**Hebrews 3:7–19 – Seeing the Sin Within and Calling One Another Back to Christ**

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,

“Today, if you hear his voice,

8 **DO NOT HARDEN** your **hearts** as in the **rebellion**,

on the day of testing in the wilderness,

9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years.

10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said,

‘They always go astray in their heart;

they have not known my ways.’

11 As I swore in my wrath,

‘They shall not enter my rest.’ ”

. . .

12 **TAKE CARE**, brothers, Command #1

lest there be in any of you an . . . **heart**,

evil,

unbelieving

leading you to fall away

from the living God.

13 But Contrast in leadership

**EXHORT** one another Command #2

every day,

as long as it is called “today,”

\ that none of you may be hardened

by the deceitfulness of **sin**.

14 For

we have come to share [*metoxos*] in Christ, 1:9; 3:1; 6:4; 12:8; cf. 2:14

**if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.**

15 As it is said,

“Today, if you hear his voice,

**DO NOT HARDEN** your hearts as in the **rebellion**.” Acts 19:9

16 For Q1 Who were those who heard and yet **rebelled**?

Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? Shade at Moses

17 Q2 And with whom was he provoked for forty years?

Was it not with those who **sinned**, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? “saw my works”

Num 14:22

18 Q3 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest,

but to those who were **disobedient**?

19 So

we **see [*blepo*]** that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

**How does this passage work?**

1. **“Therefore”** – How does this passage relate to the last?
   1. Verses 1–6 are the ground; Verses 7–19 are the action
2. **What’s the biggest thing in this passage? What does everything else orbit around?**
   1. Psalm 95
3. **Why Psalm 95?**
   1. Moses
   2. Sin of Unbelief
   3. Command – Do not harden your heart . . .
4. **What is the action?**
   1. Four Commands –
   2. Do Not Harden (2x)
   3. Take Care [Look!];
   4. Exhort [Parakaleo]
5. **What kind of passage is this?**
   1. Warning!
   2. Exhortation
   3. Indicative + Imperative
6. **How does he build his argument?**
   1. Look for the connector words . . .
   2. Verse-by-verse
      1. Therefore (v. 7) . . . QUOTATION (v. 7b–11)
      2. . . . (v. 12)
      3. But (v. 13)
      4. For/Because [gar] (v. 14)
      5. As it is said (v. 15) – repetition of the “therefore” / action
      6. For (v. 16 . . . 18)
      7. So (kai) – interpretation of the passage . . . conclusion
   3. Because Christ is greater than Moses (vv. 1–6) . . . do not harden your hearts

Christ is greater than Moses (vv. 1–6) . . . therefore, do not harden your hearts

“ “ “ . . . therefore, look at your hearts

“ “ “ . . . therefore, exhort one another

Why? Because . . . We have come to have a share in Christ

*Then it repeats . . .*

Quotes Psalm 95 again . . . 3 rhetorical questions || same point

Concludes with a call to see the result of their unbelief . . . NO REST ( 🡪 4:1–12)

**What do we learn from his approach?**

1. How this sermon compare to modern day sermons?
2. How does he use Scripture?
3. How does he build his argument?
4. How does he teach us to read the Bible?

**What is Psalm 95 about?**

1. **Psalm in Book IV of the Psalter**
   1. This Book begins with Moses Psalm
   2. This Book promises God to bring a New Exodus
2. **Psalm commanding “REST”**
   1. Verse 11
   2. Psalm 92
   3. Creation leads to rest (Gen 1–2)
   4. Redemption’s goal is rest
3. **Psalm warning about missing the rest of God – How do we miss his rest?**
   1. God’s presence is the place of God’s rest
   2. Disobedience is the way to miss God’s rest
4. **How does Hebrews develop this idea?**

**Unbelief** . . . Fall away = this is called evil (v. 12)

**Sin** . . . results from deceit ~ false teaching (v. 13)

|

**If we hold fast** . . . not holding fast = disobedience (v. 14)

All of this is called **rebellion** . . . (v. 15)

BTW . . . this all repeats in reverse order – another chiasm!

**Rebellion** (v. 16)

**Sin** (v 17)

|

**Disobedience** (v. 18)

**Unbelief** . . . see their unbelief (v. 19)

**Hebrews 3:7–11**

**“The Holy Spirit says” (v. 7) – What does this tell us?**

* “This is a remarkable indication of the Spirit’s deity . . .” (Schreiner, *Hebrews,* 121)
* It is also a reminder that the Spirit speaks today by the Word

**“The rest” (v. 11) – What is this in reference to?**

* “The ‘rest’ here refers to the land of Canaan that was promised to Israel in fulfillment of the covenant enacted with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Schreiner, *Hebrews,* 123)
* This is a key word/idea in Hebrews 4:1–12, one we will spend much time on next week.

**“Living God” (v. 12) – Why this name?**

* “Living God” is used “when Israel is in a conflict other nations (e.g., Josh 3:10; 1 Sam 17:26; 2 Kings 19:4, 16), or to designate his reality in contrast to idols (Jer 10:10; cf. Acts 14:15), or to emphasize that their fellowship is truly with the Lord (Pss 42:2; 84:2)” (Schreiner, *Hebrews,* 127)
* To fall away from him is to abandon life / pursue death!

