ENTERING GOD’S REST

**DATE: 10/23/2013 Wed.**

**TEXT: Hebrews 4:1-11; Psalms & Proverbs, Exodus**

**INTRODUCTION**

We arecontinuing in our study of the Book of Hebrews

And I might say, *“What a study it has been”*

In **chapter 3** we saw how the writer used the children of Israel as an example of unbelief

He continues using them as an example in **chapter 4**

The writer of Hebrews talks about a ***“rest”***

He uses Israel as an example of those who failed to enter into all that God had for them

They are a tragic example of missing out on the Promise of God’s Rest

Their example is a warning to us not to miss out on God’s Rest

9 times in **vs. 1-11** we find the word ***“rest”***

This Rest, as we shall see, is the Christian life at its Best

It really speaks of what God desires for every Christian

Remember that the theme of Hebrews is the Superiority of Christ

We have seen so far Jesus presented as Superior to …

The Prophets, the Angels, Moses and in our last lesson in an indirect way as superior to Joshua

- Moses led the people out of Egyptian bondage but was unable to lead them into the Promise land

- Joshua led them into the Promised Land but was unable to give them Rest

Jesus Christ is able to do both

He not only leads us out of Bond­age but also into total Victory (He is our rest, has we will see)

**Ill.** Watchman Knee wrote a book entitled *The Normal Christian Life*

Vance Havner said that most Christians live such subnormal Christian lives, that if they ever began to live a normal Christian life, people would think us abnormal

This ***“rest”*** is the Normal Christian Life,

But unfortunately, it is far from normal for most Christians

Let’s pray and then think on this though

***“Entering God’s Rest”***

***~~~Prayer~~~***

**I. THE “FEAR” WE MUST POSSESS - v. 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”***

The first four words are extremely important to the proper understanding of Paul's warning

We must realize that Fear is not always a bad thing

The Bible has a lot to say about Fear in relation to God

The *“****fear”*** of the Lord is one of the great duties of man

Solomon said in **Eccl. 12:13 –** *“****Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man”***

The Fear of God is not a popular attitude today

Many try to explain it away by reducing it to Reverence and Respect as opposed to actual Fear

While the Fear of God does involve Reverence and Respect, there is more to it

Let’s look at a few aspects of Biblical Fear

**A. The ‘Bible’ and Fear**

The Hebrew word for *“****fear”*** speaks of *Terror, Respect and Reverence*

It is a Holy Fear

It includes the idea of Reverence …

… but it does not exclude Fear

The Greek word for *“****fear”*** means *Alarm, Fright, and Terror*

Webster defines ***“fear”*** as *an unpleasant often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger*

Paul said in **II Cor. 5:11-** *“****Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...”***

To Fear the Lord certainly goes further than Reverence or Respect

It also includes Fear, Dread, and Terror

We are commanded in **Phil. 2:12** to – *“****work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”***

The word for *“****trembling”*** is where we get our English word *tremor* from

It means *to shake or quake with fear*

The Fear of the Lord includes Reverence and Respect,

But also the Fear and Awareness that we are going to stand before God as our Judge

Here is how the Fear of God works

Reverence and Respect come into play when we begin to learn who God truly is …

As we begin to get an understanding of His great attributes of Holiness, Righteousness and Justice

But that is not where it stops

Once we realize that God is a God of Holiness and Justice we also realize that He will deal with sin

That is, He is not just a God of love who will ignore sin

But He is also a God of Wrath Who's Holiness and Justice demands the punishment of sin

**Deut. 4:24 – *“For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God”***

The greater thought is that God is not to be provoked

He can destroy His own people with fire as He did on several occasions throughout the exodus

It is in this that we develop the proper balance of Fear and Reverential awe for God

The Bible says in **Heb. 10:31 – *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”***

Think of the reaction of anyone when they can into the Presence of God

Abraham; the Children of Israel at Mt. Sinai; Isaiah in Chp. 6, John on Patmos, the Kings of Babylon

**B. The ‘Barrier’ of Fear**

The Fear of the Lord is a Barrier that keeps us from Evil

Solomon said in **Prov. 16:6 – *“… by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil”***

The idea here is Powerful

When we have the correct understanding of God and Fear Him as we ought,

That Fear motivates us to stay away from sin

**Prov. 14:27 – *“The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death”***

**C. The ‘Benefits’ of Fear**

**1.** The Fear of the Lord Strengthens our Faith

**Ps. 111:10 – *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: …”***

**Prov. 1:7 – *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge...”***

We see here that both Wisdom and Knowledge begin with the Fear of the Lord

*Wisdom* is discernment (keenly sensitive)

*Knowledge* is knowing what to do with the discernment

**Prov. 19:23 – *“The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil”***

The word ***“tendeth”*** carries the idea of being led

The idea is that the Fear of the Lord leads us in the right direction

When we Fear God, we Obey Him and as a result of obedience we have a better quality of life

