**Religion of Convenience**

*1 Kings 12:25-33*

**Introduction**

1. The purpose of the commands of God – **1 Timothy 1:5** (especially – “sincere faith” – unhypocritical faith). (Love from such – i.e. keeping God’s commands, exhibiting love toward Him, not outwardly simply, but in sincere conviction of faith)
2. God has promised that He will keep us by faith for the inheritance – **1 Peter 1:5**
3. However, in order for that faith to keep us until that day IT MUST BE GENUINE AND SINCERE. So, God has promised our faith will be tested – **1 Peter 1:6-9** – the faith that receives the reward is genuine faith.
4. This test will ultimately prove one of two things:
   1. The person of faith is a Christian out of CONVENIENCE.
   2. The person of faith is a GENUINE/SINCERE Christian by CONVICTION.
5. We need to make sure we are not practicing a religion of convenience, but one that is sincere, and from true conviction in the truth of God.
6. Jeroboam’s Religion of Convenience
7. Background
   1. God told Jeroboam He was taking the kingdom from Solomon (when it was under control of his son – Rehoboam) and giving 10 tribes to Jeroboam – **1 Kings 11:31-32**
   2. Jerusalem will still be the place where God’s name dwells – **1 Kings 11:36**
   3. If Jeroboam obeys God he will have an enduring house – **1 Kings 11:37-39**
8. Jeroboam’s Actions
   1. After the rebellion – **1 Kings 12:25-27** – Jeroboam did not think about God’s promises, but about what MIGHT happen to him if Israel still went to worship at the proper place in Jerusalem.
   2. **1 Kings 12:28-33** – He allowed fear to determine his actions, and he created false worship to avoid a return to the house of David by the people instead of trusting in God.
   3. Jeroboam’s religion was not one of SINCERE FAITH, but one of CONVENIENCE:
      1. If I obey, what will happen to me? – Instead of asking, “what does God require of me, and I will do it?”
      2. It is too much to obey – He reasoned through fear about what might happen, and was made to compromise.
      3. BECAUSE HIS FAITH WAS NOT SINCERE, WHEN IT WAS NO LONGER CONVENIENT FOR HIM TO SERVE GOD ACCORDING TO HIS SPECIFICATIONS HE STOPPED DOING SO.
9. Religion of Convenience, or Sincere Faith
10. Religion of Convenience
    1. What it says:
       1. If I obey, what will happen to me?
          1. NOTE: Legitimacy in counting the cost – **Luke 14:28** – but not in pondering about how far we’ll allow our faith to take us.
          2. Felix and convenience – **Acts 24:24-27** – the time was only inconvenient because he wasn’t willing to give up what was required. (In an adulterous marriage with Drusila.)
          3. Peter’s faith exposed as one of convenience – **John 13:36-38** – it was convenient for Peter to say that at that time, but when push came to shove his faith failed.
          4. Parable of the sower – **Matthew 13:20-21** – Stony ground – no root, i.e. never became very strong, very real – flourished during convenience, then withered away in trial.
       2. It is too much to obey.
          1. Rich young ruler – **Matthew 19:16-22** – Spiritually minded, but Jesus wanted his faith deeper – turned out to be a matter of convenience, and he didn’t obey Jesus. (actions of obedience in sacrifice)
          2. Jews who believed – **John 6:60-66** – Concerning His doctrine of consuming Him (obviously figurative) to receive life – **John 6:26-27** – didn’t grant them what they wanted. (Concerning doctrine)
    2. What it looks like:
       1. Solid during peace, but compromising during trial – **Proverbs 24:10**
       2. There are certainly different challenges for each Christian, but we must not have a faith of convenience, or when a challenge is presented against our faith, we will fail.
    3. Faith of convenience will fail:
       1. In persecution.
       2. In the call of the world to conform.
       3. When false teaching arises.
11. Religion of Sincere Faith
    1. The early Christians
       1. The Christians we read of in the first century didn’t have a faith of convenience (overall) – there was no such thing as convenience in Christianity.
       2. Jews – **Hebrews 10:32-34** – they obeyed the gospel out of conviction, and were able to joyfully undergo persecution.
          1. It wasn’t convenient for them to live faithfully – suffering.
          2. However, they were sincere in their faith, and had confidence in the reward.
       3. Gentiles – **2 Thessalonians 1:3-4; 1 Peter 4:3-6** – obeyed the gospel out of conviction, and were able to leave their old religions.
          1. They received immense persecution for leaving polytheism to go after One God.
          2. They received immense persecution and blasphemy for denying matters of the flesh that were the norm.
          3. Yet, they were convicted, and sincere, thus, continued in faith.
    2. What God expects of us
       1. Love from sincere faith – **1 Timothy 1:5**
          1. Love – **John 14:15** – commandments are given to keep. Show love by obedient faith.
             1. Pure heart – unhypocritical. (**Romans 12:9**)
             2. Good conscience – a conscience desiring to simply do God’s will, that does what is right.
             3. Sincere faith – doing so without hypocrisy. (FROM TRUE CONVICTION, NOT CONVENIENCE.)
       2. Consistency – **James 2:8-11**
          1. Not necessarily speaking of one who fails in weakness, BUT ONE PICKING AND CHOOSING WHAT HE WANTS TO OBEY.
          2. (**v. 10**) – stumble in one point, even though keeping all else, break the law period.
          3. **(v. 11**) – the reason – GOD IS JUST AS SERIOUS ABOUT MURDER AS ADULTERY.
             1. To consistently keep one law while consistently choosing to transgress another shows the obedience rendered to be out of CONVENIENCE.
             2. The adulterer may not murder, but it is simply because murder doesn’t suit him.
             3. Such obedience is out of convenience, NOT OUT OF GODLINESS, AND TRUE REVERENCE FOR THE THINGS OF GOD.
             4. THE GODLY MAN WILL OBEY ALL LAW – FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATES – **cf. Matthew 5:17-19**
       3. Endurance
          1. **1 Peter 1:6-9** – Faith must be proven sincere by withstanding fire.
          2. **Hebrews 10:35-39** – Must not cast away confidence, for God only rewards the faithful.
    3. Cultivating sincere faith
       1. Readiness **– Acts 17:11**
       2. Diligent study – **2 Timothy 2:15; Romans 10:17**
       3. Honest introspection – **2 Corinthians 13:5**
       4. Humble submission – **James 1:21** (meekness – accept God’s word, don’t dispute or resist, humbly submit – be a doer)

**Conclusion** – We must make sure our religion is not one of convenience, but of conviction.