

Hebrews 3:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest,
but to them that believed not?

Analysis

The third rhetorical question: to whom did God swear exclusion from rest? 'Those who disobeyed' (Greek 'apeithēsasin' - were disobedient/unbelieving). The term carries both meanings, showing unbelief's practical expression in disobedience. Reformed theology emphasizes that true faith always produces obedience (James 2:17); persistent disobedience evidences lack of saving faith.

Historical Context

The oath in Numbers 14:21-23 specifically targeted the disobedient generation. This divine decree was irrevocable, demonstrating that there is a point beyond which persistent unbelief hardens into final rejection.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does your obedience or disobedience reveal the genuineness of your faith?

2. What does God's oath teach about the possibility of final, irrevocable rejection of grace?

Interlinear Text

τίσιν	δὲ	ὥμοσεν	μὴ	εἰσελεύσεσθαι	εἰς	τὴν
to whom	And	sware he	not	enter	into	G3588
G5101	G1161	G3660	G3361	G1525	G1519	
κατάπαυσιν	αὐτοῦ	εἰ	μὴ	τοῖς	ἀπειθήσασιν	
rest			not		to them that believed not	
G2663	G846	G1487	G3361	G3588	G544	

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 4:6 (Parallel theme): Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

Numbers 14:30 (Parallel theme): Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

Numbers 20:12 (Faith): And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Hebrews 4:2 (Faith): For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Numbers 14:11 (Faith): And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?

Numbers 14:23 (Parallel theme): Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:

Hebrews 3:11 (Parallel theme): So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

Deuteronomy 9:23 (Faith): Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org