

An Earnest Warning Against Unbelief

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon warns that unbelief, even among the highly favored, is the sole barrier preventing entrance into God's promised rest and blessings.

Scripture: Hebrews 3:18-19, Exodus 12, Numbers 14, Deuteronomy 1, Psalm 90:1-5, Matthew 18:21-22, John 3:16, Hebrews 4:3

Topics: "Unbelief", "Faith and Salvation"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon exhorts believers by examining the example of the Israelites who, despite great privileges and evidence of God's power, were barred from entering the promised land due to unbelief. He emphasizes that unbelief is the only sin that ultimately excludes from God's rest and blessings. Spurgeon calls listeners to examine their own faith and warns of the eternal consequences of rejecting the Gospel. This sermon is a heartfelt appeal to embrace faith and enter into the rest God offers.

Transcript

"And to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." Hebrews 8:18,19.

ALL the histories of Scripture are written for our examples, but especially the story of the Israelites in the wilderness, which is given to us at a length far exceeding the value of the narrative unless it is intended for purposes of spiritual instruction, for it occupies four books of the Old Testament and those, by no means, short ones! These things were written that we might see ourselves in the Israelites as in a mirror—and so might be warned of dangers common to us and to them—and be guided to a worthier use of the privileges which we enjoy. Always read Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy with this view—"This is the story of the Church of God in the wilderness—I would see how God dealt with them and how they dealt with Him, and from this learn lessons that may be useful to me in my own pilgrimage to the eternal rest."

The great promise which was given to Israel was Canaan, that choice land which God had of old allotted to them. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." He made Palestine to be the center of worship, the joy of all lands, the seat of His oracle and the place of His abode. In the wilderness the tribes were journeying towards this country and it was a very short distance from Egypt, so that they might almost at once have taken possession of the land, and yet it cost them forty years' travelling! If you trace their travels, you will see that they ran a perpetual zigzag, backward and

forward, to the right and to the left. Sometimes they were actually journeying away from the promised rest, plunging into the depths of the howling wilderness—and all, we are told, because of their unbelief! The land itself flowed with milk and honey. It was a land of brooks and rivers, a land upon the surface of which all choice fruits would grow, and out of whose bowels they could dig copper and iron. It was the choicest of all lands and will yet again become so when there is an end of the accursed rule which now makes it desolate. Once more, under decent, settled rule and properly irrigated, it will again bloom and become such a country as all the world besides cannot match! This was the promised land and into it they were to enter—and there to multiply and increase as the stars of Heaven—and to be a nation of kings and priests unto God. But "they could not enter in because of unbelief." This, alone, shut them out.

Brothers and Sisters, Canaan is a type to us of the great and goodly things of the Covenant of Grace which belong to Believers. But if we have no faith, we cannot possess a single Covenant blessing! This day, in the proclamation of the Gospel, the demand is made of faith in God. And if there is no faith, no matter how rich the Gospel, how full its provisions and how precious the portion which God has prepared, none of us can ever enter into the enjoyment of them!

Some of you, because of unbelief, have not entered into the rest which God gives to His people even here below ("for we which have believed do enter into rest") and into the rest which remains—the blessed Sabbath of the skies—you will not be able to enter because of unbelief. This pains and troubles me, but so it is. Moses wrote a mournful Psalm which began, "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations," and then he went on to weep and bewail the transitory nature of man's estate. He wrote it while he was seeing forty funerals, at least, every day, for it required an average of forty deaths per diem to carry off all the people that came out of Egypt in the forty years. Their days were spent in bewailing the dead so that it was true of them as it is not true of us, "All our days are passed away in Your wrath." They had to mourn and sigh with Canaan but a little way ahead! They might have been laughing in its glades, sunning themselves in its plains, feasting on its figs and grapes and corn, but instead, there they were—pining and dying, digging

graves and expiring—for "they could not enter in because of unbelief." Many, many, many this day are tormenting themselves with needless despondency, shivering in fears they need not know and vexed with plagues they need not feel because they fail to rest in Christ through unbelief! Alas, myriads more are descending into the lake that burns with fire and they know no rest—and never shall know any! For them the harps of angels never sound! For them the white robes are not prepared because the unbelieving must have their portion in the Lake of Fire! Oh, that God would now deliver them from this dreadful sin of unbelief!

