



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Egypt to Canaan

Rebellion and Complacency (Deuteronomy 1:1–4:43)

Deuteronomy begins with a speech by Moses recounting the major events in Israel's recent history. Moses draws lessons from these events and exhorts Israel to respond to God's faithfulness by obeying him in trust.

Deuteronomy 4:40, *Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you for all time.*

Violating trust in God by rebellion and complacency.

Israel Refuses to Enter the Promised Land.
Deuteronomy 1:19-45.

In the wilderness, the people's fear leads to a failure to trust God. As a result, they rebel against God's plan for them to enter the land he promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Deuteronomy 1:7-8, *Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites; go to all the neighbouring peoples in the Arabah, in the mountains, in the western foothills, in the Negev and along the coast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates.*⁸ *See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land the Lord swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them.”*

God had brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt, given the law at Mount Horeb (Sinai), and brought the people swiftly to the borders of the promised land.

Deuteronomy 1:19-20, *Then, as the Lord our God commanded us, we set out from Horeb and went toward the hill country of the Amorites through all that vast and dreadful wilderness that you have seen, and so we reached Kadesh Barnea.*²⁰ *Then I said to you, “You have reached the hill country of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is giving us.*

According to the book of Numbers, God asks Moses to send out spies to survey the land he is giving to the Israelites, and Moses obeys (**Numbers 13:1-3**).

But other Israelites use this reconnaissance mission as a chance to disobey God. They ask Moses to send out spies so they can stall the military action that God commanded.

When the spies return with a favourable report, the Israelites still refuse to go.



Deuteronomy 1:26, *But you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God.*

Deuteronomy 1:28, *Where can we go? Our brothers have made our hearts melt in fear. They say, 'The people are stronger and taller than we are; the cities are large, with walls up to the sky. We even saw the Anakites there.'*

They tell Moses, adding that "our hearts melt".

Even though Moses assures the people that God will fight for them just as he did in Egypt, they do not trust God to fulfil his promises.

Deuteronomy 1:29-33, *Then I said to you, “Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them. ³⁰The Lord your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, ³¹and in the wilderness. There you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place.” ³²In spite of this, you did not trust in the Lord your God, ³³who went ahead of you on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day, to search out places for you to camp and to show you the way you should go.*

Fear leads to disobedience which leads to severe punishment.

Because of this disobedience, the Israelites living at the time are barred from entering the promised land.

Deuteronomy 1:35-36, *“No one from this evil generation shall see the good land I swore to give your ancestors, ³⁶except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give him and his descendants the land he set his feet on, because he followed the Lord wholeheartedly.”*

The only exceptions are Caleb and Joshua, the only members of the scouting expedition who encouraged the Israelites to obey God's command.

Numbers 13:30, *Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."*

Moses himself is barred from entering the land due to a different act of disobedience.

In **Numbers 20:2-12** Moses pleads to God for a water source, and God tells Moses to command a rock to become a spring.

Instead, Moses strikes the rock twice with his staff. Had Moses spoken to the rock, as God commanded, the resulting miracle might have satisfied both the Israelite's physical thirst as well as their need to believe that God was taking care of them. Instead, when Moses strikes the rock as if to break it open, the opportune moment passes.

Like the Israelites in **Deuteronomy 1:19-45**, Moses is punished for his lack of faith which underlines his disobedience.

Numbers 20:12, *But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honour me as*

holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.”

When the Israelites realize that they have condemned themselves to a lifetime of eking out an existence in the desert instead of enjoying the "good land" God had prepared for them, they make their own plans to attack the Amorites.

Deuteronomy 1:42, *But the Lord said to me, “Tell them, ‘Do not go up and fight, because I will not be with you. You will be defeated by your enemies.’”*

A lack of trust in God's promises leads Israel to miss the blessings he had in store for them.



When we know what is right, but are tempted to violate it, trust in God is all we must keep us in God's ways.

