

Title: ~~Entering into Rest~~ *The Promise of Rest (What is the Real Issue in SALVATION?)*

Text: 4:1-~~2~~

Turn to the Eoshure book of the N. T., Hebrews, and let's try today to get out off the wilderness. We are in chapter chapter ⁴ verse 1 and we will read through verse ~~2~~.....Chapter 4 verses 1 ~~thru 21~~....There are notes in your bulltin. ~~This notes are to be used this morning and tonight~~ *And I trust you will take them out and follow along with us.* We are are studing about entering into God's Rest....

This is all a part of a WARNING PASSAGE. There are 5 warning passages in the book of Hebrews. This is the second one. It began with chapter 3 verse 7 and continues through chapter 4. *And in each of these passage* difficulties in interpretation are presented. ~~2~~

I believe that the book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers. But there are, also, in these warning passages messages of application to those who are UNBELIEVERS. But in the midst of the believers. Warnings about a person's relationship to God and the importance of belief in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord.

The entire book of Hebrews is about the PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST. And the first major section of Hebrews going to chapter 8 verse 2, deals with the AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST OVER EVERYTHING.

And we have looked at this so far as to Christ authority over angels. That took us to the end of chapter 2. Beginning with chapter 3 verse 1, we are looking at the authority of Christ over Moses and all the house of ISRAEL. And in the midst of this discussion we have studied so far:

1. A comparison between Moses and Jesus: similar, yet different in a great contrast....Moses was a part of the house hold of God which God is building. Yet, the Bible teaches that Jesus is building the house and owns the house. He is the hier...the son to whom all the possessions of the house belong. Where as Moses is simple his servant.

2. Then *begin w.m.* in verse 7 ~~thru 11~~ there was a *caution* from the Holy Spirit which is still the subject Paul is dealing with. *This second Warning passage*

And it comes from the book of Psalms. And in this caution we read: "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as the Jews did in the wilderness at the time when they tested God."

Now, we have looked at, already, a little about what this wilderness experience of the Jews would be if you just directly applied it to christians. ~~And~~ example: when they came out-off Egypt they were redeemed said the Bible. They shed the blood of a lamb and the death angel passed over and did not bring death to the first born. That is the meaning of the pass-over. Christ is our pass-over. So, by way of application, "OUT OFF EGYPT IS LIKE GETTING SAVED. It is like becoming a believer in Jesus.

But, it was only a 11 day tripe if you walk from Egypt to Canaan which' was the land of promise. It didn't take them 11 days. It took them 40 years. As they wandered in the wilderness. Finally, they went into Canaan.

Now, I know that Canaan was not heaven to them because the Bible clearly teaches that they looked for another city whose builder and maker is God. They weren't simply looking at the land of Canaan. IT WAS A TYPE. THEREFORE, ~~the~~ Canaan represented VICTORY, ~~that, to them...~~ Even through there were many battles they had to fight in terms of conquering the land. And there are many battles we have to fight to have victory in the chirstian life....

So, the wilderness wanderings represents Carnal christianity.

(3D) Now, when you get into chpter 4, however, ~~I believe~~ ^{we have} there is an application of the entire struture of the wilderness ~~wanderings~~ ^{Journeys}...And it is applied strictly to the issue of salvation.

Now, that may not make a lot of sense to you right now. But stay with me.....Hebrews chapter 4 beginning at verse 1.....And the issue before ~~us~~ us as to what we need to understand is the issue of REST...THAT IS THE ISSUE...

(Read Hebrews 4:1-12)

Would you join with me in a moment of Prayer as we ask God to guide us in a study of this passage.....

(1E) Let's look at Vs 1 and 2 clearly as we examine the Promise of God's rest. I believe a lot of people miss read this verse. Perhaps it is simple to mis read it after you find out the problem. Let's look at this promise that Paul mentions in Vs 1 and 2 of entering into ^{God's} rest. And I would like to share four things about that promise.

(1F) First of all, the scope of this promise. We are told in Vs 1 that it is entering into His rest. By way of scope, I mean: HOW LARGE IS IT? HOW EXTENSIVE IS IT?

So, far, in chapter 3, we have been talking about rest as it applies to the land of Canaan. But, according to Vs 1, it says "LET US".....

^{Now Remember}
~~You see,~~ Paul wrote this letter sometime before 70 A.D. We know this to be true because the Temple is still in existence. It was destroyed in 70 A.D. So, Paul is writing to Christians who lived in that time before the temple was destroyed. And he is saying "LET US".....Follow the pronoun carefully all the way through Hebrews. THEY...THEM...US....WE....YOU... They are all very important.

