

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

Authority is an offensive word to many people in any generation. Some say: “Don’t restrict my freedom. I can do whatever I want.” Other protest: “There is no absolute truth. I just follow what my heart says is right.” Not only young people tend to be rebellious. We are all inclined to break rules. The notice reads: “Free Sample. Take One.” But we have an urge to grab more. The sign says 40 MPH. But the impatient driver behind you is about to kiss your rear bumper. But no one questions an authority when they need help from them. People who call 911 expect someone will answer them right away. I assume those diplomas hanging on the walls are real when I see a doctor. Authority is more than about power or control. It also means knowledge and skills. You must trust an authority when you seek help from them. You will follow their instructions if you believe in their expertise. If we listen to a specialist, how much more should we submit to God? He is the ultimate authority of all truths. However, the Old Testament Israelites disobeyed God. They suffered a great loss. The author of Hebrews recalls some pain history of his ancestors in chapter 3. We are no better than them. If not because of God’s grace, no one can be saved. From their failure, we see that there is a great cost for rejecting God; but there is also great blessings for receiving Him.

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 忠心的管家 Faithful Steward

So far the author tells us that Jesus is the Superior Son. He is superior to the angels, and He is our Superior Brother. In chapter 3, the author cites the experience of Moses. He was a faithful steward of God. The Jews consider Moses as a national hero. His name is synonymous with the Old Testament Law. God gave His Law through Moses on mount Sinai. Moses and Jesus have a few things in common. They were both servants appointed by God. They were both faithful in their duties. However, Moses was only a steward, but Jesus was God’s Son. The passage describes Moses as a foreman for a building project, but Jesus was the chief architect and owner. As such, Jesus deserves a greater honor than Moses. What does the “house” represent? It is God’s household. In other words, it is the sum total of all the believers throughout history. The author highlights Moses’ work as a prophet in this chapter. Verse 5 says Moses testified “...to what would be said in the future.” The duty of a prophet is more than telling things that will happen in the future. A prophet is a spokesperson for God. Faithfulness is a requirement. A prophet cannot pick and choose what messages he wants to convey. He should not be afraid to tell the truth, although it is not something the audience like to hear. The faithfulness of Moses is a stark contrast to the disobedience of the Israelites. The same command of faithfulness is repeated in the New Testament for pastors. For example, Paul writes in 2 Timothy 4:2-3 – **2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season... 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine...** Here “preaching” can mean both sharing the gospel to non-believers and teaching the Bible

to believers. If Timothy and churches stop sharing the truth, then where else can people hear it? God's command has not changed from the Old Testament to the New. We must be faithful in delivering God's Word, whether or not people accept it. God never guarantees us the so-called famous. But He asks us to be faithful. After all, we are only God's stewards. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to revive dead souls and give people spiritual appetite. We can come up with creative way to teach God's Word. But we must be faithful in our duties, whether or not we see immediate results. A testimony from a retired pastor gives me much encouragement. He ended his ministries in a smaller church, which is located close to a megachurch. He understood that people are naturally attracted to the big church because it has more manpower and resources. He prayed that his goal was not to preach to a bigger audience. He just wanted more people to hear the Bible. Throughout his tenure, his church never grew beyond a certain size. Some members relocated elsewhere and new people came in. At his retirement party, people made a poster for him. It was a painting of a tree. On a closer look, there were thousands of thumb-prints. Each one has a name under it. The pastor recognized most names. They are current and former members. The artwork was a token of people's love to thank the pastor for his faithful ministries. He did not build a big church of several thousand people. But he was faithful in doing what God entrusted him. Brothers and sisters: keep up the good work for God's Kingdom. Perhaps someone may say to you when you get to heaven: "You may not remember me. I was that naughty boy in your children Sunday school who always made trouble." Or: "I was that arrogant guy who said something mean when you shared the gospel with me in Shelby Farm." "I'm here because of what you did. Thank you!" But the best comment we should look forward to hearing will be from the Lord: "Good and faithful servant!"

