

Lesson 5: Hebrews 3:7-19: A HARDENED HEART AND MISSED REST

I. Introduction

In the last session, we discussed the difference between Jesus and Moses as leaders of God's household and saw the clear superiority of Jesus' leadership- being our faithful High Priest. We now transition into verse 7, where the focus shifts to the people who made up this household of faith in the Old Testament—the Israelites. The writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 95, a key passage that describes God's response to the rebellion, unbelief, and sin displayed by the Israelites as they approached the Promised Land. Despite God's encouragement through Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, they chose to harden their hearts and refused to enter the rest the Lord had promised them since the time of Abraham (see Numbers 13–14). This section begins with the words, "So, as the Holy Spirit says," reminding believers that the call to enter God's rest is not merely historical but remains a present and active instruction from the Holy Spirit today.

The passage urges believers to encourage one another daily, turning away from sin, unbelief, and rebellion so that they can fully experience the rest God has prepared for all His children. The repeated use of the word "Today" emphasizes both the urgency and the importance of responding to God without delay and not being misled by the deception of sin. Verses 16–19 then pose a series of questions that highlight a sobering reality: that generation of Israelites died in the wilderness without ever entering the rest that was promised to them. The chapter concludes by identifying the root cause of their failure—unbelief. This serves as a strong warning to believers today not to fall into the same pattern that caused the Israelites to miss the rest that God had prepared for them.

II. Study the Scriptures: Read the Passage Hebrews 3:7-19

Note your thoughts as you read:

Write down any questions that come to mind as you read:

III. Think Through the Following Questions:

1. Why do you think the writer of Hebrews begins verse 7 by identifying the Holy Spirit as the source of the instruction to the reader?
2. What is the significance of the repeated use of the word “Today” in this passage?
3. In Numbers 13–14, how did the Israelites demonstrate hardened hearts?
4. In what ways can believers today avoid hardening their hearts and falling into the sin of unbelief and rebellion?
5. What kind of “rest” is this passage referring to?
6. How can believers practically live out the command in verse 13, “*But encourage one another daily...*”?
7. As you carefully reflect on verses 16–19, why do you think the author asks this series of questions, and how does it apply to believers today?

IV. Lessons Learned: Are there any new things you learned from this passage today?

V. Application: How do you think this will impact your thinking and/or actions going forward?