***The Exodus Generation of Israel  
  
Colossians 2:18-19  
  
COL-456***

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Our subject is "The Error of Angelic Worship," number 13, in Colossians 2:18-19.

From the time of the apostle Paul to this day, spiritually-disoriented, religious teachers have been trying to impose the Old Testament Mosaic Law legalistic way of life of Judaism on the New Testament church-age way of life of Christianity. That battle is ongoing. It began in the very early New Testament church, when some of the original people who were in prominence were telling Christians, "You must obey the Mosaic Law, or you cannot be saved. You cannot be under the blessing of God."

So, we see that there's a great deal of meaning to that first sentence of Colossians 2:8, where the apostle Paul said, "Let no one (and it is a command) keep defrauding you of your prize." That means: "Let no one rob you of your prize." That prize that he's referring to is grace-age, power system of Christian living – all of the blessings that accrue in time and eternity, because it is the grace of God that enables us to do it. Do all Christians rise to the heights of their Christian heritage? Not on your life. I see people all the time who can sit for years and years and years, under good instruction in the Word of God. And always there is a little bit of pushing away of the Lord; a little bit of a reservation; and, a little bit of a: "Don't go too far with me, God, in imposing your request on me, I already have a life."

Well, that's what Paul is talking about. Are you're going to do it your way; by your human effort; and, by your capacities, or are you going to leave it up to the Holy Spirit to live through you, and be willing to follow His enablement and His guidance? Paul commands us never to let anybody rob you of being able to live the grace way of life. Some Christians never get to it. That's true. But once you have it, and once you've tasted that wonderful experience of having God direct your mind; of having our Heavenly father intuitively directing you; and, of having you suddenly find yourself on top of things that almost were slipping away, and you find yourself saying, "You're right Lord. Thanks for reminding me of that. Thank you, Father, for opening the door. That's the solution, Lord." And all of a sudden, you find that the mind of God has become your mind. Do you want to go back to the mind of Moses, and live like that? That's the issue.

**The Mosaic Law**

The Mosaic Law merely revealed to everybody how sinful man is, but it had no power to save anybody, and it had no power to enable anybody, even after they knew what they should do, and what was right to do. The Mosaic Law had no capacity for enabling a person to live a godly life. You knew God's standard, but you couldn't live it.

**Be Christlike**

The call of the church-age believer is to be Christlike. That's an impossible way of life by any kind of human effort. Therefore, God has given us the enablement of the Word of God to tell us what the rules are; what the guidelines are; and, what the techniques of the Christian life are, and has given us the Spirit of God to give us the guidance to enable us to live the godly life. All areas of our lives, as Christians, are to be evaluated by the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity. Last week, we walked you through a large number of them. It was kind of startling to suddenly realize, in this area and in that area: "Yes, Jesus Christ would have acted in a certain way." And then you get the uncomfortable feeling that that's not the way you would have done it.

It's not unusual, when you start taking what we know from Scripture about His ways, and applying them to specific things in our life, and we have to say, "No, he wouldn't have done it that way." Then why are you doing it? All areas of our lives are to be evaluated by His pattern, and that Christlike style, based upon Scripture – the way He was. Satan and his demons (his demon angels) are constantly seeking to induce Christians to be Christlike in their lives, and for the Christian to be enslaved to the lust patterns of his sin nature. Everything that characterizes the devil is in there inside of you, in that sin nature. And all that he wants to do is to have you follow it. And for some Christians, they can't get very far away from it. That's too bad. Their disappointment for eternity will be very sad to observe and to experience.

So, the point is that the Christian can be robbed of his church-age, grace freedom, and privileges in Christ. You can choose: the powerless Mosaic Law (self-effort); or, the power of the grace of God doing it for you?