## 2. 不信的懦夫 Faithless Cowards

Moses was a faithful steward of God. He was sent to lead a bunch of faithless cowards. They did not have faith in God. The author reviews the history of his ancestors by quoting Psalm 95. It is actually a psalm of praise. The writer praises God for His faithfulness. God rescued His people from Egypt, and He provided for their needs in the wilderness. The psalmist then condemns his people for their lack of faith. It is unthinkable for people who experienced so much grace and mercy from God to disbelieve Him. One historical background for this psalm is recorded in Exodus 17. The Israelites grumbled to Moses when there was no water. They questioned why Moses took them out of Egypt and allowed them to die of thirst. God showed them mercy by giving them water. But God did not want future generations to forget this incident. Verse 7 of the passage says: **And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"** Massah means testing and Meribah means quarreling. Moses gave that place some special names to remember the event. People quarreled with Moses for bringing them out from Egypt. They also tested God. It was outrageous for them to ask if God was indeed with them. People blame God all the time for His absence when something goes wrong! Why am I jobless, broke and ugly if God cares about me? Why are there war and disease if God is good? If God is real, everyone should be wealthy, healthy and happy. Brothers and sisters: it is one thing to be low in our faith; but it is a very different thing to be faithless. Do not let

your doubt become denial. Pray to the Lord instead: “God, I don’t know why I meet this challenge. You know how weak I am. Strengthen my faith and give me patience to wait for Your answer.” Unfortunately, the Israelites were faithless. A hallmark of their rebellion was their refusal to go to Canaan. Moses sent twelve spies to survey the land. They came back and reported with one voice that the place was indeed fertile. But those native people were big and strong. Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, encouraged others: “Guys, come on and let’s go. God will help us conquer the place.” But the other ten spies disagreed and said: “Are you insane? Those people look at us like grasshoppers. They will crush us under their feet!” Guess which side the rest of the people would listen? Numbers 14:2-3 record: **2 All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, “If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! 3 Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?”** The more you exaggerate a potential problem, the bigger your fear. They questioned: “Why this, why now and why me?” They forgot that they must go through some battles before they could take over Canaan. Had they forgotten the long list of miracles God had performed: the Ten Plagues, dividing of the Red Sea, provision of manna, and overcoming foreign enemies? What other proofs did they still need to convince them that God was with them? Those faithless Israelites hardened their hearts. They determined to reject God despite what they heard and saw. It is true that they did not need to fight the Canaanites if they stayed in Egypt. But they would never enter the Promised Land either! Likewise, you will never face a car problem if you do not have a vehicle. You will never argue with your spouse or kids if you stay single. In fact, you will never have any life issue if you do not exist! If we let that kind of logic sink in, then every blessing from God will look like Satan’s curse. New problems can be opportunities to grow our faith. First, we need to look back. Recall the last time when God showed His faithfulness. It can be a relational, health or financial issue. Second, we need to look up. Has God changed? No. His faithfulness and power remain forever. His love and will for us are the same. Then thirdly, if all those facts are valid then we can look forward. God will be faithful to the end. Do not be faithless cowards. By God’s grace, He can turn our fear into faith.

### 3. 美好的獎賞 Favorable Reward

Moses was faithful to God. But the majority of the Israelites in that generation were faithless. The author encourages his readers not to give up like their ancestors. God has reserved a favorable reward for His faithful followers. The author borrows the concept of “rest” from Psalm 95. God prepared Canaan as a resting place for those Israelites. It was a permanent home unlike the wilderness. God provided them resources to grow food. God also protected them from enemies and natural disasters. God promised to take care of all their needs if they put their trust in Him. All those benefits were the results of making Jehovah their God. Unfortunately, they did not receive any of those blessings because of their disbelief. The author cautions his readers not to repeat the same sin. This is the second warning passage in the book. This “rest” is more than a home in Canaan. It symbolizes an eternal rest God had prepared for His children. The readers had to stand firm and focus on this favorable reward. Remember this letter was sent to some Jewish Christians. It was not written to some monks

