

## **REBELLION AND REBELS IN 3-D (Hebrews 3:15-19)**

In the fall of 2014, a Space X rocket blasted into space carrying supplies to the International Space Station. There was one very interesting item that was included in the payload. It was a 3-D printer. You may wonder, “Why do astronauts need a 3-D printer? What are they going to do with it?” NASA explained that a 3-D printer can be used by astronauts to make spare parts which they can then use to make small repairs to their space station. For instance, if they need a certain screw which they do not have on hand, they can’t order one from Amazon nor from any other vendor because presently, neither FedEx nor UPS nor the US Post Office is delivering packages to the International Space Station that orbits the earth from about 250 miles above the surface of our planet. And, the space station travels at over 17,000 miles per hour, which is about 5 miles per second. Given its location, it is rather expensive to send a rocket to the space station to deliver a screw whenever they need one. Now, the astronauts can simply make a plastic screw or many other items they might need by using their 3-D printer.

I had never heard of a 3-D printer until a couple of years before then, but we are all familiar with 3-D movies. A 3-D film gives the illusion that what you are watching is three dimensional. When watching such a movie, did you ever find yourself reaching up to touch what you perceived as being almost within your reach?

The main difference between a 3-D movie and a 3-D printer is that while the film gives the illusion of being 3-D but isn’t, what the 3-D printer makes actually is.

Of course, you know that the letter “D” stands for *dimensions*; so, what are the three dimensions that makes something 3-D? (Height, Width, and Depth)

The title of today’s message is, “Rebellion and Rebels in 3-D.” Our text is chiefly Hebrews 3:15-19. Let’s look at that passage. Two weeks ago, we considered a story that the author of Hebrews included in his letter. It is a story about rebellion.

Who were the ones rebelling?

From whom did they rebel?

The author of Hebrews puts this story in front of his readers as a warning. He is basically telling them, “Don’t be like your forefathers?”

Let’s consider the dimensions of rebellion. **First, the extent of rebellion is wide.** Look at v. 16. The author asked a rhetorical question concerning who it was that rebelled. He answered his question with another question: “Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses?” Now, we know that not everyone was judged by God. We noted in the previous message that everyone except Joshua, Caleb, and all those who were under 20 years of age died in the desert. They died because they refused to trust God. They didn’t believe God would protect them. They thought their enemy was bigger than their God. God had obviously brought them to the land He had promised them, but they didn’t think He was capable of giving them the land. The inhabitants were just too big.

Even Moses was not allowed to go into the Promised Land. Look at Numbers 20:2-13. Moses addressed the people as rebels, and then he promptly rebelled against God by

not doing what God told him to do and instead doing what God had not instructed him to do. Rebellion is disobedience. We see here that Moses was also guilty of rebellion.

Rebellion is wide. The NT teaches that rebellion against God could not be wider. Paul wrote in Romans 3:10-12, “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

Every single person in this room is a rebel. Every person you know is a rebel. Everyone hearing my voice is a rebel. With the exception of Jesus, every person who has ever been born is or was a rebel. We have rebelled against a holy God. The extent of rebellion is wide.

**Second, the cause of rebellion is deep.** Look at v. 15 of Hebrews 3. The author warned, “Do not harden your hearts.” Rebellion starts deep down in the heart.

I grew up under a pastor who said often, “The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.”

It doesn’t take extraordinary perception to look around at what is going on in our major metropolitan cities, in foreign countries around the globe, and even in our own life and realize that something has gone terribly wrong in the human heart. We are not what we were meant to be.

The reason for that goes all the way back to the Garden. Adam and Eve sinned; they disobeyed God. In short, they fell. Now, all the descendants of Adam and Eve, and that includes you and me, are all fallen creatures. The cause of our rebellion is deep.

While the extent is wide and the cause is deep, **the judgment of rebellion is long.** I am substituting the word *length* for *height*. The consequences of rebelling against God are long lasting. Look at v. 18. Some versions, like the NIV, the NLT, and others use the word “never” rather than “not.” They both mean the same thing: *it aint gonna happen*.

The only sin God cannot forgive is the sin of unbelief. If a person dies without placing his or her trust in Christ, there is no more chance to receive salvation. Life is a one and done arrangement. You don’t receive multiple lives to get it right. You get one. The Bible teaches, “It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” (9:27). We will be judged for the choices we make in this life. We must realize, to not make a choice is to make one. If we are to live with Christ then, we must choose Christ now. If we are to live with Christ there, we must choose Christ here.

### **The Extent of Rebellion Is Wide.**

### **The Cause of Rebellion Is Deep.**

### **The Judgment of Rebellion Is Long.**

Now, I want to turn a corner and look at rebels in 3-D in another way. I want to make three statements, and the key word in each statement starts with the letter “D.” We are going to focus on rebels rather than rebellion because you don’t have a rebellion until you have a rebel, and everyone in front of this pulpit and everyone behind this pulpit qualifies as a rebel.

## **Rebels Are Disillusioned with God's Plan**

Why did the people in the desert whom Moses sought to lead choose to rebel? Why did Moses rebel by striking the rock rather than speaking to it like God told him?

Can you think of others in the Bible who didn't like God's plan and thus rebelled? How about Jonah? How about Judas?

Chapter 11 of Hebrews is full of people who could have decided they didn't like God's plan. They could have said, "I don't want anything to do with this," but they didn't.

Think about Noah . . . Abraham . . . Moses . . . All three of these men could have asked, "You want me to do what? You want me to go where? I don't think so," they could have said, but they didn't. And that is the difference between a rebel and a person of faith. The rebel doesn't like God's plan and says, "No." The person of faith may or may not like God's plan but says "yes" any way because he or she believes God knows what He is doing.