The president has recently been saying, several times, that freedom for which Americans stand, and that we desire, not only for ourselves, but for other nations – freedom comes not from government, but from God. He has been upsetting a lot of the liberal world by saying things like that, when he was asked about his faith and trust in God, and the things he believed. Here on the eve of potential war, he took the trouble to say, "Yes, I do pray, and it's a daily practice. I do read the Word of God, and I pray for the people who will be suffering if we have to go to war – the people of Iraq, as well as our own people." And you could not believe the explosion of anger and rage from the liberal press the next day – for a president to be talking about religious matters in that way.

Well, why are we going to war, folks, if we go, except for the religious viewpoint of Islam, and for its core doctrine, over 100 times in the Koran, that people who will not subject to Islam are to be killed (not to be ignored, and not to be passed over). Jesus said, "If they won't listen to the gospel, go on to the next person. Shake the dust off. Get the Word out. And lead people to their choices, and the consequences of their choices." But Satan, we're told, was a murderer from the beginning. And his practice is to shed the blood of those who will not subject themselves to him.

So, who is being religious? The president; or, that which is causing the terror that we face in this world today? Well, be that as it may, there is no question about the fact that man, on his own, is sinful. And you and I as Christians have a way of life that was never true under Moses and that Mosaic Law.

Israel is a tragic example of a nation that had great opportunities, had the Word of God as no nation had before, and yet it failed, for this reason. The apostle Paul, in Romans 15:4, says, "For whatever was written in earlier times (that is, in the Old Testament), was written for our instruction, that we should learn from the experience of Israel."

When I was a boy, the man who was a great spiritual influence upon my life, Dr. Davis, told me one time: "You can learn in two ways, John. You can learn from your own mistakes; or, you learn from the mistakes of other people." It is better to learn it from the mistakes of other people, and save yourself from the scars. That is good advice. This is the same thing that the apostle Paul is giving us here.

Romans 15:4: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction – that through perseverance and encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope."

**The Exodus Generation of Israel**

So, let's take a look at Israel for a moment here. We have the tragic example of Israel in the Exodus generation – that group of people, who were the end of the line of 400 years of slavery in Egypt, came finally to the end by those dramatic ten plagues that came upon Egypt. The hand of God was everywhere, showing them what had been done in their behalf. Here they are, out in the desert wilderness. They need food, and God gives them the quail. And they need bread, and God gives them the manna. They need water, and God gives Moses a rock that he strikes, and out it, the water comes. Whatever they needed, God was there. He was there, leading them, when they came up against the Red Sea, and their backs were to the wall. Pharaoh had changed his mind. His army and his chariots were thundering down upon them. They had no place to go now. They were facing this body of water. And God said, "I'll just open it up, and you can walk through, and it'll be dry as you go through it. And it was.

Well, as soon as they were through, Pharaoh and his army, and the chariots thundered into that corridor, and the waters closed on them. Now, put yourself back in their place. That's the background. Would that impress you – to see these ten plagues going on? You're in Goshen Land. You're looking across. And all this devastation has taken place in Egypt, but it's not touching you. Does that tell you something – that you are under the protective custody of God? Well, Moses is telling the truth, isn't he? That's exactly what God said he would do.

So, let's sit back and relax and let's see what He wants to do. He's going to tell us that He's going to take us out of this enslavement (this hellish existence that we're in now), and He's going to take us back to the Promised Land of Canaan, from whence our forefathers came 400 years ago. And we are going to be brought back into the place where our kingdom will be established with our own Messiah Savior, Who will come to reign over the whole world. That's good news: "We're going back, folks. Pack up. Get ready.

Well, sure enough, that final plague and the symbolic blood on the door posts, and on the lintels, the sides of the door posts, and on the top of the doors: signifying that blood of Christ. They were brought safely out of Egypt, and they passed over into the desert area.

Finally, they came to the port of entry into the land of Canaan, at Kadeshbarnea. This was it. This was it, folks: the land of milk and honey. But when they got their report from their 12 reconnaissance agents, ten of those men said, "Boy, the people of this land!" They're the Nephilim. The Nephilim were giants. They were tall guys. They were so impressive. Ten of them said, "There's no way we can stand up against them. They're a fearful lot. We cannot walk into their land." However, Caleb and Joshua were two men who knew how to believe God. That's all.

