

While It Is Called Today (Heb 3:13)

November 19-21, Orlando FL

Introduction – We have been in a pandemic for 18 months. There is much division in the country. And natural disasters such as fire, storms, and floods abound. When so many things are changing so fast and so unexpectedly, we thank the Lord His loving kindness and His purpose toward us have never changed. We can hold on to Him. Ps 61:1 says, when I am overwhelmed, lead me to a rock which is higher than I! The Lord has proved to us He is our rock in all circumstances!

The Lord is returning soon. We have no time to waste or to wander. The Lord is returning to judge the wicked and to restore righteousness. All the lies will be exposed and the liars will be judged. The Lord is also returning to bring us to a higher ground, His own kingdom, where He is the king on the throne, and from Him flows to us His life and blessings. It is urgent for us to align our lives with God's love and our eyesight with His purpose.

The book of Hebrews gives us a sense of urgency. It emphasizes Today! Heb 3:13 urges us to encourage each other while it is Today. Heb 4:11 urges us to use diligence to enter into God's rest. It is therefore urgent for us to heed His word, to enter into His purpose, and to be set free from the bondage of sin and the world, and the power of darkness.

Hebrews 3 and 4 refer to a very difficult and trying time in the history of God's people, when they were in the wilderness between Egypt and the land of Canaan. It spanned 4 decades. There and then, a generation of men that came out of Egypt with Moses failed God's purpose and perished in the wilderness. A new generation grew up. They followed God faithfully and entered God's purpose at the end. Throughout the 40 years, they overcame many difficulties. Most remarkably, they rejected the temptation of returning to Egypt, which occupied the hearts of the previous generation all these years. They were ready to enter into Canaan in the 40th year. We will devote Sessions 1 and 2 to the story of their victory, and learn practical lessons from them.

An outstanding character of that generation was they wholly followed the LORD. It tells us we ought to wholly follow the Lord in our life! In Session 3 we will see from the words of Lord Jesus how we can follow Him in a real and practical way, wherever He goes.

Another outstanding character was that they together focused on God's purpose for them: to enter Canaan. Today it means we, His church, ought to fulfill God's purpose and be a testimony of Jesus. In Session 4 we shall look at a real example, the church in Philadelphia. Why were they precious in the eyes of Lord Jesus? And how can their story encourage us today?

1. A new generation growing up in the wilderness

- a. God's purpose and expectation for His people (Ex 4:22, 16:9)
 - i. Israel is my son, my first born
 - ii. A kingdom of priests, a holy nation
- b. That generation failed God's purpose (Heb 3:9,16)
 - i. Their hearts turned back to Egypt (Acts 7:39)
 - ii. The golden calf, a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex 32:1, Num 16:13)
 - iii. Let us make a captain and let us return to Egypt (Num 14:4)
- c. "But as surely as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD!" (Num 14:21)
 - i. The LORD stated this at the lowest point of Israel's spiritual condition.
- d. Caleb – Hebron, another spirit wholly following the LORD (Jos 14:6-14)
 - i. The meaning of Hebron to Caleb (Num 13:22, Jos 14:12-15)
 - ii. Another spirit, wholly following the LORD (Num 14:24)
- e. Joshua – the tabernacle, humble and teachable, a faithful servant
 - i. Joshua's heart did not leave the tabernacle; the Lord's Spirit never left him. (Ex 33:11, Num 27:18)
 - ii. He was humble, attendant of Moses then servant of God (Josh 1:1, 24:29)
 1. He was correctable, teachable (Ex 32: 17-18, Num 11:29)
 - iii. Wholly following the LORD (Num 32:12)
 - iv. Absolutely faithful and obedient (Jos 5:15, 11:15)
- f. The new generation – Chose God's purpose, not Egypt, focused and faithful in following the LORD (Num 14:31, De 31:6,7, Josh 24:31, Jud 2:7,10)
 - i. Against all odds, they were ready after 38 years.
 - ii. They entered into Canaan. They conquered the land. They had testimony.