I have only three remarks to make. And the first is that these were a highly-favored people, yet they could not enter in because of unbelief Secondly, that the sole and only thing, according to the text, which shut them out was unbelief And that, thirdly, there were other people, their own sons and daughters, who, being delivered from this unbelief, did enter in. That must have made the case more clear against them because their little ones, who they said should be prey, were, nevertheless, permitted, each one, to stand in his lot. God's purpose was not frustrated because of man's unbelief! "If we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself."

I. First, then—THESE WERE A HIGHLY-FAVORED PEOPLE, YET THEY COULD NOT ENTER IN BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF.

Mark you, this was not said of Egyptians, Amorites or Philistines! No, it was said of Israelites who occupied the position of those who, in the New Testament, are called the "children of the kingdom"—many of whom will be cast out. These are the persons to whom it may be truly said, "Be you sure of this, that the Kingdom of God is come near unto you." The dust of the feet of God's servants will be shaken off against you, but yet you have heard the message of mercy and you have been as highly favored as Bethsaida and Chorazin when they heard the Word of God which, through its rejection, worked for them a more intolerable doom!

Now, think of it. These Israelites had seen great wonders worked. These men were in Egypt during those marvelous plagues. What times to live in, when they heard of miracle after miracle, peals of God's great thunder when He made His storm to beat about the head of proud Pharaoh! These men had seen the waters turned into blood and the fish floating dead upon the stream. They had seen the diseases on the cattle and the great hailstones which destroyed the harvest. They had been in the light when all the Egyptians were in the darkness that might be felt! They had seen the plagues of locusts and of lice—and all the terrors of the Lord when Jehovah took arrow after arrow out of His quiver and shot them against the hard heart of Pharaoh. They had all eaten of the paschal lamb on that dread night when Egypt sorely wept because the chief of all their strength had been killed in all the dwellings of the sons of Ham! They had gone out with their kneading-troughs in haste to escape from the land of bondage—brought forth with a high hand and an outstretched arm. These very men had been with Moses when Pharaoh pursued them and when that lifted rod split the Red Sea and Israel found an open channel where of old the waves had perpetually rolled! They had marched through the depths as through the wilderness and they had seen the eager waters leap back again into their place and drown all Egypt's chivalry! They had heard the song of Miriam, "Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea." Yet "they could not enter in because of unbelief."

And, oh, Brothers and Sisters, there are some among you who have seen great marvels worked by God! You have known the gift of His dear Son so as to be assured of the fact—and to see it with your mind's eyes—though you have not believed unto salvation. You know what God has worked for His people! You know how He delivered them and saved them by the blood of His Son. You have been present when the power of the Lord has swept through the audience as the wind sweeps through the forest and breaks the cedars of Lebanon! You have known the mighty works which God has done in the midst of the congregation! Your eyes have seen them and your fathers have also told you of the wondrous things which He did in their day and in the old time before them! And yet, with all this before you, and your mother in Heaven, and your sister in the Church of God, and your friends saved, you cannot enter in because of unbelief! Ah, the Lord will not have mercy upon you because of what you have seen, for so much light is but an aggravation of the guilt of your unbelief! And, instead of pleading in your favor, it demands justice on those that believe not after all they have seen!

To these Israelites great things had been revealed, for during their sojourn in the wilderness, they had been scholars in a gracious school. You, yourselves, have marvelled that they did not learn more. What glorious marches those were through the wilderness when the mountains saw You, O God, and they trembled when Sinai was altogether on a smoke! To what other people did God ever speak as He spoke to them? To whom did He give the tablets of Divine Command-

ments written with His own mysterious pen? Where else did He dwell between the cherubim and shine forth with glorious majesty? Where else did He reveal Himself in type and shadow, by priest and sacrifice and altar? Where else was heard so sweetly holy Psalms and daily prayer? Where else smoked the

morning and the evening lamb, God teaching by all these? And yet, when they heard, they provoked! When they were taught, they refused to learn! When they were called, they went not after Him. Their hearts were hardened and they believed not the Lord their God!

