

## Hebrews 4:1-13

**Intro:** Having reminded his readers of the generation which came out of Egypt, did not enter the rest of Canaan b/c of unbelief, the writer now proceeds to warn them of possible failure on their part of entering into rest in Messiah. This warning applies to anyone who is hesitating in committing oneself fully to Jesus Christ. A Review of Chapter 3, **First**, verses 7-19 continue the theme of the superiority of Christ to Moses. **Second**, these verses address the danger of falling back into Judaism. If the danger facing the Hebrews was drifting from Christ and the New Covenant and falling back into Judaism and the Old Covenant, then verses 7-19 deal with this issue. **Third**, we should note that the entire first generation<sup>3</sup> of Israelites failed to enter their rest (verse 16). If an entire generation failed, then the warning based upon their experience carries more weight. Have you listened to the commercials for prescription drugs lately? After urging us to ask our doctor about the usefulness of a certain medication, they go on to list all of the possible side effects. Why don't these side effects scare us to death? Because we assume that they are few and far between. If only 5% of those who take a pill have their hair fall out, then I conclude that it probably won't happen to me, especially if the pill will fulfill all the promises that are made concerning its benefits. But when 99.9999% of that generation failed, then the danger must be great indeed. **Fourth**, this generation failed for forty years. Israel's unbelief and disobedience was a persistent practice. It was the rule, and not the exception. **Fifth**, the Israelites failed under Moses' leadership, after hearing God speak to (and through) Moses, and after seeing many miracles in confirmation of Moses' authority. **Sixth**, God was angry with this generation, and this resulted in their death in the wilderness (which is exactly what they asked for – Numbers 14:2), and thus their failure to enter into rest. **Seventh**, the offer of “rest” remains till “today.” **Eighth**, the danger of failing to enter rest also remains till “today.” **Ninth**, the fundamental problem is that of “unbelief.”

## IX. Entering God's Rest – vs 1-13

## A. The Meaning of Rest

1. **katápausis** - rest: reposing down, i.e. (by Hebraism) abode:--rest.
  - a. It basically means ceasing from work or from any kind of action
  - b. In reference to God's rest, it means
    - i. ceasing from one's labors -
      - for salvation
      - trying to please God through self effort
    - ii. freedom from worries, not the trials that could cause worries
    - iii. to be inwardly quiet, composed, peaceful
    - iv. to be free from guilt,
2. several meanings in Hebrews -
  - a. the “rest” the first generation of Israelites missed in failing to enter the Promised Land
  - b. the “rest” from its enemies - Heb 3:11
  - c. the “rest” to which the psalmist referred in Psalm 95 that was available in his time (“today”).
  - d. the “rest” which was available to those whom the author of Hebrews was writing in his day:
  - e. a “sabbath rest” from God
  - e. There is still a “rest” that is available to us “today.”
3. involves remaining confident, keeping trust

## B. The Availability of Rest - vs 1

1. Therefore,

- a. refers to Israel's unbelief and consequence failure to enter God's rest
  - b. since a promise remains of entering His rest,
    - i. as long as the promise remains, there is opportunity to be saved
    - ii. Does God's promise to Israel still remains? some say no (Amillennialists)
      - Though the members of Israel, 20 and older, didn't enter the promised land, God didn't forsake them
      - God's Promise in the New Covenant stipulates under what conditions God would remove His promise - Jer 31:35-37
      - Ro 11:15, 24-25 makes it clear that Israel's stumble had a purpose and time allotted to it, its end will be "life from the dead"
2. let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.
- a. **phobéō** – to fear, withdraw (flee) from, avoid.
    - i. generates "wanting to flee" from feeling overwhelmed (not adequate to meet the situation).
    - ii. in classical Greek meant *shrink away from* (flee, *escape* from), i.e. to *avoid*.]
    - iii. The root of this NT Greek word usually focuses on the *negative* fear of *man* or an irrational *fright* of God. Rather, this should be *positive*, i.e. the fear of God's *disapproval* (cf. [Ac 10:22,35](#)).
  - b. For non-believers - Mt 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
  - c. For Believers
    - i. Lu 12:32 "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.
    - ii. Reverential Awe
      - 1Pe 2:17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.
      - Re 14:7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

