

Finding Rest

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Heb. 3:17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

Heb. 3:18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

Heb. 3:19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Heb. 4:1 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.

Heb 4:2 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*.

Heb. 4:3 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.

I think one of the big jobs of gospel ministers toward saved people is to encourage them in ways to get the largest blessings possible out of their status - the status of being children of God, citizens of the most beneficial Kingdom ever known, and co-heirs with the greatest King ever known! This big job is especially true of pastors, because they are supposed to stand in positions of being under-shepherds of the flock of God...so leading and guiding is very important for the well-being of the flock.

When we think about encouraging God's people, we may think that going to the book of Hebrews to get something to give that encouragement would be unlikely. Hebrews is chock-full of teachings about how professing Christians can fail at finding the best way of responding to and serving God. The writer uses a lot of examples which involve the children of Israel when they were in the wilderness. Now, these examples obviously cast the children of Israel in a light that shows them to be for the most part disobedient and unbelieving. But, that example is shown because the writer is illustrating how God's people must not act, or what they must not become.

Some bible scholars have approached the book of Hebrews as though it was a depiction of people who try to get saved, work at it, but finally fall away and are lost at last even though they have tried. These scholars make the lessons to be about going to heaven or not going to heaven...entering into eternal rest or not entering into eternal rest. But, the truth is, the teachings of this book are about both lost people never obtaining eternal life through unbelief and about saved people who, because of staying in a state where their trust level never rises to the place where they find the spiritual rest that is available to them in their everyday life of serving God. Both types of people are blended together in our text. Today, we want to think about the difference between lack of trust, and therefore, lack of spiritual rest, or trusting in the Lord and finding spiritual rest.

I. **VV. 17-18** If we ignore or disbelieve the promises and the leading of the Lord, we will die without ever seeing spiritual rest - this is about living a life that never rises above the carnal, the base, the worldly

■ **1Cor. 3:3** For **ye are yet carnal**: for whereas *there is* among you **envying, and strife, and divisions**, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

▶ Notice first, they fell in the wilderness (not in Egypt, a type of sin, but in the wilderness a type of the world where there is no experience of spiritual richness, rest, and plenty).

■ Notice next (**v.18**), it was because of their **unbelief**

▶ Don't mistake this unbelief for rejection of Christ (thousands of these same people looked on the

serpent on the pole (**Num. 21**)...that is salvation extended to those who would obey...that was a type of Jesus Christ...and were spared from dying...that was a type of eternal life by faith in the power of God to save.

▶ Remember that Aaron, Miriam, Phinehas, and Moses died in the wilderness...obviously not meant by the Lord to be included in the group mentioned in **Heb. 3:17** of our text.

- In **Ex. 25**, God made a covenant with Phinehas that was a covenant of peace because he executed the demand of the law against the fornicators.

▶ Our text is talking about those who made the Lord angry because of failure to believe in the promises He had made to them about keeping them safe, guiding them carefully, and bringing them to the place of rest. In other words, this was unbelief that we would call “not trusting God to take care of them.”

II. See the features of entering into God’s spiritual rest - **Heb 4:9-10** There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

- A spiritual rest does not happen as a result of work, work, work, even though it may be spiritual effort we are doing

- Spiritual rest comes from trusting totally in the work of Christ within us.

- We have already trusted in the work of Christ which redeemed us; what we need to trust in now, and rest in now, is the work He is doing within us

- We DO have a labor to do to get to that place. Let’s see how that goes: **Heb 4:11** Let us **labour therefore to enter into that rest**, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

- ▶ Illustrate: A UPS truck pulls up in front of your house. The man gets out, hauls a small wooden crate out of the back. The crate is solid looking with screws everywhere, made of solid oak, lots of bands on it to keep it together. The man says, “Inside this crate there is a little steel vault sent to you by your best friend. Inside that vault is full of gold bullion bars. But, you have to work to tear that crate apart to get to the vault and the gold.

- ▶ This is an illustration of how we have the gift of the treasures of God within us, but the outer shell is the outer man...that man has to be stripped away before we can expose the gold bullion of God’s treasures.

- **2Cor. 4:7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

- So, you have the crate with the gold inside the vault. But you have to get to it yourself.

- ▶ Then, the UPS guy says, “Oh, and by the way, your friend sent along this screwdriver and this pry bar as tools for you to use.” This part is **Heb 4:12-13** For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

- You get ready to start getting the crate open and you notice a note on it from your best friend which says, “Call me and I will give you some tips on how to get the crate open easily.” This part is **Heb 4:16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

III. Read **Heb 3:12** - Take heed, **brethren**, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief**, in **departing from the living God**.

- Notice that our personal proof of enduring faith, and our personal proof that we have saving faith lies in whether or not we continue to trust in God...we do not go away from Him and return to the very

life we had before we made a profession of faith.

▶ This is not just a call for us to watch one another necessarily, but fits better as a call for us to watch our own selves and look for the evil heart and the departing.

• I've got this kind of sixth sense that tells me when I am going to catch something like a cold or virus. It's a subtle warning I feel in my head...you could call it a "misery alarm." I usually take heed to that and do something about staving off such a cold or virus before it gets here.

■ **Heb 3:13** But **exhort one another daily**, while it is called To day; lest any of you be **hardened through the deceitfulness of sin**.

▶ This is an exhortation for us to encourage one another and watch out for one another lest the deceitfulness of sin sneak up on one of us.

• Many soldiers in enemy territory in wars across this planet have spent nights in enemy territory sleeping sitting up with their backs against the back of a fellow soldier...so that they could be ready to address the enemy from any direction.

■ **Heb 3:14** For we are **made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end**;

▶ Aaron deviated when he helped make that golden calf

▶ Miriam deviated when she rebelled against Moses

▶ Moses deviated when he struck the rock

▶ But, above all, they continued to trust God to lead them

▶ Some, however, wanted to go back to Egypt..and would have if they could have found their way. Their hearts were IN Egypt.

■ For those who have faith, we may deviate, we may wander, but we don't forget who is able to preserve us. And when it's all over, we had better know that it is Him we have our confidence in to preserve us everlastingly.