

Bible Study Manual: Christ Above All - Episode 7

Jesus: The Greater Rest

Introduction

This study explores Hebrews 3:7–19 and the theme of Jesus as the Greater Rest. The passage warns against unbelief, using Israel's rebellion as an example, and emphasizes faith in Christ as the key to entering God's rest.

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 3:7–19

"So, as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" (Hebrews 3:7–11)

A Warning from History

The passage recalls Israel's rebellion in the wilderness, warning believers not to follow the same pattern of unbelief. The Israelites witnessed God's miracles but still hardened their hearts. This serves as a reminder that faith is not just about seeing signs but about trusting in God's word and character.

- **1 Corinthians 10:11** – "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come."
- **Hebrews 11:6** – "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Unbelief kept Israel from entering the Promised Land. Likewise, unbelief keeps people from experiencing the true rest found in Christ.

The Deceitfulness of Sin

Hebrews 3:12–13 warns believers against the deceitfulness of sin, which can harden hearts and lead to falling away from God.

- **Jeremiah 17:9** – "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"
- **Exodus 16:3** – "The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.'"

Sin deceives by making the past seem better than God's promises, leading to disobedience and separation from God's blessings.

Encouragement in the Faith

Hebrews 3:14–15 reminds believers of their calling to persevere in faith and hold firmly to Christ.

- **Galatians 6:9** – "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."
- **John 6:68–69** – "Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.'"

Faith in Christ provides the strength to endure challenges and remain steadfast.

The Tragedy of Unbelief

The passage concludes with a solemn warning: those who refused to trust God did not enter His rest.

- **Hebrews 3:18–19** – "And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief."
- **Matthew 11:28** – "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Faith is the key to experiencing God's rest. This rest is not just a physical land but the peace and salvation found in Christ.

Conclusion: Entering God's Rest

The warning from Israel's history is clear: do not harden your heart. Faith in Christ is the way to enter God's rest.

- **Psalms 95:7–8** – "Today, if only you would hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness."
- **Hebrews 4:1** will continue this theme, urging believers to strive to enter that rest through faith.

As we journey forward, let us encourage one another daily to remain steadfast in Christ.