

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Romans 16:17-20**.
- B. From Roy H. Enoch (03-19-95).
- C. The children of Israel were God's people under the OC and were often a backsliding people.
  - 1. In the wilderness at Sinai, the ten spies "melted their hearts."
  - 2. In the land of Canaan during the Judges, they turned from the Lord repeatedly.
  - 3. Under the divided kingdom, they constantly left the Lord (Jer. 2:19).
- D. Only two of the 603,550 men, twenty years and older (not counting the Levites) came out of Egypt (Joshua and Caleb).
  - 1. They had provoked God w/their rebellion through unbelief (Num. 14:2,4).
  - 2. They failed to enter into God's rest in Canaan because of unbelief (Heb. 3:11).
- E. Paul also used this example of the Israelites as a warning to Xians (1Cor. 10:1-12).
- F. In this lesson, we want to study this warning:
  - 1. Men leave God for many different reasons.
  - 2. Many signs shows a heart of unbelief.

## I. MEN LEAVE GOD FOR MANY DIFFERENT REASONS.

- A. **Some, like the Israelites, leave God because of unbelief.**
  - 1. They had enough faith to do what God said to be freed from Egyptian bondage.
    - a. But their faith was not enough to keep them in the wilderness trials (Heb. 3: 19).
    - b. They had no faith, that God would do what He promised (giving them Canaan).
    - c. The people lost faith because of the false report of 10 of the spies (Num. 13:25-33).
  - 2. The Xian faith is still under attack.
    - a. Atheistic Humanism causes many to leave the faith.
    - b. Liberalism (denial of the Bible as the literal word of God) causes many to do as they please.
  - 3. Yet, in spite of these attacks, God's word still lives and works for those who trust it enough to do what it says (Rom. 1:16).
    - a. Man's unbelief and disobedience can no more nullify God's word now than in the days of Moses (Heb. 3:11,12).
    - b. God's word is still a discerner of man's heart, even though man does not discern the word of God.
  - 4. The glory of man is short-lived.
    - a. Those ten spies caused the hearts of the people to melt, but they died and God's word proved true under Joshua.
    - b. Critics still scoff at the word of God, but it will outlast them all.
- B. **A lack of daily exhortation can cause men to depart from God** (Heb. 3;13).
  - 1. It is still possible to become discouraged in living the Xian life (Heb. 10:36).
  - 2. Brethren do have a responsibility toward one another (Gal. 6:1). Yes, we are our brother's keeper (Jas. 5:19,20).
  - 3. Xians should be more active in a daily exhortation.
    - a. When one is sick he/she will need exhortation and encouragement.
    - b. When death comes, the family needs encouragement.
    - c. If a man has a financial tragedy, he needs encouragement.
    - d. Students in college need encouragement.
    - e. New Xians need much encouragement.
    - f. This encouragement should go beyond what is extended in Bible classes and from the pulpit: cards, letters, phone calls, personal visits, etc.

- g. The worship service should also be a time of exhortation (Col. 3:16).
- C. **The deceitfulness of sin can cause God's people to leave Him** (Heb. 3: 13).
  1. Sin is a deceiver, and distorts spiritual vision (Eph. 4:22).
  2. The sin of neglect is subtle and deceptive (Jas. 4:17).
  3. Sin promises men what it does not give (happiness and security), and then gives what it did not promise: death (Rom. 6:23).

## II. MANY SIGNS SHOWS THE HEART OF UNBELIEF.

- A. One sign of unbelief is **neglecting salvation**.
  1. "Neglect" means a lack of concern that reveals indifference.
  2. An indifferent attitude toward spiritual needs and responsibilities shows a lack of faith.
- B. Another sign of unbelief is **failure to become a teacher of God's word** (Heb. 5:12).
  1. Not everyone can effectively teach a class, but we can teach/encourage our friends.
  2. We must trust that the soul is more valuable than the rest of the world (Mt. 16:26).
  3. Xians need the firm conviction that God's word can save (Jas. 1:21).
  4. We must all see the need to become teachers of the word (1Pet. 3: 15).
- C. Another sign of unbelief is **forsaking the assembly of the saints** (Heb. 10:25).
  1. Those who really believe the Lord will honor His commands (Lk. 22: 19). Jesus said to eat the Lord's Supper in His memory. This was one of the purposes of assembling each first day of the week (Ac. 20:7).
  2. A refusal to worship the Lord clearly reveals an "evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

## CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. The NT does not speak of the "possibility of apostasy" but the reality of the danger of it.
- B. One can "take heed lest he fall" (1Cor. 10:12).
- C. One must guard his heart carefully because that is where sin starts (Mt. 15:18-20).
  1. Ananias and Sapphira had heart trouble (Ac. 5:4).
  2. Simon the sorcerer had a problem in his heart (Ac. 8:22).
- D. We can be faithful to God and not draw back to perdition (Heb. 10:39).
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.