

**Knowing and Growing in Christ**  
**Hebrews 3:15-19 (Week 11) 04/14/2024**  
**Lessons From Israel's Rebellion**

**This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.**

***15 As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."***

***16 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. (Hebrews 3:15-19)***

### **Introduction and Review**

- If you were with us last week, you'll recognize that the **theme** in these verses that \_\_\_\_\_ **just read for us, is the same as** what we looked at in **verses 7-11**.
- In fact, **verse 15** is a repeat of **verses 7-8**, they both say...

***Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. (Hebrews 3:7-8, 15)***

- This is the **theme** of the entire section (**verses 7-19**).
- ***Do not harden your hearts to the voice of God.***
- As God speaks through his word, **do not reject what he says.**
- As you experience difficulty, hardship, **trials of various kinds.**
- Hold fast to your faith, **continue to believe**, trust in the gospel of **Jesus Christ**.
- This is the author's **heart's desire for his 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish Christian readers.**
- To encourage, exhort and warn them to **remain true to Jesus Christ.**
- **And so, he's not** merely providing **doctrinal truth**, valuable though that is,
- He's giving **practical instructions - Lessons** for his readers to follow.
- **Lessons** from the **Holy Spirit** that are meant to help **us persevere in our faith,**
- **Especially** when that faith is being tested.
- And as we saw last week, to **drive his point home,**
- **to help his readers understand this warning against hardening their hearts to God.**
- The **Holy Spirit inspired author** uses an **illustration from the rebellion.**

### ***as in the rebellion***

- **This refers to the time of the Exodus,**
- **The time when** God (through Moses) powerfully delivered Israel from their bondage in Egypt and brought them through the Red Sea into the desert.

- **However, after their deliverance when Israel faced difficulties in the desert** (tests of their faith).
- Instead of trusting in God, they **hardened their hearts and rebelled against him**.
- **And** the author of Hebrews draws from this **historical example** to teach and warn his readers about **the grave consequences** of hardening their hearts to God.
- He sees a **clear parallel** between Israel during the time of the Exodus and Christians of his day (and I would say of every day)
- That is, **both face tests of their faith**.
- The Israelites faced **hunger and danger and fatigue**, and instead of trusting God to provide.
- They hardened their hearts **and rebelled against Him**.
- They failed to trust in **God's Word as given through Moses**.
- And they experienced the consequences of death in the desert,
- **of not entering the promised land**.
- And when Christians of any age, experience hardships and temptations our faith is tested as well.
- Do we continue to trust in God or do we, like Israel, harden our hearts to his voice,
- Do we grumble and complain about him not truly caring for us.
- And so, using **Israel as a bad example**, the writer of Hebrews warns his readers.
- When your faith is tested, don't be like Israel and harden your hearts to the voice of God.
- Don't rebel against him or you too will **face grave consequences**.
- This is what we saw last week as we looked at **verses 7-11**.
- And we'll see more of it today in **verses 15-19**.
- Now if you're **paying attention** then you've noticed that we **skipped verses 12-14**.
- Well, I had planned to cover **verses 12-19**.
- But when the **sermon began approaching the 60-minute mark**,
- it became clear that I needed to **divide it into two messages**.
- And I decided that since **verses 7-11 which we looked at last week**,
- **and verses 15-19** both focused on Israel's rebellion that I would cover **15-19** first.
- And then **next week** look at **verses 12-14**.
- Because in verses 12-14, between the passages that warn us against following Israel's example of hard-hearted rebellion, the author gives **some very practical instructions**.
- **Instructions that are** meant to help his readers not harden their hearts to the voice of God,
- To believe and persevere in their faith.
- So, I felt it would be good to learn all we can from Israel's rebellion first,
- and then look at the specific instructions or practical **application second**.
- **OKAY...**
- So, as we turn to **verses 15-19**, I want us to see three lessons from **Israel's Rebellion**.

- The First lessons is...

## 1. A Hard-Heart is an Evil Heart

- Again, the warning **against a hard heart comes**,
- the **Holy Spirit said** it in **verse 7-8** and repeats in **verse 15**...

