

“BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF”

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Hebrews 3:16-19**. From Roy H. Enoch.
 - B. God has always required a faith that would do what He says.
 - 1. The NT gives examples from the OT to teach the kind of faith that is required today.
 - a. 1Cor. 10:1-12 gives a similar warning from the Israelites as in this passage.
 - b. James cites “the prophets” as examples for Xians (Jas. 5:10).
 - c. Hebrews 11 is a long list of examples of the faithful from the OT and the kind of faith that God approved.
 - 2. The faith that God required would seek to please HIM (Heb. 11:6).
 - 3. Paul wrote, “For we walk by faith...” (2Cor. 5:7).
 - a. The Xian “walk” was the manner in which he lived.
 - b. Not a single act or attitude, but the reaction to temptation according to God’s word.
 - 4. John said that the victory which overcomes the world is faith (1Jn. 5:4).
 - 5. Paul declared that those branches in God’s olive tree (Jews) were broken off because of unbelief and the Gentiles, as branches of a wild olive tree were grafted in through faith (Rom. 11:20-21).
 - C. The faith that God requires is obedience (Heb. 3:18,19).
 - 1. In our text, the last words in verses 18 and 19 mean “unbelief” or “disobedience.”
 - 2. Verse 18 in the NKJ says, “who did not obey,” and the KJV says “to them who believed not.”
 - 3. Verse 19 closes in the NKJ as “because of unbelief” but *Strong’s Greek Dictionary* defines it as “unfaithfulness (disobedience).”
 - D. Just as there is security in a trusting faith, there is danger in unbelief.
 - 1. Our text in Heb. 3:19 has both an admonition to faithfulness and a warning of the danger of falling by unbelief.
 - 2. Paul told Timothy that some had had their faith shipwrecked (1Tim. 1:19).
 - 3. At the end of his life, Paul said that he had “kept the faith” (2Tim. 4:7,8).
 - E. The warning here shows that the danger of falling is real.
 - 1. It clearly illustrates the tragedy of unbelief.
 - 2. Israel’s fall is an example for God’s people today.
- I. **ISRAEL’S FALL ILLUSTRATES THE TRAGEDY OF UNBELIEF (Heb. 3:16-19).**
- A. We have recently studied this account of unbelief in Num. 13,14.
 - 1. The 12 spies scouted the land for 40 days and brought a glowing report of the richness of the land (Num. 13:23-27).
 - 2. However, because of unbelief they concluded:
 - a. “The people are stronger than we” (Num. 13:31).
 - b. “We were in our own sight as grasshoppers” (Num. 13:33).
 - c. “We were in their sight” as grasshoppers (Num. 13:33).
 - d. “Let us return to Egypt” (Num. 14:4).
 - 3. The people refused to listen to men of faith: Caleb and Joshua (Num. 14:6-10).
 - 4. Therefore, the people rebelled against God in unbelief. Num. 14:9
 - B. For their unbelief, the people of Israel died in the wilderness during the next 40 years (Num. 14:28,29).
 - C. The believers, Joshua and Caleb led the next generation into Canaan as promised.
- II. **ISRAEL’S FALL IS AN EXAMPLE FOR GOD’S PEOPLE TODAY (Heb. 4:11).**
- A. The time this was written to the Hebrews was also a time of skepticism and infidelity even as today.
 - 1. Scoffers still show their doubts and unbelief (2Pet. 3:1-5).
 - 2. Today in the classrooms and the media, religion is attacked and atheism and agnosticism are glorified, as in evolution.

3. Most textbooks teach the theory of evolution as fact and will not even allow any suggestion of the possibility of divine creation.
 4. TV programs and movies ridicule religion and picture those with faith in the Bible as radicals and fools.
- B. The example of Israel in the wilderness should cause us to seriously to consider:
1. We need to study God's word constantly and carefully to maintain our faith in God (Rom. 10:17).
 - a. We cannot ignore God's word and maintain faith in God.
 - b. We cannot assemble when Convenient and keep the faith.
 - c. We cannot do what we please in God's name and maintain our faith in God.
 2. John said his account of the life/works of Jesus was to produce faith (Jn. 20:30,31).
 3. We need to take our opportunities in Bible classes seriously by preparing carefully, and looking forward to participation in class.
 4. Follow the lessons carefully given in the sermons, by looking up the Scriptures studied and taking notes (Ac. 17:11).
 5. Share the word that you study with others by asking questions in classes and conversations.
 6. Try to avoid situations where God's word is being attacked and try to seek teachers who build up faith in God rather than destroy it.
- C. The unbelief of the Israelites caused them to forget the burdens and problems of slavery in Egypt and seek to return to the slavery.
1. The same lack of faith today will often cause one to become again entangled in the same worldliness from which they had been freed (2 Pet. 2:20-22).
 2. When one dies in unfaithfulness today, he misses the "rest" that God has offered in heaven, just as those in the wilderness failed to enter the land of Canaan (Heb. 4:1; 4:10,11).

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Although Israel lost faith in God's word, the Lord still meant and did what He said.
- B. God's word is still:
 1. Living
 2. Powerful
 3. A discernor of the thoughts and intents of man's heart (Heb. 4:12).
- C. God still knows the hearts of men: whether there is faith or unbelief.
- D. Faith is trusting what God says by doing it without hesitation or doubt.
- E. God has promised heaven to obedient souls: Do you believe it?
- F. We can be faithful, and we can have a great joy doing His will, but it takes diligence and watchfulness- we can't do it by convenience.
- G. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.