

WARNINGS

BIBLE TEXT : Hebrews 3:7-19; 4:1-13

LESSON 434 **Junior Course**

MEMORY VERSE: "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Hebrews 3:7-19

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Hebrews 4:1-13

Bible References:

Notes:

The Apostle Paul explained how people could be saved, but he also warned them what would happen if they refused the message of salvation. One time when Paul was writing to the Corinthians about some of the sins which the Israelites had committed when wandering in the wilderness, he said: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition" (I Corinthians 10:11), or for our instruction. They are warnings of the punishment that God sends for sin, and if we do not want to suffer the same punishment we must be careful not to commit sin.

The Heart Hardened

We studied of the Three Persons in the Godhead. In this lesson we find the Holy Ghost (who is spoken of as the Third Person) speaking, showing His personality. The Holy Ghost warned the Israelites in Old Testament times, and Paul repeats the warning for us not to harden our hearts. How can one harden his heart? By refusing to obey the commandments of the Lord. Every time one disobeys, his heart becomes a little harder. At first he may feel very bad when he commits a sin, but after disobeying God many times, his heart will become so hard he may not even think he is doing wrong. His conscience will not bother him any more.

Unbelief also hardens one's heart: not believing that God will punish sin; not believing that Jesus can save from all sin; not believing that it is necessary to live a holy life. If we continue to doubt any part of God's Word, our hearts will become hard.

There is even danger after we are saved that we might slip from our confidence in Jesus, and begin to doubt His Word -- maybe just some part of it. If we are not as strong in our faith today as we were when the Lord first saved us, we had better check to see if we are still saved. It may be we have lost that "first love." Paul thought it a very serious subject. He said: "Take heed." Pay attention! "Exhort one another." Warn each other not to let the beautiful things that God has given us slip from our lives.

Sin deceives. Satan can tempt us with something that may look good, and we think there is nothing wrong with doing as he suggests. But if we listen to the Spirit of God, He will warn us of the things that are wrong. If we refuse to heed the warning, we will fall for the temptation and our heart will become hard.

Holding Fast

Paul explains that we will be saved for eternity, enjoy Christ's Kingdom with Him as His children and fellow-labourers, only if we "hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14). That means that if we have once been saved, we must keep that experience -- live it every day -- in order to be ready when Jesus comes. When we are sanctified it is easier to "hold our confidence," easier not to backslide. And after we are baptised with the Holy Ghost, we have more power to overcome sin. Then we have the Holy Spirit in us to warn us of the deceitfulness of sin.

God had performed a mighty miracle when He brought the Children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. They were only slaves in Egypt, but they walked right out one night without any opposition

1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature

-- God said that not a dog would even "move his tongue" against them. God would take care of His people.

God's Provision

But after that great deliverance, the Israelites did not believe God -- and disobeyed Him. So the journey that they could have completed in two years (in that length of time they were prepared as a nation to enter Canaan) continued for forty years until almost all the people who had been 20 years old or older when they left Egypt had died. Through all those forty years God had trouble with them. You would think they would have appreciated their liberty, getting away from the terrible dictator, Pharaoh, who had made them work very hard, and had them beaten with whips whenever they displeased him. God gave them enough food every day to keep them well -- "Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full" (Psalm 78:25), their clothes did not wear out -- "Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years" (Deuteronomy 8:4)- God sheltered them from the heat by day with a cloud, and lighted them at night with the pillar of fire (Psalm 105:39); He gave them water to drink in that dry and barren wilderness -- "He opened the rock and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river" (Psalm 105:41). All those things God did for Israel, and yet "they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation" (Psalm 78:22). For that reason God was wrath with them and told them they could not enter into Canaan. They could not live in cities nor in permanent houses -- they were always camping. Sometimes they had to go to war with people who did not want them to walk through their land. They suffered great hardships, but it was their own fault.

Judgment sometimes fell on the Israelites and thousands were killed. When Dathan and Abiram sinned, they and all the members of their families were swallowed up in a pit in the earth; and 250 more people died when they presumed to offer incense, contrary to God's commandment. The next day more people complained of these judgments, so God let a plague break out among them, and 14,700 died. Finally God said: "They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest" (Hebrews 3:10, 11).

The Land of Rest

The land of Canaan was a beautiful country, with very rich soil, and a good climate to make all their crops grow bountifully. God promised to drive the heathen nations out of the land ahead of them as they advanced; so it would indeed have been a land of rest. But there is a greater rest ahead for us: Heaven.

After God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them He rested. When Jesus finished His work of redemption on earth -- after His crucifixion and resurrection -- He went back to Heaven to rest. Now we have our work to do on earth, winning souls for Jesus as we live a spotless Christian life, and then we will enter into Heaven to rest, too. That rest is waiting for us, but we must prepare our hearts now to be ready to enter into it.

God does many things for us today because He loves us and wants us to be good and holy so we can live with Him in Heaven. But if we do not believe His promises, if we refuse to consecrate our lives enough to Him so He can give us faith to receive the blessings of His promises, we will not enter into His rest. Paul tells us that we should fear lest we do things that will make us unworthy of Heaven. We can see the things that the Israelites did which barred them from Canaan, and they are good warnings for us not to do the same things.

Our good works alone will not be enough to make us worthy of Heaven. God knows the heart and sees every evil thought and ambition that might be hidden there. "For the word of God is quick,

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and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the Joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God will judge us when we stand before the Judgment Seat, and every rule for our conduct here on earth is given in the Bible. Every wrong thing we have ever done if it has not been forgiven and covered with the Blood of Jesus) will be revealed. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

QUESTIONS

1. Who convicts men of sin?
2. How do people harden their hearts?
3. Name some of the good things God did for the Children of Israel in the wilderness.
4. How soon were they prepared to enter into Canaan? Why could they not go in at that time?
5. What happened to the Israelites when they disobeyed God?
6. Describe the Land of Canaan.
7. What did God do after He finished creating the world?
8. What will be our rest if we are overcoming Christians?