***15 As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." (Hebrews 3:15)***

- A **hardened heart** is the **opposite of a soft or tender heart**.
- A **soft heart** responds in faith to **God's work of redemption through Jesus Christ**.
- A **soft heart** is one that is **easily penetrated by and obeys the Word of God**.
- A **soft heart** is moved by God's love. **The love of Christ compels a soft heart**.
- **Basically**, a **soft heart** will receive from God, will trust God and will obey God.
- And of course, a **hard heart** is just the opposite.
- A **hard heart** will **ignore** God, will **doubt** God, will **disbelieve** God, and will **sin against** God.
- And what I want us to see is that having a hard heart towards God is **a terrible thing**.
- I mean think about it, a hard heart cannot receive what God in his grace, mercy and love offers.
- We see this in **Jesus' parable** of the **four soils**.
- We don't have time to look at the **whole parable**,
- but I want us to see what happens to the seed (the gospel) that is sown on the **path**,
- **which represents hard ground or a hard heart**.
- This is explained in **Matthew 13:19**...

***19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. (Matthew 13:19)***

- The seed, the word of the kingdom, the gospel, **is not understood or believed** because it does not truly penetrate the hard path, the hard heart.
- **And it is soon snatched away**.
- Possibly the clearest example of **hard-heartedness** in the Bible is **that of Pharaoh**.
- Despite witnessing **God's might and power** in the 10 Plagues.
- Despite being told exactly what this all-powerful God wanted – **let my people go!**
- **Pharaoh** would not yield, but stubbornly resisted to the point of his **own destruction**.
- **How tragic** that Israel, the very people who saw Pharaoh's hard-hearted example.
- **Did the very same thing**.
- They, too, became hard hearted even after God's powerfully delivered them from slavery in Egypt.
- They complained against him in every difficulty.
- They accused God of wanting to kill them despite his many great demonstrations of love.

- And the thing we need to see is that they hardened their own hearts to God.
- They chose to reject the God who had delivered them.
- And this was not a mistake, a boo boo, an error, something that just needed a little adjustment.
- **Verse 12 makes this clear** as it warns us...

***12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart... (Hebrews 3:12)***

- **A hard heart is an evil unbelieving heart.**

**We see this also in verses 17 and 18.**

- In **verse 17** those with an unbelieving heart are described **“those who sinned,”**
- and in **verse 18** we are told that they **disobeyed**.
- **A hard heart is an evil unbelieving, sinful, disobedient heart.**
- And this should not surprise us. Because if you harden your heart **to the voice of God**.
- If you do not allow God’s **word, his love, his mercy, his commands** to penetrate your heart.
- If you reject what God, who created you says, in favor of what the world, the flesh and devil offers...
- Then your life will be marked by EVIL, by Unbelief, by sin, by disobedience to God.
- And if you read about Israel’s rebellion in **Exodus and Numbers**, you read of one evil, one sin after another.
- And the writer of Hebrews boils their sin down into one word, that is **unbelief**.
- That’s the word he uses to summarize the reason they didn’t enter the promised land.
- In **verse 19** we read...

***19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. (Hebrews 3:19)***

- Having a hard heart to the voice of God is **synonymous with unbelief**.
- Not believing **who God is and what God says**.
- And I think there is an important insight here,
- Specifically, that **unbelief is both evil and is at the root of all sin**.
- In **his commentary** on this passage, **Richard Philips** gives this illustration:

***Specific sins are like rotten fruit hanging on a bad tree. But this is not the real problem; it is not the disease, but just the symptom. If we are greedy or hateful or selfish or dishonest, that is just evidence of dead and rotten things deeper inside. Bad fruit grows on a bad tree, just as sin grows from our sinful, corrupt nature. But deeper still, there is a root system to every tree; that is most important of all. Unbelief is the root system that feeds the whole rotten tree of sin. (Richard Philips)***

- We need to understand that having a hard heart, not believing the voice of God, **unbelief** is not a **minor problem, it is evil**.
- **It is evil if we find it in our own hearts and it is evil in the hearts of others.**

- By contrast, **having a soft heart**, believing God, **causes us to reject what is evil and embrace obedience to the Lord.**
- **Noah is a good example.**
- His world was filled with evil, **with those whose hard hearts had rejected God.**
- But **Noah believed** when God told him a great flood was coming,
- God then instructed him to build an ark... **And Genesis 6:22 we read...**