Why do some Christians never rise to the grace power system of living? Why are they always little puny characters? Because they cannot believe God. On, they believe in themselves. They believe in trusting themselves to take care of themselves, but they cannot believe that they can step out, and do the work of God, and He will take care of them in the process.

Well, the result was that, when they got this report, Joshua and Caleb said, "Don't listen to these ten guys. They're misleading you. This is not the will of God. He has told us that He's going to take us in, and He will bring us there successfully. Leave him. Don't pay attention to these men. Go in." But they rose up and refused to do it.

So, they refuse to believe that God's grace would carry them through. They depended on their own human wisdom, and their own human effort. So, here is the example, like Paul says: "We can learn from them." Let's see if you do.

Exodus 6:2-8 are the historical record of that tragic moment. They're standing at the entrance of the greatest light they've ever had – freedom. They even have the Ten Commandments to guide them, and to preserve their freedom. This is like many Christians. Christians keep wanting to stay out there in the desert, wandering around Egypt – the symbol of the world in Scripture. They want to eat the leaks and garlics out there. They never can rise up and say, "Lord, I'm your person. You guide me. You tell me. I follow. And I expect you to carry me through whatever I need.

Exodus 6:2-8: "God spoke further to Moses, and said to him, 'I am the Lord, and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, and by My Name: LORD ('Yahweh' or 'Jehovah'). I did make Myself known to them.'" This is the God of particular relationship in this name, "Yahweh," to Israel – His special people: "And I also establish My covenant with them, to give them the land of Egypt, the land in which they sojourned.

Now, the Palestinian Covenant, that they would have this strip of land along the Mediterranean Sea, was an unconditional covenant. God said, "I'm going to do this to you. I'm going to do this for you, if you'll obey me. If you don't obey me, I'm still going to do it, but I'm going to punish you for disobeying." The Mosaic Covenant was a conditional covenant: "I'll bless you *if* you do this. Otherwise, there will be no blessing. But the Palestinian Covenant said, "I'm going to bless you with your own land. You'll have it forever. You can do it the easy way, by believing Me and accepting it; or, you can go through a lot of discipline, but you're still going to get that land."

So, here the covenant is sure. The land of Canaan has been given to Israel forever, and it is theirs this day. They're just not in it, in full divine blessing. But they are ready to come back in. They're at Kadeshbarnea – the entranceway out of that slavery, into the freedom of the Promised Land.

Verse 5: "And furthermore, God says, "I've heard the groaning of the Sons of Israel because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant." God never forgets you. You do. We do. But He never forgets.

Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel and the Lord: "I'll bring out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I'll deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments." Boy, did He ever redeem them with the ten plagues. And He redeemed them at the Red Sea. They said, "Hey, I'm not going to trust God. When I get to the Red Sea, I want to have the money to buy a ticket for the boat to get me across. You don't think I'm going to go up to the Red Sea, and wait without my own means to do it? That was their problem.

Our problem today is that some Christians never learn what it is to live by means of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says, "Walk by means of the Spirit, and then you won't fulfill the lust patterns of the sin nature.

Verse 7 says, "Then I will take you for my people. I will be your God. You shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I'll bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And I will give it to you for a possession, for I am the Lord.” That's the setup. That's the promise. They all knew it. This was what God had said that He was going to do to them.

However, now, when they finally come back to the land (this Promised Land), that God has covenanted to them, they get a bad report from the spies, and they don't believe God. They believe the spies. And Caleb and Joshua stand up for the integrity of God. They stand up for what is the good, and the right thing to do. That was the course of wisdom. And what do the people do to them? They want to stone them.

When was the last time that you (and how many times has the preacher's this, if they're expository preachers, explaining the Word of God to people, and telling them: "This is what the Word of God says. This is He thinks." And the people have snotty remarks about the preacher, and they question the subtlety of what he's trying to put across to people, and to get something out of it. It is the oldest satanic stupidity in the world – that Christians will turn against the very people who are their lifeline: the spiritual reality; and the blessing in time, and the rewards in eternity.

