

Notes for Study Group Leaders - Hebrews Chapter 3

1 The Nature and Destiny of Christians And How They Realise Them (v1):

This is a one verse summary of a Christian's whole life, character and destiny. Discuss the meaning and significance of each of the following phrases:

- Holy Brothers
- Share the heavenly calling
- Fix your thoughts on Jesus
- The Apostle and High Priest whom we confess

Note that all these elements are in the plural. How does this challenge Western individualistic culture? How is it that these last two elements will bring us to our destiny in Christ?

2 The Challenge of Faithfulness (vv2-6):

In these four verses the word «*faithful*» appears four times. Both Jesus - the greatest character in the N.T. - and Moses - the greatest character in the O.T. - are described as having been faithful. Faithful also describes every Christian who ultimately shares in Christ's glory:

«They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings— and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.» Rev. 17:14

Discuss the words «*called, chosen and faithful*». What do they mean? How true are they of us as individuals and as a fellowship? In the light of this verse what are the implied consequences of not being faithful?

«And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast»

Verse 6 describes those who really form part of Christ's «house». In what circumstances are courage and hope normally required? What is the specific Christian hope?

3 Warning Against Unbelief (vv7-11):

A quotation from Psalm 95:7-11 summarises the sad and shameful failure of Israel in the desert. A people delivered out of slavery, but without the faith to enter the Promised Land.

Discuss what these verses teach us about;

- Hearing and seeing God.
- The importance of our heart.
- Testing.
- The consequences of failure.

Discuss the following phrase;

Coming out of Egypt is not the same as entering into the Promised Land.

4 The Way to Victory (vv12-14):

These verses map out for us the path to victory in our Christian lives. If we follow the counsel of these verses we will be part of those who remain faithful to Christ until the end.

What do these verses instruct us to do;

- as individuals.
- as a fellowship.

How do these verses tell us that a genuine Christian can be recognised?

The following have been noted as qualities most often possessed by Christian leaders who finish well:

1. *They had perspective which enabled them to focus.*
2. *The enjoyed intimacy with Christ and experienced repeated times of inner renewal.*
3. *They were disciplined in important areas of life.*
4. *They maintained a positive learning attitude all their lives.*
5. *They had a network of meaningful relationships and several important mentors during their lifetime.*

[from Connecting by Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, Navpress, 1992]

How do you see yourself in comparison to this list?

5 The Consequences of Failure (vv15-19):

Why is it significant that those who had been delivered out of Egyptian slavery and who had also heard God's voice speaking, were the same ones who rebelled and failed to enter into God's promise? What is the author's point?

From these verses, how serious is it to rebel, to disobey, to refuse to believe God?

Why does unbelief make it impossible for us to enter into God's promises?