

Finishing Well

Lesson #7 Hebrews: Warning #2 Danger Of Doubting March 3, 2021
The Danger of Disobedience & Not Entering Into Rest

Hebrews: The Supremacy of Jesus Christ

- Written to Hebrew believers who had trusted Jesus Christ for their salvation.
- Danger in returning to the Temple and Jewish religion to escape increasing persecution

Hebrews' 5 warnings are a unit which build upon one another and intensify until warning #5.

Warning #1: Danger Of Drifting > Because of Neglect > Leads to

Warning #2: Doubting and Disbelieving God's Word > develop hardness of heart

Heb. 3:7- 4:16 God Is Greater In The Rest He Gives

- Uses an example from the Old Testament concerning loss of inheritance.

Ex. 12:2-3,6-7 [note: God's instructions in Egypt] This month [Nisan] shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

- [Originally called Aviv or Abib = Barley is ripe]

³ Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the 10th day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And ye shall keep it up until the 14th day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.⁷ And they shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

- The picture of THE DAY when a man enters into PEACE WITH GOD, becomes reconciled on God's terms and finds salvation. Day of Redemption.

Notice God's instructions regarding how to celebrate Passover.

Ex. 12:11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's Passover.

- The day the blood was applied, they were to be equipped for a journey.
- This day was to be the beginning of a journey to the Promised Land - inheritance.
- From this day, they could never be the same again. Embark on the journey.

Ex. 13:3 Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place...

Ex. 13:5 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites...which He sware unto thy father to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service [Passover] in this month.

- This was a day to be remembered, but in a land to be possessed.
- God brought them out to bring them into their Promised Land, Canaan.

Note: God allowed them to celebrate the Passover only ONE time in the wilderness. 2nd year.

- Num. 9:1 The LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the 1st month of the 2nd year after they came out of Egypt, saying, Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at the appointed season.

The Exodus generation of Israelites, who came out of Egypt, [bondage and slavery]

- were a redeemed people delivered by the power of God

Ex. 14:31 And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

Ex. 15:13 Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

- who saw the mighty power of God in their midst [cf. Ex 19].
- They were redeemed by the blood of the Passover lamb, delivered out of Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, saw Pharaoh's army drown, fed manna from heaven daily, and witnessed the goodness of the land of Canaan promised to them by God.
- Hence, they were witnesses of the goodness and glory of their Almighty God.
- Failed to heed God's instruction: Enter & Claim

God's Purpose: Do not remain either in Egypt or in the wilderness.

His desire was that the people enter their glorious inheritance in the land of Canaan.

The Possession or Ownership of the land of Canaan was an inheritance promised for obedience.

- Reward for faithfulness

But when Israel got to the border of their inheritance, they delayed because they doubted the promise of God. [Started with drifting from what God promised.]

- They took their 1st wavering step of doubt when they asked Moses to send in spies and search out the land before they agreed to engage the enemy in battle. [Deut. 1:22]
- The spies traveled 500 miles in 40 days but they discovered nothing that God had not already told them.
- [Num. 13–14] "We are not able" wept the ten spies and the people. "We are able with God's help!" said Moses, Joshua, and Caleb.
- Because the people went backward in unbelief instead of forward by faith, they missed their inheritance [1st generation] and died in the wilderness.

Note: Israel did not lose their status as a redeemed people.

- God would NOT ALLOW them to return to Egypt, bondage and slavery.
- Nevertheless, they LOST the blessing of their inheritance in the Promised Land.

It was the new generation that possessed the land and entered into their rest.

Note: NOW Israel had to cross the Jordan River by faith [a picture of the believer as he dies to self and the world, Rom. 6] and claim the inheritance by faith.

- They had to "step out by faith" [Josh. 1:3] and claim the land for themselves, just as believers today must do.

Canaan represents our spiritual inheritance [abundant life] in Christ [Eph. 1:3, 11, 15-23].

