

Bible Study – Hebrews chapter 3:7-19

The Danger of Disbelief

In our last study, we see how Jesus is superior to Moses, one of the greatest men in Israel's history. Moses accomplished a lot in his lifetime for Israel: leading them out of Egypt to the Promised Land, giving God's Law for their righteous living, and caring for them during their entire journey, to name a few. As great as he was, we see how much greater Jesus is, being creator and king and ruling over all things.

In today's study, we will look at the warnings of disbelief and the continued encouragement to persevere in the faith.

Read Hebrews 3:7-19

The writer is warning its readers not to turn away from God and displaying unbelief in his Word and promises. He uses the example of the Israelites and their disbelief at the first entrance into the Promised Land at Kadesh Barnea and their resulting punishment as a warning.

Q. Read Psalm 95. Verses 8-11 are a subset of Psalm 95 (v. 7b-11). What was Israel's act of rebellion at Meribah and Massah (cf. Exodus 17:1-7)? What was their act of rebellion at Kadesh Barnea (cf. Numbers 13-14)? The author talks about 'rest'. What does this look like (cf. Genesis 2:2; Revelation 14:13)? What was the intended rest for the nation of Israel at that time (cf. Joshua 1:13-15, 21:43-45)?

Q. The act of disobedience by the Israelites serves as a warning to the readers of the book of Hebrews (see also 1 Corinthians 10:6-11). Can a Christian harden their heart? If so, what can cause their heart to be hardened and what does it look like? What is the effect of a hardened heart? What are some practical ways for Christians to prevent their hearts from being hardened?

Q. What are the “deceitfulness of sin”? Give examples of what it may look like. The writer instructs believers to exhort each other every day. What do you think the term ‘today’ is meant to imply? What are some practical ways we can exhort each other? What do you think it is meant “we have come to share in Christ”? How is this an encouragement to hold fast to our confidence in Jesus Christ?

Q. In verses 16-19, what is the writer trying to emphasize to his readers? Why is it important not to lament or wish for things from this world? How can this warning be an encouragement for us?

“Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it” – Sir Winston Churchill

The writer is exhorting the readers of Hebrews to learn from the example of the Israelites from history, specifically the generation that was called out of Egypt and to inherit the Promised Land. It was their unbelief in God’s ability to care for them that caused them to suffer and not find the ‘rest’ that was promised to them.

The writer gives this example as a warning to the Jewish and Gentile believers at the time, but it is also applicable to Christians today. This is so they can learn from the past and not repeat the same mistakes as the Israelites of the Old Testament. We are to be vigilant, every day, to guard our hearts that it not become hardened, which would draw us away from living a godly and sanctified life. At the same time, we are not alone, and this shows the importance of belonging to a local church so we can draw encouragement and support from the body of Christ. As the writer encourages us to exhort one another every day, let’s make this a daily habit to lift up our brothers and sisters.