

1. Five warning passages appear in the book of Hebrews. The first warning was in chapter 2 verses 1-4. Warning number 2 begins in chapter 3 verse 7 and runs through chapter 4 verse 13.
2. The first warning had to do with disregarding the salvation of God - this one has to do with disbelieving the sufficiency of God.
3. The main idea in chapter 3 is clear enough. The writer draws an exact parallel between an historical event and present day experience. (verses 7-11)
4. Israel refused to accept the reality of all that God had done for them. God in turn refused to allow them to enter into Canaan rest. (Numbers 14:26-39)
5. The unbelief and complaints of Israel in the wilderness were truly astonishing. Especially after witnessing all that God had done on their behalf.
6. Their rebellion even led to attempts on Moses' life and this rebellion
7. We have already noticed that this letter addresses itself to the problem of apostasy. Some members of the church were in danger of turning back and giving up.
8. These Jewish believers are reminded of Israel's fatal mistake in the wilderness. God requires His people to exercise persistent faith.
9. The emphasis here is on God's word, its seriousness and relevance. The writer takes us back to the message of Psalm 95. (Psalm 95:7-11)
10. This is one of the clearest testimonies in Scripture to its own divine inspiration. (2 Peter 1:21)
11. The psalm was regularly used each sabbath day in first-century synagogue worship and it provided a fitting introduction to the idea of the eternal sabbath - the promised rest which God had provided for His faithful people.
12. God was deeply grieved by His people's doubt and disloyalty and said they would not enter into the land of rest which had been promised to them and prepared for them.
13. The writer is saying in effect: "Take care, my brothers. That same evil, unbelieving heart which you despised in the ancient Israelites can be in you, in *any* of you."
14. Your hearts can become rebellious, wayward, undiscerning, evil, faithless, hardened, deceived and disobedient. This is a picture not of casual drifters, but deliberate deserters.
15. The same is true for us as well.
16. "Take heed" or "see to it," brethren - this introduces the application to his readers. (Verse 12)

17. Each believer should be careful to guard against a sinful, unbelieving heart which Israel in the wilderness displayed, the kind of heart that turns away from the living God.
18. One way to help against such a tendency would be a spirit of mutual concern and admonition among the believers.
19. Accordingly they were to encourage one another daily ... so that none would be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. (v. 13)
20. This still applies completely to any local congregation at the present time, where the hardening tendencies of sin can often be counteracted by truly concerned fellow Christians.
21. The expression "while it is called Today" alludes to the "Today" in Psalm 95:7 and means "now, while you still have opportunity."
22. The phrase in the first part of verse 14 means, "we are partners with Christ."
23. Now the phrase "Partakers/partners" is one of the writer's favorite words (3:1; 6:4; 12:8) - meaning as "we work together with Christ" or "we join with Christ in working together."
24. Notice the words in verse 15. The text in Psalm 95 connects with the caution in Hebrews 3:6.
25. The readers must hold their confidence firmly to the end and not, like the Israelites of old, harden their hearts as ... in the rebellion.
26. Now - in verse 16-17 - the writer is aware of the exceptions of Joshua and Caleb and the younger generation (those below 20 years old), who did not take part in the general failure.
27. Israel's disobedience in refusing to enter the Promised Land caused God to swear (make an oath) that they would never enter His rest.
28. This meant of course that the sinful generation in the desert was permanently excluded from taking possession of their inheritance in Canaan. (Numbers 14:40)
29. Naturally it had nothing to do with the question of their going to hell, so it would be wrong to allege that the entire Exodus generation was unregenerate.
30. But exclusion from Canaan was a consequence of their lack of faith in the power of God to bring them into it in victory over their enemies, a failure that in principle might be repeated.
31. The writer warned the Jewish believers to take it to heart that unbelief, lack of confidence in God, was the reason God's people did not enter the land.