"THEY" in the wilderness are not under discussion..."WE" are under discussion. That is, at least the ones to whom he wrote before 70 A.D. "THEREFORE, LET US FEAR LEST, WHILE A PROMISE REMAINS OF ENTERING HIS REST, ANY ONE OF YOU SHOULD SEEM TO HAVE COME SHORT OF IT.

The point is: THERE REMAINS THE PROMISE.....Now, if you put this together. It means that everything we have studied so far in chapter 3 about the Jews in the wilderness and enter Canaan-Rest, is not what is under discussion. ^{It} Was only a type for us to look to, by way of example. But it is not the point. Because whatever the REST is...it can't be Canaan. ^{because} It still remains, he says, to us in our day. So, the scope of this...entering God's rest...is not Canaan....That is in the ^{past} ~~past~~. It is something today... Something else. It still exist today....

(2F) Secondly, I would like you to notice the seriousness of our position as believers. ^{and you} Please notice the last phrase. I believe this is often miss read. Please read it carefully in your Bibles and take maybe a note or two about it.

It says: "LEST ANY ONE OF YOU SHOULD SEEM TO HAVE COME SHORT OF IT." Now, if you believe the REST has something to do with salvation, which it certainly does, then you see how serious this is. It looks to me, just in first reading, that what he is saying, then, that there is a possibility of some believers coming short of entering into ~~rest~~ rest. And why is he warning us about it lest we seem to come short. Don't you ~~we~~ either come short or you don't? Either you do or you don't. One way or another, you see

So, we have this problem. What does it mean to come short of it? Well, the word "seem" is not correct in interpretation. Because it is the Greek word which means "TO THINK"...It deals with you and me "THINKING SOMETHING"...

& Now, according to the text, then, what they were "thinking" was that they would come short of ~~rest~~ ^{Paul} "THEY"...meaning "those to whom he wrote". And therefore, I have to ~~think~~ ^{ask}: "WHAT WAS THERE FEELING?"

To whome did Paul write?...Jewish believers....What was the problem behind the book of Hebrews?...The problem was: Christians were being persecuted. Jews were not at that particular time. So, the Jews that had become Christians were being persecuted as Christians. And so they were ~~wondering~~ ^{Thinking} whether or not they should maybe return to the ~~safe~~ safe haven of Judism....So, there is a very serious issue here. Thus, what ~~he~~ ^{Paul} is saying here is...let's fear, lest that promise left to us, entering into his rest, any of you would think in your heart ~~any of you would think you would come~~ ^{That you} short of ~~that promise by being a Christian~~

And that is exactly what the ~~Jews~~ ^{Jewish} beleiver was thinking. That I had better go back to Judism, because I may be coming short of the real issue of rest. That I need both the cultural practice of Old Judism as well as Jesus the Messiah. [This is a promblem even today....Because so many of us bring our cultural backgrounds into Jesus. Listen, you ~~own~~ ^{own} cultural background is something of a private conviction and your problem. And you must deal with it. The Bible doesn't feel one way or another about it. In fact, it tells some folks who have dietary laws to practice ~~it~~ ^{them}, but

don't try and force ^{them} on someone else who doesn't believe that way.

If you think you can eat anything and get away with it, then that is fine. That is your problem. But you should not impose restrictions on others.

[Here is a christian who believes you should never cut your lawn on Sundays. But, here is another christians who see no problem with that attitude. Now, neither possion should be forced on the other or anybodies life. The Christian who understands what the Bible teaches, in love says: "Hay, there is room for all of us....You keep doing what you do. And that is fine as long as it isn't violating any principles of God's Word, you are all right."

Well, you see these Jews had a real problem. They were facing a test to there simplist of Faith in Jesus Christ. And the temptation was to return to Judism. ~~They~~ And they were thinking in theri hearts that they ~~were~~ ^{would} therefore, come short of the ultimate blessing promised to the Jews in the O.T. They were misunderstanding the princple of REST. WHAT IS GOD'S REST? And we have the same problem today. What is the rest that ~~he~~ ^{Paul} is talking about?

Well, you have to stay with the sermon. You will hear what it is later.. ^{Also, in this} ~~But, in that one~~ passage, he is not talking about christians who fall short of their salvation. I hear that all the time. And that is not the point at all. It is people thinking that they would come short ~~and~~ ultimately of what is in the context...And what is the context?...GOD'S REST...~~many~~ Jewish people believing they will miss out on the blessing of Abraham if they don't go back to Judism....And the answer is NO....LET'S FEAR LEAST THAT KIND OF TEACHING IS IN OUR MIDST.....

(3F) ^{Concerning} Number 3, ~~about~~ the promise of God's rest from Vs 2, notice the similarity with ^{the} Jews in the wilderness. Vs 2 says...."For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them." ^{Boy, what a Text}

Who is the "THEM".....The Jews in the wildernsess in chapter 3... The gospel was preached unto them. They had no right to excuse themselves. They had the gospel. It is an everlasting gospel. It has been preached all the way through from the beginning of time....