If even Moses failed to trust God completely, can we really imagine that we will succeed?

Instead, it is a matter of God's grace. We can pray for God's Spirit to strengthen us when we stand for what is right, and we can ask for God's forgiveness when we fall. Like Moses and the people of Israel, failure to trust God can have serious consequences in life, but our failure is ultimately redeemed by God's grace.

When Success Leads to Complacency

Deuteronomy 4:25-40

In the wilderness, Israel's abandon of trust in God arises not only from fear, but also from success.

At this point in his first speech, Moses is describing the prosperity that awaits the new generation about to enter the Promised Land.

Moses points out that success is likely to breed a spiritual complacency far more dangerous than failure.

Deuteronomy 4:25-26, *After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time—if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the Lord your God and arousing his anger, ²⁶I call*

the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed.

We will come to idolatry in **Deuteronomy 5:8**, but the point here is the spiritual danger caused by complacency.

In the wake of success, people cease fearing God and begin to believe success is a birth right.



Instead of gratitude, we forge a sense of entitlement. The success for which we strive is not wrong, but it is a moral danger.

The truth is that the success we achieve is mixed from a pinch of skill and hard work, combined with a heaping of fortunate circumstances and the common grace of God.

We cannot provide for our own wants, desires, and security. Success is not permanent. It does not truly satisfy.

A dramatic illustration of this truth is found in the life of King Uzziah.

2 Chronicles 26:15-16, *In Jerusalem he made devices invented for use on the towers and on the corner defenses so that soldiers could shoot arrows and hurl large stones from the walls. His fame spread far and wide, for he was greatly helped until he became powerful. ¹⁶But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the Lord his God, and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.*

Only in God can we find true security and satisfaction.

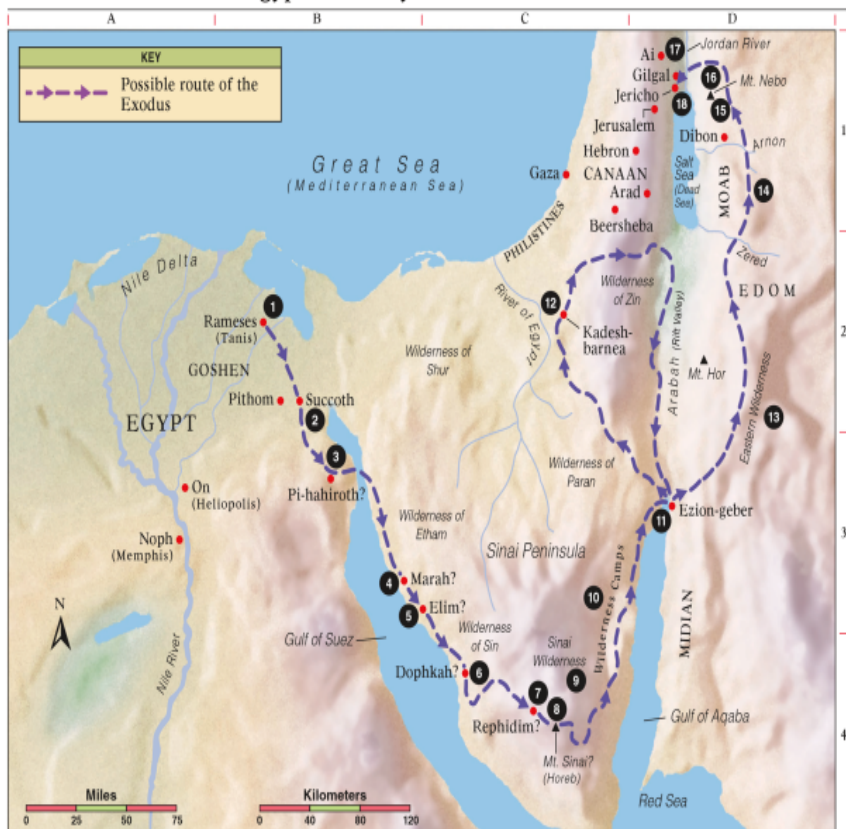
Psalms 17:15, *As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.*

It may be surprising that the result of complacency is not atheism but idolatry.