We too, have enjoyed a clear Revelation. We have heard the Gospel more plainly than the Israelites ever did. This blessed Book has more light in it than Moses could impart and the preaching of the Gospel, where it is done affectionately and earnestly, and by the help of the Spirit of God, is a greater means of Grace to the soul than all the sacred rites of the tabernacle! Shall it be with us as with them? "They could not enter in because of unbelief"—shall we labor under the same disability? Sharers in solemn feasts and yet their carcasses fell in the wilderness! Partakers of countless blessings, favored with the Light of God and yet shut out from Jehovah's rest because they believed not! Will this also be our portion?

Remember, also, that they were a people with whom God had great patience. Has it ever struck you—the great patience which must have been exercised in 40 years of provocation? I put it to any man here who has a good temper and is very calm and cool and singularly forgiving—how long could you stand provocation? Brother, if they did always provoke you intentionally, willfully and repeatedly, how long could you bear it? Ah, you could not be provoked one-half as long as you think you could, without, at least, coming to blows. When Jesus said to His disciples that if a brother should trespass against them seven times in a day, and seven times a day should turn and say, "I repent," they should forgive him—the very next thing we read is that the Apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith," as much as to say, "Flesh and blood can never attain to that, Lord! You must increase our faith if we are to do that." But forty years' provocation—what do you think that can do? Some men bear provocation well because they cannot return it, on the principle mentioned in Cowper's ballad—

"So stooping down, as needs he must Who cannot sit upright"

But when a man knows his power to end the provocation and to deliver himself, he is not so slow to ease him of his adversary. See the gentleness of the Lord! Forty years He is provoked! One would have thought that, surely, in that time these people would turn and repent. Moses, himself, I think, in the greatest agony of his prayer, could only have said, "Lord, give them 12 months in which they may mend their ways." That gracious intercessor who is mentioned in the parable of the fig tree only said, "Let it alone this year, also." That was all. But this was forty years A fruitless tree standing for 40 years! Why cumber it the ground? Oh, the stupendous mercy of God! But they could not enter into His rest after all. Will it be the same with you who have heard the Gospel for many years? What is to become of you? When so much patience is lost upon you, what must happen next? I scarcely feel as if I can pity you. I seem as if I pitied God that He has borne your indifference so long as the only return for His great love! In what manner has He acted that you should so ungenerously treat Him and continue to provoke Him? I fear it will, before long, be said of you, "they could not enter in because of unbelief."

Once more, only, on this point. These people had also received great mercies. It was not merely what they had seen, what they had been taught and the long-suffering they had enjoyed—they had received very remarkable favors. They drank of the Rock which followed them. And the manna fell every morning fresh from Heaven for them. Men did eat angels' food! They had a cloudy pillar to guide and shield them by day—and that same pillar at night became a light of fire and so lit up the canvas city all night long. The Lord was a wall of fire round about them and a glory in their midst! Will you think, dear Friend, what God has done for you from your childhood until now? Perhaps you found yourself upon a mother's lap and she was singing of Jesus. And as you grew up, you dwelt in a family circle where that dear name was a

household word. By-and-by, you were led to a godly teacher to be taught more about Jesus. And since then you have heard from the pastor's mouth, a message which he tries to steep in love whenever he delivers it. Then think of the Lord's gracious Providence. You have been fed and cared for. Perhaps you have been brought very low, but you have had food and raiment. Others are pining in the workhouse and you have, probably, a competence—or you are in health and are able to earn your livelihood. And in times of sickness, God hears you and keeps you from death. You have been preserved in accidents and here you are, kept alive with death so near! Will you not turn unto the Lord? For if not, He will not al-

ways spare you. Earth feels your weight too much for her and almost asks God to let her open a grave for the wretch who refuses to love His Creator! Time, itself, is getting impatient of your sin and hurrying on the hour when your allotted span will be over—and you will be forced into a dread eternity! O Soul, Soul, highly-favored as you are, it seems so sad a thing that of you it should be said, "He could not enter in," or, "she could not enter in"—"because of unbelief."