in a Buddhist temple. Most of the recipients were genuine believers. But just like any church, some participants were non-believers. In this chapter, the author calls them “**brothers**” in verses 1 and 12. At the same time, he also alerts them in verse 12 and 13 that “**none of you**” may rebel against God. Therefore, most of them were Christians. An indicator of genuine faith that keeps repeating in Hebrews is perseverance. True believers will not yield to persecution. Perseverance is not a requirement for salvation, but it is a proof. We can compare Judas to Peter. They both learned from Jesus. At the end, Judas betrayed the Lord. He later regretted and committed suicide. Peter denied Jesus three times. He felt ashamed for his weakness. Jesus restored Peter’s faith after His resurrection. Subsequently, Peter became a key leader in the first Christian church. He showed courage when he was interrogated by some Jewish religious leaders. Eventually, Peter was martyred for his faith. Peter persevered, but Judas did not. The readers of Hebrews would face similar hardships. The author encourages them to “**hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast**” in verse 6, also “**hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first**” in verse 14. They must hold onto their faith like holding onto a lifesaver in a sea if you cannot swim. They must complete their course like running a track race. The mission was not done until they crossed the finish line. They must persevere in order to get a reward. There was at least one thing one thing they should do. Verse 13 says: **But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.** Each of them might go through unique trials. But together, they could encourage one another. Why does the author emphasize “today?” There can be at least two reasons. First, life is unpredictable. Those Christians might be here one day, and were gone the next day. They must cherish their fellowship. Second, unhealthy habits can easily build up. They could fall into a vicious cycle of rebellion if they followed the wrong crowd. God puts us in a faith community for similar reasons. We have an obligation to encourage one another. Have you noticed any church member absent from meetings for a while? Show them your care. Send them a few Bible verses as an encouragement. Do not just pray for them. Tell them that you are praying for. How are you doing so far in your Bible reading plan and other spiritual resolutions? Check on the progress of each other. Share your insights in small group meeting to motivate each other. We can easily get weak and lazy by ourselves. A piece of wood pulled out from a fire will soon smother. A flame will continue to burn only when each stick lights up the rest in the pile. We can become stronger Christians when we are together.

## 結論 CONCLUSION

There is a great cost for rejecting God; but there is also great blessings for abiding with Him. The Old Testament Israelites failed not because they did not know God. It was because they did not believe in Him. God includes their stories in the Bible for us to gain wisdom. He does not want us to follow their sins. Knowledge about God will not save a person. You must submit to God, and commit yourself to Jesus by faith. Perseverance is the proof of genuine faith. A true believer will fully trust God whether in smooth-sailing or in a stormy sea. After all, accepting Jesus is an instant decision. But following Jesus is a life-long pursuit.

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

權威對於任何年代的人來說都可能是難以接受的。有人說：「不要限制我的自由。我可以為所欲為。」其他人抗議：「世上沒有絕對的真理。我是跟著感覺做事的。」不僅年輕人會反叛，我們都傾向於破壞規則。告示說：「免費樣品，請拿一個。」但我們有衝動想要多拿幾個。標誌上寫著時限 40 英里，但是你後面那個不耐煩的司機好像快要撞上來。但是當人們需要幫助時，沒有人會質疑權威。打 911 的人希望有人馬上會接電話。當我去看醫生時，我假設那些掛在牆上的文憑是真的。權威不只是關乎權力或控制。權威也意味著知識和技能。當你尋求幫助時，你必須相信權威。如果你相信他們的專業知識，你便會跟著他們的建議去做。如果我們聽專家的話，我們豈不是更應該順服神嗎？神是所有真理的終極權威。然而，舊約中的以色列人沒有順服神。他們遭受了嚴重的損失。希伯來書的作者在第 3 章中回憶祖先的一些痛苦經歷。我們並不比他們好。如果不是神的恩典，沒有人可以得救。從他們的失敗中，我們看到拒絕神的代價是重大的；但接受祂也會帶來莫大的祝福。

