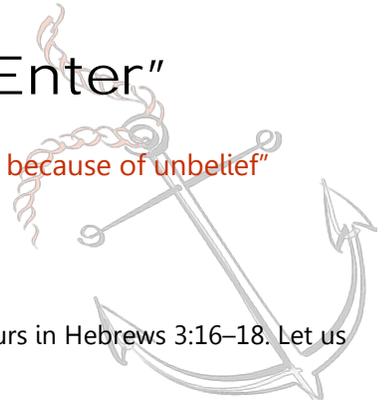




## "They Could Not Enter"

"So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19).



This conclusion is reached based on a question/answer session that occurs in Hebrews 3:16–18. Let us observe each.

### Question/Answer #1:

"For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?" (Heb. 3: 16).

The warning speaks volumes. Who are they who heard and rebelled? These were not just any group of people at any given time, but these were those people who were laden with harsh servitude, became eye-witnesses of the wonders done against the gods of Egypt by the plagues, and had before them one of the greatest leaders ever in Moses. It was that generation of people that heard and rebelled. If rebellion can exist among those men, anyone can be susceptible to it.

### Question/Answer #2:

"Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?" (Heb. 3:17).

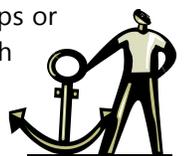
Time does not erase the wrath of God. God does not forget His judgments. God is not only a God of love, but also of wrath (cf. Rom. 11:22). These people had seen the power of Jehovah, and yet they still rebelled at His command to go into the Promised Land (see Num. 13; 14). Despite what they had seen in Egypt, they became fearful of the giants whom they faced. Rather than going by faith, they became afraid of whom they should not have feared, and became fearless of the One whom they should have feared! Their faith was swallowed up by misplaced fear, and their judgment was death in the wilderness.

### Question/Answer #3:

"And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?" (Heb. 3:18).

We find here the lesson of "trust and obey." When we fear what is before us more than who is with us, we fail the test of obedience. God swore that these people would not enter because of their disobedience. *Obedience* and *faith* are used interchangeably in this text because the faith that saves is the faith that obeys. Unbelief charges God as a liar (1 Jn. 5:10). On the other hand, how blessed is trusting obedience? "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

Like those of old, we have a rest before us to enter. We cannot let the cares, our relationships or any of the obstacles in this life turn us against our goal. "But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe" (Jude 5). When tried, do you believe?



—Steven J. Wallace