II. And now a few words upon our second head. NOTHING BUT UNBELIEF SHUT THEM OUT. "They could not enter in because of unbelief."

It was not through great sin in other respects although they were a sinful people. God was ready to forgive them everything else but unbelief. And had they been but willing and obedient, the times of their ignorance He would have winked at. He had provided sacrifices on purpose to take away sins of ignorance and multitudes of other sins, but nothing takes away the sin of unbelief, as long as it remains in the heart. You must be Believers, or the blood of Jesus Christ, itself, shall never be sprinkled upon you to your cleansing! However great your sins may have been, all manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven you if you believe. The greatness of your sin shall not shut you out of Heaven—only unbelief will stop the way.

Neither, my dear Brothers and Sisters, would their other evil tendencies have kept them out of Canaan. God knew what they were. They had been a race of slaves in Egypt and it is not easy for a nation, long in bondage, to rise to the dignity of freedom—the Israelites in the wilderness were people of a low type, much degraded by slavery—and God was therefore lenient with them. Many laws He did not make because He knew they would not keep them—and there were some things which He permitted them which could not be permitted us. "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to put away your wives," said Jesus. The Lord was very gentle towards their moral weakness and bore with them as a nurse with her children. But when it came to unbelief—a doubt of Him who was so clearly God, a denial of His power, His faithfulness, His Truth—then they were shut out of Canaan as with an iron gate.

My Brothers and Sisters, they were not unbelieving from lack of evidence, yet they had not more than you have, because most of you have abundant evidence of the truth of the Gospel. The Bible to you has been God's Book from your childhood and you take its Inspiration for granted and it is, therefore, inexcusable if you do not trust Christ! If a man's skepticism includes a doubt of the existence of God, or the truth of Scripture, we will talk to him another time. But with most of you there are no such questions, and the Lord Jesus might well demand of you, "If I tell you the truth, why do you not believe Me?" If before the Judgment Seat of Christ a man shall be forced to confess, "I believe the Bible to be God's Word," I cannot imagine the apology which he can frame in his heart for not having believed in Jesus Christ! To you, then, there is no lack of evidence—and if you are shut out of Heaven, your own willful unbelief must bear the blame!

The Israelites were not unbelieving from lack of encouragement for as I have already shown you, the Lord sweetly encouraged them to believe in Him by the great things He did for them and by His gentle dealings day by day. Most of you have been gently persuaded and encouraged to trust in the Lord Jesus. How blessedly the Word of God has worded its invitations so as to suit the timorousness of poor trembling sinners! And as a preacher, I can honestly say that I lay out all my wits to think of Truths of God which might cheer desponding souls! God, who abounded to me in all goodness and mercy and is bringing me tenderly to His feet, has made me long after souls that I may bring them to Him! If you have not believed, it has not been for lack of invitations, expostulations, encouragements and words of consolation. No, you will not be able to blame the Bible or the preacher! Unbelief of the most wanton kind will be chargeable to you and will shut you out of God's rest!

Nor would it have been true if the Israelites had said that they could not enter in because of difficulties. There was the Jordan before them and when they entered the land, there were cities walled to Heaven, and giants before whom they felt like grasshoppers. Yes, but that did not hinder them, for God divided the Jordan, made the walls of Jericho to fall flat to the ground and sent the hornets before them to chase out the giants! Israel had little more to do than to go up and take the spoil!