So, here, with all of this experience and what they've seen God do, and all the promise of the God Who never lies, and Who has carried them through, they come to the entrance, and they don't want to listen to Joshua and Caleb. They slander these two men.

Have you ever been slandered for telling people what God has to say to them? It's not a fun experience. But you don't really mind it, because you pity the idiot so much, who are slandering, as these people did – these two good men who knew that they should trust God.

Turn to Numbers 14 now, please. In Numbers 14. We pick up the rebellion, from which we should learn not to let somebody try to take over our grace, power system of living. Now, for many Christians, they don't know about that. For other Christians, they don't ever live by the grace age. They're still muddling around by their self-effort of the legalistic system of Moses.

Alright, Numbers 14:1: "Then all the congregation, after getting this bad report from these ten spies, lifted up their voices, and they cried, and the people wept that night. And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. And the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt; or, would that we had died in this wilderness? Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones have become plunder. Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

Now in the Bible, Egypt is a type of the world. It's a symbol of the world system. So, how many Christians have said, "I don't like this tough Christian life. I don't like the demand it makes on my time; my treasures; and, my talents. I want to go back to living the life where I can do what I want to do with my time; with my money; and, with my talents."

Yes, we've seen them step up here, over the years, and walk off, and go back to Egypt. We've seen it many times. And then we've seen those people, as they put their heads into the meat grinder, and God has the handle, and it's slowly turning. And they chew up their lives. And you wonder if they ever made the connection – that the day they walked out of Berean Church, and expository preaching ministry, and rebellion, they finished themselves for all blessing in time and in eternity. And they went along like shriveled up little prunes, not realizing what it was to be plump and good in the things of the Lord.

So, here they are, lying and slandering God. He never said that He was going to bring them to die in that wilderness – in the desert. He said that He was going to bring them to the land flowing with milk and honey, that would be theirs, and they would enjoy it with their children forever. That's the promise He had. He didn't say that He was going to bring them out there so that they would die, and so that their children would be dying, and their wives ravished. What is going on in the minds of these people, who saw these miraculous, powerful things of the hand of God?

So, what are they doing? They're going to have not God's way, but their way. Please notice that, would you? The next time you think you know better than maybe the preacher does. Or your godly friends do. Verse 4: "So, the Jews said to one another, 'Let us appoint a leader, and return to Egypt.'" How do you like that, Moses, you dummy? Look what you got us into. You're nothing but another Laurel and Hardy: "Here's another fine mess you've gotten us into, Moses – that old rag." And they really meant it. And don't hold him to contempt. I've heard people do this. The people of this congregation have done that too: "Look at this fine mess you've gotten me into." And what they had gotten into was up against confrontation with God.

So, now Moses was having a slap in the face, and Aaron, the spiritual leader, his brother, in verse 5: "And Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the Sons of Israel. And Joshua, the son of Nun, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes," which is a sign of grief. Caleb and Joshua were part of the 12. They went with God. And guess, folks, of the 12 spies, 40 years later, when they do come into the Promised Land, which of the spies get in? Only Joshua and Caleb, because everybody else, who was 20 years old and up, never gets into the Promised Land.

So, what is it that you're making your preparation for your future for, and that you're holding back from doing things God's way? These two men said, "You people are spiritually insane, and they were grieved for what was going to happen to them.

Verse 7: "And they (Joshua and Caleb) spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, 'The land, which we passed through, to spy out, is an excellent and good land. If the Lord is pleased with us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it to us. It is a land which flows milk and honey – a prosperous land. It is everything we could ask for. Only do not rebel." And that's the word, folks. That's the operative word. That's what the Christian does. And that's exactly what Paul is talking about in Colossians. Don't rebel against the grace way of living.

