

WHEN FAITH FALTERS

Scripture references are to the NIV-UK (2011)



Faith is not always an easy faculty to maintain, despite one's best intentions. Even those who do believe are often plagued with doubts. This is an effect of the Adamic curse; God's loving purposes have been obscured by clouds of ignorance and misunderstanding. Moreover, faith may be attached to the wrong objects – things rooted in this world, akin to pulling oneself up by one's boots.

Faith which does not have Christ Jesus at its centre rests in a falsehood, making it hard to understand humanity's fall into original sin and the consequent alienation from the Father's love and His *permission* of suffering and evil.

Everyone, whether they recognise the fact or not, has need of a Redeemer, who is Christ alone. But in this matter, too, consensus is hard to achieve, even between Christians, who hold a variety of doctrines. The thorns and thistles of doubt and ambiguity, and the hard graft needed to root up prejudice against even the very idea of 'religion', deters most from making the effort.

Faith in Christ as Saviour and King is the only prescribed way in the Scriptures to the forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation. However, not everyone is able to exercise such a saving faith under present conditions, the push and pull of other attractions and forces being too strong, disillusion too deep. For such – the majority – their opportunity for salvation will wait until Christ's return and the establishment of His kingdom on earth. Then faith will give way to sight and all questions will be answered.

Using the figure of a mountain to represent this kingdom, Isaiah 25: 7 tells us that

[In] this mountain [*kingdom*] he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations: . . .

The word 'sheet' is from the Hebrew word for *molten*, a term also used in connection with the golden calf-image of Ex. 32: 4. More or less impenetrable, this figurative cover has overshadowed society, filtering out the light of truth. In that day of worldwide deliverance, not only will errors and misunderstandings be resolved, but the human family will come to know that their experiences with sin, suffering and catastrophe have – contrary to their misperceptions – wrought everlasting benefits, and they will rejoice to see a bright future opening up.

Verse 8 continues:

. . . he will swallow up death for ever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