Now, Soul, there is no difficulty between you and eternal life which Christ either has not removed already or will not remove as you believe in Him. As for your iniquities, when you believe, they are gone—the Jordan is divided. As for your inbred sins, He will surely drive them out, little by little, when you believe in Him. As for your old habits, which are like the high walls of the Canaanite cities, they shall fall down at the sound of the ram's horn of faith! Only believe and you

shall enter into rest! Trust in God, and impossibilities shall vanish and difficulties shall become a blessing to you. Nothing hinders you except that you will not believe. And if you will not believe, neither shall you be established. "If you believe not," says Christ, "that I am He, you shall die in your sins." "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." This is the sin of which I pray the Spirit of God to convict you—"Of sin because they believe not on Me."

III. The third head is that SOME DID ENTER IN. These were their own children and I have been wondering whether if I should preach in vain to a whole generation of those who reject Christ, I might yet hope that their children would rise up to call the Redeemer blessed! Dear young man, do not follow in your unbelieving father's footsteps! Dear girl, do not imitate the indecision, the limping between two opinions which you have seen in your mother! If her carcass must fall in the wilderness, there is no reason why yours should. Is it not a great mercy that the Lord does not reject us because of the sins of our fathers? Though you were a child of shame, yet you may be a child of Divine Grace! Though your pedigree were dishonorable, your end may be glorious! If the history of your ancestors is full of unbelief and rejection of the Lord, yet this need be no reason why you should perish with them!

Look at the effect of this upon the fathers, as they looked upon their sons and said, "That boy of mine will have a house and home in the holy land, but I must die in the desert. That girl of mine will be among the merry wives that make joy in Eshcol and that go up to the house of the Lord in Zion—but I must be buried in this waste of sand, for the Lord has sworn in His wrath that I shall not enter into His rest." Fathers and mothers, how do these things suit you? I am sure if it were my lot to see my boys rejoicing in the Lord while I was an unbeliever and could not enter in because of unbelief, I could not bear it! I could not bear it! How I wish that your children would entice you to Christ! I have known it happen by the influence of dear departing infants. Many a time the Lord has taken a babe away from its mother's breast, to her grief at

first, but to her salvation in the end! The shepherd could not get the sheep to follow till he took up its lamb and carried it in his bosom—then the mother would go wherever he liked. Perhaps the Lord has done that with some of you on purpose that you may follow Him. Do you want Him to come and take another little one? Ah, He may, for He loves you! If one is not enough, He may take another till, at last, you follow the Shepherd's call. If you will not follow Jesus, you cannot enter where your babes have gone! Unbelieving Mother, you shall not see the heavenly field wherein your little lambs are resting—you are divided from them forever! Unbelieving Father, you cannot follow your sons—your believing offspring are with God, but you must be cast out from His Presence. Can you endure this?

O, impenitent Sinner, do you not know that God's purpose shall not be frustrated? If you will not have Christ, others will! If you will not come to the banquet of His love, He will gather the wanderers and the outcasts, for His wedding shall be furnished with guests! As surely as the Lord lives, Christ shall not die in vain! Heaven shall not be empty and the sacred orchestra of the skies shall not lack musicians! If you count yourselves unworthy, others whom you have despised shall be welcomed to the feast of love! Harlots and outcasts, His mighty Grace will save—but you, the children of the kingdom—shall be cast into outer darkness where weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth are heard! Can you bear it? Can you bear to think of it? If you can, I cannot! When I think of any of my hearers perishing, I feel like Hagar when she could not help her child and, therefore, laid him under the bushes and went away saying, "Let me not see the death of the child!" One of you lost? One of you lost? It is too much for me to think of! Yet to many of you the Gospel has been preached in vain, for the hearing of it has not been mixed with faith. The Lord have mercy upon you!

