

Text: Heb 3.7

Last week we dealt with Heb 3.7-11, a quotation of Psalm 95, which is a meditation on Numbers 14.

I have to say the theme of that message stayed with me all week. I found its effects to have some staying power. I hope it spoke to you as well.

Salvation gives us great blessings in Christ, but with all the trials and temptations of life, we have to make up our minds to keep soft hearts towards our God, and consequently to our brothers and sisters as well.

Today I want to go back to the first verse of that passage. It begins with a line that we might easily pass over without much thought.

Read Heb 3.7-11, text 7a

The phrase is:

Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says...

We are used to little references like this before OT quotations. Today we are going to pause and take a closer look at it. Despite its brevity, these few words have a lot to say to us.

The thing that I want to emphasize is what these words tell us about the passage we looked at last week.

- When something “big” happens in the news, the reporters go to “big voices” to get their viewpoint.
- No one has ever called me up, some big incident in the news, and said, “Pastor Don, the public would like to get your opinion on this story.”
- Some voices are weightier than others, and surely the voice of the Spirit is a weighty voice.

Still, this isn't the *usual* way of leading into an O T quotation.

- “It is written...”
- “Scripture says...”
- “David says...” or “Isaiah ...” or “the prophets...”

Here it is, “the Holy Spirit says...”

The Holy Spirit isn't just a “celebrity opinion maker.” The Holy Spirit is very significant for our spiritual lives and when He is cited, we must pay attention!

Proposition: The Holy Spirit specifically speaks to our wandering spirits: don't harden your hearts.

I. Identifying the speaker

A. The simple identification

1. Obviously, the text identifies the speaker
2. What I am after is what our text says *about* the speaker

B. Since it is the Spirit who speaks, four truths follow

1. He is the author of *the Scriptures*

2 Pt 1.21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

- a. Often the NT speaks of the OT as *the Scriptures*
 - b. The underlying doctrine of the Scriptures is that they are more than the voices of men
 - 1) Moses spoke
 - 2) David spoke (and other psalmists)
 - 3) The prophets spoke
 - 4) In them all, *the Spirit* spoke
2. As a speaking person, he is no mere force or influence
 - a. The Holy Spirit is not "an impression" that comes over a man
 - b. The Holy Spirit is a person who directs the mind and will of the prophet to utter the very voice of God
 3. As the person behind the voice of the prophets, clearly he is a person who precedes the incarnation
 - a. We see little direct mention of the Spirit in the OT (and not much is clear)
 - b. But here we see that the Spirit speaks through the Psalmist
 - 1) He is alive and active in the world hundreds of years before the Incarnation (bare minimum view)
 - 2) He does not wait for the Son's permission to enter the world

4. As the person of the Scriptures, he is God himself

a. Consider Heb 1.1

Heb 1.1 ¶ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

b. The author of Hebrews acknowledges the deity of the Spirit: it is God speaking in the Psalm

II. Understanding the speech of the Spirit

A. We already spoke of the Spirit moving the prophets (2 Pt 1.21)

B. Consider the references specifically attributed to him in the NT

1. The Holy Spirit, through David, spoke of David's son as greater than David

Mk 12.36-37 "David himself said in the Holy Spirit, 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET.'" ³⁷ "David himself calls Him 'Lord'; so in what sense is He his son?" And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him.

a. Here, Jesus himself quotes Ps 110.1

b. Ps 110.1 is unquestionably a Psalm of David

c. When David attributes Lordship to his Son, he speaks "in the Holy Spirit"

2. The Holy Spirit, in another Psalm of David, predicted the betrayal by Judas

Ac 1.16 "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

Ac 1.20 "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT'; and, 'LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE.'

a. Peter discerns, first the voice of the Spirit in the Psalm

- b. Second, he sees the authority to replace Judas in the company (not just Peter's opinion)
3. The disciples gained strength to endure persecution, taking comfort in the voice of the Spirit

Ac 4.24-25 And when they heard *this*, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM,²⁵ who by the Holy Spirit, *through* the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?'