Moses foresees that if the people abandon the Lord, they will not become spiritual free agents. They will bind themselves to objects of wood and stone that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.

Deuteronomy 4:28, *There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell.*

2. Israel's Exodus from Egypt and Entry into Canaan



1. Rameses Israel was thrust out of Egypt (Ex. 12; Num. 33:5).
2. Succoth After the Hebrews left this first campsite, the Lord attended them in a cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:20–22).

3. Pi-hahiroth Israel passed through the Red Sea (Ex. 14; Num. 33:8).
4. Marah The Lord healed the waters of Marah (Ex. 15:23–26).
5. Elim Israel camped by 12 springs (Ex. 15:27).
6. Wilderness of Sin The Lord sent manna and quail to feed Israel (Ex. 16).
7. Rephidim Israel fought with Amalek (Ex. 17:8–16).
8. Mount Sinai (Mount Horeb or Jebel Musa) The Lord revealed the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19–20).
9. Sinai Wilderness Israel constructed the tabernacle (Ex. 25–30).
10. Wilderness Camps Seventy elders were called to help Moses govern the people (Num. 11:16–17).
11. Ezion-geber Israel passed through the lands of Esau and Ammon in peace (Deut. 2).

12. Kadesh-barnea Moses sent spies into the promised land; Israel rebelled and failed to enter the land; Kadesh served as the main camp of Israel for many years (Num. 13:1–3, 17–33; 14; 32:8; Deut. 2:14).
13. Eastern Wilderness Israel avoided conflict with Edom and Moab (Num. 20:14–21; 22–24).
14. Arnon River Israel destroyed the Amorites who fought against them (Deut. 2:24–37).
15. Mount Nebo Moses viewed the promised land (Deut. 34:1–4). Moses delivered his last three sermons (Deut. 1–32).
16. Plains of Moab The Lord told Israel to divide the land and dispossess the inhabitants (Num. 33:50–56).
17. Jordan River Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry ground. Near Gilgal, stones from the bottom of the Jordan River were placed as a monument of Jordan's waters being divided (Josh. 3:1–5:1).
18. Jericho The children of Israel captured and destroyed the city (Josh. 6).

Hebrews 3:7-19,

The book of Hebrews was written to a Jewish community which had been visited by certain first apostles and prophets. Preaching of those apostles and prophets had heard the gospel.

Some had believed unto salvation.

Others had believed but had not committed themselves.

They were hanging on the edge of believing, but weren't willing to commit themselves, because of the fear of persecution and the love of their own sin.

This is a critical passage by which the Holy Spirit wants to give a great big supernatural shove to anybody hanging on the edge of faith in Jesus Christ and hasn't yet committed himself to that faith.

There are many people who intellectually have responded to the gospel. They believe it, but they have never committed themselves to that faith.

God does not think you have done Him a favour just because you like His gospel. If you hear the gospel, know it intellectually, but never commit your heart to it, then the retribution and the judgement of God on you will be much

more serious than that on those who barely even heard the content of the gospel.

To whom much is given much is required.

Hebrews 3:7-19 are the Holy Spirit's warning to the one who knows the gospel, the truth, but because of the love of sin and the fear of persecution or whatever it maybe, have not committed himself to the truth that he knows is real.

If there is a fire in a hotel and you are on the 10th floor, and the firemen below are yelling, "Jump!" because there is a net available.

You look out the window and you just can't figure out whether you ought to trust yourself to those firemen. But the fire is moving through the apartment, and you don't have a lot of choice.

But rather than commit yourself to the trust of those firemen and jump out, you are concerned with being able to hang onto your possessions, so you grab them, hoping you can make it by running back in and going down the stairs, and you are consumed in the fire.