"Only do not rebel against the Lord. Do not fear the people of the land, for they should be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them." That is good military advice. It is God who determines battle. And it is the soul of confidence in God that wins battles. It is not who is stronger, and it is not who has the greater armaments.

Verse 10: "But all the congregations said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the Lord appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel."

So, their response to this appeal, to trust God to do what He said He was going to do, was that the people wanted to kill him. Now, most Christians never put themselves out in the position of the world as witnesses of the Lord, such that anybody wants to kill them, or even give them a good punch in the nose. Most Christians have their own quiet, happy, useless lives.

So, they wanted to stone the men who were speaking the mind of God to them. Then, all of a sudden, the glory of the Lord shines out of the tabernacle tent. And the whole camp become silent. God has walked into the scene, and it is very wonderful, in those days, that God would come into their presence. And boy, you knew you were there face-to-face, and eyeball-to-eyeball. You don't see God. But His presence, symbolized by that glory cloud, was there. And the place became hushed. But you too have the glory of the Lord. You have it all recorded in Scripture. And it's all explained there. And you have the power system of the Holy Spirit that brings you into the presence of the Lord. It's all just as real for us, but for them, it was visual.

Please look at verse 20. The Lord goes on. He rebukes them. He tells Moses: "I'm not going to take this anymore from these people. I have shown them. They have seen Me going through as a cloud during the day, leading them through the wilderness. And they have seen Me as a pillar of fire at night. They know I'm here. They know I'm real. All these pagan gods back in Egypt, that they were so fond of, are not real. And I'm going to put them all to death, Moses. And I'm going to save you. And I'm going to start the nation again."

Well, Moses goes to bat, and says, "If You do that, oh, God, You know that your enemies, out there in the pagan world, will say, "You are not the God that they thought you were. You could not take your people out of Egypt, and bring him safely into the land of Canaan." And Moses pled for the people that God would not do this thing, but that God, according to His loving kindness, would forgive them.

So, we pick it up at verse 20: "So, the Lord said, 'I pardon them according to your word." God said, "OK. I will not wipe them out. I will follow your request, Moses."

In verse 21: "But indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord." God is going to win. You can go ahead and be a shriveled-up prune, doing things your way, and be spit out. But God is going to do it His way. You can go with Him, or you can go yourself. You can deny your spiritual heritage of grace; or, you can do it the self-effort way of the Mosaic Law.

Verse 22: "Surely all men, who have seen My glory and My signs, which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times, and have not listened to My voice, shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. I won't execute them now, but they're not going to go to the Promised Land."

Now, that should send a chill through you. When was the last time that God said, "'I want you to do this. I've equipped you to do this. I've enabled you to do this. Now, rise to my request.' And instead, you spurned Me, and you will never see the blessings in eternity, that would have accrued to you for following through. Oh, you'll go to heaven." These people were told, "I'm going to let you live out a span of years. But you will not come into Canaan land. You will not come into the Promised Land. The land of milk and honey is behind you." And the said, "Oh, but we thought we were preserving ourselves for milk and honey." Yeah, that's with a lot of you think too. So many Christians think that they are preserving themselves for milk and honey, and all they're preserving themselves for is a prune-shriveled, poverty, religious experience.

Verse 24: "But God said, 'My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit, and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which is entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it." Caleb, and along with him, Joshua – they were going to come in.

Now look at verse 26: "And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 'How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they're making against Me. Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you.'"

God says, "You have said that I'm taking you out into the wilderness so that you will die there; so that you will starve there; and, so that you will be devastated there by the elements, and by the pagan enemies of God, so that your children will die there, and your wives will die there. That's what you said I was going to do." "OK," God says, "We'll follow your script.

Verse 29: "Your corpses shall fall in this wilderness – even all your numbered men, according to your complete number, from 20 years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me." Once you're 20 years old, under the Mosaic system, you are an adult, responsible for what you did. And you face God, not through your parents care, but through your own.

