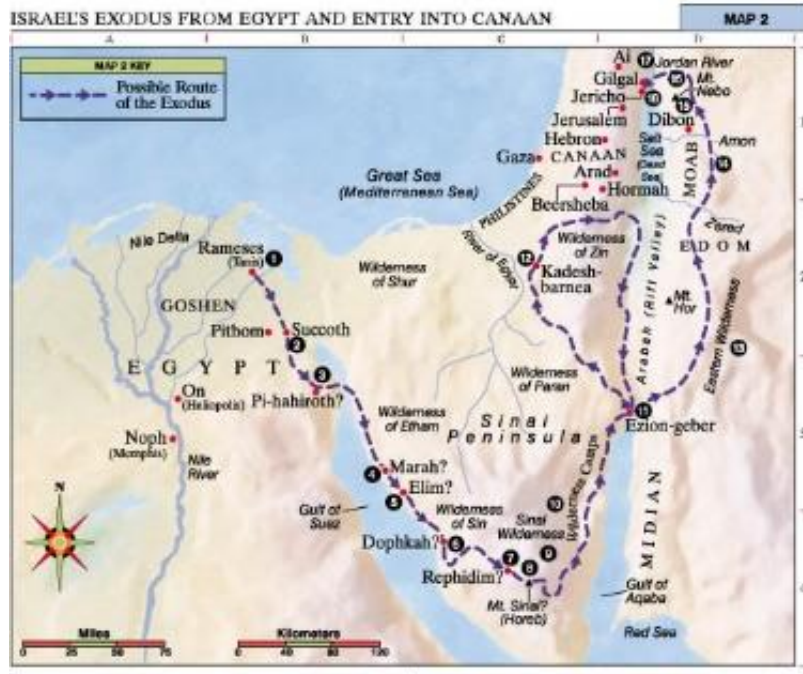


Hebrews 4:1-13, Finding Rest in Jesus

Turn in your Bibles this morning to the book of Hebrews and we will begin Chapter 4 today. As you are turning just a little review. Last week we talked about the warning of having an unbelieving heart and that is what kept the nation of Israel out of the promised land at the point and time they came to the outskirts of the land that God promised to them as a nation. In Chapter 4 we will see a continuance of that warning as it pertains to our salvation.



And as you look at this map, we are reminded that because of their unbelief and disobedience to God they wandered for 40 years in the wilderness. 1000's upon 1000's of them died in that wilderness over that 40-year time span. 11 days away from God's promised land. At the end of Chapter 3 we see a word to describe this entrance into the Promised Land and in verse 18 it was described as entering God's rest. We will see today that word, rest or rested, used 10 times in these 13 verses. But, what does that really mean? We will see it used to describe different areas within our lives. We will also see today with this continued warning an imploring, an urging to those that this letter was written to and for us even today. Over the next few Chapters we will hear these words, "Let Us" several times. This is the imploring, the urging from Paul to these believers to be committed and obedient in their lives to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

¹Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. ²For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. ³For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." ⁵And again in this passage he said, "They shall not enter my rest." ⁶Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, ⁷again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." ⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. ⁹So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. ¹¹Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. ¹²For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of

joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Verse 1 in Chapter 4 begins with the word “Therefore” telling us that what is about to be read stems from what was previously said in Chapter 3. Therefore, because God had promised the nation of Israel the Promised Land and they did not go in because of unbelief. Paul is reminding them of a few things. He is giving another warning but also giving great hope in God’s promises for everyone. It took belief, faith and obedience in God to go into the promised land. We see this promise of entering God’s rest is extended beyond just entering the Promised Land. The true rest was not the fact that they got into the Promised Land but the true rest that is being expressed here is the fact of belief in God and obedience to his Word, which brings us to a personal relationship with God on earth and eventually that eternal home in Heaven. May I say it begins with REPENTANCE!

God was not just going to take the nation of Israel into the Promised Land to isolate them from the rest of the other nations. But, to use them to show his glory, his power, his judgment so that others would come to a belief in him as the God of salvation.

That is the rest that is being expressed here, in this first verse. It is a salvation rest. A rest that brings hope of eternal life with God. A rest that gives us a place to go to as we toil and persevere for the Gospel while on this earth. Remember, along with Pastor Brad, we sung that song, Hiding Place. There is the promise but there also is a warning in verse 1.

