

## Feigned Repentance

*Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.*

*And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.*  
*Judges 10:13-15*

In this chapter we find the Israelites once again rebelling against God, serving idols, and as a result of God's judgment distressed by their enemies. After many of these cycles, and God sending judges to deliver them, this time the Lord's response changes. We are not told by what means He sent His response, but we would assume that, as in chapter six, a prophet brought the message of a seeming end to God's mercy. Their instruction, if we may paraphrase, is to be consistent in their worship. Since they had chosen the worship of Baal instead of Jehovah, then to Baal they should go for deliverance. How revealing it is that those who choose to worship the idols of this world somehow know when troubles come that those idols cannot deliver them. They are happy to worship the idols when they bring them fleshly pleasures, and yet the judgments that accompany idolatry remind the human conscience that only the living God is real and can deliver. Still the response of Israel in this text, "deliver us only," sadly reveals that their desire was only for the deliverance of God, instead of for the God of deliverance. They were even willing to confess that they had sinned, yet this does not constitute repentance. Much later in the nation's history God describes the similar situation through Jeremiah (3:10): "Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly." However, in both instances they were not willing to heed the loving and honestly abrupt warning from God.

While mankind may mouth words of confession and desire for deliverance, the Lord knows the motives of the heart. There actually is no end to God's mercy, for it endures forever; however, there are conditions, especially honesty of heart before Him. We cannot feign repentance before God; He searches the heart and tries the reins. At least the father of the possessed son had the honesty to cry out, "help thou mine unbelief!" So when we come to the place where we recognize that a worldly idol is vying for or has misdirected our attention, let us flee with unfeigned repentance to seek the God of deliverance, to not only be delivered from the consequence, but from the very idol itself. For we have His promise that sin shall not have dominion over us, when we are living under His covenant of grace. Even to Judah, He promised through Jeremiah (29:13) that "ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

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