

## Hebrews 3:7-19

The following passage deals with God's exploits for Israel and yet their rejecting God by not understanding God's ways and erring in their hearts. As a result judgment came upon them. The warning contained in these verses are consistent with the warnings God regularly gives through Scripture (Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9). *Today* is used 5 times, 3:7,13, 15; 4:7 (2x) in the warning that is now about to be given to the professing believers. Something to consider is the use of Psalm 95:7-11 in this section and its possible eschatological focus.

These verses apply to all of us, but are pointedly directed at those who know the truth but haven't responded, as we don't know how long life will be - now is the time to get right with God (see 2 Corinthians 6:1,2).

**7-11 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)**

Verses 7-11 is used as an illustration for the warning that will be given in chapter 4 and is taken from Psalm 95:7-11. It is recounting the rebellion of the nation of Israel in the wilderness wanderings.

7     *For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,*  
 8     *Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*  
 9     *When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.*  
 10    *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:*  
 11    *Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.*

### **Harden not your hearts,**

*"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."*     Acts 7:51

"Two things are assumed by the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 3:7-8: first, that human responsibility begins with the hearing of the voice, 'today if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts'; and, secondly, that when the voice is heard man is left free to obey or to disobey...We cannot study this Bible without being brought face to face with personal responsibility...A man in his choosing must choose definitely between right and wrong, light and darkness, good and evil...The second assumption of the text is that of the freedom of the will when the voice speaks. 'Today if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.' This assuredly means that we can harden them if we will; we can disobey, we can see the light and choose the darkness; we can gaze on the high and admire it, and then turn our face to the depths. It is equally true that the heart can yield, and there can be obedience...RESPONSIBILITY IS CREATED BY THE VOICE OF GOD; when the voice of God speaks, man's will is free to obey or to disobey."     Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, *Westminster Pulpit*, Vol. VII, pages 304-307

**as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:** Psalm 106:7-15

**When your fathers tempted me, proved me** - Exodus 17:3,7

*"And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"*

*"And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?"*

**and saw my works forty years** - the journey should have lasted only 11 days, Deuteronomy 1:2.

"Unbelief never has enough proof!"

- Split the Red Sea and destroyed the Egyptian army - Exodus 14:21-31
- The rock brought forth water - Exodus 17:1-7
- Provided deliverance through a bronze serpent - Numbers 21:4-9
- God provided bread from heaven - Exodus 16
- God led them by a cloud by day and fire by night - Exodus 40:34-38

**Wherefore I was grieved with that generation They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)**

The "rest" spoken of here can't be a "rest" in the land of Israel as that "rest" was provided centuries earlier than what David (see Hebrew 4:7) is writing about in Psalm 95.

The "rest" must be a future "rest." In Psalm 95 the rest was "in the land of Israel," Deuteronomy 12:9-10.

9        *For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.*  
10       *But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety;*

With the writer of Hebrews quoting Psalm 95, and applying it to the present situation, it seems the "rest" promised is also a time of "rest" in the land of Israel, but is speaking of a future time (the millennium).

"Do not make it another day of rebellion in which you will, once again, be denied entry into God's Sabbath, as they were denied entry into the land, but make sure it is a 'Today, if you obey his voice,' thus a time of redemption.

The Rabbis [speaking of Psalm 95:11] also gave an eschatological reading to the rest in this verse and Sabbath altogether."

Dr. Daniel Boyarin, *Two Notes on the Jewishness of the New Testament*, *Rivista Biblica*, pg. 458, 2013

"R. Kattina said: Six thousand years shall the world exist, and one [thousand, the seventh], it shall be desolate, as it is written, And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day (Isaiah 2:11). Abaye said: it will be desolate two [thousand], as it is said, After two days will he revive us: in the third day, he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight (Hosea 6:2).

It has been taught in accordance with R. Kattina: Just as the seventh year is one year of release in seven, so is the world: one thousand years out of seven shall be fallow, as it is written, And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day,' and it is further said, A Psalm and song for the Sabbath day, (Psalm 92) meaning the day that is altogether Sabbath and it is also said, For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past (Psalm 90).

The Tanna debe Eliyyahu teaches: The world is to exist six thousand years. In the first two thousand there was desolation; two thousand years the Torah flourished; and the next two thousand years is the Messianic era." Talmud Sanhedrin 97A

"Rest" (certainly *spiritual* "rest") comes through the work of Messiah Jesus and our putting our trust in Him (this will be seen clearly in chapter 4), but the writer seems to be imploring these professing Jewish believers to put their faith in Jesus so that they don't miss the future promise of the kingdom "rest" in Israel, as their earlier brethren missed the "rest" in the land of Israel after their desert wanderings.

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

Brethren here is a reference to the writer's Jewish relations (i.e. brethren is used in Acts this way):

*"And now, brethren, I [know] that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Acts 3:17*

*"Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent." Acts 13:26*

"Literally it is men-brethren, a very usual form in Greek; for every person knows that *ανδρες αθηναιοι* and *ανδρες περσαι* should not be translated men-Athenians and men-Persians, but simply Athenians and Persians." Adam Clarke's Commentary

If one is truly born again (saved) it is impossible to depart "from the living God." This is addressed in Hebrews 6 and we will consider it at that time.

The reason the heart is evil in unbelief is that you have turned from the living God!!

How do people usually depart from God?

As often as not through religion.

*"Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."* Jeremiah 1:11-13

*"Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?"* Matthew 15:1-3

**13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**

The command is to encourage your Jewish brethren to put their trust in Jesus as the Messiah. By extension, the challenge is for all believers to encourage unsaved people to put their trust in Jesus.

What is destructive is to let sin deceive you and harden your heart - Deuteronomy 29:18-20.

- 18 *Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;*
- 19 *And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst:*
- 20 *The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.*

**14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;**

"partakers" μετοχος metochos - this is the same word used in Hebrews 2:14 about Jesus "took part of the same" speaking of His becoming a man.

A mark of a true believer is continuance in the Christian life and discipline from God.

*"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"* Philippians 1:6

*"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."* 1 John 2:19

*"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."* Hebrews 12:6-8

**15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.**

An appeal is again made to individuals who are professing believers not to harden their hearts to the Lord -

*"He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."* Proverbs 29:1

The need is for faith -

*"I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not."* Jude 5

**16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.**

Some = the entire congregation

*"But all the congregation bade stone them [speaking of Moses and Aaron] with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel."*  
Numbers 14:10

Not all = Joshua and Caleb

*"Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD. And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed."* Numbers 32:11-13

In spiritual matters oftentimes the majority is wrong and the minority is right.

*"Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."* 1 Kings 19:18

*"But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."* Romans 11:4-5

*"Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."* Luke 13:23-24

**17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?**

Sin grieved God and was the cause of their not going into the land.

**18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?**

*Believed not* is not the usual word for believe.

αζπειψεω *apeitheo* {ap-i-theh'-o}  
to disbelieve (wilfully and perversely):--not believe, disobedient, obey not, unbelieving.

**19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.**

Faith is the final determiner whether or not you enter into Gods (spiritual) rest, and then ultimately into His "rest" in the land of Israel, during the millennium.

*Unbelief* is the usual word for faith (here used in a negative sense)

αζπιστια *apistia* {ap-is-tee'-ah}  
faithlessness, i.e. (negatively) disbelief (lack of Christian faith), or (positively) unfaithfulness (disobedience):--unbelief.