***22 Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him. (Genesis 6:22)***

- Because of his **belief**, **Noah obeyed all God commanded him.**
- On the other hand, **because the Israelites had never come to truly know God and had not believed his promises,**
- They **rebelled against him** and sinned in the desert.
- **Faith belief** versus **unbelief** is at the core of **every spiritual issue**, every spiritual battle.
- The battle boils down to will we, **with an evil hard heart reject God,**
- or will we with a **soft heart believe trust** and obey God.
- Here is how you know if you have an evil unbelieving heart,
- When confronted with the word of God, the commands of God, do you resist, do you seek to reject, to you tray and rationalize your sin.
- Or do you believe, trust in God and obey his word.
- **Also, one final thing I want us to learn from Israel's hard heartedness.**
- **I want us to notice** that **evidence** is not the issue.
- Lack of evidence is not the **cause of unbelief.**
- These Israelites (not to mention Pharaoh) had all the evidence **anyone could ever want.**
- **They saw and experienced the power and mercy of All Mighty God.**
- but because **their hearts were hard** the evidence did not produce faith.
- Likewise, most people today do not reject **Jesus Christ** on **philosophical grounds but on moral grounds.**
- **Oh**, they may say they **don't believe because the Bible is full of contradiction.**
- Or because **they can't believe in a God who allows such evil in this world.**
- Or because they **find science and evolution much more reasonable than the Bible.**
- **But really and ultimately**, they reject God because they **have a greater love for their sin,**
- and their love for sin requires **hardness to God's Word.**
- This is what Paul describes to the **Romans...**

***21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:21)***

- The philosophy (the stated reasons) for unbelief, come later; It is only the **fruit of hardness** to God's Word and love for sin.

- So WARNING, if you find yourself, **questioning the voice of God**, the word of God.
- If you find yourself wondering, did God really say this, did he really mean this.
- Especially in an effort to justify some sin, **then know you are hardening your heart to the voice of God.**
- For example, I have talked to people who know the Bible very well,
- but because of their sinful desire for sex outside marriage,
- they hardened their heart to God's word and sought to find loopholes to justify what they were doing.
- Oh, this doesn't apply today, Oh but we are committed, in love, getting married... Blah Blah Blah.
- And hope you can see that a hard heart is not a minor thing,
- It is an evil wicked thing.
- And it will lead to your own destruction unless you repent and call upon the Lord to soften your heart.
- So, first lesson from Israel's rebellion, **a Hard-Heart is an Evil Heart.**
- Second lesson,

## 2. A Good Start Does Not Ensure a Good Finish

- Now in **verses 16-18** we have a series of **questions** designed to help us think about **Israel's rebellion.**
- The **first two questions** are in **verse 16...**

***16 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? (Hebrews 3:16)***

- This is really a question and an answer in the form of a question.
- Who are the ones who heard but **rebelled against the word of God given them by Moses.**
- **Well**, it was the same people who experienced God's power and mercy as he delivered them from slavery in Egypt **and even parted the Red Sea for them.**
- **And I think the point is this...**
- Clearly the Israelites at the time of the Exodus had **a good start with God.**
- They are rejoicing, flying high as they're caught up in what God has done for them.
- **In fact**, after God brought them through the Red Sea, in **Exodus 14:31** we read.

***31 Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses. (Exodus 14:31)***

- This was a **high point of their deliverance**,
- They had seen God's power and they feared and believed in him.
- Yet in a very short time, when their faith was tested in the desert,
- **They rebelled, they hardened their hearts, they no longer believed in (trusted in) the LORD.**
- **They fell away again and again, even creating and worshipping other Gods.**

