

Heb 3:7-15

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,
 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
 In the day of trial in the wilderness,
 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,
 And saw My works forty years.
 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation,
 And said, 'They always go astray in their heart,
 And they have not known My ways.'
 11 So I swore in My wrath,
 'They shall not enter My rest.'"

Verses 7-11 are a quote from Psalm 95.

The author is referring to the time that the Lord led the Hebrew slaves

- out of Egypt from slavery
- and toward the promise land.

The scenario was 600,000 men plus women and children,

- so probably about 1 1/2 million people
- and maybe upwards of 3 to 3 1/2 million people,
- and their live-stock, leaving Egypt
- after 430 years of bondage.

We're told in the book of Exodus

- that the Lord went before them by day
- in a pillar of cloud to lead the way,
- and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.

The journey should have taken 13 days max,

- but it ended up taking 40 years
- because of a generation
- that was rebellious against God

and because of that,

- God didn't allow that generation to enter.

Instead, He took their children into the promise land.

- Only two people over the age of 20
- from that generation entered the promised land,
- that was Joshua and Caleb.

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,
8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
In the day of trial in the wilderness,

- The hardening of the heart
- comes before the rebellion
- and it's typically a gradual process.

But this really begins in the heart when a person stops feeding his faith.

Eventually he begins to ignore the nudges

- from the Holy Spirit and
- begins to feel less and less conviction.

And to fill the void, he turns to other things, we call it sin.

The author is telling them to learn from their forefathers.

he says "today, if you hear His voice!"

That's the ESV version, if you hear, not if you will hear.

There is a sense of urgency here,

The author says, "if you hear His voice,"

This requires a person to hear.

If you hear His voice, He says, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

The Hebrews were exhorted in chapter 2,

Heb 2:1

1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

People develop certain expectations for others, even for God.

Story of Lazarus: Jesus delays

When Lazarus died, Jesus knew he was dead, He said so in John 11:14.

John 11:15

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

There was a greater miracle going to take place than healing someone,

- it was raising someone from the dead.

Jesus would later say that He is the resurrection and the life.

Despite the Hebrews seeing God's power and what He did for them,

- they sat there and complained,
- they doubted and they disobeyed.

People are easily disappointed and blame God.

We've all had questions for God at times that only He can answer.

The real question is,

- what are we going to do
- when things come up in our life
- that we don't have the answers to.

David said,

Ps 42:11

11 Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

ESV

There is nothing wrong in wanting to understand God's justice,

- as long as that's what the intent is.

Job 13:15

15 Though he slay me, I will hope in him;
yet I will argue my ways to his face.

ESV

He simply wanted to present his case to God.

Heb 3:8-9

8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
In the day of trial in the wilderness,

9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,
And saw My works forty years.

Verse 9 is in reference to those that came out of Egypt.

They put God to the test by their complaints,

Ex 16:3

3 And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Paul said, "in all things I have learned to be content."

If we can't have what we like, maybe we should start liking what we have,

- and learn to be content with
- what the Lord has given us.

It's only in Jesus that we can truly be content.

David said in Psa 23, the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He understood the role of a shepherd.

- He had a close relationship to his sheep,
- leading them to pastures and water
- all while watching for danger,
- even willing to risk his life to rescue stray sheep.

You and I are like sheep.

- We are weak and vulnerable
- and dependent on the Lord.
- We rely on Him to provide our needs.

After 400 years of slavery, the Lord delivered the Jews from slavery.

- They were now free
- and on their way to the promise land.

So what happens? God parts the red sea,

- the Hebrews go thru on dry ground,
- the Egyptian army follows them,
- and God swallows them in the sea.

The Lord provided for the Israelites for 40 years in the desert.

Still the Jews complained about what they didn't have.

9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,
And saw My works forty years.

In the NT, there were three cities which saw the works of Christ,

- that are more accountable during Jesus' ministry.
- They were Bethsaida, Capernaum and Kora
- and they were more accountable because
- they witnessed more of His miracles.