Hebrews 4:1

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

Now when some people equate the word fear with God, they seem to have a problem with that terminology. Some would even say it is a contradiction of God’s attributes. Look at these next two verses on the screens.

2 Timothy 1:7

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Romans 8:15

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba! Father!

What are these two verses talking about though? They are both talking about our lives after we have come to a point of repentance of our sin, belief, faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we are to live lives of obedience to Jesus Christ. Not to continue or to fall back, as it says in Romans 8:15, to a life of sin and disobedience to God’s word.

These next verses show us why it is not a contradiction.

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Even Jesus himself tells us this from the Gospel of Matthew 10:28.

Matthew 10:28

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Some try to soften this word by saying we are to have a reverence or to be in awe of God. I would agree with all of that. But in that reverence, in the feeling of awe it brings us to true repentance because of the knowledge of the fact God's wrath comes upon all those that do not believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Personally, I think we all could use a small dose of the fear of God. Paul is warning, "Let us" fear to make sure we are entering into that salvation rest. What this is, is a call to self-introspection. Turn to 2 Peter Chapter 1 verses 5 to 9. This shows us a command to do so.

2 Peter 1:5-9

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Are we saved? Are we being obedient to the Word of God? Look at this picture. This is why you are going to see this picture several times. Are we truly experiencing God in our lives? Are we ready to climb?



Turn back to Hebrews. Look at verses 2 through 5.

Hebrews 4:2-5

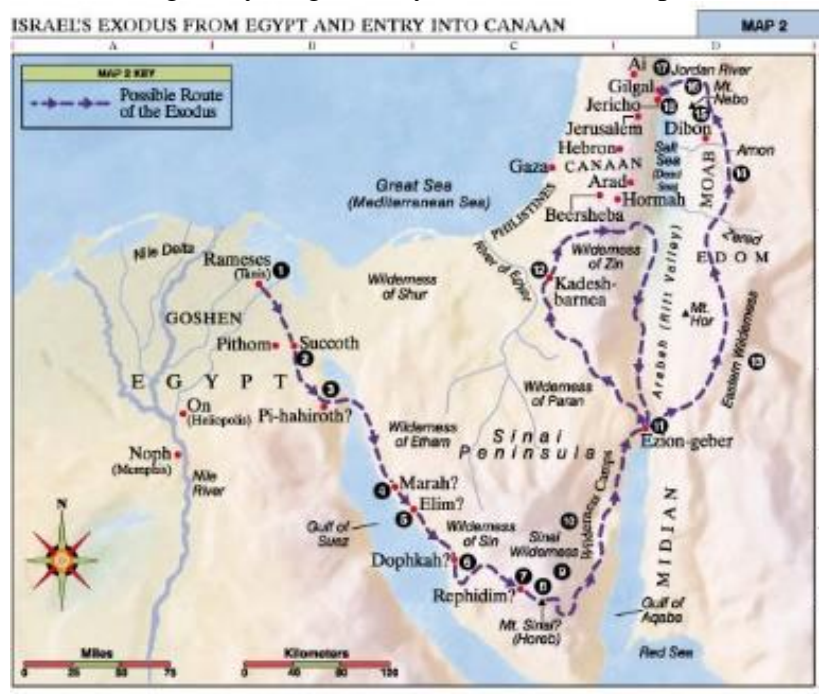
² For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. ³ For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." ⁵ And again in this passage he said, "They shall not enter my rest."

Just as we have, what we call the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ. They also had the message of Good News. God promised them a messiah to come. Remember these are a group of Jews that are coming out of Judaism. The sacrifice of the animals for forgiveness of sin was a picture of Jesus, the messiah, the savior to come. But all of that still ties into faith. It was by faith they would bring the sacrifices. It is by faith that we trust in what Jesus did on the cross that leads to salvation.

They heard the message, but it did not benefit many that heard. They hardened their hearts. If you harden your heart to the Gospel you leave God, no choice but to levy his judgment upon you and his wrath will come upon you. After the Israelites started their wandering around the wilderness, did all of them repent of their unbelief and go to heaven when they died. I would propose to you, no, that many continued to harden their hearts. What does that do? Romans 1 tells us that a hardening of the heart brings us to a point where God hands us over to a reprobate mind. Okay! Have it your way!

