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Hebrews 4

A Sabbath-Rest for God's People

([Genesis 2:1-3](#); [Exodus 16:22-36](#))

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.

This chapter may take some time as there are many nuances contained herein.

First the verse starts out by telling the Hebrews that they should “fear”. Failure to “fear” in this verse may result in a person coming short of the promise.

Let’s start with “fear”. What does it mean?

The Greek is:

Transliteration: phobeó

Phonetic Spelling: (fob-eh'-o)

Definition: to put to flight, to terrify, frighten

Usage: I fear, dread, reverence, am afraid, terrified.

It is where we get the English word “phobia”.

1

: exaggerated fear of
acrophobia

2

: intolerance or aversion for
photophobia

The idea is to not want to have any part of something because we do not like what is about to happen.

In this verse the fear is not being able to have or partake of a promise. In otherwards the notion is that you would hate to not be able to enjoy something that was promised to you. You are afraid of missing out.

The “promise” was to enter “God’s rest”.

What is God’s rest? To answer that we need to go Genesis where God Himself initiated the idea of “Rest”.

Genesis 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

Greek:

Transliteration: shabath

Definition: to cease, desist, rest

The key idea in this “rest” is to stop or end a project. In this case the project was completed, so when it was complete, meaning

nothing more to be done God stopped, ceased, desisted; there was nothing left to do. The Creator had created what He wanted to create. The idea of resting or stopping after the completion of something was the idea that God gave man to accomplish a physical reality and a spiritual reality.

The physical reality was that man and animals were to work 6 days a week and rest one full day so they could continue their labors again the next day after their rest day. With God He had completed His Work, for us our work continues on the upcoming week. That is central to the idea that God completed His, we are continually working, but in God's economy working to do what? Man-kind if religious by nature is constantly working to please God, much like the Jews who constantly try to fulfill the law even today. Working, working, working, never completing. That is physically trying to please God.

The spiritual reality was challenging for man to understand then as it is today. The spiritual rest is one in which a Believer enters the Rest that Jesus created on the Cross. Jesus completed the requirements of the law of redemption, by Himself for all mankind. Man could finally rest from trying to please God through obedience to the Law. It had never worked and never would work

because we are flawed and sinful people. That was the purpose of the Law to show us how far short we fall from God's Glory.

Man since the fall has tried, worked, endeavored to find peace and communion with God through the works of the law. Always working never finding completeness or fulfillment until the Cross.

The promise of entering His rest came to man finally at the Cross through the Blood of Christ. Man was redeemed, saved, justified before God with the ultimate Sacrifice, Jesus the Messiah.

In the first verse the fear the author had was that these Hebrew believers (small b) may not grasp the nature of Grace and fall back into works causing them to come up short of the promise of God's Rest.

2For 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*.

The author without putting a name to "them" identifies two types of people. Both having the "gospel" preached to them but with two different outcomes. The "us" in this verse is from the author's viewpoint (God's viewpoint) the us are "BELIEVERS". The them are those that heard the word of God, perhaps mentally assented but never allowed it to move to their hearts. "Them" were still unsaved because the transport mechanism from mental assent or

knowledge housed in the brain to the heart is FAITH. They had no FAITH mixed with their brain knowledge to move the Truth by FAITH to the heart. They were unsaved and were leaning back to the Law.

3For 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.

Those with FAITH do BELIEVE in the Power of Christ and the Blood He shed on the Cross to Salvation. This BELIEF is unquestioning, not based on reason but on FAITH. So, the “we” in this verse are believers that have entered into God’s Rest that He promised, and Jesus delivered on the Cross.

God says, “I have sworn in my wrath”. That seems odd that God would encase this promise of “rest” inside His Wrath.

The Greek term for Wrath is:

Transliteration: orgé

Phonetic Spelling: (or-gay')

Definition: impulse, wrath

Usage: anger, wrath, passion; punishment, vengeance.

We are used to wrath exploding on whom ever our wrath is directed. God’s Wrath under closer scrutiny is very different. First of all, His Wrath is a Righteous Wrath where ours is usually not.

God's Wrath is built on "passion" for the Truth. God establishes the Truth because He is the Truth. Jesus is declared in John;

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

God had established this "Rest" at creation. He said so!

Genesis 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

God established His Rest at the creation of the earth and universe. It was meant for Adam and Eve and their posterity, but something went wrong. Sin! It removed mankind's natural state of being with God in His Rest.

4 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. 5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

The two issues here are Rest or Unrest and Belief and Unbelief. Both are symbiotic; if you are a Believer, you have Rest, God's Rest. If you are an unbeliever, you have no rest. Some of these

Hebrews that the author is speaking to were apparently caught in this precarious place of unrest and unbelief.

There is an apt saying that goes. "Know God, Know Peace. No God, No Peace." That sums up the problem here.

Jesus told us that there is only one way to the Father!

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

If you want the Peace of God, the Rest that God offers you can only get there through the Son.