Question: What do the wilderness wanderings represent? The experiences of believers who:

- will not claim their spiritual inheritance in Christ,
- who doubt God's Word and live in restless unbelief.
- God is with them, as He was with Israel, but they do not enjoy the fullness of God's blessing. They are "out of Egypt" but they are not yet "in Canaan."

Hebrews 3:7-11 [Ps.95 7b-11] Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost says, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:
⁹ When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.
¹⁰ Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. ¹¹ So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into My Rest.

The Land Of God's Rest:

Deut. 12:9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.

Joshua 1:10-15...to go in to possess the LAND which the LORD your God is giving you to possess...The LORD your God is giving you REST and is giving you this LAND.

Key Word: REST Heb. 3:11, 18; 4:1, 3-5, 8-11 [10x in Heb. 3 & 4 > only in these 2 chapters]

Two different "rests" found in Old Testament history:

1. God's Sabbath rest, when He ceased from His creation activities Gen. 2:2; Heb. 4:4
2. Israel's rest in Canaan [# 2663 katapausis] Deut. 12:9; Josh. 21:43-45; Heb. 3:11

Heb. 3:11 So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into MY REST [#2663 katapausis]

- Rest in OT the rest attained by the settlement in Canaan, resting, rest, dwelling, habitation.

Note: Writer saw in these "rests" illustrations of the spiritual experiences of believers today.

- Sabbath rest is a picture of our rest in Christ through salvation Heb. 4:3; Matt. 11:28
 - God's Sabbath rest Salvation rest Heaven
- Israel's Canaan rest *Submission rest* Victory in Christ

Submission Rest: a "sanctification rest," a rest from striving as Christians in the power of the flesh, in a futile effort to attain godliness.

- Romans 7 describes a Christian trying to live up to God's standards in the power of the flesh and failing badly. [Christian living in the wilderness]
- Romans 8 is the solution. The Christian is to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that raised the dead body of Jesus from the grave. By the working of His Spirit in us, we are able, to some degree, to live a godly life [Romans 8:1-17].
 - This is resting in Him or abiding in Him [John 15:1-14]. The Key to Fruitfulness.

Consider: Even in the OT, the issue is not man's works, but man's faith in God to work.

- Rest is not the absence of activity or work.
- It is the absence of trust in one's own abilities and strength. Resting in God's ability.

A third rest found in Heb. 4:9 There remaineth therefore a REST to the people of God.

- The future rest when all believers will enjoy being with God.
- This word for REST is the Greek word sabbatismos — "a keeping of a Sabbath."
 - Only place in NT

Result: Did not enter Canaan; Promised Land; Milk & Honey; Inheritance; Rest

- Generation saved out of Egypt by God's grace & power never entered into God's promise land.

Point: A redeemed people may lose blessings which depend on continuing faith to enjoy. It is not enough to be saved by faith. "The just shall live by faith."

Heb. 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing [standing off from a former belief] from the living God.

- Departing = apostasy only place used in Hebrews

Question: Does it mean abandoning one's faith and being condemned forever?

not fit this context. Israel departed from the living God by refusing God's will for their lives and stubbornly wanting to go their own way back to Egypt.

God did not permit them to return to Egypt. Rather, He disciplined them in the wilderness. He did not allow His people to return to bondage.

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

- Exhort - come alongside to help others - especially if you see another believer drifting.
- Deceitfulness of Sin leads us to appetites that we should not have - cravings, goals, ambitions. These compete with our affection for Christ.

Heb. 3:14-15 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

¹⁵ While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

- The penalty for hardening your heart can be seen in the example of the wilderness wanderings - a 40 year spiritual detour.
- "Hardened" = callused = the result of repeated irritations.

Failing to respond to the Spirit's wooing always produces hardening. It is the end product of an evil heart [cf. 3:12]. The end result is no longer any sensitivity to the wooing of the Spirit.

Heb. 3:17-19 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those that believed not? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Unbelief about what?