- **And this should be a lesson and warning for us.**
- Even the most impressive start does not ensure **perseverance of faith till the end.**
- Maybe, when you first came to the Lord, it was **awesome.**
- You saw the power of God at work in your life, and you were so **pumped for Jesus.**
- But as **time passed** and the **emotion wore off** and difficulties came, and your faith was tested,
- **Your heart began to grow-hard, and you began to have doubts.**
- How can **God be real or really care for me** if he is allowing this terrible thing to happen.
- And **this unfortunately, happens every day.**
- I want us to understand that **a past experience** (no matter how emotional or profound) does not ensure that our faith is genuine or will endure to the end.
- Many people trust their **eternal salvation** on a time when they **prayed a certain prayer.**
- or when they **walked the aisle and knelt at the altar.**
- **When they like Israel declared their belief in the Lord.**
- But Israel shows us that a good start, and even an initial declaration of faith, does not ensure a good finish.
- Now let **me be clear**, there is **nothing wrong with a good start.**
- There is nothing wrong with praying to God to save you through the finished work of Jesus Christ.
- There is nothing wrong with a **public display** of **walking the aisle** and giving your life to Christ.
- There is nothing wrong with **declaring your faith in the Lord.**
- **The problem is** when we think this **good start is all we need to ensure a good finish.**
- That our **initial experience** is all that's needed for our **eternal salvation.**
- But a **good start** is just that, **a start.**
- It **does not take the place** of **daily walking with**, trusting in the Lord in a **long journey of faith.**
- I remember, many years ago, I was taking with our missionary **Jim Wunder.**
- We were discussing some mutual **Campus Crusade friends.**
- People Jim had discipled when they were in High School.
- People that I had joined with to start a Christian Club on the RCC Campus.
- People who were at one time on fire for Jesus.
- But as the years went by, some of them began to fall away **or fall into sin.**
- And Jim said something **that I will never forget.**
- He said the Christian Life is about... ***A long obedience in the same direction.***
- Which is the title of a 1980 book written by **Eugene Peterson.**
- I haven't read the book but Jim's point in quoting the title was to say that being a true Christian is not **only or even primarily** about how you start (**that is your initial profession of faith**).
- The Christian Life is about how you **daily live out that faith until the end.**
- It's not about a prayer, or believing some facts, it's **not** about **an emotional conversion experience.**

- It's about **daily walk with Jesus Christ**,
- It's about **a lifetime of knowing, trusting, and obeying him**.
- It's about when you fall, **getting back up**, repenting of your sin, and returning to relationship with Lord.
- **So again**, I say, the Christian Life, being a Christian, being saved, having eternal life is not assured **by a good start, a good "conversion" experience**,
- or even an **early life of serving the Lord**.
- **The Christian Life**, having eternal life is assured by **a long obedience in the same direction**.
- It's assured by **persevering, continuing to trust in the Lord until the end**.
- Now I know that some of you are **not sure about what I've just said**.
- There are those who object that this lesson that we see in Israel, **doesn't really apply to Christians**.
- For the Christian the start is everything **because we are saved by grace through faith alone**.
- Well, the Holy Spirit through the author of Hebrews is **applying the lesson** that we see in Israel to his Christian readers.
- The same ones who began by declaring their faith,
- **who left Egypt following God's appointed leader Moses**.
- Later hardened their heart and rebelled against God.
- So, it seems the author means to warn Christians that the same thing can happen to them.
- Also, some might say, it seems you're **contradicting what the Bible** teaches about **eternal security**.
- And so let me be as clear as I can.
- I believe that we are saved by grace through faith alone and I believe in eternal security,
- I believe that once you are saved, you cannot lose your salvation.
- The Bible tells us that all who **genuinely trust in Christ** can be confident in his complete sufficiency as our Savior.
- Jesus said of his own,

***28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. (John 10:28)***

- But we need to remember **that Judas** was there when he **made this statement**,
- **Judas**, who apparently had a good start.
- Who like all the disciples, left his life, made sacrifices, to follow Jesus.
- Who apparently was seen as just as much a disciple as all the rest.
- For in the upper room at the last supper, when **Jesus said** that one of his disciples would betray him, no one said, Oh of course it's Judas.
- So, Judas (at least on the outside) appeared to have faith in Christ.

- But his **faith was not genuine**, and therefore **Jesus' promise of eternal life** was not for him.
- So how do we **know if our faith is genuine?**
- How do we have **that assurance of salvation and eternal life?**
- **Well**, I think the author of Hebrews would tell **that assurance** comes when we behave differently than Israel.
- That when our faith is tested, **we do not harden our hearts to the voice of God but continue trusting in him.**
- This I believe is one of the reasons we can (**as James commands**) rejoice in our trials.
- For it is through them that we come to know **that our faith is genuine.**
- But you might respond, what if my faith has yet to be tested?
- Well, the Bible gives us other **important** ways to have **assurance.**
- But they are not automatic.
- I think **as we lead people to Christ**, or we disciple or befriend a new or less mature Christian.
- **Our desire for them and for ourselves is to have immediate assurance of salvation.**
- We love to quote **1 John 5:13...**

***13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)***

- And so, we say, did you pray the prayer, did you really, really mean it,
- do you really believe in Jesus.
- Then no worries, it's a done deal, you're saved, you are going to heaven, you have eternal life no matter what.
- But what we fail to understand is **that John didn't just write a verse about assurance.**
- **He wrote a whole letter.**
- I write these things (1 John Chapters 1-5) to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.
- John is saying you need to read the whole letter in order to know you have eternal life.
- And if you read the letter, it's filled with **verse after verse** telling us what **true belief in the Son looks like.** For example... in **1 John 1:6** we read...