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 忠心的管家 Faithful Steward

到目前為止，作者告訴我們耶穌是超越的兒子。祂比天使更超越，祂也是我們超越的弟兄。在第 3 章，作者引用了摩西的經歷。他是神忠心的管家。猶太人視摩西為民族英雄。他的名字和舊約律法是同義詞。神透過摩西在西奈山頒布律法。摩西和耶穌有一些共通點。他們都是神的僕人，他們都忠於職守。然而，摩西只是一個管家，而耶穌是神的兒子。這段經文將摩西形容為建築工程的工頭，但耶穌是建築師和屋主。因此，耶穌比摩西配得更大的尊榮。這裡的「房屋」代表什麼？它是指神的家。換句話說，它是歷史上所有信徒的總和。作者在這一章中強調了摩西作為先知的工作。第 5 節說，摩西「**…為要證明將來必傳說的事**」。先知的職責不只是預言將來會發生的事情，他們是神的代言人。忠心是對他們的基本要求。先知不能挑選他想要傳達的信息。他不應該害怕說實話，儘管聽眾不喜歡聽。摩西的忠心與以色列人的悖逆形成鮮明的對比。忠心也是在新約中對傳道人的同樣要求。例如，保羅在提摩太後書 4:2-3 說：**2 務要傳道，無論得時不得時…。3 因為時候要到，人必厭煩純正的道理…。**這裡的「傳道」既可以指向非信徒分享福音，也可以指向信徒教導聖

經。如果提摩太和教會停止分享真理，那麼人們還能從哪裡聽到這些信息呢？神的命令從舊約到新約並沒有改變。無論人們是否接受，我們都必須忠實地傳達神的話語。神從不保證我們會成功，但祂要求我們要忠心。畢竟，我們只是神的管家。是聖靈甦醒沈睡的靈魂，給人屬靈的胃口。我們當然可以想出創意的方式來教導聖經。但我們必須忠於我們的職責，無論我們是否看到立時的果效。一位退休牧師的見證給了我很大的鼓勵。他在一個比較小的教會結束他的事奉，那所教會靠近一間很大的教會。他明白人們自然會被大教會所吸引，因為它擁有更多的人力和資源。他的禱告不是要在大教會講道。他乃是希望有更多的人聽到聖經。在他的任期內，他的教會從來沒有增長至一定的規模。一些成員搬走，也有新人進來。在他的退休慶祝會上，會友們送給他一張海報。那是一幅樹的畫。仔細一看，有幾千個手指印，每個下面都有一個名字。牧師認得大多數的名字，他們是現在和過去的成員。他們用這幅圖畫來表達對牧師忠心服事的感謝。他沒有成立一間幾千人的大教會，但是他忠心地做好神託付給他的事情。弟兄姊妹：讓我們彼此勉勵，繼續為神的國努力。到了天堂時，也許有人會對你說：「你可能不記得我了。我是在你的兒童主日學班上那個頑皮鬼。」或者：「當你在 Shelby Farm 與我分享福音時，我很不客氣地回敬你幾句話。」「我現在能夠在這裡是因為你所做的。謝謝你！」但我們應該期待聽到的最好的讚賞是來自主：「良善又忠心的僕人！」