- God could give them victory IN THE LAND.
- God could give them victory over the enemies.
- God would be faithful to keep and fulfill His promises.

They REFUSED to continue a Life of Faith and enter their inheritance.

The Danger: We will also defect from the life of faith.

Important Observation: [Num. 14:11-35]

- The entire 1st generation [except Joshua & Caleb] were not allowed to POSSESS the land of Canaan - their inheritance. However, God assured Moses that their sins are forgiven.

Num. 14:19-23 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

²⁰ And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word: But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

²² Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;
²³ Surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:

- There are consequences for their constant grumbling and rebellion, but their sins were forgiven.
- Be very cautious about jumping to the conclusion that "failure to enter the land" is the equivalent of "failing to enter heaven." Canaan is not heaven - it was their physical inheritance they would possess and experience victory over their enemies.
- However, there were temporal consequences for the nation's sin, but God assured Moses their sin was forgiven.
- Moses, like the Israelites, did not believe God and disobeyed His Word.

Num. 20:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

- Like the Israelites, Moses and Aaron were not allowed to enter in the rest of possessing the inheritance - the land of Canaan.
- Surely, we cannot conclude from Moses' failure to enter this rest or inheritance that Moses would not go to heaven when he died.

Consider: True believers are capable of unbelief and disobedience.

Ex. 13:9 And it [Passover] shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.

- Passover is to represent that your redemption has changed:
 - The things you do
 - The things you think
 - The things you say

Rom. 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

What The Israelites Did In The Wilderness > God's Instructions

Deut. 12:1 These are the statutes & judgments, which ye shall observe TO DO in the land which the LORD GOD of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that you live upon the earth.

- Enjoy the land and possess it all the days they are on the earth.

Deut. 12:7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

- All your activity will be bathed in delight and joy.

Deut. 12:8 Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.

- Every man was doing what was right in his own eyes in the wilderness.
 - No sense of the sovereignty of God
 - A man in the wilderness, even though prompted by sincere motives, is subject to certain patterns of conduct to which he seeks to conform.
 - His Christian activity and walk tend to be drudgery rather than the sheer joy that God purposed for His redeemed people.
 - They were to walk in the power, fulness and energy of God the Holy Spirit.

Deut. 12:9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.

Consider: While you are still doing the things you think are right, you have not entered into rest nor your inheritance.

Heb. 4:10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

- Rest = katapausis = OT rest attained by the settlement in Canaan: resting, rest, dwelling, habitation. [Same rest in Heb. 4:1, 3, 5, 10-11 - Different word for rest in Heb. 4:9]

Thomas: You have relinquished the right to do what is right in your own eyes and have submitted yourself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You recognize to be valid only that activity that stems from Jesus Christ. This is true spiritual rest.

Consider: What have you been DOING since your redemption? Still doing what is right in your own eyes?

- Do you still claim the right to use your leisure time as you please?
- Do you still claim the right to spend your money as you please?
- Do you still claim the right to choose where you will spend your vacation?

Thomas: You do not have that right except in the wilderness.

Your walk is to be under the dictates of the Holy Spirit.

What The Israelites Thought In The Wilderness

Passover: a memorial between their eyes and indicate all their thinking had been changed.

Num. 11:4-8 And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? ⁵ We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: ⁶ But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes. And the manna was as coriander seed... and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil.

Oil in the Bible is a beautiful picture of the Holy Spirit. The daily manna demonstrated constantly, supernaturally, the unrelenting presence of the living God in the midst of His redeemed people. They became BORED with it. They were sick and tired of manna.

- God never intended for them to eat manna for 40 years.
- God had prepared Canaan for them, but they stayed in the wilderness and dreamed of Egypt.

They had been baptized with Moses and raised miraculously by God in a position to begin a new walk that would lead them to the Promised Land These were redeemed people brought out of Egypt and on their way to their inheritance.

BUT their thoughts, ambitions and appetites were fed by the memory of that from which God had redeemed them! Their thought life was dominated by a DEFEATED ENEMY.