***6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (1 John 1:6)***

- That is, if we walk in darkness (live in sin) we don't believe in the name of the Son of God.
- So, what you say about having a relationship with God must be backed up by the way you live.
- There is no assurance for those who walk in darkness, who continue to live in their sin.
- Or in **1 John 2:15** we read...

***15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)***

- You can say you have faith, that you have received the love of God through Jesus Christ.
- But if you continue loving the world, living like those in the world, then you are deceiving yourself.
- And you don't believe in the name of the Son of God, **and you can't know you have eternal life.**
- One more this is crucial, in **1 John 3:9, the Apostle writes...**

***<sup>9</sup> No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:9)***

- No one born of God makes a practice of sinning.
- There is no assurance for those who continue to practice sin.
- And this is not saying **if you sin you are not saved.**
- It is saying if you continue practicing sin without repentance, without seeking help from God,
- **Then you can't be saved.**
- Why? Because those who are born of God (truly saved) cannot (it is impossible for them to) continue in their sin.
- Why? Because God's seed (the Holy Spirit) abides in him.
- Here is the point, if you are **truly saved**, if your faith is genuine then you've been given the Holy Spirit,
- and therefore, you cannot continue practicing sin – It's not possible.
- So, if you are continuing a practice of sinning then your faith is not genuine and therefore you should not have assurance.
- Let me say this one more way.
- You can have assurance of genuine faith in Jesus Christ if you are becoming more like Jesus Christ.
- **Because only those who have genuine faith,**
- **Only those who are born of God and receive the gift of the Spirit have the ability to become more like Christ.**
- **As Jesus said...**

***<sup>16</sup> You will recognize them by their fruits... (Matthew 7:16)***

- You know a tree by **the fruit it produces.**
- And a **Christian tree (a Christian person)** produces Christ-like fruit.
- Like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control.
- If the fruit of the Spirit, **these Christ-like qualities** are growing in your life, **then you can have assurance.**
- Because only those who have the **Holy Spirit of God can truly consistently produce this fruit.**
- And just to be **very clear**, in all of this, I am not talking about what is required for salvation.
- **Again, we are saved by grace through faith alone.**
- But I am and the Author of Hebrews is, and John is talking about what genuine faith is and does.
- Genuine faith produces both fruit (the character of Christ and **perseveres enduring until the end.**

- OKAY!!!
- Now if what I've said, has created some **doubt** in your heart about the genuineness of your faith.
- If you are thinking, you know there are areas of my life where I am still waking in darkness, living in sin.
- Or, if I'm honest with myself, I'm not different from others in the world,
- I'm not growing in love or peace or patience or kindness.
- I may say and even do the right things when my Christian friends are around,
- but I know, in my heart I am not becoming more like Jesus.
- **And if faced with a major difficulty in my life**, I'm not sure if I would continue in my faith.
- **If that describes you** and what I've said is causing you to doubt the genuineness of your faith,
- Then I say, I have **accomplished my purpose**.
- **Because, as your Pastor**, I would rather create **doubt** than **give false security**.
- For those with **false security** will one day be **surprised** when Jesus says...

***21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' (Matthew 7:21-23)***

- These are the ones who **had false security in their "faith"**, but they never truly knew Jesus.
- So, **doubt can be good**, it can cause you to **examine your life your heart**,
- your faith, your response to tests.
- And that examination can cause you **to grow in assurance**.
- But it can also help you realize that your faith may not be genuine.
- And if that's the case, if you are doubting your faith, then I have done my job,
- and now you have the opportunity to go before the Lord in true repentance,
- calling upon him, in genuine faith to save your soul and committing yourself to trust in him no matter what.
- **So be warned... A Good Start does not ensure a Good Finish**
- And then **the final lesson** I want us to see is...
- **The writer of Hebrews forces us to face the fact that...**

### **3. Sinners Will Experience God's Wrath**

- In **verses 17 and 18** we get more questions and answers...

