

Hebrews 4: A Better Rest

1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

- Why is the “therefore” there for?
- Returning to the end of Chapter 3, we see the *drifting, doubting*, and then *denying* of God’s word which led to the hardening of the people’s hearts and a refusal to enter into the rest provided for them in Canaan
- The last verse of Chapter 3 informs us the people could not enter because of unbelief
- There is no limitation in man that can diminish the will of God and the works He is able to accomplish through that person, but a heart of unbelief will stall that work

2 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.

- *Gospel, or good news*
- *Preached, or proclaimed*
- Together the two words come from the Greek word where we derive *evangelize*
- The action of hearing alone does not equate to obedience or growth in the life of the believer (individually or corporately), hearing without the second ingredient of faith can lead to the same wandering the Israelites endured outside Canaan

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

- The writer returns to the first rest of scripture, the rest of God after creation
- This rest was a cessation of works because everything was complete and “good”
- This rest is not to be confused with laziness or idleness, but rather a knowledge that the perfect work of God is complete
- This rest represents *salvation* as Christ ushered in a new age where the previous righteous works of the Old Covenant were replaced by faith in His perfect sacrifice

Jas 1:22-25

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

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

- The second door of rest is unlocked with the same key as the first – faith
- *Unbelief* comes from the Greek word where we derive *apathy*

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

- *Jesus* should be translated *Joshua* in this verse
- Both names share the same Hebrew root
- As great a leader and general as Joshua would become, he did not lead the people into the full rest that would be available only in Christ

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

- This verse informs us of the second rest as “the people of God” have already entered into the first rest because of salvation
- The second rest is *sanctification*
- The writer is stressing to his readers to not become caught between the (2) rests just as those who left Egypt, but did not enter Canaan

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

- The second state of rest was that of Canaan or our spiritual inheritance in Christ
- In salvation, we realize the perfect work of Christ cannot be strengthened or weakened by man’s best or worst efforts and that is why we can rest in salvation
- *Labor*, Hebrew for *strive*
- It is a conscious effort to remain in rest as even the Jewish nation often sold themselves back into bondage after they had entered Canaan
- The Old Testament is also an illustration of partial victory if Canaan is not conquered
- Some of the people groups within Canaan continued to be a source of trouble for Israel because of their lack of complete obedience
- Joshua 14:6-15 Caleb enters his inheritance

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

- The writer once again turns to the message or the word of God
- One must not forget the spoken word of God delivered through prophets in the Old Testament and the written word held in our hands today is the same and must be heeded in the same reverence
- The word of God that saw through the rebellion in the hearts of those in the wilderness still observes our hearts, thoughts, and intentions today
- The scriptures are often unleashed as a hammer, but God uses His word as a surgeon's scalpel as He must remove sin without destroying the heart
- *Powerful*, Greek for *energy*
- *Piercing*, Greek for *reaching through*
- *Soul* and *spirit*, or mind and spirit as the scriptures can separate the difference between issues of the mind and the heart
- *Discerner*, Greek for *critical*
- *Thoughts*, Greek for *deliberations*
- *Opened*, Greek for *seizing by the throat to expose the gullet*

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

- For those longing to return to the priesthood, the writer reminds them they have a High Priest and this High Priest is "great"
- No other high priest had the title of "great" attributed to them
- The term "Son of God" was actually one of great scandal if used in the description of anyone other than the Roman Emperor as he had proclaimed himself "Uhius Theos"

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

- They had a high priest that knew their struggles (better than they) because He had endured those struggles without sin
- *Feeling*, Greek word where we derive *sympathy*

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

- *Boldly*, Greek for with *frankness, bluntness, publicity*
- *Need*, Greek nautical term for *lashing a vessel*
- The Jewish believers worshipping in the temple did not always have access to the high priest as he was one man amidst an entire nation and required the help of thousands of priests to perform the temple duties
- The Jewish believers did not have full access to the temple as the average Jew could only enter the courtyard, the priests ministered within the Holy Place and the high priest entered the Most Holy Place once a year
- The believer in Christ can not only have access at any time to their High Priest, they can enter the inner throne room boldly in time of need
- The Jewish high priest entered the veil with trembling