

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Three Hundred and Counterfeit Faith

There is a strong correlation in the scriptures between the number three hundred and the subject of faith. While most of the time this correlation points us to a positive aspect of faith, there are a few times that it points us to a counterfeit faith. That which is counterfeit looks similar to the authentic, yet differences can be seen when closely examined.

In the book of John, we look at an accusing question raised by Judas the traitor: John 12:3-8 "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for **three hundred pence**, and **given to the poor**? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always."

Judas did not care for the poor, but he had the money bag and he wanted the money therein. Judas gave as a reason for his actions, giving to the poor. The counterfeit faith is money based. The motivation for the actions of those who promote this counterfeit faith is to collect large sums of money. How often has money been collected for the poor and the "poor" preacher has gotten a hefty sum of it? Today, in our society, we have preachers who have become very rich through "preaching." How different this is to what we read of Peter, who said, "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

Likewise, we read Paul's admonition to the elders at Ephesus: "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 28:33-35). The Lord said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree

cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matt. 7:15-20). These give an appearance of being righteous and religious, but their fruit shows they are a counterfeit.

Next, those who promote a counterfeit faith try to overwhelm the true with sheer numbers of adherents: 2 Chr 14:9 "And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and **three hundred chariots**; and came unto Mareshah." This host was far greater than anything that Judah could come up with in sheer numbers. Yet, Israel was much mightier because the Lord was with them and overcame this great host: 2 Chr. 14:10 "Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11 And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee. 12 So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled." The Lord said concerning the true church: Luke 12:32 "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Three hundred of the counterfeit faith are no match for one man who truly trusts in the Lord: 2 Sam 23:18 "And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against **three hundred**, and slew them, and had the name among three."

Furthermore, the goal of the counterfeit faith is to bring people into bondage: 2 Sam 21:16 "And Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed **three hundred shekels of brass** in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David." Brass and iron are metals in the bible associated with bondage.

Great multitudes of the Lord's people are in bondage to the works system of salvation taught by the counterfeit faith adherents. Paul prayed for these saying, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:1-4). Paul's prayer was that God's people be saved from their ignorance and from going about trying to establish their own righteousness through the religious works systems.

