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Email: Woody@dtgministries.org
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Hebrews, Chapter 3 Deceitfulness of the Sin Nature

The topic of “rest” is opened in Hebrews 3 and continues through verse 13 in chapter 4. Faith and lack of faith are also connected with the rest, initially stated to Moses by the Lord, Ex 33:14; cp Dt 12:9-10. The wilderness experience, Dt 9:7, is used as an example for failure to enter the rest. Yet a literal rest from their enemies came about in the time of King Solomon: *Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant*, 1Ki 8:56. Joshua also stated that the Lord had given Israel rest, Josh 21:44-45; 23:14. What is the rest discussed in these chapters, and is something that continues to be available to God’s people?

Read Hebrews 3:1-6:

1. Generally, what is a house discussed here, and who built it? Ex 40:38; Mt 15:24

{The phrase “house of Israel” is used 152 times in the KJ Bible. Christ, as Captain of the host, Josh 5:13-15, built the house of Israel through the sons of Jacob, Gen 49:28. Since the cross, the house includes the Gentiles.}

2. What is difference between the house in verses 2, 5 compared to the one in verse 6? Lk 6:48-49; 1Pt 2:5

{Inwardly, the difference is the mind-set of each in their generation. The house of Israel in which Moses was faithful, Num 12:7, was governed by the letter, or writing of the law, 1Cor 10:1-2; Josh 8:30-32; the house of Israel in Paul’s day was governed by the Holy Spirit given through Christ, Jn 1:17; Act 2:33; Rom 8:3-4.}

3. In verse 5, to what does the *testimony of those things to be spoken after* refer? 1Cor 10:5-12

{Israel’s obedience resulted in blessings; but disobedience leads to disaster. Examples can apply literally or allegorically - i.e. Serpents, Num 21:4-9, figurative of mankind’s sin nature, which bites us everyday.}

Read Hebrews 3:7-13:

3. What was Israel’s problem and who were they provoking during their wilderness experience? Verses 9-10; 1Cor 10:3-4

{Except for the first word in verse 7, verses 7-11 are inserted here from Psalms 95:7-11 as a warning to not repeat past experience. The error was in the hearts of those who fell, as they did not know God’s ways. The wilderness is spiritual today in the sense that we start out not knowing God’s ways. We are raised in the modern traditions of the church. It does not take much investigation to see that there are vast differences of beliefs of people of the various religious groups. *Wherefore, ...Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart lacking faith, departing from the living God*, Heb 3:7, 12. Faith is Christ’s understanding; comes by hearing, Rom 10:17.}

4. How is the heart hardened? Verse 13; Rom 6:7

{Deceit happens before the act of sin. The definite article, not translated, precedes the word 'sin,' indicating that it is the deceitfulness of the sin-nature that hardens a person's heart who will not hear God's voice. The Bible is an instruction book through which God speaks to the conscience as we study & fellowship. 1Jn 3:8 more accurately: *The one authoring the sin (nature) is from the devil, because the devil sins from the beginning. For this the Son of God was revealed, that He might free (you) of the works of the devil.* Rom 5:12; Gen 3:1; Rv 12:9. The result of a sin-nature is *lawlessness*^{g458}, 1Jn 3:4, or *lack of understanding of the law*, cp Mt 7:22-23. Notice, we are set free from the works, not the devil. A *devil* is what we are, a human being guilty of slandering others, & carrying an adversarial spirit toward God & man. THIS is the bondage from which we are being set free by the truth, Eph 5:26. Holding on to error sets no one free.}

Read Hebrews 3:14-19:

5. At this point, what can we conclude as to why and who could not enter the rest?

{Here is a broader understanding of the words at the end of verse 18, them that believed not^{g544} & verse 19, unbelief^{g570}: The Greek word *apeithesasin*^{g544} is from *alpha*^{g1} & *peitho*^{g3982}, meaning *to persuade, convince*. With the *alpha* in front of the word, the meaning is reversed to mean, *not persuaded, unconvinced*. The Greek word *apistian*^{g570} is from *alpha*^{g1} & *pistos*^{g3982}, meaning *faithful, worthy of trust*. With the *alpha*, the meaning is opposite, as *not faithful, untrustworthy*. This is warning to all who will not consider the word of God.}

6. In verse 14, we are to hold what steadfast, unto the end of what? 1Pt 1:7-9

{We are to hold steadfast our faith until the completion of our being saved from ourselves. Don't be like those who refused enter God's rest, & died in the wilderness, or their darkness of understanding. Have a heart open to explore the word of God, & be prepared to turn your back on teachings that are not scriptural.}

Moreover you, beloved, remember the words spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, because they told you that at the last time there will be mockers following their own ungodly desires. These are they setting themselves apart, animal-like ones, not having the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up by your most holy faith, praying in a holy spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, eagerly awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. Jude 1:17-21

Amen