Solomon said, we ***“shall abide satisfied”***

The word ***“satisfied”*** carries the idea of being *happy and content*

Not only do we have a better quality of life, but we will enjoy life

**Prov. 14:26 – *“In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge”***

The word ***“confidence”*** speaks of *hope, of something to look forward to*

A ***“refuge”*** is a place of safety and protection

The idea here is that when Parents Fear the Lord as they ought

They will teach their children about God and thus give them Hope and Protection

It is a good thing for us to have the right kind of Fear

**2.** The Fear of Man is detrimental to our Faith

**Prov. 29:25 – *“The fear of man bringeth a snare:***

***… but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe”***

Israel failed God at Kadesh Barnea because they Feared the people of Canaan rather than God

Had they put their trust in the Lord they would have occupied the Promise Land and enjoyed God's Rest and Protection

The Writer of Hebrews calls on us to look back at Israel's Failure and Fear lest the same things happen to us

**THE “FEAR” WE MUST POSSESS**

**II. THE “FAILURE” WE MUST PREVENT – vs. 2, 3**

***“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”  
“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 of Hebrews continues using the Failure of the Israelites to enter into the Promised Land as an illustration to warn us against unbelief

Notice that he is comparing us and them

God brought all of Israel out of Egypt

God's Rest was available to everyone, but many fell short of it

It says, the Word Preached did not Profit them

They had heard the Promise of God

The Word was Preached to them

They knew first hand that they could & should enter Canaan

Why did so many fail to enter in?

Why did the Word of God not profit them?

Because the Word preached was not mixed with Faith in them that heard it

The Problem wasn't with God or His Promises

The Problem was their unbelief IN those Promises

The Promise is only Beneficial to those who receive it by Faith

Joshua and Caleb Profited from the Word preached because they had Faith in what God Promised

**Numbers 13:30 – *“And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it”***

They Heard yet they Fail in Faith, so they were without excuse

**THE “FEAR” WE MUST POSSESS**

**THE “FAILURE” WE MUST PREVENT**

**III. THE “FAITH” WE MUST PURSUE – vs. 4-11**

***“Rest”*** is the prominent word in the last part of **chapter 3** and the first part of **chapter 4**

We find it in **3:11, 18; 4:1, 3-5, 8-11** (11 x’s in 10 vs.)

Webster’s defines ***“rest”***as *to cease from action or motion, especially from action which has caused weariness; to desist from labor or exertion... to be free from whatever wearies or disturbs; to be quiet or still*

Strong's defines ***“rest”*** as *to* *settle down*

The idea is to be *"settled down with God"*

It is the Rest of Faith whereby we live Totally Dependent upon God

It is a Life of Total Trust and Obedience as opposed to …

The Life of Unbelief and Wavering that characterized the children of Israel at Kadash Barnea and in the wilderness

There are 3 Illustrations of Rest listed in this passage

**A. Rest was ‘Proclaimed in Creation’ – vs. 4, 5**

***“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”  
“And in this place again, If they shall enter into My rest”***

God did not Rest because He was tired

He is Omnipotent

He does not get tired

**Isaiah 40:28 – *“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding”***

God didn't Rest because of weariness, but because the work was complete and good

His was *the Rest of Satisfaction* in a job well done

God's Rest was interrupted when man fell into sin

**1.** This Creation Rest was the pattern for Israel's Sabbath

**Exodus 20:9-11 …**

**2.** The Sabbath consequently became a distinctive sign of Israel's covenant relationship to God

**Exodus 31:12-17 …**

**3.** The Israelites' obedience in keeping the Sabbath dem­onstrated their Faith in God

They believed that He would supply their needs and sustain them for seven days even though they only worked six days

Therefore, Israel's obedience in resting on the Sabbath and keeping it holy was proof that they Believed and Trusted God

**B. Rest was ‘Prefigured in Canaan’ – v.6-8**

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

This is Canaan Rest

The phrase... ***“they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief” …***

Refers back to the Israelites who failed to enter into their Rest because of unbelief

Canaan was God's Best for his people

Canaan was described as a Fruitful Land that Flowed with Milk and Honey

It typified The Victorious Life

***“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”  
“For if Jesus had given them rest, then would He not afterward have spoken of another day”***

The Writer of Hebrews quotes from **Ps. 95** to prove that Joshua's Rest fell short of God's Promise

It is important to note that the ***“Jesus”*** of **v. 8** is not Jesus the Saviour

The Hebrew word translated Joshua is the same word the Greek uses for Jesus

The readers had to determine from the context which Jesus was being spoken of

Here the context is clear that this is Joshua the great leader of the OT who finally led the people of God into the Promised Land

While Joshua did lead them into Canaan, As seen in…

**Joshua 21:44 – *“And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that He sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand”***