2. Use diligence to enter into the rest (Heb 4:11)

- a. Difficulties and challenges facing the new generation
 - i. A sense of guilt and failure before the LORD
 1. The unbelief and hardened heart of the upper generation
 - ii. The great and dreadful wilderness
 - iii. The usual growing pain
- b. How did they overcome?
 - i. They remembered the LORD's expectation:
 1. My first born
 2. A kingdom of priests, a holy nation
 3. The whole earth shall be filled with My glory
 - ii. They had good examples of Caleb and Joshua
 - iii. They had God's spoken word – commandments, tabernacles, sacrifices (De 8:3)
 - iv. They knew the LORD and His work for Israel. (Jos 24:31, Judges 2:7,10)
 1. The LORD's Spirit was with them. (Caleb, Joshua, Othniel, Achsah)
- c. Their testimony
 - i. A people that dwells alone, not reckoned among the nations. (Num 23:9, 24:2, 5)
 - ii. The two spies (Josh 2:14)
 - iii. Othniel (Josh 15:16-17, Jud 3:9-10)
 - iv. Achsah (Josh 15:18-19, John 7:37-39)
- d. God's expectation for us Today
 - i. Partakers of the heavenly calling;
 1. Seeing Christ, as Son over His house (Heb 3:1,6)
 - ii. Know His ways, His rest and His voice (Heb 3:10,11,15)
 1. They err in heart, not knowing My ways (Heb 3:10)
 2. They shall not enter My rest. (3:11)
 3. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. (3:15)
 - iii. Enter God's rest
 1. The Sabbath rest: God's purpose satisfied, work done, God rested
 - a. This is our true rest! (Heb 3:11, Heb 4:3-5,8-10)
 - b. Entering God's rest is to enter God's purpose.
 2. Share in Christ, Be His companions (Heb 3:14)
 3. Jesus leads us into God's rest (Heb 4:8-9), into Christ Himself.
 - a. From Him, through Him and unto Him (Col 1:16)
 - iv. Use diligence to enter that rest, while it is today (Heb 4:11, 3:13)
 1. Vision – As Caleb never forgot Hebron, we will never forget God's heart purpose for His people: Christ and His church.
 2. Servant - As Joshua was, we want to be humble, teachable, faithful servants.
 3. Purpose - Like the new generation, we choose God's purpose, not the world. And hold it fast by faith.
 4. Follow - Follow Jesus and the Holy Spirit, whole heartedly

3. Wholly following the Lord

- a. As a sheep following the shepherd (John 10)
 - i. My sheep knows my voice and knows me (John 10:4, 14).
 - ii. The path of righteousness Ps 23:3
 - iii. Thy rod and Thy staff (Ps 23:4)
- b. Take up the cross and follow me (Matt 16)
 - i. Deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me (Matt 16:24)
 - ii. In this verse, the cross separates the self and Lord Jesus.
 - 1. It enables us to say no to ourselves, and say yes to Lord Jesus;
 - 2. And to come out of ourselves into Christ Jesus.
- c. Follow Jesus as a servant, and be where He is (John 12)
 - i. A grain of wheat (12:24)
 - ii. He that hates his soul in this world (12:25)
 - 1. Love not the world and things of the world (1John 2:15-17)
 - iii. If anyone serves me, let him follow me. Where I am, there shall my servant be. (12:26)
 - 1. David: I have set the LORD continually before me. (Ps 16:8)
- d. Follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Rev 14:4)
 - i. Having the same mind, same feeling, and same will
 - ii. All the overcomers

4. The Philadelphia church (Rev 3:7-12)

- a. Lord Jesus introduce Himself: The holy, the true, He that has the key of David -- (3:7)
- b. They have kept His word and His name (3:8)
 - i. They loved the Lord: His word and His name (3:8b)
 - 1. Kept His word
 - 2. Kept His name
 - 3. Different from Pergamos
 - ii. An opened door – opened to heaven and to men (3:8a)
- c. They do not lie – They put to shame the synagogue of Satan, the liars (3:9a)
 - i. Those from Satan said they were Jews but they lied
 - ii. The meaning of true Jews, true Israel, true circumcision
- d. As a church they glorify the Lord - I have loved you (3:9b)
 - i. Christ loves the church --- that they may be a glorious church (Eph 5:25,27)
- e. They are walking with Lord Jesus on the way of the cross – You have kept the word of My endurance (3:10)
 - i. They had walked with Him on the way of the cross.
 - ii. The word of the cross (1Cor 1:18)
 - iii. I will keep you out of the hour of trial (3:10b).
- f. They are a testimony - My father's name, God's city's name, my new name (3:11)
 - i. You have a testimony worthy of these 3 names!
 - ii. Compared with the Ephesian church whose lampstand may be removed.
- g. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches!

