

## Hebrews 3:7-19

### “Eternal Security”

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#### I. Introduction

We start now with the second warning of this book:

- A. The first one was in chapter 2 verse 1 against “*drifting away*”. It was the danger of *paying no attention, of being preoccupied. It describes the danger of letting the truths concerning Jesus, which alone have power to set us free, to drift by, unheeded, unheard.*
- B. The second one, starts here in verse 7 and runs through chapter 4 verse 13 and is in two parts.
  - 1. First in 3:7-19 is the danger of hardening your heart against the truth. This warning is against the *danger of hearing the words and intellectually believing them, understanding their meaning, but taking no action upon them.* The peril of holding truth in the head, but never letting it get into the heart. Truth **KNOWN** never does anything; it is truth **DONE** which sets us free. The terrible danger which the writer points out is that truth known but not acted on has an awful effect of hardening the heart so that it is no longer able to act -- and *we lose the ability to believe.*
  - 2. Then in 4:1-13 the failure to enter His rest.

#### II. Vs. 7-11 Scriptural support

Vs. 7-11 The “*therefore*” in this section reaches back to the Author’s argument of Jesus’ superiority over the prophets, angels and Moses. He now continues with scriptural support from Psalm 95:7-11 where David is giving commentary on Exodus 17:1-7 which is the story of the murmuring and hardness of heart by the Israelites at Rephidim due to a lack of water. This scriptural support is used to enforce the warning from Jewish history, to illustrate what happens if they don’t hold fast the confidence firm to the end is from the first testament. The inclusion by the writer of the phrase, “*As the Holy Spirit says*”, denotes that the warning he has just shared is both rooted in history and is not mere

**rabbinical opinion** but **truth from the Holy Spirit**.

These Hebrews who enjoyed the protection and provision from God, dared to question God by saying, “*Is the Lord among us our not?*”. Instead of trusting God in the midst of adversity, they demanded God demonstrate to them that He was in their midst to help. The word “*harden*” in the Greek is a prohibition of continuing an action of “*hardening*” that they were already engaged in. These Hebrews were being similarly warned not to take the same attitude as their forefathers had in the wilderness. They were being persecuted because of their “*professed faith*” in the Messiah and the gospel but they are being warned that NOT trusting God in the midst of this and going back to the Levitical sacrifices would be hardening of their heart. The phrase in verse 10 “*And they have not known My ways*” speaks of an ignorance which was due to their neglect of obeying God.

The word “*rest*” in verse 11 speaks of a “*permanent cessation of activity*” thus a “*permanent rest*” or God’s rest that He gives to people. In context, the failure of that generation to enter into the land and enjoy those promises was because of the “sin of unbelief”.

### III. Vs. 12 The warning

Vs. 12 Having given biblical support of the defection of the wilderness generation of Hebrews the writer can now warn these present day Hebrews against committing a similar sin. The use of the words “*any of you*” in the Greek make this a warning to each person individually not the group corporally. The words, “heart of unbelief” speak not only of corruption that drags the person down but a corruption that drags others down with them. It is a hardening heart of unbelief that is NOT passive but active. There is the

difference between a “*heart in which unbelief is present*” and a “*unbelieving heart*”. A true believer may at times have a “*heart in which unbelief is present*” but they can never have a “*unbelieving heart*”. An “**unbelieving heart**” is one in which there is **no faith** towards the true God at all. The first may describe at times a true Christian, but the 2<sup>nd</sup> one can never describe a true believer. This warning to some of these **Hebrew profession believers** is of a “*unbelieving heart*” and as such indicates that **they were never saved and had stopped at mere intellectual assent to Jesus being the Messiah and to the gospel.** The word “*departing*” in the Greek doesn’t mean the same as it does in the English. In the English it can have the meaning of: “Having arrived at a location and then leaving or departing from that location.” Here in the Greek the word is a compound word made up of two words, “off” and “to stand” thus “to stand off” which is exactly the position of these **professing Hebrews** as they were “standing off” from *Jesus the Messiah*, they **hadn’t left, they had never yet arrived at His location.** Our word “apostasy” is derived from this Greek word and is defined as “the act of a person who now renounces their former professed belief in favor of some new diametrically opposed belief.” The “*new belief*” isn’t merely a new belief, it is one that **negates the former belief!** That is the point of the author; should these professing Hebrews go back to the Levitical sacrificial system of faith they would be “*negating*” their “*new professed belief in Jesus as the Messiah, **THE LAMB OF GOD**!*” They could trust in “Levitical sacrifices” or the “crucified Messiah” but not both as they are “**diametrically opposed**” to each other.