## 2. 不信的懦夫 Faithless Cowards

摩西是神忠心的管家。他被派去帶領一群不信的懦夫。他們對神沒有信心。作者引用詩篇 95 篇來回顧祖先的歷史。它實際上是一首讚美詩。作者讚美神的信實。神將子民從埃及拯救出來，並在曠野供應他們的需要。詩人接著責備他的同胞缺乏信心。經歷過神如此豐富的恩典和憐憫之後仍然不相信祂是難以想像的。出埃及記 17 章記載了這篇詩其中一段歷史背景。以色列人向摩西發怨言，因為他們沒有水喝。他們懷疑摩西為什麼把他們帶出埃及，讓他們渴死。後來神施憐憫，賜給他們水。但是神不希望後代忘記這件事。經文第 7 節說：他給那地方起名叫瑪撒，又叫米利巴；因以色列人爭鬧，又因他們試探耶和華，說：「耶和華是在我們中間不是？」瑪撒是試探的意思，而米利巴是吵架的意思。摩西給那個地方取了一些特別的名字來紀念那一事件。他們與摩西發生爭執，怪摩西將他們從埃及帶出來。他們還試探神。他們問神是否真的與他們同在，這真是太離譜了。當出現問題時，人們總是責怪神不在場！如果神真的關心我，為什麼我會失業、沒錢和長得難看？如果神是良善的，為什麼會有戰爭和疾病？如果神是真實的，那麼每個人都應該富有、健康和快樂。弟兄姊妹：信心不足是一回事；但對神沒有信心又是另一回事。不要讓你的懷疑變成否定。你可以向主禱告說：「神啊，我不知道為什麼會碰到這個挑戰。祢知道我

的軟弱。求祢堅固我的信心，給我耐心等候祢的回應。」很可惜，以色列人不相信神。他們悖逆的一個標誌是拒絕去迦南。摩西派了十二個探子去窺察那地方。他們回來時異口同聲地報告說那個地方確實是肥美，但那些土著高大威猛。其中兩個探子約書亞和迦勒鼓勵其他人：「手足們，我們上。神會幫助我們征服那個地方。」但其他十個探子卻說：「你瘋了嗎？那些人把我們看成蚱蜢。他們會把我們踩在腳下！」猜猜其他人會聽哪一邊？民數記 14:2-3 記載：2 以色列眾人向摩西、亞倫發怨言；全會眾對他們說：「巴不得我們早死在埃及地，或是死在這曠野。3 耶和華為什麼把我們領到那地，使我們倒在刀下呢？我們的妻子和孩子必被擄掠。我們回埃及去豈不好嗎？」你越把潛在的問題誇大，你只會越害怕。他們的意思是：「我們為什麼會遇到這個問題，為什麼是現在，為什麼是我？」他們忘記了他們必須經歷一些戰爭才能佔領迦南。難道他們忘記了神所行的一連串神蹟：十災、分開紅海、供應嗎哪、戰勝敵人？他們還需要什麼證據來證明神與他們同在？那些不信的以色列人心裡剛硬。儘管他們親耳聽到神也親眼看到神的作為，他們還是拒絕相信神。如果他們留在埃及，他們的確不需要與迦南人打仗。但他們也永遠進不了應許之地！同樣，如果你沒有車子，你就不會有修車的煩惱。如果你仍然單身，你就不會和配偶和孩子爭吵。事實上，如果你不存在，你永遠不會有任何生活上的問題！如果我們陷在這種邏輯的困境，那麼神的每一個祝福都會像撒旦的詛咒。新的問題可以成為信心增長的機會。首先，我們需要回頭看。回想上一次神顯示祂的信實的時候。可能是一個關係、健康或財務危機。其次，我們需要向上看。神有改變嗎？沒有，祂的信實和能力存到永遠。祂對我們的愛和旨意也不會改變。第三，如果這些都是事實，那麼我們就可以用信心往前看。神會保持信實。不要做不信的懦夫。靠著神的恩典，祂可以把我們的恐懼化成信心。