趁著還有今日（希伯來書 3:13）

11 月 19-21 日，Orlando FL

前言——我們已經處於疫情中 18 個月了。這個國家有很多意見的分歧。火災、風暴和洪水等自然災害比比皆是。當許多事情變化如此之快、如此出乎意料時，我們感謝主，祂對我們的慈愛和旨意從未改變。我們可以緊緊抓住祂。詩篇 61:1 說，當我不知所措時，領我到那比我更高的磐石！主已向我們證明祂在任何情況下都是我們的磐石！

主很快就要回來了，我們沒有時間可以浪費或徘徊。主回來審判惡人，恢復公義。所有的謊言都將被揭穿，說謊者將受到審判。主要回來，帶我們到一個更高之處，就是祂自己的國度，在那裡祂是坐在寶座上的王，生命和祝福從祂那裡流向我們。我們迫切需要讓我們的生活與神的愛保持一致，讓我們的眼光與祂的旨意保持一致。

希伯來書給我們一種緊迫感，它強調今天！希伯來書 3:13 敦促我們總要趁著還有今日，天天彼此相勸。希伯來書 4:11 敦促我們要務必竭力進入那安息。因此，我們迫切需要聽從祂的話，進入祂的旨意，從罪惡和世界的捆綁，以及黑暗的權勢中得釋放。

希伯來書第 3 章和第 4 章提到了神的子民，一段非常艱難和試煉的歷史，當時他們在埃及和迦南地之間的曠野，它跨越了 40 年。那時，與摩西一同出埃及的一代人違背了神的旨意，在曠野中滅亡。新一代長大了，他們忠心跟隨神，最終進入神的旨意。40 年來，他們克服了許多困難。最引人注目的是，他們拒絕了多年來一直佔據著上一代人的心的回到埃及的誘惑。他們準備好在第 40 年進入迦南。我們將用第 1 堂和第 2 堂，講述他們勝利的故事，並向他們學習實際的功課。

那一代人的一個突出特點是他們完全跟隨耶和華。它告訴我們，我們應該在生活中完全跟隨主！在第三堂，我們會從主耶穌的話語中看到，無論祂往哪裡去，我們如何能夠真實、實際地跟隨祂。

另一個突出的特點是他們一起專注於神對他們的旨意：進入迦南。今天，這意味著我們，就是祂的教會，應該完成神的旨意，成為耶穌的見證。在第 4 堂中，我們將看一個真實的例子，就是非拉鐵非的教會。為什麼他們在主耶穌眼中是寶貴的？他們的故事今天如何激勵我們？

1. 新一代在曠野中長大

- a. 神對祂百姓的目的和期望（出 4:22, 16:9）
 - i. 以色列是我的兒子、我的長子
 - ii. 祭司的國度、聖潔的國民
- b. 出埃及的一代在神旨意上失敗了（來 3:9,16）
 - i. 他們的心歸向埃及（徒 7:39）
 - ii. 金牛犢，流奶與蜜之地（出 32:1；民 16:13）
 - iii. 我們不如立一個首領回埃及去吧！（民 14:4）
- c. 『我指著我的永生起誓，遍地要被我的榮耀充滿！』（民 14:21）
 - i. 耶和華在以色列人屬靈光景的最低點說出這話
- d. 迦勒 - 希伯崙的異象；另一個靈專一跟從主（書 14:6-14）
 - i. 希伯崙對迦勒的意義（民 13:22；書 14:12-15）
 - ii. 另一個靈，專一跟從主（民 14:24）
- e. 約書亞 - 會幕、謙卑受教、忠心的僕人
 - i. 約書亞的心沒有離開會幕；主的靈從未離開他。（出 33:11；民 27:18）
 - ii. 他謙卑，是摩西的幫手，後來是神的僕人（書 1:1, 24:29）
 1. 他是可以糾正的，可以受教的（出 32:17-18；民 11:29）
 - iii. 專心跟隨耶和華（民 32:12）
 - iv. 絕對忠心和順服（書 5:15, 11:15）
- f. 新一代選擇神的旨意，拒絕埃及，專心、帶著信心跟隨主（民 14:31；申 31:6,7；書 24:31；猶 2:7,10）
 - i. 儘管困難重重，但他們在 38 年後準備好了。
 - ii. 他們進入了迦南。他們征服了這片土地。他們有見證。