***17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? (Hebrews 3:17-18)***

- Here we learn that God was “**provoked**” (or **grieved**) with those who sinned,
- Those whose hearts were hard against his voice.
- Those who were **filled with unbelief**.
- And this went on for **40 years**.
- And because of this as we read in **verse 11**, God said...

***11 As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’” (Hebrews 3:11)***

- Here we see God’s wrath against **those who sinned**.
- Many people today consider wrath to be an **inappropriate** response for God to make toward sin.
- God should be more like us, they think **he shouldn’t take sin so seriously**.
- But, unlike us, **God is perfectly holy and therefore his wrath burns against sin**.
- Now to be clear, when the Bible speaks of **God’s wrath**, it doesn’t mean God throws a temper tantrum in anger.
- Rather, God’s wrath is his deliberate response in judgment toward sin and sinners.
- As **J. I. Packer** explains,

***This is righteous anger—the right reaction of moral perfection in the Creator towards moral perversity in the creature. So far from the manifestation of God’s wrath in punishing sin being morally doubtful, the thing that would be morally doubtful would be for Him not to show His wrath in this way. (J. I. Packer)***

- Put simply, God’s wrath against sinners is right and natural outcome of God’s holy Character.
- And because of their unbelief and subsequent sin, this entire generation of Israelites,
- the very people God had redeemed out of Pharaoh’s grasp, experienced God’s wrath,
- They died in the wilderness; they did not enter the promised Land.
- We often hear that God punishes the sin but not the sinner,
- **But that is not what the Bible says.**
- It was not **unbelief** or **disobedience** that died in the desert wilderness.
- It was the unbelievers, sinners, the disobedient **themselves**.
- So also, will God cast **unbelieving sinners** into the fires of hell,
- not merely their sin but the **unrepentant sinners themselves**.
- As the **Apostle John** observes God’s Final Judgement at the great white Throne,
- he writes...

***15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life,***

- That is, if anyone has not trusted in Jesus Christ and received eternal life.

***he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:15)***

- God's wrath was real when it fell upon unbelieving Israel,
- and it will **be just as real** when it falls on those who harden their hearts and refuse to believe in him today.
- So, we've seen three lessons from Israel's rebellion.
- A Hard-Heart is an **Evil Heart**
- A Good Start does not **Ensure** a Good Finish
- And – Sinners will **Experience** the Wrath of God.
- And we ask, what should **our response be to these lessons**.
- Well, for those who even today are recognizing their hard heartedness towards God,
- Or those who had a good start but now find themselves with a hard-heart.
- The only response that matters to **believe**,
- to repent of your wretched evil unbelief,
- to ask, beg God to soften your heart that you might **see him for who he truly is, and believe**.
- You must turn from your doubts and sin and trust in Jesus Christ.
- For the Bible teaches that yes, **sinners will experience God's wrath**.
- But that on the cross, the wrath of God was poured out on Jesus Christ for your sins and mine.
- And those who trust in him, believe in him, those who by faith give themselves completely to him.
- Those he will make righteous,
- They will no longer be sinners in the eyes of God and will therefore escape his wrath and experience his love and forgiveness.
- They will experience salvation and eternal life in his presence.
- So that's the response for those who have yet to believe, or for those whose faith is not genuine.
- But what about the rest of us, how should we respond to these Lessons.
- Well we should certainly continue to examine our hearts and lives, gaining confidence, assurance of the genuineness of our faith.
- But I would also suggest that we respond as the author of Hebrews responded as he saw the grave consequences that faced those who like Israel, hardened their hearts to the voice of God.
- He made every effort to proclaim the truth to them.
- He declared the greatness of Christ to them,
- and he warned them of the consequences of their hard heart, their unbelief.
- **We warned them of the wrath of God to come**.
- And I think we must do the same, **not just on Sunday mornings**.
- We must always be God's witnesses to our world, declaring the truth of His word,
- Declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ to friends, family, neighbors, or anyone we encounter.
- Because it is through the word of God, the word of Christ that God softens hard hearts and brings about repentance and genuine faith.
- So would you pray with me, both for those who need God to soften their hearts,
- and for those who God desires to use to bring about that softening. **Prayer...**