

# GUARD YOUR HEART – PART ONE

C. Stephen David | *Ekklesia Evangelical Fellowship* | November 13, 2022

**Scripture: Hebrews 3:1-6** [The author continues speaking about Christ’s supremacy over Moses]—ENCOURAGEMENT

We will be covering today **Hebrews 3:7-19**. Argument after argument, application after application to stir up people’s hearts to consider Jesus—WARNING

## Historical background:

- God heard the cry of the Israelites in the bondage of Egypt
- God sent Moses to deliver them from the bondage of Egypt
- God sent plagues on the Egyptians (10 plagues)
- Israel’s exodus from Egypt with a great celebration
- Red Sea divided, Israelites walked through it, Egyptian army drowned in it.
- Was it a happy ending? No. It was a happy beginning.
- Then began the wilderness journey for 40 years
- More than 1 million adults came out of Egypt.

<b>Psalm 95:6-11,</b>	<b>Hebrews 3:7-11,</b>
<p>Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at <b>Meribah</b> <b>[quarrelling]</b>, as on the day at <b>Massah</b> <b>[testing]</b> in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. <b>[cf. Exo. 17]</b> For forty years I loathed that generation and said, “They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways.” Therefore I swore in my wrath, “They shall not enter my rest.”</p>	<p>Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’”</p>

**“The Holy Spirit says”**—the author uses the present tense in citing Psalm 95, not the past tense. Every time we open the Bible, the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts. **(See Deuteronomy 27:10)**

## THE LORD'S WORK:

- ❖ **Hebrews 3:8**, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, **on the day of testing in the wilderness...**
- ❖ **Deuteronomy 8:2**, “And you shall remember the whole way that **the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you** to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

**Note:** The Israelites' journey to the Promised Land was only supposed to take 11 days, but it took 40 years. **[see Map]**

## PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE:

**3:7-8**, Hardened their hearts/rebelled.

- ❖ “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion...”
  - **Today** (present tense and with a sense of urgency)
  - **If you hear His voice:** Hear God's Word (Scripture is God's voice)
  - **Do not harden your hearts:** The heart is hardened by not obeying God's Word.

**Warren W. Wiersbe:** “What does it mean to harden your heart? It means to see clear evidence of the hand of God at work and still refuse to accept His Word and submit to His will. It means to resist Him by showing ingratitude and disobedience and not having any fear of the Lord or of His judgments. Hardhearted people say with Pharaoh, “Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice?” (5: 2) ...The same sun that melts the ice also hardens the clay. It all depends on the nature of the material.” [Ex. Spouse, Children, Church, Workplace]

**3:9**, “your fathers put me to the test.” How? By grumbling.

- The grumbling of Israelites (against God). (14 times it was recorded)

**Note:** All their grumbings were targeted directly **against Moses**, not against God.

- God led the people through Moses. People didn't understand God's leading through Moses. People grumbled against Moses.
- ❖ **Exodus 16:8**, “What are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the Lord.”

**3:10**, “They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.”

- They heard God's Word but haven't known God's ways because they haven't believed and obeyed. **Knowing God and His ways comes from believing and obeying, not merely accumulating information.**

## THE LORD'S RESPONSE:

- ❖ **3:10-11**, Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'"

## THREE RHETORICAL QUESTIONS:

### Hebrews 3:16

- **Question:** For who were those who **heard and yet rebelled**?
- **Answer:** Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses?

**Caution:** May this not be true of us—Heard but rebelled.

- ❖ **Deuteronomy 9:16**, You had turned aside quickly from the way that the Lord had commanded you. **Deuteronomy 9:23**, you rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God and did not believe him or obey his voice.

### Hebrews 3:17

- **Question:** And with whom was he provoked for forty years?
- **Answer:** Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? (More than 1 million)
- ❖ **Numbers 14:32-33**, But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness.

### Hebrews 3:18

- Question:** And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, **[Answer]** but to those who were disobedient?
  - ❖ **Numbers 32:11-12**, Surely none of the men who came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, because they have not wholly followed me, none except Caleb...and Joshua..., for they have wholly followed the Lord.'

**Conclusion in Hebrews 3:19**, "So we see that they were **unable to enter because of unbelief**." It was impossible for them to enter with unbelief.

Why did they rebel? Why was God provoked for forty years? Why did they sin, leading to death? Why didn't they enter God's promised land? **UNBELIEF**.

**Point to believers:** The author cautions his readers/shaky believers not to follow the example of the unbelief of Israel that couldn't enter the Promised Land.

## **Biblical Antidote:**

### **1. GUARD YOUR HEART**

**Physical heart:** Recently, I felt some discomfort in my heart. I did ECG/2D echo to check my heart's condition. When scanning, I heard a continuous sound. I asked the technician, and he said that's your heart. Amazed, unceasingly beating for 46 years!

**How to care for the heart?** Stress, smoking, alcohol, fatty foods, physical exercise.

**Remember:** The spiritual condition of the heart is much more important than the physical condition of the heart.

- ❖ **Hebrews 3:12**, "Take care, brothers..." **Deut. 11:16**, "Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside..."

"**Take care, brothers**" is a command to guard their hearts in Christ against the danger of unbelief.

**Don't be overconfident:** Believers can harden their hearts and prone to go astray.

**Don't be passive:** When your hearts go astray.

**Don't be active occasionally:** The command is in the **present tense**—"KEEP ON TAKING CARE, BRETHREN." Guard yourself (be on constant alert and take action)

**Remember:** You must take care. No one does this for you

- ❖ **Pro. 4:23**, Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

**Heart (inner controlling center):** Mission control center of human life.

**Note:** Although external situations may influence the heart, the inner condition of the heart is the cause of the fall.

- ❖ **Hebrews 3:12**, "Take care, brothers," says the writer, "lest there be in any of you **an evil, unbelieving heart**, leading you to fall away from the living God."

**J Vernon McGee:** What was their sin? It was not murder; it was not stealing; it was not lying. What was it? My friend, they didn't believe God. That was their great sin.

**Unbelief:** They [Israelites] did not believe that God is **righteous** (right and faithful in all that He says and does) and **good** (loving, caring) and **powerful** (providing).

**Remember:** All sin is rooted in unbelief. The first sin in the Garden of Eden was the sin of unbelief. God said, **You will surely die** (Gen. 2:17), the serpent said, **You will not surely die** (3:4). Whom did Eve believe?

**When you don't believe what God says, you disobey what God commands.**

What things can reveal unbelief, leading you to fall away from the living God?