

DEADLY UNBELIEF

HEBREWS 3:7-19

DEADLY UNBELIEF

Outline

- I. The Warning of the Holy Spirit (7-11)**
 - A. God's prohibition in Ps. 95 (7-9)**
 - B. God's judgment/punishment (10-11)**
- II. Application to the Congregation (12-19)**
 - A. Two Instructions (12-13)**
 - 1. Need for Insight (12)**
 - 2. Need for daily mutual support to avoid deceptions (13)**

HEBREWS 3:7-19

DEADLY UNBELIEF

II. Application to the Congregation (12-19)

B. Reason for heeding (14)

1. Their status as partakers
2. Need to hold on to the end

C. Reason for Israel's failure (15-18)

1. Israel's negative response to what they heard and experienced (15-16)
2. God's disgust at their repeated sin over a 40 year period (17)
3. God's oath to exclude them from His place of rest (18)

D. Conclusion (19)

HEBREWS 3:7-19

DEADLY UNBELIEF

This passage is quoted from Psalms 95. The writer of Hebrews ascribes these words to the Holy Spirit. Why? In all actuality, it really doesn't matter who the human author is, since all of Scripture is inspired by God (cf. 2 Timothy 3:14-17). Thus, the Holy Spirit moved men to write down God's message. The human writer was the tool (the means) by which the Holy Spirit used to bring God's message to the world. This is another reminder that all of Scripture is God's words and not mere human opinion.

HEBREWS 3:7a

DEADLY UNBELIEF

This passage is quoted from Psalms 95. The writer of Hebrews ascribes these words to the Holy Spirit. Why? In all actuality, it really

2 Timothy 3:16-17

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

author is, since God (cf. 2 Holy Spirit moved the pen. The human author by which the message to the world that all of God is not mere human

HEBREWS 3:7a

DEADLY UNBELIEF

In the beginning of chapter one, we noted that we cannot comprehend God on our own. He can only be comprehended if and when He chooses to reveal Himself to us. Because He did reveal Himself to us and has given us His message, we should/must PAY ATTENTION to it and study it!

HEBREWS 3:7a

DEADLY UNBELIEF

The author first quotes this passage from Ps 95 about the failures of the Israelites in the OT and then will go on to exposit these verses making points and applications from them. Notice that in the coming passages he reviews these verses sometimes more than once. What we will see is an interesting 3 point exposition of this passage: (1). "...beware of unbelief" (12-19); (2). "...be afraid of falling short" (4:1-10); and (3). "...be diligent to enter" (4:11-13). **HEBREWS 3:7a**

DEADLY UNBELIEF

It's of interest that earlier in the sermon, the congregation has heard from God the Father (1:5-13) and from the Son (2:12-13). Now they hear from the Holy Spirit and He urges them to receive what God say to them here and now in the Divine Service.

HEBREWS 3:7a

DEADLY UNBELIEF

Ps 95 is a liturgical Psalm that was sung by the Levitical choir that led the congregation in procession to the Temple during the Three Great Festivals (Shalosh Regalim: Pesach (*Passover*), Shavuot (*Weeks* or *Pentecost*), and Sukkot (*Tabernacles, Tents* or *Booths*)).

HEBREWS 3:7b-11

DEADLY UNBELIEF

The Holy Spirit now urges the congregation that they must not be like the Israelites. They must avoid the example of Meribah and Kadesh, which brought Divine retribution. In the hardening of their hearts, the Israelites refused to trust in God and His provision for them and the judgment was their 40 years of wandering. They also refused to recognize “His ways” that also provided for them as they journeyed.

HEBREWS 3:7b-11

DEADLY UNBELIEF

“Take heed, brethren, that there is not in any of you an evil heart of unbelief that turns away from the living God” (v.12). The first two words of this verse are very important: Βλέπετε, ἀδελφοί. Literally, take heed, be careful. It’s important for you to know that this Greek word is an imperative...a command; and it’s directed to the entire congregation, including the preacher!

HEBREWS 3:12

DEADLY UNBELIEF

The second Greek word is brethren (ladies and gentlemen), which also shows that the preacher is including himself. So then, all are to be careful, take heed, and be on guard in every area of our Christian life. We should continually evaluate ourselves. If there are any sins or sinful tendencies we must confess them quickly before they can grow and spread. Sin is like a cancer and must be cut out mercilessly.

