent more study of God’s Word, may seem, sufficient, but it is not. Am I here preaching “overkill,” or perhaps “legalism,” or might it be “works” theology? Is it works? You bet it is! But it’s works of gratitude that follow salvation! Is it legalism? It sure is! But it is obedience to the laws that Jesus declared as applying to all that are, or would be His.

These requirements come into full force after individual redemption, when the Holy Spirit begins His perfecting work called sanctification. I believe the often-missing point here is that while these efforts do not bring about justification, they are essential after-the-fact evidences of it! Without such evidences in the life of a professing Christian, it

may be strongly presumed that the triggering grace of justification never occurred! Is this too heavy of a commitment to live with? How much is eternal security worth? Is it measured merely by how much of this carnal life you are willing to give up in exchange for it? I pray not!

Jesus said that faith even as small as mustard seed can be a saving faith. However, we must realize that this faith must be alive, the seed must sprout and grow and bear fruit. Otherwise it's a dead seed, that can only produce a dead or vain faith. He also told us that unless we are willing to give up the things of this world, we are not worthy of Him. Any faith that fails this test is vain. Faith is a little word, but in the context of a saving faith, it is jam packed with meaning far beyond what passes as such these days. It behooves every seeker, and all who profess to have a saving faith, to look deeply into Scripture, and into himself or herself, to become certain that what they have is real and not vain faith.