Holy Spirit saying at the top of His voice, "Jump!"

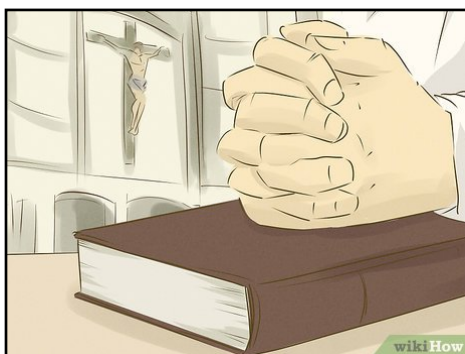
This is the Spirit of God moving on those hearts and saying to those who know the truth, but yet because of their love of

their possessions or their own ability and they find out that there is no escape unless you jump in total faith committing yourself to Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews has a great fear for these Jews because they have heard the gospel.

They have heard it right from the mouths of the apostles and the prophets, but because of the love of sin, the fear of persecution, they would shrink back. They would fall away from an initial profession of faith or an initial statement of confidence in Christ. They would begin to fall back.

They are never willing to throw their whole weight on Jesus, and as a result of that they become what the Bible defines classically as an apostate.



An apostate is an individual who knowing the truth wilfully rejects it and falls back.

The Holy Spirit uses an Old Testament account, because He knows He's talking to Jews.

He wants to talk to them out of their own context.

Hebrews 3:1-6, is the proof that Jesus is greater than Moses.

The whole book of Hebrews, the writer is endeavouring to present Jesus better than everything else. Jesus is the mediator of a new and better covenant than the old.

If He is, He must be better than all the people who went with the old covenant.

- ✓ He is got to be better than the old prophets.
- ✓ He is even got to be better than the angels who mediated the old covenant.
- ✓ He is got to be better than Moses.
- ✓ He is got to be better than Joshua.
- ✓ He is got to be better than Aaron.
- ✓ He is got to be better than that whole group of people.

The Hebrews using an illustration right out of the experience of Moses.

The illustration is real.

The invitation: "Take heed."

The instruction: "Exhort one another daily."

The issue: unbelief.

The illustration, the invitation, the instruction, and the issue.

Illustration.

Many sermons begin with the backdrop or the illustration, then comes the invitation and the instruction that's the format the Holy Spirit chooses here.

The Holy Spirit chooses to pick from the history of Israel during the time of Moses. But His quote comes from the time of David because David is quoting about the time of Moses.

David chose this statement 1,000 years before, and now this time the Holy Spirit makes the very same point.

The backdrop.

David in **Psalm 95:7-11** refers to Israel in the wilderness and what went on in the wilderness.

Psalm 95 reflects on Israel's disobedience and rejection of Moses in the Exodus wanderings.

Israel's in the land of Egypt, in captivity. They have been there 400 years making bricks. Pharaoh made them make bricks with no straw, and the straw was what held them together. They were oppressed, they were beaten, and so God brought in plagues.

They finally ended with the death of the first born a great miracle.

Moses gathered them all together and he marched them out of that place, and Pharaoh said, “Get out of here is right! I can’t take the plagues any longer.”

They moved out and God parted the Red Sea parted. The children of Israel walked across on dry land, and Pharaoh marched his whole army in there, and the Red Sea closed on them.

God was working miracles in Israel – miracle after miracle.

They got in the wilderness, and immediately they didn’t believe God. That is the classic illustration of unbelief in the face of overwhelming evidence.

God had revealed Himself.

They knew how He had revealed Himself.

They knew the truth of His revelation.

They saw the disclosure and the proof of it, yet they did not believe.

They would not commit themselves to faith in God.



So, they as a result had to wandered for 38 years in circle in the same little area because of their unbelief.

