

## Hebrews

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### Hebrews 4:1-10

#### Introduction

- These 10 verses are a bit complicated because the writer uses the word "rest" with three different meanings.
- First, he uses "rest" as we would use "the peace of God". So if we were to say, "I had such a difficult decision to make and I prayed about it and I had the peace of God just come over me, so I knew just what to do", then he is using "rest" here in the same sense, as if to say, "I had a tough decision to make, but I just rest in God knowing that He will show me the way."
- Second, he uses "rest" here as he did in Ch. 3 to speak of the Promised Land as "the Land of Rest". Certainly after having lived for generations as slaves in Egypt and having traveled for so long through the desert, the land on the other side of the Jordan would be a land of rest!
- Third, he speaks of how at Creation, on the seventh day, God rested. So here he speaks of rest as the condition where everything has been fully completed.

#### Vss. 1-2

- God's rest, in all three meanings used here, is still very much available for us. The fear comes when others in your church family do not reach it, as Moses' generation did not reach it.
- In that generation's case as well as our own, there are people right beside us, who hear what we hear and see what we see, but it "did not profit them because it was not united by faith". I remember watching the crowds in Billy Graham crusades, seeing how everyone heard the same message, and while two get saved, the one right next to them does not, for that one did not unite what they heard with faith and so will not enter into the Lord's rest with the first two.

#### Vss. 3-7

- Fear can be paralyzing. Not only can fear keep you from moving physically, fear can also bind and inhibit you spiritually. Such was the case of Moses' generation. Having finally

reached Jordan they sent out spies, one from each of the 12 tribes, to bring back a report on the Promised Land. In the book of Numbers we are told they brought back samples of the produce of the land, affirming that it was just as rich as God had promised. BUT, the land was inhabited by giants who lived behind great and mighty walls and fortresses. Thus, fear triumphed over God's promises to Moses' generation. This is what the preacher to the Hebrews did not want to see repeated in his day to his congregation.

- But verse 6 tells us that the "the rest remains", meaning that God's rest extends beyond one generation's failure due to their "disobedience". The rabbis at the time of the New Testament pointed out that over the first 6 days of Creation the Word says "there was morning and there was evening", but on the 7<sup>th</sup> day it does not declare that there was an evening, only that the Lord rested, so they contended that the 7<sup>th</sup> day never ended so the Lord's rest continues forever.
- The preacher returns to Psalms 95 in verse 7. His point is that every generation stands on the desert side of Jordan. Will what you hear of the promises of God be united to the faith that is in your heart? The unification of Truth and faith is so powerful that it can overcome fear and invite great miracles!

#### Vss. 8-10

- The invitation to enter into God's rest is still open. God's "Today" is where we live, but we will not live here forever.
- There are at least two ways to take these 10 verses and it all starts with vs. 1. First, the verse may be taken to say, "Beware, so that your disobedience due to your fear and lack of faith doesn't mean that you have missed the rest and peace and salvation God has for you." Another way the sentence may be read is, "Beware so that you do not think you have been born too late to receive the gifts of rest and peace and salvation and adventure that God has for you!" Too many good church-going people tacitly believe that the great days of God are over, that the great miracles of God, the great movement of the Holy Spirit are all in the very distant past and that there's little or nothing to get excited about or believe in. This makes for a very thin faith indeed. Jesus told Thomas and the other Apostles in John 20: 29, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed". Every generation has their Jordan they must cross. What do you believe?