Jesus performed more miracles there than anywhere else.

- Those three cities rejected Him.

Matt 11:21-24

21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

John said:

John 12:37

37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,

Some of the miracles in Capernaum included:

- Healing of a paralyzed man lowered through the roof (Mark 2:1-12)
- Healing the centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10)
- Casting out a demon in the synagogue (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37)
- Healing Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31)
- Healing many who were sick and demon-possessed (Mark 1:32-34)
- Raising Jairus' daughter from the dead (Mark 5:21-43; likely near Capernaum)
- Healing the woman with the issue of blood (on the way to Jairus' house) (Mark 5:25-34)

Miracles in Bethsaida included:

- Feeding of the 5,000 (likely nearby, on a hillside) (Luke 9:10-17)
- Healing a blind man (in stages) (Mark 8:22-26)

As for Chorazin, we're not given specifics about miracles there

- but Matt 11 and Luke 10
- reference Chorazin in a rebuke.

But, much like those cities rejected Christ and were ungrateful,

- that's how it was for the Hebrews
- rejecting God in the OT

Heb 3:10

10 Therefore I was angry with that generation,
And said, 'They always go astray in their heart,
And they have not known My ways.'

When we see a child being disobedient to his parents,

- most people instinctively think of the child's actions,
- he's misbehaving, he's being disobedient.
- Most don't think of it as a heart condition.

When the kingdom of Judah was conquered by the Babylonians it wasn't merely a political move by the Babylonians,

- but judgement from God because
- the people of Judah continually rebelled against God

Zech 7:11-12

11 But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear. 12 They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the Lord of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the Lord of hosts.
ESV

Those people actively and willfully disobeyed God

- by turning a stubborn shoulder.

To turn a stubborn shoulder was a farming metaphor

- like an ox refusing to accept
- the yoke on his shoulders.

And stopping their ears that they might not hear

- was like taking a finger to each ear

Notice in verse 12 they made their hearts diamond-hard.

Heb 3:15

15 "Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

This implies that people have a choice whether to harden or not harden their heart

Bitterness and unforgiveness sets in the person

- and they refuse to reconcile.

But God has a way of softening a person's heart.

I wonder how many people could have been saved from

- the pits of hell had someone simply loved them.

Prov 15:1

1 A soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.

Heb 3:11

11 So I swore in My wrath,
'They shall not enter My rest.'

Rest was something the Lord meant for Israel once they entered the promise land.

However, because of their sin and unbelief,

- they didn't enter the promise land.

You and I as Christians have trials on this earth.

- But the day is coming when God will give us rest.
- Even today we can rest in Him.

Matt 11:28-29

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29
Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you
will find rest for your souls.

The next section of Hebrews 3 encourages us to watch our heart,

- to encourage the brethren
- and to hold on to our faith in the Lord.

When a person allows sin in his life,

- his heart slowly hardens,
- and he slowly begins to ignore
- the soft still voice of God's calling.

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

The warning is to the brethren, those believing in Christ.

The warning is if a person develops an unbelieving heart,

- he's in danger of departing from God.

Israel's refusal to trust in God

- kept them from entering the promise land.

The same Greek word "aphistemi" was used in Luke 8 in the parable of the Sower, Luke 8:13

13 But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

The word was also used in 1 Tim 4:1

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons

With that said, verse 13 tells us

13 but (to) exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

As iron sharpens iron we are to exhort one another daily.

But we can't encourage one another unless we are together.

Heb 10:25

25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

As the day draws nearer, which day, the day of Christ,

14 For we have become partakers of Christ (we now share in the benefits of Christ as Christians) if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821)

In his final years, Napoleon—once a powerful emperor—was exiled to the remote island of Saint Helena. During his exile, he had time for reflection, and there are records suggesting he contemplated Jesus Christ deeply.

Evidence of Contemplation:

- **Napoleon is famously quoted as saying:**

“I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man... Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him.”