

Hebrews 4:1-13 - Entering His Rest

A. Missing God's Rest - Exodus 17:1-7 - A pattern of unbelief

-From the Plagues to the Spies, a pattern of unbelief persisted and kept true rest from the people of Israel.

-The writer of Hebrews speaks Jew to Jew and warns of going backward - to behave as if Christ had not brought satisfaction of the Old Covenant. As the nation once looked at the promised land with skepticism, we are now often just as guilty of looking at the timing and plan of God with the same unhealthy skepticism.

B. How you enter God's rest

1. 4:1-2 - Don't miss God's rest

-Continuing from chapter 3 - "Therefore..."

-Fear and Unbelief is what kept the former slaves from entering Canaan

-Not because they weren't good enough, but because they lacked faith - and after being given SO MANY reasons to believe...

-What should be the only real fear? That anyone would come up short of it.

2. 4:3-5 - This rest, both an immediate and eternal rest is God's own rest

- "we who have believed do enter rest", in contrast to the people of Israel that failed to enter that available rest. Unbelief keeps many out of God's rest while faith brings people into his rest

-What kind of rest is this? This is God's own rest bringing...

a. Peace with God
b. Freedom from bondage service (sin's slavery and Israel's Egyptian bondage) and adherence to temporary covenantal obligation

c. Freedom to choose worship and service of God

e. Participate in the very rest God enjoys

-Psalm 95:11 - God's rest was His from the beginning of creation and was always intended for others to enter and enjoy

3. 4:6-9 - That same rest continues for the people of God.

- It remains that that rest, created by God is waiting for someone to enter it - it is a real thing waiting to be taken advantage of. If Israel failed to take advantage of it in antiquity (to those whom it was first offered), then someone will enter that rest, hearing the call to surrender to His will

-“Today if you hear His voice” - Psalm 95 proves that there is rest beyond that which was offered to God’s people through Moses and Joshua. If that rest was fulfilled in those days then the “Today” reference wouldn’t mean anything!

-The mention of Joshua here helps us tie Jesus to Joshua - the first rest offered through Joshua was a temporary one and not fully realized. The author efficiently shows that the second Joshua (Jesus - or “God saves). There is now a rest that is a spiritual and eternal rest because of Jesus. Jesus is thus superior to both Joshua and Moses. So why would one go back? Hebrew or Christ follower?

-This is also a rest that is in one entity alone - Jesus Christ. This isn’t a formula, a recipe, and those who can testify to it, are those who have entered and enjoyed that rest through total submission and belief in who Jesus Christ is and what He is done.

4. 4:10 - Rest means to not continue in works to earn or deserve rest

-There is no longer any place for works meant to express our own righteousness. Rest is the natural byproduct of ceasing one’s own works and resting securely on what Christ had already done. This rest provided ONLY by the Lord Jesus by his saving work on the cross - changing our “works” from now on. Resting from the desire to “earn” favor through self justifying works and now simply to know Jesus deeper and deeper.

5. 4:11 - Not mere idea but invitation to enter God’s rest

-The rest is there but God does not force it on anyone! We must enter that rest and it is entered by faith. But that faith requires diligent faith to cling to, rely upon, trust God with all that you are confronted by. In other words, if you a follower of Christ and have distributed your faith and trust to occupation, bank account, self identification - anything other than the person of Jesus Christ - you will not experience rest in the here and now. We will be as powerless to enter God’s rest as the disobedient people of Israel were

6. 4:12-13 - Discovered through God's Word

-For the word of God diagnosis the condition of the human heart with accuracy and precision and lays open the spiritual health of anyone to be assessed. The intended audience of the author of Hebrews, Jews of his era, were ready to follow in the failure of the people of Israel at the time of Moses. The caution for Jewish Christians is the same as for Gentile Christians - DO NOT GO backward, hardening you heart against the reliable and faithful voice of Christ.

-This passage talks about simultaneously the nature of Christ as Savior and His revealed Word. To pursue Christ, to know Him better is to find Him throughout the revealing scriptures that He embodies and inspires to guide us practically in this both immediate and eternal rest.

-This rest is: cleansing, healing, protection from sin, abiding, peaceful, joyous, forgiving, gracious and merciful. Taking on for our benefit the very character traits of our Savior and King Jesus. It is close proximity to Him in spirit and in truth that causes this rest in His people!

-Fellow Christians, Matthew 13:23 says, "When the word of God is heard and understood, it bears fruit."

-If you are a believer in Christ, who He is and what He did for you and me, then you have eternal rest. But enjoy the REST of God now. Surrender, believe, pursue His truth, and experience the yoke that is easy and the burden that is light.

PRAYER