To me it is especially appalling that a man should perish through willfully rejecting the Divine salvation. A drowning man throwing away his lifebelt, a poisoned man pouring the antidote upon the floor, a wounded man tearing open his wounds—any one of these is a sad sight—but what shall we say of a soul putting from it the Redeemer—and choosing its own destruction? O Souls, be warned and forbear from eternal suicide! There is still the way of salvation—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." To believe is to trust. I met with one the other night who had imbibed the notion that saving faith was simply to believe that the Doctrines of the Word of God and the statements therein made are true. Now faith includethat, but it is much more! You may believe all this Book to be true, and be lost notwithstanding your belief! You must so believe it as to act upon it by trusting. "Trust what?" you ask. Let us alter the question before we answer it. "Trust Whom" You have to trust in a living Person—in the Lord Jesus Christ who died as the Substitute for those who trust Him—and lives to see that those whom He bought with blood are also redeemed

from their sins by power and brought home to Heaven. Trust Jesus Christ, Soul! Have done with yourself as your confidence and commit your soul unto the keeping of the faithful Redeemer!

Have you done so? Then, even if the clock has not ticked once since you believed in Jesus Christ, you are as surely saved as if you had been a saint these 20 years, for he that believes in Him is not condemned! This declaration makes no stipulation as to time. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." God grant that you may obey the heavenly precept, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: HEBREWS 2f 3.

Hebrews 2:1. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. That is to say, because Jesus is so great, because the Truths which He came to reveal are so infinitely important, "therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." For sometimes, we seem to let them slip. We grow old. Our mind is dull. Our heart is occupied with other matters and we let these heavenly things leak out, or drift by us, as if we were not concerned in them.

2, 3. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? "Listen! "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" Not if we resist it, reject it, despise it, oppose it—but if we neglect it! If a man is in business, it is not necessary that he should commit forgery in order to fail—he can fail by simply neglecting his business. If a man is sick, he need not commit suicide by taking poison—he can do it just as surely by neglecting to take proper medicines! So is it in the things of God—neglect is as ruinous as distinct and open opposition! "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

3, 4. Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? "Observe, then, that this Gospel comes to us by Christ and it is confirmed to us by His Apostles, and further confirmed by those signs and wonders, and divers miracles which God sent as the seals of Apostolic teaching! So that this spell is not one about which we can raise any question whatever—it comes by a Medium which we must not dare to question—it has confirming seals in it which it is blasphemous for us to dispute! Oh, how gladly should we receive it! How tenderly should we treat it! How devoutly grateful should we be for it and how earnestly should we comply with all its requirements!

5. For unto the angels has He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak God has not made angels to be the preachers of the Gospel. Doubtless they derive some happiness from it, if only from the sight of those converted under it, but it is in no sense under the government of angels.

6-8. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that You are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that You visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of Your hands: You have put all things in subjection under his feet It is so, in a measure, in the natural world. Man is made to be the master of it—and the ox and the horse, with all their strength—must bow their necks to man. And the lion and the tiger, with all their ferocity, must still be cowed in the presence of their master. Yet this is not a perfect kingdom which we see in the natural world. But, in the spiritual world, man is still to be supreme for the present and, therefore, Christ becomes not an angel, but a man! He takes upon Him that nature which God intends to be dominant in this world and in that which is to come.

8. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. We see not yet man the master of everything. Not even Christ, the model Man, the Head of all men. While He was here below, He was not a ruling Lord, but a suffering Servant. He said to His disciples, "I am among you as He that serves." Yet it is in Him that the dominion once given to man is to be seen most clearly displayed.

9. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor We see that by faith. We see Jesus not merely as God, but as the God-Man exalted "far

above all principality and power, and might, and dominion."

9, 10. That He, by the Grace of God, should taste death for everyman. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through

sufferings. [See Sermon #2619, Volume 45—THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION.]

Not that Christ needed to be made perfect in Nature, but perfect in His capacity to be the Captain of our salvation— complete in all the offices which He sustains toward His redeemed people. He must be a Sufferer that He may be a Sympathizer—and hence His sufferings made Him perfect.

11. For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one. [See Sermon #2418, Volume 41—"all of one."] He who sets them apart and they who are set apart "are all of one." They are of one nature and they have one destiny before them.