Question: What memories did they have of Canaan in the wilderness? None!

- They had only heard sermons about Canaan - the land of milk and honey.
- They only had secondhand talk about Canaan.
- They had no personal, vital, individual experience of Canaan.

Thomas: It was language, but not life.

Truth: If you do not walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, if your life is not completely surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, then all the promises of victory in the Bible and all the promises of power by the Holy Spirit will simply be texts, printed on paper - but impersonal and irrelevant! They had nothing to celebrate in the wilderness!

What The Israelites Said In The Wilderness

Ex. 13:9 And it [Passover] shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.

Num. 16:3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

- In their own estimation, they were all holy.
- They resented every suggestion from Moses and Aaron that they were missing God's purpose for their lives - on the ground they were holy enough.

The Daily Manna In The Wilderness

Ex. 16:15 And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they did not know what it was.

And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

- God's gift to a redeemed people. Represents the gift of God's Holy Spirit.

Num. 11:8 The taste of the manna was "as the taste of fresh oil."

Ex. 16:31 The taste of it was like wafers made with honey. Oil & honey

Twofold taste of the manna in the Wilderness:

1. Taste of Oil = speaks of His witness to the presence of the Living God in man's spirit after redemption.
2. Taste of Honey = speaks of His constant incentive to those in the wilderness to move on and possess the land. Be filled with the Spirit.

Consider: The role played by the manna in the wilderness was not representative of His full, gracious ministry. It was but a foretaste of better things to come.

- Not just a thin, dry wafer, but a land flowing with milk and honey.
- There is just enough substance in a wafer to stimulate your "salivary juices" and make you cry for more.

The Holy Spirit reminded them of a day to be remembered in a land to be possessed.

Recall: The more they gathered the manna, the more they got sick of it and complained.

Num. 11:6 But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.

Consider: Our daily Bible reading is designed to allow the Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth so that you may increasingly "become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself. [Eph. 3:19] It is designed to show you the wealth and heritage that is yours in Christ.

- If you do not respond to the Holy Spirit and the incentive He gives you through His Word to holiness of life;
- If you are not enticed by the taste of the honey,
- Then the wafer will remain stubbornly thin, dry and uninteresting.

The daily manna was a source of discomfort to some, but it was a source of endless comfort to others. Caleb & Joshua never ceased to believe that the God who brought them out was the same God who would take them in. Imagine living among the wickedness, idolatry, grumbling and unbelief of the Israelites. Did Caleb & Joshua wait for the dawn to see if God had left them? At the first hint of daylight, they would scan the ground.

There it was, the manna from God. God had not left them. The manna was His witness!

Recall: While Moses was away, Aaron yielded to the pressure of the people. Half-naked in their shame, they worshiped the golden calf. What despair must have filled the hearts of the faithful few! Yet, the next morning, "mingled with the shattered fragments of those tablets of stone, which had been written upon with the finger of God ---there was the daily manna on the ground!

- Amazing patience and longsuffering of God; the love that will not let me go

Rom. 5:20b Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

Heb. 13:5c God has said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Consider: When every hope is dashed, when every holy ambition written with the finger of God Himself upon your heart is shattered, hope can rise again and grace can chase away the gloom...there is manna on the ground.

Hag. 2:5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

While God was feeding His people in the wilderness, He let them hunger.

Deut. 8:2-3 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

- For 40 years they were never satisfied. The manna was given to sustain life, but not to satisfy. God never intended them to be satisfied in the wilderness.
- You will not change in the wilderness.
- The novelty of your activity and service will eventually lead to burn out.
- Ignoring what you NEED, you will begin to clamor for what you WANT.
- Be careful, God may give you what you WANT.

Ps. 106:13-15 They soon forgot His works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

Thomas: God refuses to satisfy you in the wilderness when He has spread the table with good things in Canaan, your abundant life.

"Let Us" Command Following The Warning: Enter His Rest

Heb. 4:1 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.

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