#### IV. Vs. 13-15 Deceitfulness of sin

Vs. 13-15 The Greek word “*exhort*” and means to “*call with a loud voice*” and in conjunction with the word “*today*” means that these Hebrew possessing believers were to

continually call with a loud voice to these Hebrew professing believers NOT to harden their heart and go back to trusting in the “Levitical sacrifices” in stead of the “crucified Messiah”. Further more the writer describes what the leading cause was of their turning back to the “*Levitical sacrifices*” in stead of the “*crucified Messiah*” as “**deceitfulness of sin**”. The word in the Greek means to “trick” and the hardening of the heart was caused by this “trick of sin”; which was that they could still trust in “Levitical sacrifices” while intellectually professing belief in the “crucified Messiah”. This is the same point that the writer will take up in Hebrews 10:4 where he writes, “**For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.**” In verse 14 the writer illustrates the difference between of “**possessor**” of Christ and a “**professor**” of Christ. The “**possessor**” is a “**partaker of Christ**” and means “*one who holds with another*” or a “**participator**” **sharing IN and partaking OF Jesus the Messiah. The chief characteristic** of a “**possessor of Christ**” is described as: “**Holding from the beginning of our confidence steadfastly to the end**”! As in verse 6, which we examined last week, the question of the writer: “**Is NOT the RETENTION of salvation based upon the PERSISTENCE of faith, but the POSSESSION of salvation as EVIDENCED by a CONTINUATION of faith!**” **The writer to the Hebrews is NOT concerned with the future of these Hebrews, he is concerned with their past and present as they have NO FUTURE if they are NOT partakers of Jesus as Messiah as they aren’t saved to start with!** We like these Hebrews: “*Don’t KEEP our salvation based upon persistence of faith, rather we are in possession of His salvation seen by our continuance of faith in Jesus.*” The Greek word for “*confidence*” is translated in Hebrews chapter 11:1 as “*title deed*” and describes in secular Greek as documents bearing ownership of a person’s property. Here

it is being used of faith in the Messiah which is the ground of assurance and security that “possessing believers” are saved. If some of these Hebrews have “*possessing faith*” that persists to the end of their lives, despite persecution, they have complete security. Finally, in verse 15 the writer warns against the hardening of the heart mentioned in verse 13 and uses the unbelieving generation of Hebrews in the wilderness as an example which all but Caleb and Joshua failed.

#### V. Vs. 16-19 Never believed

Vs.16-19 The writer points out that these ancestral Hebrews of the exodus refused to trust God and instead comprised. The result was all but two of the whole number of those who left Egypt under Moses compromised and perished before every entering into the Land of Promise. This was the same group of Hebrews who had obeyed the prescribed symbol of deliverance, by killing the Passover lamb, and sprinkling its blood over the doorposts. They had followed Moses out of Egypt passed through the Red Sea. Yet, with all of those reasons to continue trust God and “*hold fast firm to the end*” they didn’t.

The real test of their faith would come for the first time when they were asked to trust God to obey against the Giants that could destroy their life in the land of promise, their failure to do so revealed the truth that they never had any faith! ***They had never really believed God. They were only acting as they did to escape the damage, death, and danger of Egypt. But they had no intention of coming into having to trust and obey God in dealing with the conflict of possessing what God had for them if it meant they had to deal with the giants in the land.*** They had only intended to leave the effects of Egypt without having to walk in obedience with God!

The application for Christians and the church is the same as for these profession

Hebrews: **Our security isn't based upon "intellectual" agreement but upon spiritual commitment**: There is a danger in merely considering the cross of Christ and counting the truth of his death as appropriated for us intellectually and getting baptized based on that intellectual agreement, just as the early Hebrews did at the exodus with the blood of the Passover lamb, going through the waters of the Red Sea baptism. All of this reveals the truth in the Word of God that it is possible that we can:

- **Profess the Lord Jesus**
- **Take our stand upon the cross of Christ**
- **Claim his death for us**
- **Profess to have been baptized into his body**
- **Enjoy the God's Fatherly care**
- **And even observe him working miracles in our life**

Yet, when God asks us to lay hold of the giants in our life that are destroying us, the Giants of fear, bitterness, jealousy, envy, lust and impatience; things that keep us in bondage, we can refuse to trust Him to defeat these Giants among us. To this the writer says, **we are in danger of remaining in the wilderness and never entered the promised rest.**