

1. What do verses 1-7 exhort the people to do? (worship God because of His greatness)
2. What do verses 8-11 warn against? (hardening their hearts like their ancestors had at Massah and Meribah)

Hebrews 3:7-15. The writer to the Hebrews challenges us as Christians to avoid the mistakes made at Massah and Meribah. Read the passage and answer these questions.

1. To whom does the writer attribute the quote from Psalms? (the Holy Spirit)
2. What present-day application does the writer make? (don't have a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God; encourage one

another daily; don't be hardened by sin's deceitfulness; hold firmly till the end)

Making It Personal

Personal application

- Give each person a pencil and a copy of the following (duplicate Item 2).


What's my Massah and Meribah?

1. What situation or circumstance in my life is causing me to complain to God, to question His provision, to make demands upon Him? _____

2. How does my response indicate "a sinful, unbelieving heart" that is "hardened by sin's deceitfulness"? _____

3. What step can I take right now to turn back to the living God and hold firmly till the end the confidence in Him I once had? _____

- Allow three minutes for members to complete the sheet silently. Then allow volunteers to share with the class.

 **Faith at Home**
 Is there a place in your family's history that conjures up memories of God working in your lives? If so, lead your family to talk about that place and the events that took place there. Ask them to share what lessons they learned from the experience.

Wrapping It Up

- **There is always a Massah and Meribah just around the corner. We must be careful never to let our hearts rebel against our God.**
- Call on someone to lead the class in prayer.

Teacher's Toolbox

*Getting your class into God's Word
and God's Word into your class*


ExcitingBibleStudy.com **Bible Series**

Hebrews 3:1-15
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HOW TO USE TEACHER'S TOOLBOX: Make a four-page folded teacher's leaflet from the first two sheets by printing two-sided (or by putting the blank sides together). The other two sheets are for duplicating, displaying, distributing, or otherwise using as called for in the lesson plan.

 **Faith at Home** – A specific application of today's Bible passage to family life, to be used for individual reflection, family discussion, or class activity.

Getting Started

Thinking about place names

- **Is there a place in your family's history that has a major story behind it, the mere mention of which reminds you of an important truth or lesson you have learned in life?**

For example, there is one family that, when they hear the word "Cookeville," they immediately think of a vacation interrupted by the Blizzard of '93, forcing them to spend a weekend in a Red Cross shelter set up at the local high school, where they conducted a worship service on Sunday morning and a suicidal truck driver accepted Christ. Whenever they hear the word "Cookeville," they are reminded that sometimes what seems to be a terrible inconvenience can turn into a tremendous blessing.

- Offer the class a personal example from your own life.
- **There are many places that figured prominently in the history of**

the Hebrew people, such as Jerusalem, Mount Sinai, and Egypt. Today we are going to look at a lesser known place, but one of great significance. When the writer of the Book of Hebrews reminded his readers of this place, it was a shorthand way of warning them of the dangers that come from rebellion, hard-heartedness, and unbelief. It was just a spot in the desert until the Jewish exiles from Egypt passed by one day. From then on it was known as Massah and Meribah.

(Write on the chalkboard: Massah and Meribah.)

- Lead the class in prayer, asking God to use today's study to convict each of us of rebellion, hard-heartedness and unbelief in our lives.

Exploring God's Word

Passage overview

- The writer to the Hebrews has already shown that Jesus Christ, God's Son, is greater than the prophets and greater even than angels. He begins chapter 3 by making clear that Jesus is also greater than the Jewish people's number one hero, Moses.

- Have someone read aloud Hebrews 3:1-6.

- How does this passage say that Jesus is greater than Moses?

(worthy of greater honor than Moses; Jesus is to Moses as the builder of a house is to a house, or as a son who rules over a house is to a servant of the house)

- Then the writer calls to mind that Massah/Meribah event from Israel's history, a scandalous event in which even Moses himself was involved.

You won't find the words Massah and Meribah in your English translation of the He-

brews passage, but you will find English words that translate Greek words that have the same meaning as the Hebrew words Massah and Meribah.

- Beneath "Massah" on the chalkboard, write "to test, try." Beneath "Meribah," write "to strive with, contend, find fault with, rebel against." Then have learners underline in Hebrews 3:8-9 the words "rebellion," "testing," "tested," and "tried."

- That desert place was named Massah and Meribah because it was there that the people of Israel rebelled against God, complained about His care for them, tested and tried Him by making demands upon Him. Later, toward the end of their wilderness wanderings, the Israelites had a similar experience at another place which then also became known as Meribah. When the writer to the Hebrews mentions "the rebellion," and "the time of testing in the desert, where your

fathers tested and tried me," his readers knew he was talking about Massah and Meribah.

Studying related passages

- Give each person a pencil and a copy of the following, but without the suggested answers given here in parentheses (duplicate Item 1). Allow 15-20 minutes for them to study with someone else. Then call for reports.

Massah and Meribah

Exodus 17:1-7. The time frame is shortly after the Exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. God has already shown His ability to provide for them in the desert by turning bitter water sweet, covering the camp with quail one evening, and the next morning beginning what would be a daily supply of manna. But still the people were unwilling to trust the Lord in between provisions. Read the passage and answer these questions.

1. What problem did the people have? (no water to drink)
2. What words are used to describe the people's actions and attitudes toward Moses and God? (quarreled with Moses, put the Lord to the test, grumbled against Moses)
3. What did God tell Moses to do? (strike the rock with his staff)
4. What happened when Moses did what God told him to do? (water came out of the rock)

5. Why did Moses name the place Massah and Meribah? (because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?")

Numbers 20:1-13. This incident takes place in the 40th year after the Exodus at a location far from the first one, but the situation and response of the people are similar. Read the passage and answer these questions.

1. What problem did the people have? (no water to drink)
2. What words are used to describe the people's actions and attitudes toward Moses and God? (quarreled with Moses)
3. What did God tell Moses to do and what did Moses do instead? (speak to the rock; struck the rock twice with the staff)
4. What happened when Moses did that? (water gushed out)
5. What was God's judgment and sentence against Moses and Aaron? (did not trust God enough to honor Him as holy in the sight of the Israelites, so they would not bring them into the land God would give them)
6. Why was the place called Meribah? (because the Israelites quarreled with the Lord and He showed Himself holy among them)

Psalms 95:1-11. Years later, King David wrote a psalm and referred to Massah and Meribah. Read that passage and answer these questions.

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