### C. The Elements of Rest

#### 1. Hearing the Gospel is necessary, but not sufficient for salvation

- a. Faith is required, believing the gospel - Ro 1:16; 1 Co 15:3-4
  - i. Faith is a key concept in Hebrews,
  - ii. It is an evil heart of unbelief that falls away from the living God - 3:12,
  - iii. those who enter God's rest do so by faith - 4:3
  - iv. Unbelief leads to a hardened heart, which leads to rebellion and divine discipline.
- b. They heard the good news of rest - the gospel was preached to us as well as to them
  - i. didn't do any good - the word which they heard did not profit them
  - ii. They didn't believe - not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.
- c. Hell will have multitudes that knew truth, but never trusted Christ
  - i. Mt 7:22-23 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"
  - ii. The Parable of the Wheat and Tares – Mt 13:24-30

d. Jesus warned that the true children of Abraham would believe as he did, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.– Jo 8:39

2. Both the positive and the negative sides of this truth are absolute

a. Those who believe enter that rest

b. Those who do not believe do not enter that rest - "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'"

#### D. Our Rest is God's Rest

1. The promised rest is God's rest,

a. not the rest of inactivity

b. the rest of finished work

- His works were finished from the foundation of the world. - Re 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

- And God rested on the seventh day from all His works

2. Divine Decree – vs 5-6

a. and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."

i. the "rest" was offered in the time of Moses,

- they missed the opportunity, as could any generation through unbelief – vs 6

- those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,

ii. the "rest" was offered again in the time of Joshua

iii. the "rest" was offered again in the time of the Psalmist

b. Since therefore it remains that some must enter it

i. the "rest" was being offered again through the writer of Hebrews – vs 5

ii. the "rest" is part of God's sovereign decrees and His design is that some will enter in

3. Immediate Action – vs 7

a. again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today,"

b. opportunity for God's rest remains, but "Today" will come to an end

#### E. The Nature of Rest – vs 8-10

1. It is Spiritual

a. The rest that Joshua offered was a picture of the rest that God offers to all

b. by the time the Psalmist writes, Israel has been in the land for 400 plus years, if the land was the rest, why is rest offered again

2. It is for the people of God – vs 9

a. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

b. the writer is addressing Hebrews

c. we (as Gentiles) get to participate being made the people of God in Christ

3. It is Fulfilling Faith– vs 10

a. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

b. See A.3.

4. There is a future rest – Rev 14:13

#### F. The Urgency of Rest – vs 11-13

1. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest,

a. we should diligently with intense purpose and concern secure it

b. w/o diligence, the tendency is to ... fall according to the same example of disobedience.

2. The Word's importance in Rest

a. God's Word is a key ingredient in Hebrews

i. called **“the Word of God,”** - 4:12

ii. referred to

- as **“what God has spoken”** - 1:1-3

- **“what we have heard”** - 2:1

- **“good news”** - 4:2

iii. God's Word is the full and final revelation through the Son,

- the crowning conclusion to the prophets - 1:1-4

- It is the message of salvation we are exhorted to give careful attention - 2:1-4

- Israel's unbelief and disobedience was in spite of God's Word revealed to and through Moses - 3:7-19

iv. Belief in God's Word is the key to **“rest”** - 4:3

b. For the word of God is

i. living and powerful,

- reveals sin – Ro 7:9-13

- creates faith – Ro 10:17

- transforms the reader - 2Co 3:18

- matures through putting into practice - Heb 5:14

ii. and sharper than any two-edged sword,

- piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow,

- and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart

c. And there is no creature hidden from His sight,

i. but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him

- **trachelizo** – two uses

-to seize by the throat or neck,

-to expose the gullet of a victim for killing (to lay bare):--  
opened.

- face to face situations

ii. to whom we must give account.