So, here, the Lord said, "You're worried about dying in the wilderness. That's exactly the judgment that's going to come on you. All they had to do was believe God. All they had to do was stop lying to Him; having good intentions; and, just believe the Word.

Verse 30: "Surely you shall not come into the land, which I swore to settle you, except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun. Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey (those who are under 20 years of age), I will bring them in. They shall know the land which you have rejected:" "You said I'm going to hazard the lives of your children. No, I'm going to protect them. They're going to go into the land. But you will not. So much for worrying about how your children are going to make it," God says. "They're under My care in custody. But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. Your sons shall be shepherds for 40 years in the wilderness. They shall suffer for your unfaithfulness until your corpses lie in the wilderness. Your children are going to have to wander in the desert for 40 years. They're going to suffer, because you parents made the choices you made."

OK. How often indeed does that happen? Children watch their parents grow up; children who watch their parents’ values; and, children who watch where their parents are throwing their emphasis, and their time, and their efforts, and the corners of their integrity shaved off. When they grow up, where is their confidence? Where is their interest when it comes to the things of eternity?

So, because of your unfaithfulness, your children suffer. It's true today. You get all tangled up with the Egypt of this world. Then your children become the ones who suffer the consequences. But He says, "Your corpses are going to lie in the wilderness, but they're going to come through, according to the number of days which you spied out the land. You looked at this land for 40 days. You looked at it from one end to the other. It was a good reconnaissance. And you know that what I told you is true. It is a land flowing with milk and honey. It is a prosperous land. You'll have a life like your people have not known for 400 years. Here it is. I'm opening that up to you. Prosperity is where I'm bringing you – not poverty. You looked for that land for 40 days. And then, when you got back, what did your spies report to you? You listened to the negative ten instead of the positive two, who were speaking for me. You thumbed your nose at me, after 40 days of seeing, and I led you in that reconnaissance. I showed you what I want you to see – to confirm what I was telling you. So, for every day of that 40 days, you shall bear your guilt a year – even 40 years, you shall know my opposition.

"You're going to leave Kadeshbarnea, and for the next 40 years, you're going to be wandering around in that desert. And one-by-one, we're going to bury everybody 20 years old and up. I, the Lord, have spoken. Surely this I will do to all this evil congregation, who are gathered together against me in this wilderness. They shall be destroyed, and there they shall die."

Well, this hit this exodus generation like a ton of bricks. It devastated them. Everything became clear to them immediately. They finally saw what fools they were. This is the same kind of experience that many Christians will have with the Judgment Seat of Christ, when, like a ton of bricks, it will hit them – what fools they were as a stewards of God, and the servants of the Most High God, in the lifetime allotted to them on this earth, and in the Ephesians 2:10 mission, of divine good works assigned to them. It will all come back with a blow of how far they have fallen short, and why would they have wanted to do that. To them, it was a terrible and great loss.

Well, the result was that they had to go back out, into that terrible wilderness. The result was that the people were devastated. So, they said, "We made a mistake. We'll go in." And Moses said, "No, you won't. It's all over." They said, "No, we're going to go in." They still wouldn't listen to the man who was in touch with truth. And they decided that they were going to go ahead anyhow. They were going to go up. And Moses said, "Don't do that. You're struck down. You're not going to charge into Kadeshbarnea. Now the Lord is not with you. You wanted to do it on your own. Good. Now, you've got it. You're on your own."

Well, as you know, they went up; they charged; and, they were devastated. And they had to pick up the remnants of what they had, and they walked out into the wilderness – one year for every day of the reconnaissance research of that good land.

So, here's a really classic example of what the costs of refusing to trust God, and to follow His plan; His guidance; and, his leadings. They thought that they were going to make their security. How many Christians have I seen, over a period of years, who thought they were providing for security? And then they lost it all, and it ended with them wandering in the wilderness. And that's how many Christians end up with their spiritual lives. Their whole lives, they are wandering in the wilderness of self-effort.