It hasn't changed. Some people before the cross looked forward; and of course we look backward. But, everybody is saved the same way. It is an everlasting gospel says Revelation 14. It hasn't changed at all. The Gospel was preached unto THEM, as well as unto us.....

What is the Gospel in the context?....It is entering into God's rest. *OK*.....Well, what is God's rest?.....Stay with me. I haven't got there yet..

But, it is similar in terms to the Jews in the wilderness and us in the sense that it was preached unto both....Keep that in your mind.

(HF) Number 4, is the source of the problem. It is stated at the end of Vs 2. It says: "but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard."

What a tremendous verse for us to understand....Why, do some people who say with their mouths that they are christians, yet, their lives clearly demonstrate they are not christians.....WHY do some people have that problem? And the answer is clear...

Vs 2 The word which they have heard was not united or mixed with faith.... Do you understand what is being said?

Paul is saying until what you hear becomes united with your faith, you' have not really experienced salvation.....

Listen, many people *put* into their lives what they have heard about the gospel. But *it was never* ~~it~~ united with faith? *It* It was simply added to all the other information you have received in your brain.....And so it is just seating there. And so some one ask them: Have you heard about the Gospel of Christ.....Oh, yes, I have....

Do you accept the Gospel?.....Oh, sure.....

But, you see, all they mean is that they have agreed to a given set of fact....And those facts are ~~mixed~~ added to many other facts of life. But, they haven't been mixed or united with faith to form one single blend, one single mixture....one single substance.....

Until what you hear is the same as to what you believe, totally, so that it is one and the same, you are not a real believer.....

A lot of people get all the facts correctly. But those facts are never united with faith....And until you say what God says about this book. And you believe it and apply it to your life....And these facts are united with your faith.⁵⁰ It is one and the same. Then, it is salvation....

And this becomes a very important point for us today. ~~That~~ means that the Jews in the wilderness, there was no question that they heard the Gospel preached unto them....No question...They heard all of God's promises. They saw his works..his miraculous deeds for 40 years.

But the reason why they died in the wilderness, the reason why they did not have saving faith and why they did not enter into the land of Canaan IS...Their knowledge was never mixed with faith.

Inspite of all that they had seen and all that they had heard, yet, they never really believed it.

And the word translated "UNBELIEF" throughout this passage is the word meaning "UNPERSUADED"...And that is ^{the} great...*issue in salvat*

You see, a lot of people if you ask them "Do you believe the facts of the Gospel"? They can say to you.."WHY CERTAINLY"....They agree to them. They agree they exist or that they happened.

But, it doesn't mean that they are persuaded that those things are actually the truth. And that there isn't anyother truth put that.....
AND THAT IS THE ISSUE, YOU SEE, OF SALVATION... *Lord, Lord. Depart from me, I never know you*

You see, you may believe the facts. But if those facts have not persuaded you that those things are final truth....absoul~~t~~ truth, then you have not experienced salvation.

And many of us are in ~~the~~ ^{That} same boat. Untill we are really persuaded that it is the truth and it is going to happen, saving faith has not really ocured....That is the whole point of that verse. It is a very important issue. Christianity is built upon facts of history. Christianity is built upon things that are true.....Not hopeful, ^{but} true...not thing~~s~~ ^{but have} so... ~~It is~~ ~~either black or white~~...It is either the truth or it isn't....Christianity is ~~not~~ ~~based on~~ ~~facts~~ ~~and~~ ~~use~~ ~~this~~ ~~word~~ ~~loosely~~ ~~because~~ ~~it~~ ~~isn't~~ ~~that~~...

Christianity is the only religion in the world that is built on historical facts. Things that actually occurred which are the foundation of what we believe and why we believe *Dem....*

But I believe that God wants each of us to see *this* simple truth: that the major reason why people are not becoming believers in Christ and why they are not assured of heaven *or why some folks believe you can be saved* is because the Word they heard was not united with faith.....That they now trust and rely completely upon that word which they have heard.

SOFTLY The whole issue is: DO YOU BELIEVE THE BOOK? AND ARE YOU TRUSTING THE BOOK? The Bible says that Jesus died for our sins. He paid for all your sins. He arose again from the dead and was seen by hundreds of people. He ascended into heaven and one day He is coming back for us....

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT.....ARE YOU TRUSTING IT.....ARE YOU PERSUADED THAT THAT IS THE TRUTH.....

That is the issue of salvation.....

Let us Pray

*That there is salvation in ~~not~~ no one else, except Jesus
That Jesus is the only way that you can be saved!*