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Sermon Notes

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## **A Warning from Israel's History**

**Hebrews 3:15-19**

Perhaps in the New Year, someone inquiring into Christianity will make a New Year's Resolution to read through the Bible this year for the first time. Maybe they are not even close to the point of trusting in Christ as their Savior, but they have always been intrigued by the most famous and significant book in human experience... so on January 1, they will sit down and begin to read.

As they do, the familiar accounts at the beginning of Genesis will flow through their minds, and they will connect with some of those familiar themes: creation, the Garden of Eden, the tree, the temptation with the serpent, Cain and Abel, etc. But soon after those familiar stories, the explorer will bump into some unfamiliar territory—a genealogies, stories of tent-dwelling nomads whose wealth is counted in sheep and goats, squabbles over wells and the rights to drink water from them; an account of one man dickering with a village over the rights to buy a cave in which to bury his dead wife... page after page of ANCIENT HISTORY. If he perseveres, this sense will only get stronger... he will read accounts of battles between nations that don't even exist anymore; he will read of minor kings whose names would have been forgotten long ago if they'd not been immortalized in the pages of the Bible. Prophets will rise up and talk for page after page about nations and tribes, their sins and their judgments... all of it is screaming in his ear: HOW IN THE WORLD DOES THIS RELATE TO MY LIFE? He will put the Bible down, drink his coffee, get into his Accura and drive to an office where he will process someone's application for a mortgage. He will use the internet, call people on his Blackberry, set up a virtual meeting by Skype with some potential investors; he will microwave his lunch, eat it quickly while visiting the CNN Money website to keep up with the financial picture; he will spend his day using the familiar electronic technology of our age. When he gets home, he will pick up the Bible with a sigh, and read some more about people from two to four thousand years ago, whose lifestyle seems as relevant to his as would be that of some stone-age tribe in the outback of Australia.

At some point, the question may cross his mind: if the Bible really is the word of God, God's final word to the human race, WHY DID HE FILL IT WITH SO MUCH ANCIENT HISTORY? What does this history have to do with ME, 21<sup>st</sup> century ME?

Harvard Professor George Santayana once famously said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Professor Santayana seemed convinced of the power of the past to shape and mold the present, and warned that to fail to learn the lessons of the past is dangerous.

What is history? A simple definition could be a retelling of past events... as Joe Webb from Dragnet used to say, simply “just the facts, ma’am” BUT there are so many facts to tell that every retelling is SELECTIVE, choosing the most relevant facts to achieve a certain purpose.

So every history has a PURPOSE... a retelling has a REASON why... we are searching for SIGNIFICANCE to what happened... why it happened, what it tells us about today.

It doesn't take much reading in the Bible to realize that it is overwhelmingly a book of HISTORY... even the poetry (Psalms) are celebrating the acts of God in history. There are two basic premises I take to the Bible every time I read it:

- 1) God never changes; so what the Bible teaches me about the character of God four thousand years ago is STILL TRUE TODAY
- 2) Human beings don't really change either... from generation to generation, we are dealing with the same basic problems: our pride, our lusts, our ambitions, our materialism, our family squabbles, our health, our sickness, our birth, our death. We may be wearing different clothes, listening to different music, using different technology... but inside, we're no different men and women than the ones whose lives are recorded in the pages of Scripture

God has lavished on the human race an immense gift in the Bible: a perfect history book of His dealings with sinful human beings generation after generation. The events of history in the book are written to HELP US TODAY as we live our lives... their examples in the past break into two basic categories:

- 1) Positive examples, in which men and women do the RIGHT THINGS and are blessed by God in some specific ways
- 2) Negative examples, in which men and women do the WRONG THINGS and experience curses from God and difficulties and judgments as a result

The positive examples are written for us to FOLLOW that we may also be blessed; they are ENCOURAGEMENTS

The negative examples are written for us to AVOID that we may not be cursed or judged as those people were; they are WARNINGS

When we read of Cain's refusal to worship God in the prescribed way, his jealousy of his brother Abel, the warning by God about imminent sin, Cain's murder of Abel and his subsequent judgment by God... it is CLEAR that God wants us to read it and BEWARE

When we read of Noah's faithfulness in obeying ALL of God's commands to the letter, building an ark to save his family, it is clear that God wants us to drink in this positive example and IMITATE NOAH'S FAITH

In the passage today, we return to Hebrews 3, to the author's extended meditation on King David's warning in Psalm 95:

***Hebrews 3:7-11 "Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, <sup>9</sup> where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. <sup>10</sup> That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' <sup>11</sup> So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'"***

As we have already seen, there is a telescoping context here: there is OUR context as 21<sup>st</sup> century readers of the book of Hebrews—what this warning says to us; there is the context of the original first century readers of the book of Hebrews around A.D. 62 or so, the people to whom the book was originally addressed; then there is the context of King David around 1000 B.C. when he wrote Psalm 95; then finally, there is the context of the Jews during the Exodus around 1445 B.C.

