

## **The Five Warnings of Hebrews**

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### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **THE DANGER OF DOUBTING -- Hebrews 3-4**

The previous danger was the danger of drifting.

This is just going along with the crowd and with the currents and pressures of this world's system which will move you away from the truth. It is possible to wake up someday and find that you are not with GOD's people nor with the truth at all. You have drifted from the truth because of an indifference to it. While you came to the truth, it never became something to which you anchored yourself. The truth will never change, but we can change, and this is the danger.

It is possible to come to Calvary and be redeemed by the precious blood of CHRIST and then drift away from this position because of indifference to the things of the Lord. It is the first danger in the Christian life.

Having stated this danger, the writer of Hebrews resumes the truth that JESUS CHRIST is greater than the angels. Having previously shown the Son to be superior to angels in His Deity as the Son of GOD (1:4-14), he now shows that He is superior to angels in His humanity as the Son of Man, 2:5-8.

GOD's purpose for man is given in 2:5-8. It is to subject the world to men, not angels. This is why the Garden of Eden was given to man to rule. This was GOD's will.

Proof that this is still GOD's will and program and that this will yet be accomplished, in JESUS' place today, 2:9. "JESUS" is the Lord's human name. He is the Lord's "man" to rule the world to come, i.e., the millennium.

Provision was made by CHRIST in His humanity that this might be accomplished, 2:10-18. He has defeated Satan already at the cross.

#### **OUTLINE:**

A. Superiority of the Son to Angels, 1:4-2:18

1. In His Deity as the Son of GOD, 1:4-14.
2. In His Humanity as the Son of Man, 2:5-18.

## B. Superiority of the Son to Moses, 3:1-6.

This is the new truth, and from it the writer will draw a new warning. CHRIST is shown to be superior to Moses in at least four ways.

CHRIST was the builder or creator of the House of Israel; Moses was a part of the house or a creature, 3:3.

CHRIST was over it, 3:6; Moses was in it, 3:5

CHRIST was a Son, 3:6; Moses was a servant, 3:6

CHRIST was the revealer; Moses testified to a revelation, 3:5b

Not only had One spoken who was greater than angels, but One had spoken who was greater than Moses. Just as GOD spoke through angels and every word was true; so GOD spoke through Moses and every word was true. This brings us to the second danger, and the writer of Hebrews stops to give the warning to the Hebrew Christians that they do not fail as their fathers failed.

### **SECOND WARNING: Danger of Unbelief, 3:7-4:13.**

First warning was not to drift from His salvation, and the second warning is not to miss His rest.

This warning goes back to the time of Moses.

#### 1. The Illustration, 3:7-19

**Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."**

Israel was redeemed out of Egypt from bondage and slavery. They were redeemed by blood of the passover lamb, and by the power of GOD. GOD brought them out; they did not liberate themselves. This redemption was His work, and He received the glory. It was glorious that Israel was redeemed out of Egypt; the tragedy is that they perished in the wilderness.

#### a. Explanation: How Israel Failed, 3:7-11.

Verses 1-6 give the faithfulness of Moses and the Messiah. Now we are shown the unfaithfulness of the children of Israel at the time of Moses, and the danger of unfaithfulness for the church at this present time.

The provocation (3:8) was the rebellion at Meribah given in Numbers 20:13. It was at the end of the wilderness experience. The temptation (3:8) was the rebellion at Massah recorded in Exodus 17:7, and was their experience at the beginning. From the beginning to the end, Israel provoked the Lord.

The result was not entering into rest, Hebrews 3:10-11. They never entered into the promised land. Now we must realize that the promised land was NEVER a picture of Heaven. It was a picture of rest, and this generation that was saved out of Egypt by GOD's grace and power never entered into this life of rest.

The point is this: A redeemed people may lose blessings which depend on continuing faith to enjoy. It is not enough to be saved by faith as an end in itself. "The just shall live by faith." If GOD's people cease to live by faith, they cease to live a life of blessing in time.

Being "saved" gives us rest of conscience, and we have peace with GOD. **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ"** (Romans 5:1).