4. Paul understood the character of the unbelieving nation from the voice of the Spirit in Isaiah

Ac 28.25-26 And when they did not agree with one another, they *began* leaving after Paul had spoken one *parting* word, "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers,²⁶ saying, 'GO TO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY, "YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; ... and following...

C. The writer of Hebrews especially cites the Spirit as his authority

1. The whole design of the OT ritual worship is the voice of the Spirit concerning their inadequacy (Heb 9.1-10)
- a. The items he lists
- 1) The whole earthly sanctuary: the tabernacle (1)
 - 2) The tabernacle, the lampstand, the table and shewbread: the holy place (2)
 - 3) The inner tabernacle, the golden altar, ark of covenant, the golden jar with manna, Aaron's rod which budded, the tables of the covenant, and the cherubim: the holy of holies (3-5)
- b. The worship he describes
- 1) The continual entry of the priests into the outer tabernacle (6)

2) The annual entrance of the High Priest once a year in the holy of holies (7)

c. With these objects, the Holy Spirit *signifies* (communicates) truth: (8-10)

1) These rituals cannot show the way into the holy place (8)

2) They are only a foreshadowing of the present time (9a)

3) They only relate to physical things and cannot in themselves take away sin (9b-10)

The Holy Spirit means for us to look beyond the things by which he speaks to the one Person who reveals the way into the Holy place.

2. The Holy Spirit witnesses to the true way of Salvation from sin, speaking to us today (from Jeremiah) (Heb 10.15-18)

a. This is the Spirit's "expert testimony, affirmation" — witness in the courtroom (15)

"The common occurrence of this word after a signature, just as we write 'witness,' ... a mother writes to her son that she had received a good report of his παιδαγωγός from his former teacher—ἐμαρτύρει δὲ πολλὰ περὶ τοῦ παιδαγωγοῦ σου"¹

b. God's New Covenant means a radical transformation of the person (16-17)

1) Law written on heart

2) Sins remembered no more

c. Where forgiveness obtains, there is no more need of sacrifice to enter the Holy Place (18)

¹ J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930).

III. Submitting to the message (Heb 3.7)

A. One little detail I've left off till now: "says" is in the present tense

1. It isn't just, "As the psalmist *said*"
2. Or even, "As the Holy Spirit *said*"
3. It is this: *The Holy Spirit is saying this to you ... right now, this moment*

Not only was the Holy Spirit speaking then, to the Hebrew Christians...

He is speaking right now, to you, here in this room

B. What is he saying?

1. If you hear his voice...
2. Do not harden your hearts

As we noted last time it is quite possible for Christians to harden their hearts to the Lord.

- Born-again believers
- Redeemed
- On their way to heaven

Even people such as these can harden their hearts

C. A gospel example (Mk 8.11-17)

1. Context: the feeding of the four thousand (Mk 8.1-10)

Remember, the feeding of the *five* thousand occurred some weeks before (Mk 6.33-44)

2. The Pharisees come asking for signs (Mk 8.11-13)

- a. How many signs do they want?
- b. He fed the five thousand
- c. He walked on water
- d. He fed the four thousand
- e. He healed many, all the time

How many signs? What would it take for them to believe?

3. The disciples stumble in their understanding (Mk 8.14-17)
 - a. They set sail, but forgot to provision themselves (14)
 - b. Jesus warns them of the leaven of the Pharisees (15)
 - c. They have bread on their mind: can't lift their eyes above it (16)
 - d. Jesus rebukes them (17)
 - 1) Do you not see?
 - 2) Do you have a *hardened* heart?

He reminds them (18-21) of the five thousand and the four thousand

Conclusion:

Proposition: The Holy Spirit specifically speaks to our wandering spirits: don't harden your hearts.

I am so concerned about this concept this week. I know that I have many failings. Is my heart hard?

How about you? Do you listen to the Spirit speaking to you in the word? Is your heart hard?