HEBREWS 3:12

DEADLY UNBELIEF

We like to think that our greater threats come from the outside, from unbelievers! Actually, our greatest danger is from apostasy from within the Church or congregation! Such an unbelieving heart within the congregation will misinterpret God's Word and slowly and insidiously spread the poison of false teaching and unbelief, known as apostasy. Apostasy is "spiritual suicide!" It's a slow, yet steady slide into grievous sin with a resultant denunciation of Jesus. We see this happening today throughout Christendom, many are teaching that which is good is evil; and that which is evil is good!

HEBREWS 3:12

DEADLY UNBELIEF

We have discussed that it quite easy to drift away from God. Believers who are walking faithfully with God wouldn't typically wake up one day and then decide to commit heinous sins or denounce Christ as their Lord and Savior. Apostasy is a very gradual process. We'll study this issue more fully in Chapter 10, but when can unbelief sneak in?

HEBREWS 3:12

DEADLY UNBELIEF

Not getting what we want via prayer – We approach God with a demand in prayer. We do not receive it and grow upset that God hasn't given us what we want; so doubt in God takes hold!

Facing a difficult trial – When facing a trial some would begin to doubt God's goodness. If a loved one has died or they have lost their job or face a painful health problem, a person may slowly grow bitter against God, which would cause them to fall away from Him.

HEBREWS 3:12

DEADLY UNBELIEF

Not keeping a close relationship with Him (remaining in Him, John 15:4) – We just can't say we are a Christian; we must live in and through Jesus Christ. Again, you would do well to read the entire 15th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John.

HEBREWS 3:12

DEADLY UNBELIEF

We have a responsibility to help other brothers and sisters not to fall away from God (v.13). What is it? God has called us to encourage others day by day (daily) (God's Today, cf. Ps 95:7). This is something we should be doing regularly as a lifestyle, not just now and then. God knows our heart's inclination toward sin. He knows the struggles we face and He knows that if we are on our own, the likelihood that we will fall into sin is even greater.

HEBREWS 3:13

DEADLY UNBELIEF

In His great love and mercy, He has provided a large Christian family for us. He has provided fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ so that we can be a safety net, a motivator, accountability partners, prayer partners, and He has sent to you a called and ordained servant, who is charged to listen to you, admonish, correct, comfort, and absolve you. What are some specific things we can do to encourage others in their relationship with Christ?

HEBREWS 3:13

DEADLY UNBELIEF

We are partakers of Christ – Each of us must realize that we are not insignificant nobodies; nay, we are God's children! We are His royal co-heirs who share with Him in what He is, what He has, and what He does. Only through Jesus, our King and Lord, do we have access to our Father and His place of rest for us. Thus, we must “hold on” to what is already ours, so that you and I do not lose what we do have now – eternal life in His Kingdom!

HEBREWS 3:14

DEADLY UNBELIEF

“...if indeed from the beginning we should hold on firm to the assurance...” In your Baptism and instruction, thereafter, you obtain the assurance. It’s interesting to know that the Greek noun that the preacher uses is: ὑποστάσεως (hypostaseos); which, literally, means the title deed.

For the believer, this “title of deed” or “title of possession” is the Lord’s guarantee to fulfill the faith He in-births (cf. Heb 11:1 with Heb 11:6). Indeed, we are *only entitled* to what God gives or grants through faith in His promises.

HEBREWS 3:14

DEADLY UNBELIEF

Provoking God – Sometimes you are tempted to think that God is far away, aloof, or uncaring about what is going on in the world, especially your world! When one views God like this, they think that He doesn't care much about sin (and some might go so far as to think He didn't even see it as Proverbs says, "A fool says in his heart, 'there is no God.'") We need to realize that our sin provokes God. Sin is grossly offensive to Him.

HEBREWS 3:15-17

DEADLY UNBELIEF

The consequences of sin – Don't be fooled.

God sees our sin. How does He react to it?

Verse 17 shows that it makes Him angry. This is His righteous anger because of His holy nature. The people who provoked God with their sins in the wilderness wandered in it for forty years before dying without ever seeing the Promised Land. Their sin came with a high cost and the example the preacher uses is an example that the congregation would have known quite well: Meribah (מְרִיבָה) (cf. Numbers 20).

HEBREWS 3:15-17

DEADLY UNBELIEF

In verses 18 and 19, the implication is that just as those people who provoked God could not enter into the land of rest, if we follow their example in provoking God, we will not enter into His rest (heaven). Don't think that our fate will be different than theirs. If you have any sinful habits, know that continuing in them is provoking God. He sees and you will also face the consequences, unless you, confess, repent of the sin(s), and remain in Christ Jesus!

HEBREWS 3:18-19