It becomes a picture for what David says in Psalm 95 as he warns in his days, David was warning 1,000 years before Hebrews was written by saying, “Now people, don’t you harden your heart against God like Israel did in the wilderness.”

Now the writer of Hebrews is saying, “Now you Hebrews, living when I am writing, don’t you do what David warned the people not to do in his day, which the people in Moses’ day had done.”

Things haven’t changed a lot, today I can stand up in front of you and say, “what I am going to say to you is, ‘Don’t do today what the writer of Hebrews told the Hebrews not to do because David told the Hebrews not to do it, because Moses said they did it.’”

So, we see the pattern traces itself all the way along.

Hebrews 3:7-12, *So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, ⁹where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did. ¹⁰That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.’ ¹¹So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’ ” ¹²See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.*



The Holy Spirit here says to these Hebrews who are on the edge of decision but have never made that commitment.

They continued not to believe God. Don't do that.

In Psalm 95, who's talking?

David.

V 7, *So, as the Holy Spirit says:*

Inspiration is the Holy Spirit speaking through the mouth of God's agency. What David said was not his own opinion.

When David opened his mouth, the Holy Spirit spoke. That's divine inspiration. When the Bible is written and you open its pages and you read a verse, those are not the choice of men, those are words of the Spirit of God who is the author of the Scripture.

2 Peter 1:21, *For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit wrote every word of Scripture.

V 7-8, *So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, ^s do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,*

The same is used in **V 7, 13, 15 and 4:7**.

He uses it repeatedly the word "today."

It's the word of urgency.

If you know the truth of Jesus Christ, if you know the Gospel of Jesus Christ, don't do what Israel did when they knew God's truth, when they saw God's revelation. Don't harden your heart. So foolish.

2 Corinthians 6:2, *For he says, "In the time of my favour I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation.*

Moody asking people to go home and decide and then the Chicago great fire.

Today signifies the present time of grace.

Men today as in the time of the Hebrews, as in the time of David, as in the time of Moses had the privilege of hearing God's voice as God spoke.

Hearing God is a matter of your own will. But as always there is that possibility of hardening the heart as Israel did and seeing the sad results.

1 Timothy 4:2, *Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.*

You can harden yourself against the gospel.

The today only lasts as long as your conscience is sensitive to the Spirit of God. Then today is over, it's tomorrow and it's too late. That's what He's saying.

Today if you will hear God's voice, don't harden your heart. Your heart gets harder every time you say no to Jesus Christ when you know the truth.

Proverbs 21:29, *A wicked man hardens his face, But as for the upright, he establishes his way.*

People come to church for various reasons. Some have come because of the compulsion of their loved ones. But Do not harden your heart.

V 8 specific illustration.

Exodus 17:1-2, *Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. ²Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?"*

This was inevitably what they kept doing.

They never would believe God, so they kept saying, "God, just do some more things, so we can know you are for real."

God said, "I am sick and tired of being on trial by you!"

Exodus 17:3-7, *And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"* ⁴*So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"* ⁵*And the Lord said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go.* ⁶*Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink."* *And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.* ⁷*So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"*

He hit that water and water gushed out.

He called the name of the place Massah," - which means trial or tested.

Meribah, which means striving.

They tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'" That's the stupidest thing you could ever test God on at this point.

God has just released them from Egypt by fantastic miracles, fantastic plagues that he brought, the opening of the Red Sea, manna in the morning, every day, the cloud, the whole thing

leading them through the wilderness as a people, and now they say, “Is God among us?”



Ridiculous!

That is the character of unbelief, it never has enough proof.

They had failed to believe God’s promise. God had given them enough evidence to convince anybody ten times over. But they loved their sin, they loved their selfishness, they loved their own plans and their own ideas, and they would not put themselves in God’s hands.

Don’t be like that.

Don’t be that person that hangs around all these years, months, days, and you have seen what He has done, and you never commit yourself to it.

You keep asking for more evidence!

You don’t need more evidence.