### 3. 美好的獎賞 Favorable Reward

摩西對神忠心。但是那一代的大多數以色列人不相信神。作者鼓勵他的讀者不要像他們的祖先那樣放棄。神為祂忠實的跟隨者保留了美好的獎賞。作者從詩篇 95 中借用了「安息」這個概念。神為以色列人預備迦南作為安息的地方。他們離開曠野，進入永久的家園。神會提供種植的資源。神也會保護他們遠離敵人和自然災害。神應許如果他們信靠祂，祂就會照顧他們所有的需要。一切的祝福都是以耶和華為神的結果。可惜的是，由於他們的懷疑，他們沒有得到任何這些祝福。作者提醒他的讀者不要重蹈覆轍。這是書中的第二個警告信息。這個「安息」不單是指迦南，它其實像徵神為祂的兒女準備永恆的安息。讀者必須站穩，注目這個美好的獎賞。我們要記住，這封信是寫給一些猶太基督徒的。它不是寄給住在寺廟的一些和尚。大多數收信人都是真正的信徒。但就像任何教會一樣，一些成員是非信徒。在這一章中，作者在第 1 節和第 12 節中稱

他們為「兄弟」。同時，他也在第 12 節和第 13 節中提醒他們「免得你們有人」悖逆神。因此，他們中間的大部份人是基督徒。希伯來書中重複提出持守真道是信心的一個明顯的標誌。真正的信徒不會屈服於信仰迫害。堅忍不是得救的條件，但它是得救的證明。我們可以把猶大和彼得作比較。他們都向耶穌學習。最後，猶大背叛了主。後來他後悔了並自殺。彼得三次不認耶穌。他為自己的軟弱感到羞愧。耶穌復活後恢復了彼得的信心。隨後，彼得成為第一所基督教會的主要領袖。當彼得被一些猶太宗教領袖審問時，他表現出勇氣。最終，彼得為信仰殉道。彼得堅守真道，但猶大沒有。希伯來書的讀者也會面對類似的困難。作者在第 6 節鼓勵他們要「將可誇的盼望和膽量堅持到底」，然後在第 14 節說他們要「將起初確實的信心堅持到底」。他們必須持守信心，像不會游泳的人在大海中抓緊救生圈一樣。他們也必須像田徑選手一樣完成比賽。直到他們衝過終點線，任務才算完成。他們必須堅持才能得到獎賞。起碼有一件事情可以幫助他們。第 13 節說：總要趁著還有今日，天天彼此相勸，免得你們中間有人被罪迷惑，心裡就剛硬了。他們每個人都可能面對獨特的考驗。但在一個群體裡，他們可以互相鼓勵。為什麼作者強調「今日」呢？至少有兩個原因。首先，生活是無法預測的。那些基督徒可能今天還在，明天就不見了。他們必須珍惜他們的團契。其次，不健康的習慣很容易累積。如果他們跟隨錯誤的思想，他們可能會跌倒。同樣，神把我們放在一個信仰群體中，我們有義務互相鼓勵。你有沒有注意到有些兄弟姐妹最近缺席聚會？你可以向他們表示關心。和他們分享幾節經文作為鼓勵。不要只為他們禱告，告訴他們你正在為他們禱告。到目前為止，你的讀經計劃和其他屬靈展望的進度如何？你可以和其他人互相督促，在小組聚會中分享你的心得來互相激勵。我們單獨一人時很容易變得軟弱和懶惰。從火中抽出來的一根柴很快就會熄滅。只有當一根木頭點燃其他的木頭時，火才會繼續燃燒。當我們在一起時，我們互相都可以成為更堅固的基督徒。

## 結論 CONCLUSION

拒絕神的代價是重大的；但接受祂也會帶來莫大的祝福。舊約以色列人失敗不是因為他們不認識神，乃是因為他們不相信神。神把他們的經歷收錄在聖經中，讓我們獲得智慧。神不希望我們仿效他們的罪。只擁有關於神的知識不能救一個人。你必須順服神，憑信心把自己交託給耶穌。堅守真道才是信心的證明。一個真正的信徒不論在一帆風順或是在波濤洶湧中都完全相信神。畢竟，接受耶穌是一個瞬間的決定，但跟隨耶穌是一生的追求。