**“Exhort” (v. 13) – What is the key description of the command?**

* Encouragement (*parakaleo*)
* Daily – “Occasional encouragement does not suffice” (Schreiner, *Hebrews,* 127)
* “Lest any of you be harden” (v. 13)

**“Lest you be hardened” (v. 13) –** What does he assume?

* We all need to be encouraged, because we are all susceptible to hardening.
* It doesn’t take much or long before we are discouraged.

**“if indeed we hold our original confidence” (v. 14) – How do you read this? What’s his intention?**

* He is not making a statement of eternal security – for or against – he’s calling his audience to watch out, exhort one another, lest any not go on believing
* “He is not arguing here that true believers will definitely persevere, for it is a conditional statement. Nor is he saying that those who are truly believers *will* persevere.” (Schreiner, 128)
* This sets up verses 15–18

**“Today, if you hear . . .” (v. 15) – How is this verse working?**

* It picks up the passage again, reiterates its focus, and highlights its command.
* Then instead of repeating the rest, he turns the rest into three questions

v. 16 – Moses

v. 17 – 40 years

v. 18 – Rest

* It’s model of exposition . . . the shape of the test is the shape of the message!

“**So . . . unable to enter” (v. 19) – What does this mean? Does this refer to eternal judgment?**

* It’s too much to make a decision about Israel’s eternal state based on this
* “The earthly failure of the Israelites is analogous to and typological of the eternal judgment the readers face if they fall away. It may well be the case that many or most of the wilderness generation also experienced eternal punishment. It is possible, however, that some repented and believed. The author makes a typological point here and does not consider the final fate of the wilderness generation.” (Schreiner, *Hebrews,* 131 n181)

**How did people sin in the wilderness?**

1. They grumbled
2. They asserted themselves and missed the Lord’s provision
3. The best answer is found in context – Hebrews 3:9 (“forty years”)
   1. The people saw God’s works and didn’t believe
   2. In the wilderness Israel continued to test God – this was sin!
   3. Cf. Numbers 14:22

**You have put me to the test “Ten Times”**

An important part of this “sin” was Israel’s repeated unwillingness to believe:

* Just as there were ten plague (Exod 7–11) and ten words (Exod 20), there were also ten times Israel disobeyed.
* Ten Times—Literal or Figurative?
  + **Literary**: R. D. Cole; JFB (“very frequently”); Keil and Delitzsch (“Ten is used as the number of completeness and full measure”[[1]](#footnote-1)); Calvin (“it is no fixed or definite number, which is intended, but God would merely indicate that they had done so without measure or end”[[2]](#footnote-2))
  + **Literal**: Babylonian Talmud;
* The Babylonian Talmud counts them as follows:

These are (1) at the Red Sea (Exod 14:11–12); (2) at Marah (15:23); (3) in the Sin Wilderness (16:2); (4–5) twice at Kadesh (16:20, 27); (6) at Rephidim / Massah / Meribah (17:2–7); (7) at Sinai (32:1–35); (8) at Taberah (Num 11:1); (9) at Kibroth Hattaavah (11:4–34); and (10) here at Kadesh in the Zin Wilderness (13:1–14:45) (*ʿArakin* 15b). The rabbis described them as two at the Red Sea, two for water, two for food, two for flesh, one for the idolatry of the golden calf, and one for the spies. Cf. also Ashley, *Numbers*, 260–61; Gray, *Numbers*, 158.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**In what ways does the sin in the wilderness mirror the temptation facing the church of Hebrews?**

* They have seen Gods’ works in Christ – will they believe or reject?
* They have a like / greater Prophet than Moses – will they follow or frustrate?
* They have received the promises of God – will their hearts harden or receive?

**What do we learn from this passage?**

* **We learn a great deal about sin.**

Unbelief is evil and comes from a wicked heart.

Unbelief is as rebellion.

Unbelief . . . Disobedience . . . Sin . . . Rebellion

*If you see rebellion . . . you have to find the source of the unbelief.*

No one becomes a rebel overnight . . . it starts with unbelief and false beliefs.

A vacuum of belief (unbelief) . . . leads to accepting lies . . . which gives birth to sin and rebellion.

*If you see false teaching . . . rebellion will follow, unless checked by truth.*

No one becomes a rebel overnight . . . but bad thinking will ultimately leading to bad living.

In Hebrews 3 . . . we find a similar pattern to James 1:13–15.

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. **14**But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. **15**Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

**What is common about both passages – Hebrews 3–4 and James 1?**

* **Temptation – We learn a great deal about temptation here.**

The people in the wilderness were being tempted toward unbelief. So too the church of Jesus Christ is being tempted to have wrong thoughts about God. This will have a damaging effect.

* **Sanctification – We also learn a great deal about fighting temptation and sin.**

1. We are called to examine our hearts . . . and what we believe.
2. We are called to exhort one another (*parakaleo*) . . . Sanctification is not an individual act
3. We are called to soften our hearts . . . to the things of God
4. We are called to learn from previous generations . . .
5. We are called to look to Christ

1. Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Vol. 1, p. 714). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Calvin, J., & Bingham, C. W. (2010). *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony* (Vol. 4, p. 78). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Cole, R. D. (2000). *Numbers* (Vol. 3B). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)