

Be aware of the danger of disbelief

7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, 9 where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. 10 That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' 11 So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" 12 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. 14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. 15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." 16 Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? 17 And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? 18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. Hebrews 3:7-19

Summary of Chapters 1-2

Jesus is supremely unique and worthy, therefore...

...he deserves our complete trust

Vs. 7 – 11 This is a quote from Psalm 95:7-11

1. Don't be like the children of Israel in wilderness: *but, **we are...***
 - a. **Harden hearts:** heart does not refer to emotions, but to **thought**.
 - b. To harden one's heart is to act according to ones own **desires**
 - c. Evidence of this hardness from the Old Testament:
 - Massah, which means **rebellion** (Exodus 17:1-7). The Israelites lacked water, and did not believe that God walked with them. Moses was told to strike a rock with his staff and bring forth water to prove to them again that God was with them.
 - Meribah, which means time of **testing** (Numbers 20:1-13). Once again, the Israelites were without water. Once again they gossiped, complained and doubted. Moses did not follow God's command to speak to the rock, but struck the rock as he had in the previous lesson. God was faithful to provide water. However, Moses and Aaron failed the test because they were disobedient, and therefore, were not permitted into Promised Land
 - d. For 40 years, the Israelites saw the amazing miracles of what God had done for them:
 - Despite seeing ample evidence, they rebelled.
 - In the NT lesson: It had been 40 years since Jesus death and resurrection, so the author is warning this set of Jews: You've seen enough over these 40 years, so stop hardening your heart.
 - How often has God richly blessed us, but we rebel against God anyway?
2. **They will not enter into my rest:**
 - a. Refers to the Promised Land in the OT context, not to eternal **salvation**.
 - They did not enjoy the blessings here and now that God intended for them.
 - **Rest:** refers to place of blessing where there is no more striving, but only basking in the holy presence of God. Therefore there is no **fear**
 - b. God is angry:
 - God does not sit impassively in the face of sin, but becomes a consuming **fire**.
 - God is passionately opposed to our evil
3. God made an oath:

"If they inter into my rest, then my name will no longer be God."

Vs. 12 - 13

1. *Israel did not enter the rest, however...*
 - ...it is still available to us*
 - ...but, we won't receive it by following the laws of Judaism*
2. God opens up the opportunity to His blessing, but not all will take advantage of it.
 - a. At some point, the opportunity will be **removed** from the table.
 - b. Don't lose out on God's blessing by being rebellious.
 - c. God wants to bless us, but our rebelliousness prevents God from showering us with all of the blessings that God wants us to enjoy.
3. **Living God:** God is not a God of dogma and laws, but of **relationship**.
 - a. The Jews said, "*We are serving the same God, we are just doing so by going back to the law and to our roots.*"
 - b. They are rejecting a higher **revelation**: one of relationship, not law
4. **Encourage:** Christian fellowship is NOT **optional**, but necessary if we are to remain rooted in Christ
5. **Today:** refers to the length of our lives, not necessarily this 24 your period.
 - However, none of us know how long our lives will last.
 - As long as we live, submit to God and give God obedience.
 - The voice of God is sounding now: don't ignore it!!!!

Vs. 14 - 15

1. **Share in Christ:**
 - a. We are given an offering of blessing by God
 - b. Better translation: **Participators** with Christ
 - We have been offered the privilege to be a part of Christ's team
 - We are not just fans who sit on the sidelines and watch from the stands!!!!!!
 - c. What is required of us: simple trust and obedience
 - Trust: we are willing to stake our **life** on Jesus
 - Obedience: **do** what is asked. A doctor says, "I can cure you IF you obey my instructions." Yet, many people refuse to change their behavior.
2. There is a limit to this offer from God
 - a. We have the opportunity **Today** (*no NT author uses this word more often. He senses the urgency*)
 - b. However, none of us are certain when **Today** may end: take advantage of this opportunity.
 - c. Now may be the only time.

Vs. 16 - 18

1. The 3 questions in these verses emphasize the spiritual privilege of the Jews, who despite this privilege, still sinned grievously.
2. Don't waste our opportunity by trying to find salvation in something other than **Christ**.

Vs. 19

1. God is not a despotic God who sends us to **hell**:
 - our unbelief leads to separation from God
 - unbelief refers to our disobedience and rebellion against God.
2. We alienate ourselves from God, and to slip away from faith is ultimately **fatal**