Are you disillusioned with God's plan for your life? Did you think it would turn out differently than it has? Are you disillusioned with God's commands? He commands us to stay sexually pure before marriage and stay faithful after marriage. He commands us to return a portion of what He has blessed us with back to Him and His work. He commands us to follow His will rather than our own.

Those who choose to rebel are those who like their plan rather than God's. On which side do you fall? Who are you going to let run the show? Is it going to be you or God?

Have you ever noticed how exhausting it is to travel? They may not be true for you, but it is for me. If I am in a car for eight hours, all I am doing is sitting down, holding on to a steering wheel, and staring through a windshield, and yet for some reason, that just takes it out of me.

Most nights I am ready to go to bed, and I have concluded that it's because I have done a lot of traveling. We all have. Consider these facts. You may not be able to feel it, but the earth rotating on its axis at about a 1000 miles per hour. Of course, it takes this big ball 24 hours to do a full 360. At the same time earth is spinning, it is also rotating around the sun. In the time it takes to do one 360 around the sun, it does 365 360's around its axis. The earth travels around the sun at over 67,000 miles per hour. In one 24-hour time period, the earth travels close to 1.6 million miles. In addition to that, the sun is revolving around the center of the Milky Way galaxy and taking us along for the ride. We are traveling around our galaxy at a speed of 483,000 mph. While it takes us 24 hours to revolve once on our axis and 365 days to revolve once around the sun, it will take us upward of 250 million years for our sun and its planets to do one lap around the center of our galaxy.

Now you know why you are so tired. It's all that traveling.

How many of you stayed awake last night praying that God would keep the earth spinning and revolving? If the earth quit spinning, we all would be in serious trouble. One side of the earth would bake in the heat of the sun, and the other side would be freeze in darkness. Is anyone here worried about suffering either of those two fates?

Here is the point I want to make: If we can trust God to do the great miracle of keeping this big ole earth moving and rotating as it should, we ought to be able to trust God to do the smaller miracle of keeping our lives in track. He will do exactly that as we trust Him and obey Him.

### **Rebels Are Disqualified from God's Rest**

Look again at vv. 18-19. We need to ask, "What is God's rest?" That question can be answered in a number of ways, but in each instance, the author of Hebrews is not thinking of something physical.

When Jesus said, "Come to Me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," He wasn't promising to put them down for a nap time. That is Matthew 11:28, and in v. 29 He specifies, "you will find rest for your souls."

We live in a nation that is sleep deprived physically, but it is even more deprived of soul rest. People live in a near constant state of agitation, worry, and upset.

Do you need rest for your soul? Do you need a sense of peace that it's going to be OK, that you are being OK, that God has this covered, and it is not all up to you?

God wants to give you that, but if you refuse to trust Him and obey Him, that is not going to happen.

God does offer rest here and now, but He also offers rest there and then with Him in that place the Bible calls heaven. That is the greatest rest. In heaven there will be no sickness, no death, no crime, no heartache, no suffering, no sin. We will have rest from all those things that eat at us and worry us and torment us here in this world.

The critical question is, "Do you qualify to go there?"

Have you ever been disqualified from something? When you were young, maybe you were too short to ride on that certain ride at the amusement park that you had been looking forward to ride all summer. Maybe there was a job that you really wanted. You sent in your application. You were hoping for the best, but you were disappointed to discover that you didn't meet the qualifications. Your lack of the right level of education or your lack of experience disqualified you from being considered.

As painful as it might be to be disqualified from some things you were hoping for in this life, it pales in comparison to the thought of being disqualified from living forever in heaven. Look at Revelation 20:15.

As scary as it is to read that verse, it does give us a glimpse of hope because that verse mentions a Book of Life. That brings us to our final point.

We have seen that rebels are disillusioned with God's plan. Rebels are disqualified from God's rest.

### **Rebels Are Delivered by God's Great Grace**

Look again at v. 19. If this verse is true then the opposite of this verse must also be true. What is the opposite of being unable to enter? And what is the opposite of unbelief? That means the one who believes is able to enter.

What is it we are to believe? This letter is all about Jesus, about who He is and what He has done. We are to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty of sin, and He arose victoriously from that grave, and once we believe those things there is something we need to do. Look at Hebrews 4:16.

During the late 1800's an English evangelist named Henry Moorhouse made several trips to preach in America. On one of those occasions, he was taking a walk through a poor section of town when he noticed a small boy coming out of a store with a pitcher of milk in his hands. Just then, the boy slipped and fell breaking the pitcher and spilling the milk all over the sidewalk. Moorhouse rushed to the child's side and found him unhurt but terrified. "Mu mama'll whip me," he kept crying. So, Moorhouse picked up the boy and carried him into the nearby store where the preacher purchased a new pitcher. Then, he returned to the dairy, had the pitcher washed and filled with milk. With that done, he carried the boy and the pitcher home.

Putting the youngster down on his front porch, Moorhouse handed him the pitcher and asked, "Will your mama whip you now?"

A wide smile spread across the boy's tear-stained face, "No sir, 'cause this is a lot better pitcher than we had before."

By His grace, God saves us. He doesn't patch up our old lives that have been shattered into a million pieces by sin and Satan. That would not do. His reputation is at stake. We are His workmanship! He gives us new life and a new nature. He makes us better than we have ever been before!

God, however, not only gives us a new pitcher (a new life), He also fills it. He doesn't fill our lives with milk. He fills us with His Holy Spirit who comes in and helps us to become what God wants us to become.

He transforms us from being a rebel into a royal son, a royal daughter of the rightful King. Do you want to be a rebel or royalty?