The basic concept of Hebrews 3:15-19 is LEARN FROM THE SINS OF THE PAST and DON'T REPEAT THEM!!!

***Hebrews 3:15-19 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." <sup>16</sup> Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? <sup>17</sup> And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? <sup>18</sup> And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.***

And what lesson were the Jewish Christians to learn? Remember that the Letter to the Hebrews was written to Jewish people who had made an outward profession of faith in Christ and testified to it by water baptism, but who were now under immense pressure to stop following Christ and revert to Old Covenant Judaism. The author has already given them a sense of the greatness of Jesus in Hebrews 1, how He is the great Captain of our salvation in Hebrews 2, how He is greater than Moses in Hebrews 3. In the midst of all this, he turns to Psalm 95 to get a lesson from history...

And what was that lesson? IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO START THE JOURNEY TO THE PROMISED LAND... YOU HAVE TO FINISH IT... just being with God's people as they go on Exodus and journey to the Promised Land is not enough... you have to finish the journey

And the only way you can finish the journey is to KEEP BELIEVING in Jesus and KEEP OBEYING His commands

The Jews of the Exodus were cursed by God because of their unbelief leading to disobedience

So also we are in danger... if we develop a sinful heart of unbelief and refuse to obey the gospel, we also will not enter God's perfect rest in heaven

## I. Warned by Repetition: Psalm 95 Again

***Hebrews 3:15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."***

### A. King David and Psalm 95

1. The author to the Hebrews turns to Psalm 95... Hebrews 3-4 an extended meditation on that one brief passage of Scripture
2. Psalm 95 written by King David five centuries after the Exodus under Moses
3. David, reflecting on Jewish history, gives the people of his own generation a timeless lesson in faith and obedience

***Psalm 95:7-11 Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, <sup>9</sup> where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did. <sup>10</sup> For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways." <sup>11</sup> So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest."***

### B. The Jewish Rebellion During the Exodus

1. The backdrop to Psalm 95 AND Hebrews 3 is the Jewish history of unbelief and rebellion during the time of the Exodus
2. God sent Moses to rescue the Jews from bondage in Egypt and to fulfill his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
3. The Jews consistently resisted Moses, murmured against him, and followed their idolatrous hearts, worshiping the gods they'd worshiped in Egypt
4. They tested God at Massah and Meribah... complaining against God and Moses, tested God, saying "Is God really among us"... they complained about having no water, they complained about having no bread... they refused to believe in Him despite the miracles they'd already seen in Egypt and at the Red Sea crossing
  - a. Massah = testing
  - b. Meribah = quarreling
5. After they received the Ten Commandments, they immediately broke those commandments and made for themselves an idol in the form of a golden

calf... they said "Here are your gods, O Israel, that brought you out of bondage in Egypt"... they had a riotous orgy, laughing, dancing, eating, committing sexual immorality, and bowing down to a golden calf

6. But the worst rebellion of all occurred when the time came to enter the Promised Land itself and conquer it from the Canaanites...
  - a. Moses had sent twelve spies into the land to spy it out
  - b. These men had travelled through the land and seen its luxurious fruitfulness... they carried an immense cluster of grapes that was so heavy they had to carry it on a pole between two men
  - c. They spied out the land for forty days... and saw everything they needed to see
  - d. BUT when they came back, ten of the twelve spies (Joshua and Caleb excepted) spoke out of fear and unbelief

***Numbers 13:31-33 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." <sup>32</sup> And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. <sup>33</sup> We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."***

- e. The people wept aloud and grumbled against Moses and made wicked statements:

***Numbers 14:2-4 All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! <sup>3</sup> Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" <sup>4</sup> And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."***