**Joshua 22:4 – *“And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as He promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side Jordan”***

**Joshua 23:1 – *“And it came to pass a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age”***

… Their Rest, however, ***“Fell Short”*** of what God had in mind

(These by the way, are the children, now grow up)

Remember, Canaan Rest is the Rest of Victory

It involves the conquering of our enemies so that we can settle down and enjoy God's best for us

Joshua and his people occupied the land

But they never settled down in complete peace in the land because they failed to completely conquer the enemy

After they had been in the land for several years the Bible states in **Joshua 13:1 –** ***“Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, ‘Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed’”***

In the books of Joshua and Judges we have the record of their failure

**Joshua 15:63 – *“As for the Jebusites... the children of Judah could not drive them out”***

**Joshua 17:12 – *“The children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities...”***

**Joshua 17:13 – *“It came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out”***

**Judges 1:19 – *“Judah... could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley...”***

**Judges 1:21 – *“The children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites...”***

**Judges 1:27 – *“Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and her towns, nor Taanach***

***and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, …***

***… nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns...”***

**Judges 1:28 – *“...they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out”***

**Judges 1:29 – *“Nei­ther did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer...”***

**Judges 1:30 – *“Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol...”***

**Judges 1:31 – *“Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob”***

**Judges 1:32 – *“But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out”***

**Judges 1:33 – *“Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhab­itants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath...”***

They enjoyed the land and experienced Rest to a degree,

But the Rest God had in mind could not be enjoyed until they were fully obedient in *driving the enemy out*

- God had Given them the land

- God had Guaranteed their victory

- All they had to do was go and Get it

The failure was on their part

Many believers are like that today

God has promised the victory, but they are only enjoying a part

There can be no real peace and rest when the enemy still has power in our life

These verses are showing us that Canaan Rest was not the complete fulfillment of God's Rest for His people

In other words, **if** Joshua had led them into that Rest,

Then David would not have prophesied of ***“another day”*** of Rest – **v.8**

We have seen that …

**Rest was ‘Proclaimed in Creation’**

**Rest was ‘Prefigured in Canaan’**

But notice also that...

**C. Rest was ‘Purchased at Calvary’ – vs. 9 -11**

**1. v. 9 - *“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God”***

The phrase ***“remaineth”*** indicates that the Rest spoken of in this verse *is yet future*

Both, **Creation Rest** and **Canaan Rest** were Types or Pictures of **Calvary Rest**

Creation Rest pictured the *Rest of Satisfaction*

That is the finishing of our labors and settling down to enjoy them

Canaan Rest is the *Rest of Victory* that we enjoy in Christ by living obediently

Calvary Rest pictures the *Eternal Rest* that is enjoyed by the believer when he finishes his work on earth and enters eternity

Moses led the people out of Egypt but was unable to lead them into Canaan

Joshua led them in but was unable to give them the fullness of rest

The best of men is only man at best

However, Jesus purchased our Eternal Rest at Calvary and is able to lead us in

With His last breath, Jesus said in **John 19:30 –**

***“It is finished”***

That which Moses and Joshua could not bring to pass

Jesus Finished

Now He says in **Matt. 11:28 - *“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest”***

The Great Provision of God's Eternal Rest was Purchased by Jesus Christ at Calvary

**2. v.10 – *“For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His”***

We gain Eternal Rest by Faith in Christ's finished work on Calvary

When we come to Christ and by Faith trust Him for our salvation He saves us

He saves us eternally apart from any merit or works of our own

It is by Faith and it is Eternal

**Ephesians 2:8, 9 …**

**Titus 3:5a – *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, … “***

However we are Saved to Serve

**Ephesians 2:10 – *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”***

**Titus 3:8 – *“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men”***

So then, Salvation is more than just being Saved;

It is a life of Service and Commitment

The Rest referred to in the beginning of this verse speaks of a day when we settle down in eternity to enjoy the fruit of our labour

The day is coming when we will cease from our work the same way God did from His

The same idea is expressed by John in **Rev. 14:13 -**

***“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them”***

It is a powerful and sobering thought when we really get hold of the truth that our earthly labors follow us into Heaven

The next verse expands on this reality

**3. v.11 – *“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief”***

Let us understand from the start that the writer is in no way advocating a works salvation

However, while Eternal Rest is guaranteed in the finished work of Christ,

The fullness of Satisfaction and Enjoyment of that Rest is dependent on our earthly faithfulness in Trusting and Serving Christ

*Let not the believer who has wasted his life in serving himself think that he will enjoy Heaven in the same way as someone who has faithfully served Christ*

We must ***“labour”*** therefore to enter into that Rest

The word ***“labour”*** means *to labour, to make effort, be prompt or earnest, be diligent*

The idea here is that we Serve Christ faithfully in order to enter into the Fullness of the Rest He purchased for us at Calvary

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