

Hebrews 3:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

Analysis

'Evil heart of unbelief' identifies the root problem—not intellectual doubt but moral rebellion against God. The warning 'departing from the living God' uses apostasia language, suggesting apostasy. Unbelief is not passive skepticism but active departure. The title 'living God' contrasts with dead idols and emphasizes covenant relationship.

Historical Context

This warning applies the wilderness generation's failure (Psalm 95:7-11) to the current readers. Just as Israel's unbelief prevented entering Canaan, their unbelief could prevent entering God's rest.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. Are there areas where unbelief is causing you to depart from fully trusting God?
2. How can you guard your heart against the subtle onset of unbelief?

Interlinear Text

Βλέπετε	ἀδελφοί	μήποτε	ἔσται	ἐν	τινι	ὑμῶν	καρδία
Take heed	brethren	lest	there be	in	any	of you	heart
G991	G80	G3379	G2071	G1722	G5100	G5216	G2588
πονηρὰ	ἀπιστίας	ἐν	τῷ	ἀποστῆναι	ἀπὸ	θεοῦ	ζώντος
an evil	of unbelief	in	^{G3588}	departing	from	God	the living
G4190	G570	G1722		G868	G575	G2316	G2198

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 17:5 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

Jeremiah 7:24 (Evil): But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

Jeremiah 17:9 (Evil): The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Jeremiah 18:12 (Evil): And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.

1 Corinthians 10:12 (Parallel theme): Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Hebrews 10:38 (Parallel theme): Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Hebrews 12:25 (Parallel theme): See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

Hebrews 12:15 (References God): Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

Jeremiah 11:8 (Evil): Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not.

Hebrews 3:10 (Parallel theme): Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

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