

THE PERIL OF ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF | HEBREWS 3:12-19

- Verse 12:
 - **Take heed** is a command to the Jewish nation.
 - **Departing from the living God** (KJV) This is part of the last warning to the Hebrews not to walk away from the promise of the Kingdom. Literally it is "to stand off from God." This is a willful act, not an accidental occurrence. A search of the 14 times this word is used in the New Testament will display the willfulness of this word. (Note that NASB uses, "fall away," which does not convey the willful nature of this word.)
- Verse 13:
 - **Exhort** is from the word παρακαλέω [*parakaleo*]. The Holy Spirit is called the *Paraclete*. This word is often taught as "comfort," but better implies imploring, beseeching, urging, appealing and even begging.
 - **The deceitfulness of sins:** People of any dispensation can be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. If sin wasn't deceitful, it would lose its power. We need a group of people around us who will be faithful to encourage us (in any form) so that we are not deceived.
- Verse 14:
 - **Partakers of Christ:** Not the distinction between v. 1 ("partakers of a heavenly calling") and v. 14 ("partakers of Christ.") Verse 1 is secure, v. 14 is potential. To the Hebrew nation, speaking through the believing Jews, the writer is begging that the nation become partakers of Christ (the Messiah).
 - **If we hold...unto the end:** This is clearly a requirement, outside of grace, and outside of assurance, for the Jewish nation. It required works (hold fast), it is not a free gift. Those who confuse the book of Hebrews to be a book about Grace-age salvation will have to spin a tale in their commentary of this verse.
 - Matthew Henry: "Let us beware of trusting to outward privileges or professions, and pray to be numbered with the true believers who enter heaven"
 - John Wesley: "For we are made partakers of Christ — And we shall still partake of him and all his benefits, if we hold fast our faith unto the end. If - But not else; and a supposition made by the Holy Ghost is equal to the, strongest assertion. Both the sentiment and the manner of expression are the same as Hebrews 3:6.
 - John MacArhtur: 'if we hold fast'-"This is not speaking of how to be saved or remain saved. It means rather that perseverance in faithfulness is proof of real faith. The person who returns to the rituals of the Levitical system to contribute to his own salvation proves he was never truly part of God's household, whereas the one who abides in Christ gives evidence of his genuine membership in that household. The promise of God will fulfill this holding fast.
- Verses 15-19: quoting from Psalm 95 in v. 15, the writer then gives an example (vv. 16-18) that shows that God does not have to bring the current generation of Israel into it's "Promised Land" any more than the previous generation. The key factor in both generations is **unbelief**.

THE CURRENT PROBLEM OF UNBELIEF | 4:1-3A

- Unbelief and its resulting disobedience ended in some not entering the Promised Land. Therefore, the writer gives a 'therefore'
- The national need: *fear*
 - *Why? Lest any come short of entering the promised rest*
 - The rest cannot be equated with Salvation or Heaven, which is fully accomplished in the work of Christ. While we "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), we are "justified as a gift by His grace" (Romans 3:24).
 - If this is equated with Christian salvation, then It contradicts other passages of Scripture, like 2 Timothy 1:7 and Romans 8:15

- The national reason: *a promise remains...but not for long*
 - This is a message to Israel in the last days of her nationhood. It does not carry over to the church.
 - The Christian's promise is not "entering His rest" (which has the Promised Land and Kingdom in view), our "blessed hope" is the rapture.
 - Israel was at its final days of opportunity

OBJECTIONS TO MY VIEW

This is for the Christian	The Kingdom was withdrawn with Paul
There is a problem with works based salvation	Paul redefines the Kingdom or misuses its promises (1 Cor 6:9-10)
The writer is "fear-mongering"	Paul's work doesn't align with such thinking: Acts 19:3, 20:25, 28:23, 28:31

- National Israel in Apostolic days had the "good news" preached to them, just as national Israel had the good news preached to the generation that died in the wilderness.
 - Be careful with the word, "gospel" (KJV). Those in the wilderness did not have the Gospel preached to them, since you cannot preach that which has not yet occurred.
 - There is more than one piece of "good news." The context of this "gospel" is the *promised rest*, that is, the Kingdom established on the land of Israel.
- Verse 3a is a promise to believing Israel compared to a warning to unbelieving Israel.
 - Entrance to the Kingdom was never on works alone. It always had a matter of faith (v. 2) that resulted in obedience.

THE SABBATH EXAMPLE | 4:3B-5

- There should likely be a new sentence with, "Although the works were finished..."
 - "Although" is elsewhere translated, "and yet."
 - The Sabbath is here presented as an illustration of the completion of God's work, thus the readiness to fulfill His promises.
 - The word *rest*: **κατάπαυσις** *katapausis*
 - Literally, "completely stopped."
 - This word testifies against Theistic Evolution as well as Inaugurated Eschatology ("already/not yet"). The rest in all these verses is "completely stopped." His rest will come quickly, suddenly, and completely, not slowly and bit-by-bit.
- The "complete stop" of the work of God displays the nature of the coming Kingdom of God. Nothing will be the same when it begins!