- f. Joshua, Caleb and Moses all pleaded with the people to trust God and believe in Him... they pleaded with their fellow Israelites to look to the God who had done all these mighty things in bringing them this far
- g. BUT the wicked nation—that unbelieving generation REFUSED to believe in God or in His messengers... they talked openly of stoning Moses, Joshua, and Caleb

7. THEN the Lord spoke

- a. At first, he threatened to wipe the Israelites off the face of the earth for their unbelief and to make a nation out of Moses
- b. Moses interceded and stopped that by pleading that God would lose His glory in the face of the Egyptians
- c. So God made this terrifying statement

***Numbers 14:20-23 The LORD replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked. <sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth, <sup>22</sup> not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times-- <sup>23</sup> not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it. <sup>24</sup> But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.***

- d. He singled out Caleb for his faith
- e. Notice how God speaks of how the Israelites had tested God TEN TIMES... this was a regular pattern, not a freak accident

Application:

What is the regular pattern of YOUR life as a Christian? There are NO SINLESS CHRISTIANS... but do you make it a regular pattern of testing God and quarreling against His holy laws?

- f. Then he commanded the Jews to begin their death march through the desert... a forty year trial in the desert until the rising generation would be replaced by their children

***Numbers 14:28-35 So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very things I heard you say: <sup>29</sup> In this desert your bodies will fall-- every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. <sup>30</sup> Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. <sup>31</sup> As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. <sup>32</sup> But you-- your bodies will fall in this desert. <sup>33</sup> Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. <sup>34</sup> For forty years-- one year for each of the forty days you explored the land-- you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.' <sup>35</sup> I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert; here they will die."***

8. This is the TRAGIC HISTORY of the Jewish rebellion... their refusal to trust God and to enter the Promised Land... their bodies ended up scattered in the desert

9. They are a WARNING to us Christians

#### C. Hebrews 3-4: Extended Meditation on the Lessons of Scripture and History

1. The Author to the Hebrews is in effect saying, "If you turn your back on Jesus and seek to return to Old Covenant Judaism, you are NO DIFFERENT than that wicked generation of your ancestors was! No different!!"

2. He is using Psalm 95 to teach them the lessons of history... look what happened to that generation of rebels

3. This is the negative persuasion mode... a severe warning to a tempted people not to cave in through unbelief to fear

#### D. Repetition Necessary

1. For the second time... this central warning

2. The repetition makes it plain: this is the vital lesson from the Scripture

***Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.***

***2 Peter 1:12-13 So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. <sup>13</sup> I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body***

BUT... there comes a time when the same thing has been said enough, and it is time to learn the lesson and put it into practice

#### E. God is STILL Speaking... We STILL Must Listen

1. Verse 15 introduces the same quote again

***Hebrews 3:15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."***

2. A better translation might be

***"While it is said, 'Today if you hear his voice...'"***

3. In effect, the author is saying "God is still speaking... we still must listen to His voice... the Spirit is still warning us about the lessons of history!!"

#### F. The Deadly Chain the Author is Seeking to Break

1. God speaks
2. Sin deceives
3. Sin hardens their hearts
4. Sinners disbelieve the promise of God
5. Disbelief results in disobedience
6. Disobedience results in the curse of God

#### G. Scripture's Dual Approach: Goodness and Severity

1. Goodness: with a sweet appeal, enticing us to see the benefits of obedience
2. Severity: with a potent warning, threatening the dire circumstances if we disobey
3. Simply put: God puts life and death, heaven and hell in front of us in Scripture
4. This passage: a severe warning based on Israel's history

#### H. Parallel Teaching in 1 Corinthians 10

***1 Corinthians 10:1-12 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. <sup>2</sup> They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. <sup>3</sup> They all ate the same spiritual food <sup>4</sup> and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. <sup>6</sup> ¶ Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. <sup>7</sup> Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." <sup>8</sup> We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did-- and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. <sup>9</sup> We should not test the Lord, as some of them did-- and were killed by snakes. <sup>10</sup> And do not grumble, as some of them did-- and were killed by the destroying angel. <sup>11</sup> These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. <sup>12</sup> So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!***

1. Lesson in both passages: learn from Israel's history...
2. Just because you are part of a church does not mean you're going to heaven
3. The whole generation of Jews that was rescued from Egypt perished in the desert