You are just unwilling to commit yourself to Christ because you love your sin.

That’s the whole thing. So, they kept on testing God.

The classic illustration of this is **Numbers 14**.

When the majority of spies brought back to **Kadesh-Barnea** to spy out the land. They all come back and said.

Numbers 13:33, *There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."*

Because they brought back an evil report, God said they will not enter the promise land.

Numbers 14:20-24, *Then the Lord said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; ²¹but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord— ²²because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, ²³they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. ²⁴But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.*

Only two of them Joshua and Caleb, out of that whole generation that entered the Promised Land were those two, because they believed God.

God says that they had enough evidence to believe that I could lead them into that land and lead them into a land of glory and milk and honey. But they wouldn't believe me, so they are not going to see that land.

My friends, that's when today is over.

You can stand on the verge of receiving Jesus Christ so long, and you can flirt with the idea, and you can say, "God, prove it some more. I am not too sure and ready."

One day God's just going to say, "You have had enough evidence. From now on it's over. It's not today, it's tomorrow. You shall not see My Promised Land."

That is why the Bible says, "Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

Deuteronomy 2:14, *"Until all the generation of the men of war were consumed from the midst of the earth, they wandered."*

They wandered for 38 years until that whole generation died out because of the depth of unbelief. It's a sad thing.

They thought they needed to test God. They didn't. All for 38 years, they murmured and murmured.

Deuteronomy 9:7, *“Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord.*

The whole time they rebelled.

They tempted God. They kept saying, “God, if you are for real do another trick.”

They tested Him. It was only a cop out, because they really weren’t willing to give up their sin. They saw 40 years of proof.
V 9. They saw 40 years of proof.

There may be somebody sitting in this place tonight who for 40 years has heard the gospel. God help you if that’s true and you have never received Jesus Christ. God help you if you have heard it four times and never received Him.

What a warning for all men.

If the evidence was into Israel in that day, the evidence is into us in this day that Jesus Christ is Lord, is it not?

The evidence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, died on the cross, rose again the third day, lives and saves men. The evidence is in. The evidence is secure.

Christ has manifested God, the only begotten Son of the Father. He has displayed His love.

He has displayed His grace.

He sent the Holy Spirit.

We don't need any human Moses. We have the third person of the Trinity to reveal Christ on top of all historical evidence.

Unbelief in the face of such overwhelming evidence is tragic indeed.

These Hebrews who know the gospel and have even made an intellectual assent to the gospel, "Don't harden your hearts."

It's so easy to grow cold and to grow insensitive to what God is trying to do in your life.

V 10, *That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.'*

God is angry with sin.

I was grieved, vexed, disturbed, aggravated, and determined to punish them.

They do always err in their heart, and they have not known My ways.

God says, "I got aggravated. They kept erring in their heart. They kept it up. They kept it up. They kept it up. They kept it up."

- ✓ God was disgusted with them.
- ✓ God was willing to spew them out.
- ✓ God rejected them.
- ✓ God abhorred them.
- ✓ God repudiated them.

Why?

Because they always err in their heart, and they have not known My ways.

They erred in their hearts.

Sin deceives!

They thought they could go their own way and do their own thing their own way and get there, and they couldn't.

- Sin calls darkness as light.
- Sin calls bitter as sweet.
- Sin calls bondage as liberty.
- Sin calls wrong as right.

Sin deceives, and it deceives in the heart.

It's the heart that's the whole problem!

V 10, *‘Their hearts are always going astray,*



This whole generation that died off were just totally evil. They always erred. They just didn't have faith. Radical and habitual evil.

These are people who constantly, habitually follow evil.

Deuteronomy 9:24, *You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.*

But he says, “Don't harden your heart and make the fatal mistake of being deceived by sin, grieving God and being rejected by Him.”

V 11, *So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’*

Now the word “rest” here refers in the illustration to Canaan, the land of milk and honey, the Promised Land.