But then we can go on and enter into the rest of heart and have the peace from GOD. **"In nothing be anxious, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts, and minds through Christ Jesus"** (Philippians 4:6).

The difference is the difference in rest between Matthew 11:28 and 29. **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."**

**"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."**

The first is positional; the second is experiential.

b. Application, 3:12-15.

The experience of Israel was not written down for them, for their mistakes being written down never helped them one bit. It is written for us.

We are to take heed lest this same thing be in us in departing from the living GOD. **"Departing"** signifies a standing off from a former belief. Formerly it was what GOD said through Moses. Now it is what GOD says through the Son: we come to Him and we are saved by Him, but then we can "depart" from Him in time.

Verse 13 tells us what we are to do when we discover this in the assembly. We are not to condemn nor condone. We are to exhort one another by love and good works (Cf. Hebrews 10:24).

The word "**hardened**" is *calloused*. It comes through the result of repeated irritations. There is callous for the hands and feet, but there is also a callous for the heart. We are never the same when we fail to respond to the SPIRIT's wooing. Failing to respond always produces hardening. This is a terrible thing. It is the end product of an evil heart (Cf. 3:12). The end result is no longer any sensitivity to the wooing of the Spirit.

c. The Interpretation, 3:16-19.

Here is the route sin takes. The very people GOD rescued, provoked Him.

There are three questions (vv. 16, 17, 18), and these give us the three stages of their sinful attitude.

UNBELIEF >>>>> HARDNESS >>>>> JUDGMENT

And attitude of unbelief issued into a manifestation of complaining and this issued into divine discipline upon them from GOD. The road is always the same. It begins with an attitude, manifests itself in action and culminates in GOD having to judge.

Then the danger is that we will also defect from the life of faith. Basically we are no different from Israel. The same thing that happened to her can happen to us.

First, the children of Israel who were redeemed, at Sinai drifted from the truth and made a golden calf -- 3,000 died.

Then 38 wasted years were experienced in the wilderness while one generation who accepted His salvation, perished in the wilderness because they refused to continue a life of faith and enter into the promised land.

There were 603,550 men of war -- of these, 603, 548 died in the wilderness.

These graves are a warning to the Christians. It can happen to us too. It can happen anywhere that hearts are left to grow cold.

2. The Encouragement, 4:1-10.

The promise of entering into rest was "left behind to another generation," (4:1).

This entering into rest was not the experience of crossing the Red Sea, which experience was salvation by blood and power.

This promise was that of crossing the Jordan River. The danger was to perish in the wilderness, rather than that we would not leave Egypt. It was a danger only for those who were saved.

It was 38 years after Israel was redeemed that Moses pleads with the new generation. The record of that plea is the book of Deuteronomy.

It is now 38 years after Pentecost for the church. It is a second generation of believers. They are facing a momentous decision. The Lord Himself is pleading with them not to fail. The record of that pleading is the book of Hebrews.

There was the Word of the report given to the nation in the Old Testament by 12 men. The same situation exists today. What are we going to do with the Word of the report (verse 2)?

:3 -- The rest of creation is a quality of life enjoyed by GOD.

:8 -- The rest Joshua gave them was only the type. The antitype or fulfillment still remains.

:9 -- That life rest

(1) Is provided by GOD.

(2) Is available today.

(3) May be entered into by faith.

3. The Exhortation, 4:11-13.

It is not enough to merely know these things. There must be positive action. Disobedience and unbelief will rob us of rest, 4:11.

GOD gives us something to search out our hearts.

(1) The Word of GOD, 4:12-13. Living, active, sharp, critic.

(2) GOD Himself, 4:13. Cf. Job 34:21, "**For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all His goings.**"

For all of us who are saved, there is a Jordan River for us to cross. It is an issue between us and the Lord. Will we do His will completely by faith, or will we not?

We do one of two things when we come to this point in our lives: We rebel or we surrender. What will it be for you?

**"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief"** (Hebrews 4:11).

That fall was physical death.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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