



"DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD"

"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12).



The pathway of Christ is filled with warning signs and remedies. The heart that departs is "evil" and its apostasy stems from "unbelief." All kinds of evil can flow out of the heart (Matt. 15:19). Unbelief is not necessarily something that man would readily classify as being evil, but it is. Anything that leads us away from God is evil. It is true that unbelief is often propped up by ignorance and pride; but envy, loving what is wicked, and being stubbornly unreasonable are more specific components of skepticism (envy, Acts 13:45; Mk. 15:10; loving unrighteousness, 2 Thess. 2:12; Jude 4; unreasonable, 2 Thess. 3:2). It is a lie to believe that faith is unreasonable. Paul spoke words of truth and reason (Acts 26:25). Atheism and its various forms of unbelief present the most unreasonable platform ever. Look only at what it proposes and applauds!

When the evidence for the truth is clearly presented, it is sinful to not believe it. Jesus rebuked the apostles for their unbelief for not heeding those who had seen Him after He had risen (Mk. 16:14). "...he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (Jn. 3:36). "But without faith it is impossible to please Him..." (Heb. 11:6).

The evil of departure is seen in considering what one actually departs from when he leaves God.

- **He departs from his duties to worship God.** God is worthy of worship, for He is worthy of all honor. "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created" (Rev. 4:11; cf. Ps. 18:3).
- **He departs from his duties to his brethren.** "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). Actions to the brethren are to the Lord (Mt. 25:40; Acts 9:1, 4).
- **He departs from the words of life.** When Jesus taught some things that offended some, many departed and followed Him no more (Jn. 6:66). Jesus asked the twelve if they also wanted to leave, to which Peter responded, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:68). Leaving Jesus results in leaving the words of life. What a sad loss!
- **He departs from a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3).** What hope for the soul does one have who walks away from God? To what guide can he trust in? To what can he look forward? To whom can he solicit strength in trial, and to whom can he thank when delivered? Leaving the living God is leaving a living well of truth and hope. "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).

The solution is daily exhortation (Heb. 3:13). The Christian's faith must be cared for *daily*. Where sin hardens the heart slowly, daily exhortation provides a remedy. "For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end" (Heb. 3:14).