3. 竭力進入安息（來 4:11）

- a. 新一代面臨的艱難和挑戰
 - i. 在神面前感覺虧欠和失敗
 - 1. 上一代的不信和剛硬
 - ii. 大而可畏的曠野
 - iii. 成長的痛苦
- b. 他們如何勝過？
 - i. 記得耶和華的期望：
 - 1. 長子
 - 2. 祭司的國度、聖潔的國民
 - 3. 全地要充滿我的榮耀
 - ii. 有迦勒和約書亞的榜樣
 - iii. 有神口中所說一切的話——誠命、會幕、獻祭（申 8:3）
 - iv. 認識耶和華和祂為以色列所做的事（書 24:31；士 2:7,10）
 - 1. 耶和華的靈與他們同在（迦勒、約書亞、俄陀聶、押撒）
- c. 他們的見證
 - i. 獨居的民，不列在萬民中。（民 23:9, 24:2,5）
 - ii. 兩個探子（書 2:14）
 - iii. 俄陀聶（書 15:16-17；猶 3:9-10）
 - iv. 押撒（書 15:18-19；約 7:37-39）
- d. 今天神對我們的期望
 - i. 同蒙天召的弟兄們：
 - 1. 視基督為兒子，治理神的家（來 3:1,6）
 - ii. 知道耶和華的作為、祂的安息、祂的聲音（來 3:10,11,15）
 - 1. 他們心裡常常迷糊，竟不曉得我的作為（3:10）
 - 2. 他們斷不可進入我的安息（3:11）
 - 3. 你們今日若聽祂的話，就不可硬著心，像惹祂發怒的日子一樣（3:15）
 - iii. 進入神的安息
 - 1. 安息日的安息：滿足了神的旨意，完成了工作，神休息了
 - a. 這才是我們真正的安息！（來 3:11, 4:3-5,8-10）
 - b. 進入神的安息就是要進入神的旨意
 - 2. 在基督里有份（來 3:14）
 - 3. 耶穌帶領我們進入神的安息（來 4:8-9），就是進入基督自己。
 - a. 出於祂、靠著祂、進入祂（or 向著祂）（西 1:16）
 - iv. 趁著還有今日，竭力進入那安息（來 4:11, 3:13）
 - 1. 不忘記異象——正如迦勒永遠不會忘記希伯倫，我們永遠不會忘記神心中對祂子民的旨意：基督和祂的教會。
 - 2. 做謙卑忠心的僕人——就像約書亞一樣，我們想成為謙卑、受教、忠心的僕人。
 - 3. 守住主的目的——像新一代一樣，我們選擇神的目的，而不是世界，並憑著信心持守它。
 - 4. 跟隨耶穌 - 全心全意地跟隨耶穌和聖靈

3. 全心跟從主

- a. 像羊跟隨牧人（約 10）
 - i. 我的羊認識我的聲音，也認識我（約 10:4,14）。
 - ii. 義路（詩 23:3）
 - iii. 你的杖和你的竿（詩 23:4）
- b. 背起十字架跟從耶穌（太 16）
 - i. 捨己，背起他的十字架，跟從耶穌（太 16:24）
 - ii. 在這節經文中，十字架將己和主耶穌分開。
 - 1. 它使我們能夠對己說不，對主耶穌說是；
 - 2. 並且從我們的己出來，進入基督耶穌裡。
- c. 做僕人跟隨耶穌（約 12）
 - i. 一粒麥子（12:24）
 - ii. 在這世上恨惡自己生命的（12:25）
 - 1. 不要愛世界和世界上的事（約壹 2:15-17）
 - iii. 若有人服事我，就當跟從我；我在那裡，服事我的人也要在那裡(12:26)
 - 1. 大衛：我將耶和華常擺在我面前（詩 16:8）
- d. 羔羊無論往哪裡去，他們都跟隨（啟 14:4）
 - i. 有相同的心思、感覺和意志
 - ii. 所有的得勝者

4. 非拉鐵非的教會（啟 3:7-12）

- a. 主耶穌自我介紹：聖潔、真實和權柄（3:7）
- b. 他們守了主的道和主的名（3:8）
 - i. 他們愛主：祂的道和祂的名（3:8b）
 - 1. 遵守祂的道
 - 2. 沒有棄絕祂的名
 - 3. 不同於別迦摩教會
 - ii. 敞開的門——向天和向人敞開（3:8a）
- c. 他們不說謊——他們叫撒旦一會的蒙羞（3:9a）
 - i. 撒旦一會的人說他們是猶太人，但他們說謊
 - ii. 真猶太人、真以色列人、真割禮的意義
- d. 作為教會，他們榮耀主——我是已經愛你了（3:9b）
 - i. 基督愛教會——使他們成為榮耀的教會（弗 5:25,27）
- e. 他們在十字架的路上與主耶穌同行——他們守了耶穌忍耐的道（3:10）
 - i. 他們在十字架的路上與祂同行。
 - ii. 十字架的道理（林前 1:18）
 - iii. 我必免去你的試煉（3:10b）。
- f. 他們有見證，配代表神的名、神城的名和主耶穌的新名（3:11）
 - i. 你有一個配得上這三個名字的見證！
 - ii. 與燈臺可能被挪去的以弗所教會相比。
- g. 有耳的，就當聽聖靈對眾教會所說的話！（這些話是說給我們聽的）