

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Hebrews 3:7-12**.
- B. From Roy Enoch.
- C. The children of Israel were God's people under the first covenant 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; 20 years and older, not counting the Levites; entered Canaan.
 - 1. They had provoked God with their rebellion through unbelief (Num. 14:2,4).
 - 2. Therefore, they failed to enter into God's rest in Canaan because of unbelief (Heb. 3:11).
- E. Paul also used this same example of the Israelites as a warning to Xians (1Cor. 10: 1-12).

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. But didn't have enough faith to keep them in the trials/tests of the wilderness (Heb. 3:19).
 - a. The people lost faith because of the false report of 10 of the spies (Num. 13:25-33).
 - b. They did not have confidence that God would give them Canaan.
 - 2. The Xian faith is still under attack:
 - a. Atheistic Humanism causes many to leave the faith.
 - b. Liberalism (denial that the Bible is the word of God) causes many to do as they please.
 - 3. Yet, in spite "of the 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 discernor 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 for people to become discouraged in trying to live the Xian life (Heb. 10:36)
 - 2. Brethren have a responsibility toward one another. Yes, we are our brother's keeper (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20).
 - 3. Xians should be more active in a daily exhortation. Encouragement is needed when:
 - a. One is sick.
 - b. Death comes.
 - c. A financial tragedy hits.
 - d. A student is in college.
 - e. A person is a new Xian.
 - f. Everyone is in worship (Col. 3:16).
- C. The deceitful 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 SHOW 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/responsibilities shows a lack of real faith.
- B. Another sign of unbelief is the failure to become a teacher of the word of God (Heb. 5:12):
 1. Not everyone can effectively teach a class, but we can teach and encourage friends and those we come in contact with.
 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 command (Lk. 22:19).
 - a. The Lord said to eat the Lord's Supper in His memory.
 - b. 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."

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.