7Again, 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.

David came 5 centuries after Moses and millenniums or 2 thousand years after creation and God declaring His Rest. God uses this never-ending term "today". He was not speaking of today as the day when He spoke to David, God is speaking of an ever-renewing opportunity to come to Salvation; "today". Tomorrow when it arrives will be "today". The offer from God is open ended until He determines that whatever day "Today" is the last "today". Until then there is always the opportunity to be saved. The problem is we as humans never know when our last "today" is. So

2 Corinthians 6: 1We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

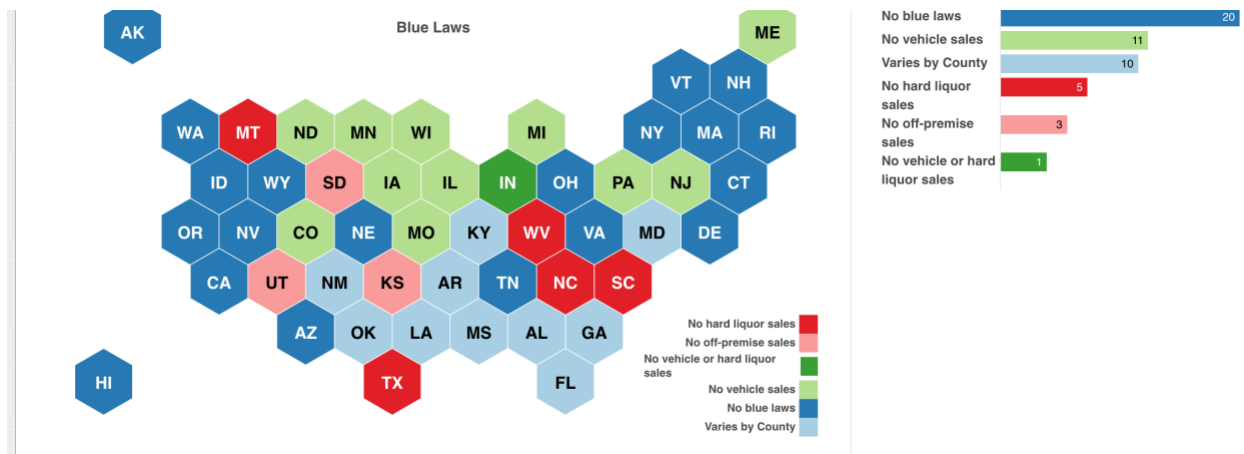
2(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

Not tomorrow, because you don't know if you have another tomorrow.

8For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. 9There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his. 11Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

It sounds like two different things here: rest and labor. God uses the natural to give us a glimpse of the spiritual. In this case we have a 7-day week, six days of which are for work (labor) and a seventh day for rest in the manner that God described and demonstrated. Let's separate the physical from the spiritual again. The physical addresses the need for the human body to recuperate from physical exercise in whatever form it comes. It is the way God made us. America as a whole used to honor this idea with most business closed on Sundays, some of that was codified requiring stores to remain closed. They are called "blue laws" still exist today at various levels. There are 20 states that have abandoned all so called blue laws. Of the 20, 15 are what we consider "blue states" in other words liberal controlled states.

Montana is one of 5 states that prohibits the sale of hard liquor statewide on Sunday. Other types of alcohol can still be purchased on Sundays.



God's Word is Living and Active

12For 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.

This verse gives us a clear reference to how important the heart is in the matter of FAITH and BELIEF. God does not say the Word cuts to the brain, but to the heart. His Word can rightly divide from the things of the flesh from the spirit. A Believer should be driving by the Spirit from the heart not from intellect of the mind.

Remember who the Word is? It is Christ the Lord

Romans 10: 17So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

*John 1: **1**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*John 1: **14**And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

13Neither 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.

So much for hiding our sin in the dark, or when alone, it is all bare before the Lord Jesus Christ God the Son. All humanity has to deal with God, does not matter whether or not you believe in Him, He is God and will judge all. "With whom we have to do."

Jesus the Great High Priest

14Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

Back to the law for a minute to understand what the author was trying to get across to these Hebrews. A High Priest would not mean much to a gentile but to a Jew they would know that the High Priest was the only one allowed to enter the Holy of Holies once a year to sprinkle the blood of a ram on the Arc of the Covenant for the sins of Israel's people. The author is describing Christ now fulfilling that role at the right hand of God, in His presence continually, pleading His Blood over the sins of mankind before the Father God. In that we, they needed to hold fast to

their profession of FAITH and BELIEF in the Cleansing Power of the Blood of the Lamb Jesus.

15For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

The flesh is the flesh and is tempted by evil. The benefit Jesus had was that He was not born of the full human process that would allow the sin nature to be inherit in Him. He was born with a live Spirit and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Non-the-less His flesh was tempted as all men and women are tempted. He received the extraordinary call of temptation from Satan himself and held strong in the Word. He Jesus did not sin.

16Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.