

Do Not Harden Your Hearts --
The Peril of Unbelief
HEBREWS 3:12-19

Article V: Progressive Revelation

- ***We affirm*** - that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive.
- ***We deny*** - that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it.
- ***We further deny*** - that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

Hebrews 3:7-11

- 7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says,
- “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,
8 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME,
AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS,
9 WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED Me BY TESTING Me,
AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS.
10 “THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION,
AND SAID, ‘THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART,
AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS’;
11 AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH,
‘THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.’”

Hebrews 3:12-19

- 12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, 15 while it is said,
 - “Today if you hear His voice,
 - Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me.”
- 16 For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

4 Historical Periods

- There are four historical periods being referenced by the author in this passage of Hebrews:
- 1. his own people reading the words of Hebrews
- 2. the people addressed by the Psalmist in Psalm 95
- 3. and then ultimately the Jews being addressed in Exodus 17:1-7 and Numbers 20
- 4. The 4th audience is us in the present day.

Psalm 95:7-11

7 For He is our God,
And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.
Today, if you would hear His voice,
8 Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, [*Psalm 95:1-6*]
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,
9 “When your fathers tested Me,
They tried Me, though they had seen My work.
10 “For forty years I loathed that generation,
And said they are a people who err in their heart,
And they do not know My ways.
11 “Therefore I swore in My anger,
Truly they shall not enter into My rest.”

Exodus 17:1-3 - Meribah

- This is the reference to the first “no-water” incident after coming out of Egypt:
- 17 Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water that we may drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?” 3 But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, “Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”

Exodus 17: 4-7 – Meribah or Massah

- 4 So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, “What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.” 5 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us, or not?”

The Second No Water Test - Kadesh

- The two incidents referred to in Psalm 95 and in Hebrews 3:7-11
- (1.) The first no water test (2.) Forty years later at Kadesh and the second no water test (the second incident is referred to first in Hebrews)
- I Cor. 10:6 (refers to these incidents as well: “Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.”)
- Hebrews 3:8 “Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” (Chapter 20 of the Book of Numbers).
- And you can see that the first miracle occurred in the beginning of the wilderness wanderings, the next mentioned in the same verse, occurs forty years later.

Numbers 20 – Kadesh and the Second Not Water Test

- 20: 2 There was no water for the congregation, and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron. 3 The people thus contended with Moses and spoke, saying, “If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the Lord! 4 Why then have you brought the Lord’s assembly into this wilderness, for us and our beasts to die here? 5 Why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us in to this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink.” 6 Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to them;

Numbers 20 – Kadesh and the Second Not Water Test

- 7 The Lord said to Moses, 8 “Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. **Speak to that rock** before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink.”
- 9 So Moses took the staff from the Lord’s presence, just as he commanded him. 10 He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, “Listen, you rebels, **must we bring you water out of this rock?**” 11 Then Moses raised his arm and **struck the rock** twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank.

Numbers 20 – Kadesh and the Second Not Water Test

- 12 But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.”
- 13 These were the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the Lord and where he was proved holy among them.

Christ the Rock of Psalm 95 and Exodus 17

- I Cor. 10:1-5 Christ the Rock of Psalm 95 and Exodus 17
- 10 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

Complaining

- Complaining about the details of life:
 - No Food (Exodus 16) God gave them the perfect food - Manna
 - No Water (Exodus 17) – God directed Moses to strike the rock and gave them water
 - No Water (Numbers 20) – God directed to speak to the rock
 - No Security – (Numbers 13 and 14) There are giants in the land – I the Lord God will give you this land that I promised
- What was God's response about the complaining? (Hebrews 3:10)

Complaining Against God

- No water tests (Meribah and Kadesh)
 - Failed – No faith that God would provide.
 - Failed – Complaining
- The Israelites, instead of believing God – they tested God, they put God on trial
- Prove to us, God, that you love us, they said
- “Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said they always go astray in their hearts” (Hebrews 3:10)

They Shall Not Enter My Rest

- God was “angry” with His people because they would not trust Him and His promises, His word.
- God in his wrath then says:
- “They shall not enter my rest” (verse 11)
- Canaan is a metaphor for God’s promise and therefore God’s rest.
- The people of God – need to enter God’s rest
- What should the Israelites have done to enter God’s rest?
- What is God’s sabbath rest?
- How do we enter God’s rest?

Directly Applicable to Us

- 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.
- 6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.
- 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.
- 11 “These things (I Cor. 10) happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.” (I Cor. 10:11)

Hebrews 3:12-15

- Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, 15 while it is said,
 - “Today if you hear His voice,
 - Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me.”

Apostasy

- “Falls Away” or “Departs”
- The word for departing is the Greek term *aphistēmi* and the form *apostani*.
- This is translated “apostasy” you can see *aphistēmi* is close to it.
- *aphistēmi* comes from the word that means “to stand,” *histēmi*, and *apo* which means “to stand off.”

Apostasy

- Rebellion
- Rebellion against Moses but more significantly against the promises of God
- Reversion from Christ to Judaism

To Hold Fast

- Hebrews 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, 15 while it is said,
- “Today if you hear His voice,
- Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me.”
- Hold fast = confidence, assurance, conviction
 - In the face of hardship, trouble, the details of life and the crisis of life

Standing Fast

- How do we stand fast in the face of sin, temptation, problems, challenges?
- Faith - belief at the point of salvation and at all points in sanctification
- Rest
- Trust
- Obedience
- Mutual Support – v. 13 encourage one another

Mutual Support

- Mutual support – mutual encouragement (v. 13) is required. “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”
(Hebrews 10:24-25)

Hebrews 3:16-19

- “For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.”