11. For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Does not this bring very sweetly before you the close relationship of Christ to His people? He has espoused their nature and He acknowledges it by calling them brethren!

12. Saying, I will declare Your name unto My brethren, in the midst of Your church will I sing praise unto You. The Apostle was writing to Hebrews and, therefore, he quoted from the books with which they were familiar. He here quotes the 22nd Psalm as the words of the Messiah.

13. And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children which God has given Me. There are some passages which we should never have thought related to the Messiah if the New Testament had not told us that they do. Hence I have no doubt that we much more often err in not seeing Christ in the Old Testament than in seeing Him there, for there may be many other passages besides these which are supposed to speak of Christ which do speak of Him.

14. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. [See Sermon #166, Volume 4—the destroyer DESTROYED.] By His own death, Christ broke that evil

power which brought death into the world with its long trail of woe! He did this, not by His example, not even by His life, but by His death! Therefore let those who speak slightly of His atoning Sacrifice see their folly, for it is through death that Christ destroys "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

15. 16. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. [See Sermon #90, Volume 2—men chosen—fallen angels REJECTED.] Christ's great mission was not to save angels, but to save men. Therefore He came not in the nature of angels, but in the nature of men.

17, 18. Therefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted. "And this is the reason why He suffered—and why He became a man capable of suffering—that He might be able to succor the tempted. It was for this that Christ left Heaven, for this He was born of the virgin, for

this He lived and for this He died, that He might be "able to

succor them that are tempted." [See Sermons #487, Volume 9—A TEMPTED SAVIOR—OUR BEST SUCCOR; #1974, Volume 33—THE SUFFERING SAVIOR'S SYMPATHY and #2885, Volume 50—CHRIST'S SYMPATHY WITH HIS PEOPLE.]

Hebrews 3:1. Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Think of Him, think how great He is, think what attention He deserves from all who believe in Him!

2-6. Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this Man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who has built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by one man; but He that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over His own house. See the superiority of Christ over Moses—Moses is honored by being called the servant of God, but Jesus is the Son of God, and as Son, Master over His own house.

6. Whose house are we. Christ built the house. He laid us together like stones upon the great foundation. Moses is but a caretaker in the house.

6. If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Final perseverance is an absolute necessity of a child of God. We do not prove ourselves to be a part of the house if we move about like loose stones!

7-10. Why (as the Holy Spirit says, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known My ways. Do not provoke your God by your quibbling, or your murmuring, or your idolatry—act not as those unbelievers did who died in the wilderness.

11, 12. So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest). Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you

an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God [See Sermon #2552, Volume 44—"TAKE HEED, BRETHREN."] There was that "evil heart" in the Israelites—is there not a danger that it may be in you, also, who are partakers of the like nature?

13. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of

sill. [See Sermon #620, Volume 116—A WARNING AGAINST HARDNESS OF HEART.]

If sin came to you openly proclaiming itself as sin, you would fight against it. But it is very cunning and deceitful and it gradually petrifies the heart and especially the heart of those who think that they will never provoke God by their sin. Pride has already begun to work in them—and where pride can work, every other sin finds elbowroom. God save us from the deceitfulness of sins!

14. For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end [See Sermon

#1042, Volume 18—A PERSUASIVE TO STEADFASTNESS.] You are to hold

fast, to hold on and to hold out to the end—and the Grace you need in order to do this is waiting for you if you will but look for it and daily live under the power of it!

15. 16. While it is said, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. All but two that came out of Egypt died in the wilderness—only Joshua and Caleb were found faithful among the faithless.

17. But with whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? See how the Apostle speaks of them! He does not say that their bodies were buried, but that their carcasses fell in the wilderness! Unbelief degrades us into beasts whose carcasses fall beneath the battle-axe of Judgment. Oh, that we might all be rid of unbelief—that degrading, desecrating, defiling, destroying thing!

18, 19. And to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. It was not the sons of Anak that kept them out! It was not the waste howling wilderness! It was nothing but their own unbelief!

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