Hebrews 3:12-19

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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***Hebrews 3:12–19*** (ESV)  
**12** Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. **13** But exhort one another 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 in Christ, 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.” **16** For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? **17** And with whom was he provoked 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 unable to enter because of unbelief.

1. Summarize the main points of Hebrews 3:1-11.

Ch 1-2. Yeshua is greater than the angels, and his message is greater than that given by the angels to Moses. Yet Yeshua was for a while lower than angels, having become man, in order to save man from slavery to fear and death. He was sent from God to be our merciful and faithful high priest.

Ch 3:1-11. Yeshua is an apostle and high priest, greater than Moses. Moses was a servant. Yeshua was the son. We must hold fast our faith in Him, and not allow sin to harden our hearts like our ancestors did when they disobeyed Moses. And we know the result of that! None of those who were disobedient were allowed to enter the promised land.

1. In Heb 3:12, what are we to “take care” to avoid? How did that look to the people of Israel in the days of Moses? How does that look for you in your life? What is the result? Recall also the prior warning of Heb 2:1.

We are to avoid having an evil, unbelieving heart. In the days of Moses, the people grumbled and complained. They were not content with what God had given them. They complained against Moses and God. The fact that this reference is pointed out suggests that the Hebrews the author was writing to could fall into a similar state (hardened heart) as the Hebrews of Moses’ day.

***Hebrews 2:1*** (ESV)  
**1** Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

The result is that we “fall away” from God. And God was not able to bless them as He desired. They did not enter the promised land. None of the disobedient entered the promised land.

With us today, it looks the same. We are not content with what God give us. We are angry with where God had brought us in life. We complain to him and perhaps also to those in leadership.

1. Heb 3:12 uses the Greek ἀφίστημι (**aphistémi**) from which we get the English word “apostatize”. Look at a few other places where this word is used, for example Luke 8:13 and 1 Tim 4:1. What is the basic definition of this word? In the Septuagint, this word is most often associated with Hebrew סוּר (**sur**). What is the basic definition of this word? How does it contrast with the Hebrew שׁוב (**shuv**)? What is the Hebrew word for repentance? What are the theological implications of all this for us?

The basic definition of GK **aphistémi** is “depart, leave”.

***Luke 8:13*** (ESV)  
**13** And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing **fall away**.

***1 Timothy 4:1*** (ESV)  
**1** Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will **depart** from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,

The basic definition of HB **sur** is “**turn aside,** turn away”

In contrast, HB שׁוב **shuv** means “**turn around**, turn back”  
Interestingly, the Hebrew word for *repent* is “teshuva”, which means “to return”. God says He will repent to us if we will repent to him. Malachi 3:7 says, “From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statues and have not kept them. **Return** to me and I will **return** to you,” says YHWH Tsevaot.

The two terms are exact opposites. They both mean to change direction, but one means to go away from something, and the other means to go back toward something.

We have choices always before us. Either we walk with God or we walk away from him (leaving him). This has nothing to do with earning salvation. We can’t ever earn his grace. But we can choose to reject it by leaving him.

1. In Heb 3:13, what advice is given on how to avoid this pitfall? How do we do that today? Are we receptive to others having that kind of input in our lives?

We must encourage one another to remain steadfast to the end, so we may receive the promise of our rest in YHWH.

Calling out sin in peoples’ lives is usually not received well. We are quick to be defensive. We need to be better listeners. Listen first, think and pray second, respond later.

1. Why do you think there is the emphasis on the word “today” in Heb 3:13? What did it mean in Ps 97? What is the purpose of repeating it several times in Hebrews 3 (3:7, 3:13, 3:15)?

In Ps 95:7 the word “today” meant to the readers that their choice “today” was no different than the choice before their ancestors back in the days of Moses. Today was contrasted with the past.

The meaning is the same in Hebrews, but it seems to be emphasized. They (and we) are to exhort one another “**every day**” and “**as long as it is called today**”. That phrase seems to imply that there will be a time that will no longer be called today. While that doesn’t totally make sense, perhaps it hints at the fact that there will come a time when **it will be too lat**e. A time when we no longer have the choice before us, and we will no longer have the opportunity of entering the promised land.

1. In Heb 3:13, what is the source of our hearts being hardened? How is that characterized? What is **your experience** of this?

Our hearts are hardened by sin. Sin is described as “deceitful”.

How often we believe the lies of Satan. When sin is our life, our mind is clouded. And when Satan speaks his lies, we are deceived. We begin to doubt, then believe these falsehoods. Then we act upon them. Our hearts are hardened to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

1. Heb 3:14 uses the phrase “**share** in Messiah”. Look up the Greek word and find out what it means. How have we come to “**share** in Messiah”? What is the corresponding Hebrew word?

Greek μέτοχος (**métochos**) “companion, partner, sharer in”

Hebrew חָבֵר (**haver**) , plural (**havarim**). Colleague, companion, close associate, friend.

We are companions with Messiah. We are his brothers, sharing in the gifts of sonship in God’s kingdom.

1. Looking further at Heb 3:14, is there any condition placed upon our “sharing in Messiah”? How does this related to the “once saved, always saved” belief that some of us were raised to believe?

Condition: “If we hold our original confidence firm to the end.”

Hebrews 3 is a warning not to fall away. Not to let sin deceive us and harden our heart. We “have come to share in Messiah” IF we are “hold our original confidence firm to the end.”

1. What is the word “confidence” in the Greek? What does it mean? Look at these other places where the same Greek word is used: 2 Cor 9:4, 2 Cor 11:7, Heb 1:3, and Heb 11:1.

Greek ὑπόστασις (**hypostasis**). “substance, essence, true nature, **reality, confidence**”

***2 Corinthians 9:4*** (ESV)  
**4** Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so **confident**.

***2 Corinthians 11:17*** (ESV)  
**17** What I am saying with this boastful **confidence**, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool.

***Hebrews 1:3*** (ESV)  
**3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his **nature**, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

***Hebrews 11:1*** (ESV)  
**1** Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

**Confidence**, **reality** & **true nature** are connected in meaning, if you think about it. We have confidence in something, because we know “that something” is **real**. We understand its **true nature.** We are stand firm to the end in our **confidence**, or our understanding of the **reality** or the **true nature** of the Messiah. Our behavior and hearts should be set on becoming more like the Messiah.

1. What is the main argument of Heb 3:16-19? What happened to our spiritual ancestors who heard the word of God through Moses? Why?

The people in Moses’ day heard the word of God through him, but grumbled, complained, and disobeyed. As a result of their sin, they died in the desert, and never received God’s blessing of the promised land.

1. Consider Heb 3:18-19. What is the grumbling and complaining of the people in Moses’ day really equated to? How should that make us reconsider our attitudes?

Grumbling and complaining = **disobedience** and **unbelief**.

We often think our grumbling is OK, or that it is just a little thing. But God sees this as not trusting him to supply what we need, and that is apparently the same as disobedience in his eyes. It is sin. A life characterized by this could potentially be seen as a life of disbelief.