## II. Warned by History: God's Severity to Israel

### A. Sin's Rebellion is Exceedingly Provocative to God

***NASB Hebrews 3:15 while it is said, "Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked me."***

1. The Greek word has as its roots the concept of bitterness
2. The unbelief and rebellion of God's people is exceedingly bitter to God, like a bitter taste in his mouth

Illus. Anti-malarial medicine on mission trip to Kenya... chloroquin... extremely water-soluble and extremely bitter... it would melt as soon as it touched my tongue and would turn my whole mouth bitter; one time I will not soon forget, a pill got lodged between my cheek and my rear molars and melted entirely in my mouth; my mouth was flooded with the quinine taste, and I couldn't get rid of that flavor for the rest of the day

So it is with our sins in God's perspective... exceedingly bitter

3. How bitter was it to God to see their unbelief after all the way God had protected them and carried them, fed them and fought for them... and STILL they didn't trust Him... THE MOST BITTER PILL IN GOD'S MOUTH
4. God was then HIGHLY MOTIVATED to be severe to Israel

### B. Look at God's Response to their Refusal to Enter the Promised Land

***Hebrews 3:10 I was angry with that generation, and I said 'Their hearts are always going astray and they have not known my ways'***

***Hebrews 3:11 So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'"***

***Hebrews 3:17 he was angry for forty years***

***Hebrews 3:18 God [swore]that they would never enter his rest***

### C. God's Forty Year History Lesson for the Jewish Nation

***Hebrews 3:9 your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did.***

1. "for forty years saw what I did..."
2. What did God do for forty years?
3. Positively: He led them every step of their journey; He provided for them day after day with manna and miraculous water in the desert... he cared for their clothes as well

***Deuteronomy 8:2-4 Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. <sup>3</sup> He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years.***

4. BUT Negatively... he KILLED OFF one person after another
5. For forty years they saw the goodness AND the severity of God; those were forty years they could have been living in the Promised Land... but instead, their bodies were scattered in the desert
6. Hebrews 3 expression quite graphic

***<sup>KJV</sup> Hebrews 3:17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?***

***<sup>NAU</sup> Numbers 14:29 your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.***

7. So also the 1 Corinthians 10 verses as well

***1 Corinthians 10:8-10 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did-- and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. <sup>9</sup> We should not test the Lord, as some of them did-- and were killed by snakes. <sup>10</sup> And do not grumble, as some of them did-- and were killed by the destroying angel.***

8. Calculating the death rate:

According to Numbers 1, the census of the Israelites took place in the second years after they had left Egypt... total number of men twenty years of age and older = 603,550

If you double that number (assuming an equal number of women that age, and assuming the women of that generation were under the same judgment as the men), and if you divide that total by the number of days the Jews wandered in the wilderness during those years, you will find that there were nearly NINETY DEATHS PER DAY as a consequence of God's wrath and curse on that nation

**Crude death rate:** (total number of deaths per year per 1000 people). As of July 2009 the crude death rate for the whole world is about 8.37 per 1000 per year... if you do the math, it turns out that the death rate for Israel during their forty years in the desert was 6.5 times the world average now... Jews were dying at a rate 6.5 higher than the whole world today.

God was slaughtering that generation

But notice how He did it over forty years... to allow the next generation time to grow up and be ready to enter the Promised Land

What caused this outbreak of God's wrath on the Jews??? The author to the Hebrews makes it plain by a series of questions

### III. Warned Against Hearing, Disbelieving, and Rebelling

#### A. A Series of Rhetorical Questions... Which He Answers

##### 1. Question #1:

***Hebrews 3:16 Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?***

##### 2. Question #2:

***Hebrews 3:17 And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert?***

##### 3. Question #3:

***Hebrews 3:18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed?***

#### B. What Is the Point? Don't Be Arrogant, But Believe!!!

1. That generation of Jews heard the good news of the Promised Land
2. They saw the miracles of God under Moses
3. They were brought through the Red Sea by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm
4. Those Jews were real, live people who experienced the grace of God in awesome ways, who saw what He did... and THEY REFUSED TO BELIEVE HIS PROMISES... but in their hearts turned back to Egypt
5. So also those first century Jewish Christians had heard the gospel, repented, supposedly believed it, were baptized, saw signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit... they had BEGUN the Christian life... but now, were they going to turn away because of the SAME FEAR that motivated their ancestors... fear of suffering and death? Fear of earthly trouble because of the gospel?
6. IF they turn back from following Christ, they will come under the exact same sentence from God:

***“So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest!’”***

C. The Root Cause of All of this: Unbelief!!

1. God laments their failure to believe Him

***Numbers 14:11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?"***

***Deuteronomy 1:31-33 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." <sup>32</sup> In spite of this, you did not trust in the LORD your God, <sup>33</sup> who 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.***

God had proven Himself to them again and again... they should have trusted Him

IV. Warned Against Failing to Enter God's Rest

***Hebrews 3:18-19 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.***

- A. The Ultimate Outcome: God Swore on Oath in His Anger... THEY SHALL NEVER ENTER MY REST
- B. The Whole Point of the Exodus... Entering God's Rest in the Promised Land
- C. Because of Unbelief, they Would NEVER Enter
  1. They would never see that Good Land God was giving them
  2. They would never see the mighty hand of God defeating their enemies one after another
  3. They would never move into houses they did not build and live in them
  4. They would never sit at the table and eat from harvests they did not plant
  5. They would never be able to fall down on their knees with tears coming down their cheeks and testify

***Joshua 21:45 Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.***

## V. Application

### A. Entering God's Rest Now is Faith in Christ Resulting in Heaven

1. We have a BETTER Promised Land to enter
  - a. The New Heavens and New Earth, the home of righteousness
  - b. The physical land of Palestine in the 15<sup>th</sup> century BC cannot compare with the perfections of the New World God is going to make
  - c. That is the REAL Promised Land
2. We have a BETTER leader than Moses... Jesus Christ is the Captain of our Salvation
  - a. He is going on ahead of His people to fight for them every step of the way
  - b. Jesus is going ahead of us to prepare a place for us

***John 14:1-3 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.***

3. We have better PROMISES from Jesus which we can trust
  - a. The promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were for an earthly land that could only be enjoyed until death parted them
  - b. The promises in Jesus destroy death itself and make heaven an ETERNAL blessing

***John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.***

### B. Application to Us as Christians: Be Warned Against Sin's Deceitfulness Resulting in Hardness of Heart Resulting in Turning Away from the Living God

1. This passage is a WARNING to all church attenders
2. It is not enough to make a verbal profession of faith in Jesus and be water baptized

3. It is not enough merely to attend church week after week and sing the songs and sit through the sermons
4. It is not enough merely to BEGIN the Christian life, and go through the outward motions of the Christian faith
5. NO!!! A sinful heart of unbelief that causes you to turn away from the living God is a constant threat... and Hebrews 3 is WARNING you not to imitate the Jews who began the Exodus but never entered the Promised Land
6. NOMINAL CHRISTIANITY: all over the world, and all over our country, churches are filled with people who are just like the Jews who died in the desert
  - a. They are along for the ride, but have no genuine faith in Christ
  - b. They can deceive the pastor, deceive their neighbors, deceive even family members... they can even deceive themselves
  - c. But true faith results in an OBEDIENT lifestyle... not a perfect lifestyle, but one that yearns by the Spirit to walk in newness of life in the pattern for God's holy laws
  - d. True faith results in an ever-deepening LOVE FOR GOD... with all your heart... from the inside
  - e. True faith results in an ever-widening lifestyle of obedience to the pattern of the Christian faith... bible intake, prayer, godly family life, warfare against indwelling sin, love for the brothers and sisters
7. Test your hearts, dear friends... are you truly walking with Christ, or has that sinful heart of unbelief already begun to creep in... a love for the world, a fear of man's disapproval?

#### C. Rest in Christ's Finished Work

1. Jesus' death on the cross is enough for all your sins
2. Cling to the cross day after day
3. Feed yourself again and again on the gospe

#### D. Rest in God's Ongoing Power in You

Paul prays that the Ephesian Christians would understand

***Ephesians 1:19-20 [God's] incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, <sup>20</sup> which he exerted in Christ when***

*he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms*

***Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us***

All truly saved people will have their faith STRENGTHENED DAY BY DAY by God's power

***Philippians 2:12-13 continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.***

The "fear and trembling" come from considering these kind of DIRE WARNINGS against sinful unbelief... how the Jews fell away

The confidence comes from knowing that GOD IS AT WORK IN YOU to keep on walking with Jesus and never give up.