

DON'T BE LIKE THEM **(Hebrews 3:7-19)**

I.A reminder of a reminder (Hebrews 3:7-11).

A.As is often the case in Hebrews, the word therefore is found.

B.The last section ended with an “if” statement.

1.We are the house of Christ “if” we hold fast to Christ.

2.We can't let go of what we have professed to believe if we want to remain in the house of, or the church of Christ.

C.Interestingly, the writer points to the inspiration of the Psalms by saying that the Holy Spirit said these things.

1.We know they were written by a man, possibly David, but not necessarily.

2.However, the One who truly spoke these words was the Holy Spirit who gave the words to the human penman.

D.He now gives a reminder of those that refused to remain in the house of God in their time and he does so by going to Psalm 95:7-11.

1.This psalm is an interesting one that was to encourage the Israelites to praise God by giving three reasons to do so.

2.Verses 1-5 teach that God is worthy of praise because of His power.

3.Verses 6-7a teach that God is worthy of praise because of His mercy and grace.

4.Verses 7b-11, what our writer quoted, encourages the people to remember these traits of God because He is also a God of wrath.

E.Our writer was inspired to use this reminder to God's people of the Old Testament to remind God's people of the New Testament what will happen when there is rebellion against God and His authority.

1.The people of old rebelled against God in different ways.

2.All through the wilderness wandering they rebelled against God by questioning Him and even turning to other gods.

3.The word translated rebellion in Psalm 95:8 is the word Meribah in Hebrew and the word translated trial is the Hebrew word Massah.

a.These should remind us of the events recorded in Exodus 17:1-7.

b.There, the people cried out for water and were ready to stone Moses.

c.God told Moses to strike the rock and water would come out.

d.Moses called the place there Massah and Meribah, because the people tried the patience of God there.

4.These people, because of their rebellion recorded in Numbers 13, had to wander in the wilderness 40 years.

a.The older generation, those 20 and over, were a rebellious people and refused to know God's ways.

b.Because of that, God was greatly angered and promised that they would not enter the promised land of rest (Numbers 14:22-23).

c.The only ones who were able were Caleb and Joshua because of their faithfulness.

5.Over 600,000 died in the wilderness because of their rebellion against

God.

F.The Hebrews writer used a passage with which these Jewish converts would have been familiar.

- 1.He reminded them of the failures of their forefathers.
- 2.They needed to get this message today, right then, and that is why he started out quoting that verse of the psalm.
- 3.Lack of faith is something that needed to be addressed quickly.

II.A warning for now (Hebrews 3:12-14).

A.Christians constantly have to be on the lookout in their lives for weaknesses in our faith.

- 1.Unbelief here is a reference to a lack of faith.
- 2.Not necessarily an unbelief in God, but a lack of doing what God wants done.
- 3.All unbelief is a departing from God because it sin, which separates us from God.

B.This departure is because of being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

- 1.We need to remember that these people had been in a right relationship with God at one time.
- 2.They were partakers of the heavenly calling and holy brethren (Hebrews 3:1).
- 3.They were being warned to not become hardened and leave God.
- 4.This shows the very real possibility of apostasy from God.
- 5.I talked with a friend the other day who is in denominationalism that those who believe that one cannot fall away have a very difficult time explaining away Hebrews 3.
 - a.We know those Jews in the wilderness were, at one time, in a right relationship with God.
 - b.They were descendants of Abraham and God's chosen people.
 - c.However, they rebelled and were lost.
 - d.If one cannot fall away, the illustration here loses all its power.

C.Sin is deceitful as we all know.

- 1.It is packaged to look beautiful or helpful or advantageous in some way.
- 2.Because it looks so good and packaged so well, sin will harden us or cause us to be stubborn against the will of God.

D.We need to get hold of any feelings of unbelief today, right now.

- 1.We can't let it linger in any way.
- 2.We don't let harmful things linger around us.
- 3.Sadly, many allow sinful things to remain and take hold.

E.When this is the case, we begin to depart from the living God.

F.We must constantly encourage one another in the faith so that we don't lose anyone.

- 1.Think of those who have left here.
- 2.Why did they leave?
 - a.They began to be hardened first of all.
 - (1)They allowed sin to enter their lives.
 - (2)They failed to separate themselves from it.
 - b.We failed to exhort them when we had the opportunity.
 - (1)No doubt some reached out.

- (2)But, in general, we failed them.
- 3.They most definitely have the ultimate responsibility to be right with God.
- 4.But we also have a responsibility to go after them and exhort them and we don't do a very good job of that here, me included.
- 5.We are to exhort one another.
- G.We should want to do so because we are partakers of Christ.
 - 1.We have experienced the benefits of being in Christ.
 - 2.All the spiritual blessings that flow from Him are ours.
 - 3.We know how great it is in Christ.
- H.But there is another "if" statement here in verse 14.
 - 1.We will be partakers of Christ only if we hold fast that confidence we had in the beginning.
 - 2.We can't allow ourselves to become hardened and we need to start today preventing that hardening.
 - 3.It is completely up to us.
 - 4.God has given us the details of the rewards of faithfulness.
 - 5.God has given us the details of the results of unfaithfulness.
 - 6.We have to make the choice.

III.A reminder again (Hebrews 3:15-19).

- A.The Holy Spirit understands that we learn through repetition.
- B.Because of that, our writer was inspired to go back to the initial reminder based on the sins of the Hebrews in the wilderness.
- C.He does so by asking three obvious questions and giving the answers to each.
 - 1.He reminds them in the first question that their forefathers had heard God's word but rebelled against it, giving them no excuse.
 - 2.The then reminds them of God's wrath because of their unbelief which led to the death of so many over the course of those forty years.
 - 3.A final reminder is given that those forefathers failed to enter God's rest because of their unbelief.
- D.He then sums it up by saying they failed to receive God's blessing because of their unbelief.
- E.Think of all that this generation missed by their lack of faith.
 - 1.They missed out on the close relationship with God.
 - 2.They missed out on an earthly home that flowed with milk and honey.
 - 3.Ultimately, they missed out on heaven.
- F.And, again, this section is started with the word "today".
- G.We need to get on with it today.
 - 1.We can't let disbelief, or lack of faith, linger.
 - 2.We must get in God's word and let it work in our lives.