The word rest implies resting from wandering and toil. God was leading them to the Promised Land, and because they had sinned and continued to be disbelieving, He said, “That whole generation will die and their children only will go into the land, for they have believed. This whole crowd will die in the wilderness. They will never enter into My rest.”

God swore it in His anger. When God makes an oath with Himself, it’s a binding oath.

The patience of God was exhausted.

The sentence He pronounced against them was that they could not enter to Canaan. The whole generation from the book of Exodus and the book of Deuteronomy died in the wilderness. It’s a sad thing!

Even the generation that did enter into the land never really knew rest in the true sense.

They got in there and God said, “The first thing I want you do is wipe out the Canaanites.”

The Canaanites needed to be wiped out. They were godless, unbelievable people. God was going to use Israel as a tool of judgement.

The Canaanites were so pagan that they buried live babies in jars in the walls of every building they built. They were such a gross, immoral, and godless people that God wanted them wiped off the face of the earth in a judicial act whereby He was going to use Israel as His instrument of judgement.

But instead of Israel wiping out the Canaanites, they intermarried with them, so consequently they never knew the fullness of the rest that God had for them.

By successive Gentile empires until the Roman era. They were scattered over all the earth in 70 A.D. Now in our day God is gathering them again for the kingdom, and Israel's final rest comes in that kingdom. When Jesus comes, He will set up His kingdom and that will be rest.

How God treats those who know the truth, but harden their hearts?

On the basis of that illustration here is the invitation.

V 12, See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

Having taken an illustration from thousands of years ago, He now says, you look at your own hearts.



Do you know the truth?

Do you know the truth of Jesus Christ?

In love I say to you, don't allow yourself to harden your heart so that you have an unbelieving heart, and you wind up departing from the living God.

This is a warning against rejecting the knowledge of the truth.

The judgement of the wilderness days fell on those who rejected God's Word through Moses.

The warning here is on those who reject God's Word in Christ.

You have come right up to the edge.

Maybe you have got religious feelings.

Maybe you even like Jesus Christ.

Maybe you are even open to the whole thing, but you have never committed yourself, and you decide you can't take the pressure, you can't take the persecution, you don't want to give up your sin, you turn around and walk away.

You have departed from the living God.

An evil heart of unbelief.

Do you know what is the greatest evil in the world?

Unbelief.

Failure to believe God. The greatest sin you can ever commit.

You thought murder?

No, the greatest sin you can ever commit is that of unbelief, for that locks you out of God's blessing forever, an evil heart of unbelief.

Here are these non-Christians on the verge of faith.

Maybe some of them professing to be Christians. They had never admitted to being actively aggressively against Christ, but they are. They are.

No matter how close you are to Jesus Christ, if you never come to Him, you have an evil heart of unbelief. Your punishment

will be all the surer punishment because you have departed from what you knew to be the living God.

Once you have understood the gospel in its fullness and you have said no to Jesus Christ and moved backwards, you will never get any higher than you were before.

Apostate!

You have become an apostate.

The Holy Spirit say to us, “Respond to Jesus while the Spirit still warms your heart, while your heart is still sensitive, and while it is soft, respond to His sweet love and his call of Grace.”

You wait too long, and you find your heart getting hard, and you have an evil heart of unbelief. Then it says you are literally departing to stand apart from. You end up standing apart from God, apostate and doomed.

“Respond today.”



There's the invitation. Simple. If you have heard the gospel and you know the gospel, I plead with you as did the writers of Hebrews.

Today, receive Christ before your heart grows cold and unbelieving, and you wind up forever departing from the living God.

He is a living God.

To walk away from Christ is not just to reject a form or a creed. It's to walk away from the living God.

Listen to the words of Solomon.

Proverbs 29:1, *He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck,
Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

To harden yourself against God is to depart from the living God and to bring upon yourself judgement without escape.

I say to you simply today as the Holy Spirit says, *So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts"*