

v7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, v8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, v9 where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. v10 That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' v11 So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' " v12 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. v13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. v14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. v15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." v16 Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? v17 And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? v18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? v19 So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. Hebrews 3:7-19

We are living in a world in search of meaning and inner peace. During this last week I listened to a discussion on this subject on the radio. I tuned in late so did not get the names of those being interviewed. One of the participants mentioned a course at Yale University, which has now become the most popular course in the Universities 316-year history. The lecturer is **Yale Professor Laurie Santos** and the title of the course is **Psychology and the Good Life** More that 25% of all the students at the University are taking the course.

Subjects covered in the course include the following, delivered in weekly instalments, with approximately 20 hours to complete in total:

- *Misconceptions about happiness*
- *Why our expectations are so bad*
- *How we can overcome our biases*
- *Stuff that really makes us happy*
- *Putting strategies into practice*

For me, the funny thing is that Solomon wrote about this stuff 3300 years ago.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-6 v1 The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem: v2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." v3 What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun? v4 Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. v5 The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. v6 The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.

Reasons why some are going to HELL and others are going to HEAVEN

SOME ARE GOING TO HELL, BECAUSE:

1. THEIR HEARTS HAVE HARDENED.

*v7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, v8 **do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion**, during the time of testing in the desert, v9 where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. v10 That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.'*

*v15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, **do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.**" v16 **Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?***

What do we learn about HARDENED HEARTS from this passage.

1.1. Hearts grow hard over a long period of time.

The Israelites travelled for 40 years in the desert. A person does not become an alcoholic after one drink.

1.2. Hearts grow hard through our own choice.

v16 Who were they who heard and rebelled?

*Acts 19:8-9 Paul entered the synagogue (Ephesus) and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. v9 **But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.***

1.3. Hearts grow hard through God giving us what we want.

God sometimes aids people to receive what they wish. Like Pharaoh, who hardened his own heart for six plagues, then in Ex 9:12 it says God Hardened Pharaoh's heart. We read in *Romans 9:18 "Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden."*

1.4. Hearts grow hard when we question God in spite of all the evidence.

God had done many miracles for the nation of Israel, yet they continued to long to go back to the slavery of Egypt. God saved them through the BLOOD. Opened the Red Sea for them. Led them by a cloud or fire. Gave them the 10 commandments. Sent manna and meat every day.

SOME ARE GOING TO HELL, BECAUSE:

2. **THEIR HEARTS ARE SINFUL/UNBELIEVING.**

v12 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

The combination of “sinful, unbelieving heart” is only found here in all Greek literature. The phrase suggests that it is not that they are not able to believe, it is that they refuse to believe.

Many in what were previously Christian nations, have rejected the bible because of the so-called enlightenment. My biggest frustration is that they have rejected the bible, without ever even reading the book for themselves. The lack of biblical knowledge is embarrassing. Young people know more about Harry Potter, than they do about the Parables.

SOME ARE GOING TO HELL, BECAUSE:

3. **THEIR HEARTS ARE DECEIVED.**

v12 See to it, brothers, v13 that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

The devil is a deceiver. He deceived Adam and Eve in the garden.

*John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, **for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.***

*Revelation 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, **who leads the whole world astray.** He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*

SOME ARE GOING TO HEAVEN, BECAUSE:

4. **THEY HAVE OBEYED THE WORD OF GOD.**

v7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, ... v15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." v16 Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? v17 And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert?

God's Word has been accepted. This passage is quoting from Psalm 95

Psalms 95:7-9 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice, v8 do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, v9 where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did.

SOME ARE GOING TO HEAVEN, BECAUSE:

5. THEY RESPONDED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PROMPTING.

v7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "

God has given us His Spirit to reveal Himself to us.

John 14:26 But the Counsellor the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Ephesians 1:13-14 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, v14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.

SOME ARE GOING TO HEAVEN, BECAUSE:

6. THEY ARE HOLDING ONTO JESUS AS TIGHTLY AS POSSIBLE.

v14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

There are some of us, and I include myself in that number, who are hanging on for all it worth. Maybe I'm too stupid to find some other way to get to heaven.

But this I know,

2 Timothy 1:12 ... Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

John 6:60-69 On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" v61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? v62 What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! v63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. v64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. v65 He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."

v66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. v67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. v68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. v69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

*v10 That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' v11 So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' "
v18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? v19 So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.*

GOD WILL KEEP HIS WORD

SO, WHAT CAN WE DO?

1. RESPOND TODAY

v7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice,

2. ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

v13 But encourage one another daily,

3. HANG IN THERE

v14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

4. LISTEN FOR THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT

v15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."