Paul, in Colossians, says, "Don't let anybody take away from you the divine provision of grace enablement, and the power system of the Holy Spirit. And Israel is an example of people who, today, are still trying to live the Mosaic Law way of life; a life of human effort; and, a life dependent upon your personal sincerity.

Moses was a faithful servant of God. He obeyed the leadership and the commandments of God. In Hebrews 3:5, we have this pointed out about Moses: "But now Moses was faithful in all his house (that is, in the tabernacle which God had him build). He was faithful in building that tabernacle for God's plan, as a servant, for testimony of those things which were to be spoken later. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is also our high priest, and He is faithful, because He is in the real temple, that the tabernacle on earth only symbolized.

Notice the next verse – Hebrews 3:6: "But Christ was faithful as a Son in His house." Christ was faithful in His house, which is the believers of the church age: "Whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence in the boast of our hope, confirmed until the end." We Christians are told, in Philippians, that we are now priests of God. Every Christian is his own priest under the Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest: "And we are called to be faithful in serving the Father as His priests. We are not to fail, as did the Exodus generation. Israel, at Kadeshbarnea, is a sad example of unfaithful believers, and the tragic loss suffered by them.

So, notice Hebrews 3:7. This is a quotation from Psalm 95, where it says, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart, as when they provoked Me in the day of trial in the wilderness." Now, we're speaking to you Christians; you Christians who are priests of God; and, you Christians who are special, divine blessing and provision, and His absolute promise: "I'll never leave you, nor forsake you. I'll give you everything you'll ever need."

"Where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw my works for 40 years. Therefore, I was angry with this generation, and said, "They always go astray in their heart, and they did not know My ways. As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest. Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, and falling away from the living God."

Yep, be careful that you do not follow their bad example – that you think that you're going to take care of yourself. Your mind could pop at any moment. Your heart could stop – zip. Everything could come to a halt immediately. You are breathing one breath at a time, and you're living one moment at a time by the grace of God. And that's it, and no more. So, where you looking to. Do you think that you're going to carry on and make it on your own? No, you're not.

Hebrews 3:13 says, "Encourage one another day-after-day, as long as it is still called today, lest any one of you be heartened by the deceitfulness of sins." So, here's an advisement for us Christians to encourage one another. When we see some Christian in our midst, carrying on in faithfulness to responding to God's guidance and call, we praise God for it. Our hearts go up, and in gratitude to Him, because you are an example to us all. What do we do? We say, "That's what I'm going to do. I'm going to be faithful. I'm going to be on the line. I want to be like Mrs. So-and-so, and like Mr. So-and-so, and like Miss So-and-so. I want to stand for the Lord with that way.

So, disobedience to the will of God, and His sacrifice, and His service to his will and service, denies the worship which is due Him. It's a violation of our priestly duty. This is to worship God as His priest by being faithful to what He calls us to do. So, a believer must always be on guard against negative volition to the plan of God in his life purpose.

Hebrews 3:12-15: "Take care, brethren, lest there should be, in any one of you, an unbelieving heart, falling away from the living God." And this is not falling away in salvation, but falling away in service: "But encourage one another, day-after-day as long as it is still called today, lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance from the end. While it is said: "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart as when they provoked Me." Do not follow the Jews' bad example. Beware of the hard heart. That is a callousness toward God that you'll have all eternity to regret.

So, do not place your confidence in yourself, instead of in your Heavenly father, or you'll end up spending years out in the desert.

Be careful about being opinionated. And the older you are, the more opinionated you tend to be, because we've been around, and we know everything. Only the Word of God is the opinion that is worth holding. Do not trust in the religious system of human effort, as represented by the Mosaic Law, instead of the grace-age, spiritual power system of doctrine, and the Holy Spirit. That is the capacity that you have. And when you break ranks, and you stumble, then we come to the confession of known sins. We repent; we admit it; it's all behind us; and, we're back on track for a life of significant living now. It's not always easy, but always significant – and a life of eternally rewarded: hearing the words of Christ, "Well done, good and faithful servant.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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