Think about our study on Wednesday nights through Revelation! Jesus promised he would come back and take those that believe, repent and take them to heaven to be with him, John 14:1-6. What is that event called? The Rapture! Those, that did not believe were left on this earth to go through the 7-year tribulation and God started pouring his wrath out upon the earth of those left behind. During the 7-Bowl judgments do you remember how the people reacted? They all repented, Correct? No! It says they cursed the name of God, they cursed God, they did not repent and give God glory. Why? Because of unbelief!

But may I remind us of something today. Again, as you look at this map.



The Israelites were but 11 days away from the Promised Land. Each of us here today are but a breath away from eternity. With the very breath that God has given each of us we have used the breath to do what Romans 10:9-10 says.

Romans 10:9-10

⁹Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Or with that breath, you harden your heart and you tell God, No! I am not going to surrender to you. You see God’s promise of salvation is still open to all of you. In these verses 2 to 5 we see this analogy of when God created the universe that he rested. Not because he was tired, but he saw the completion of his work and it was very good. God did not wind this universe up and like a top just let it go. God is intimately and continually involved in all it’s happenings.

Think about what we learned at the very beginning of our study of Hebrews Chapter 1 verse 3. When Jesus made purification for our sins, he sat down, at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Why? Because the work was complete! The work for our salvation was complete! So, that promise of rest for us is now through belief in Jesus and that promise is still promised today. Look at verses 6 through 10.

Hebrews 4:6-10

⁶ Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, ⁷ again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." ⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. ⁹ So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰ for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

There it is! The promise is still available to all that has heard the good news! But many fail to enter it because of disobedience, hardening the heart and not believing. But it says God has appointed a certain day! Today! You know what that word means! Now! Today! At the Present! Today is the day of salvation! Today if you hear my voice, don't harden your heart! Come to this altar today! Repent of your sins and find that rest in Jesus. For rest in Jesus if for all of Eternity! Quit trying find this temporary pleasure from this world! Quit working so hard to try to fit into this world's temporary culture! Now Paul does speak of working! As Joshua led the Israelites into the promised land, he was not leading them into this eternal rest. It was once again that God was going to use the nation of Israel as an example to the world to show his Glory, Holiness, Judgment and the way for salvation. Once we get saved that is not it. We have work to do for the Lord. Look at verse 11.

Hebrews 4:11

¹¹ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

Here is one of those imploring's we are going to see for the next few weeks. LET US THEREFORE STRIVE! Now, I am not talking about working for your salvation. Jesus, Scripture makes it very clear that it is repentance of sin and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. This word strive means to be diligent, to labor, to exert one's self. Are you ready to climb? You have seen this picture for the past few weeks and you are going to see it for the next few.



Are you ready to climb? Are you ready to strive to get closer to God? Will you grab that backpack Pastor Kevin talked about? Are you willing to grab that walking stick? Pastor Kevin left one important thing

out when he was describing this. Now don't go, Oh my goodness Pastor Dale is going to say something bad about Pastor Kevin. No, I told him I was going to do this! But if you are going to go hiking you need water! Let me tell you from experience. You need water when you go hiking. But if you are ready to pursue God you need the Living Water!

The Living Water is the Holy Spirit! When we repent of our sins and put our belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1 tells us we are sealed by the Holy Spirit unto salvation. It is through the power of the Living Water that we have that relationship with the Living God, and it is through the power of the Living Word that we can climb. Look at verse 12.

Hebrews 4:12-13

¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Pastor Kevin posed the scenario that some of you might be saying, "I want to climb!" "I want to get out of this sin and this lifestyle I am in!" But I don't know where to start! First, repent! Believe on Jesus! But here is where you will draw the power to do so. God's Word. The Bible. God's word is alive! It is two-edged. See it cuts! It shows us our sin! Then if we will allow God's Word to do so it will heal by cutting out that sin in our lives. Those thoughts of lust, that slander and gossip, that jealousy, that hatred! Those secret sins we think we are hiding. This is absolute truth in all things pertaining to life. In John Chapter 17, Jesus is praying to God for the disciples and he says this.

Father sanctify them (Make them Holy) by your word, for your word is TRUTH! Verse 13 tells us there is nothing hidden from God's sight. All is exposed before God.

You might be saying, Dale, I don't here you talking much about rest. The rest is in the journey. The rest is the peace and the strength that comes from being surrendered and obedient to God.

If you hear God's voice today imploring you, quickening your spirit. Do not harden your hearts! Come give your life to Jesus. If you are ready to climb? Come around this altar! Let him know! Come along with us! We are ready to climb!