"DON'T MISS GOD'S ETERNAL REST!"

Hebrews 4:1-13
3-28-2021



Introduction: Verse 1

***Don't miss out on God's eternal Rest!**

I. You will miss God's eternal Rest
if you don't have the <u>right mixture</u> of <u>hearing</u> plus <u>believing</u>
(v. 2)

II. You will miss God's eternal Rest
although He has already <u>finished the work</u> for your salvation, if you don't <u>believe</u>
(v. 3-15)

III. You will miss God's eternal Rest
if you gamble with tomorrow, when you should believe <u>TODAY</u>! (v. 6-11)

IV. You will miss God's eternal Rest
if you don't let God show you <u>the true condition</u> of <u>your heart</u> (v. 12-13)

A. God's Word <u>reveals</u> all (v. 12)

B. God's Eyes <u>see</u> all (v. 13)

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Things we miss:

--The subway train or the bus
--the flight out of JFK
--the big sale
--the doctor's appointment
--some spectacular sight (a shooting star, an eclipse, the President coming through town, etc.)

etc.

To miss such things is not the end of the world, but to miss Heaven (God's place of eternal rest) is the worst tragedy.

V. 1

"Therefore" - God now draws a personal application to the end of chapter 3. Having presented Israel (of the Exodus) as an example of hard-hearted unbelief (3:7-18) and having shown how they did not enter God's promised land because of unbelief (v. 19), he now says, *"The same applies to YOU!"* (4:1).

Just as their unbelief barred them from God's place of temporal rest, so your unbelief will fence you off from God's eternal rest.

Nothing is as delightful as rest after a weary day. To lay your head on a soft pillow and cuddle up in a comfortable position with crisp sheets lightly covering you . . . and to relax every muscle and doze off into "La-La Land."

"His Rest" - God's promised, eternal place of bliss.

This life may be filled with turmoil, but God promises a future rest.
This life may be filled with work, sweat, tears, but God promises a future rest.
This life may be filled with war and trouble, but God promises a future rest.
This life may be filled with trials and tribulations, but God promises a future rest.
This life may be filled with heartache and pain, but God promises a future rest.

"Fear" - Many don't trust God's promises because they don't see their need to do so. There is no fear of God in most people. To fear God is the first step to taking His promises seriously. *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."* (Prov. 9:10).
"Come short" - (*hustereo*/hysterectomy) - the word means to miss out on something; to be without; to lose out on something.

Multitudes of humanity will miss Heaven by a mere 18 inches (that's the average distance from a man's brain to his heart). Some understand with their head, but don't believe in their heart (EX: Judas; Simon - Acts 8).

***Don't miss out on God's eternal Rest!**

I. You will miss God's eternal Rest if you don't have the <u>right mixture</u> of <u>hearing</u> plus <u>believing</u> (v. 2)

***"Gospel"* =** good news

God's good news to the Israelites was that they could enter His rest if they believed His promises. The same Good News applies today!

"The Word preached did not profit" - These are zero benefits to coming to church and hearing the Word preached, if you do not intend to trust the truth God delivers to you from His Word.

<u>Hearing</u> the Gospel is essential (Rom. 10:14), but it is not enough.

Hell will be full of people who knew the truth (Mt. 7:22-23).

There is *"no rest"* for the hearers only!

Dreadful consequences fall on the life of one who hears but doesn't heed (Mt. 7:26). Don't be *"hearers only, deceiving your own selves"* (Ja. 1:22).

Knowing the truth does not profit if not believed; it simply heightens the guilt and condemnation of the one who knew it yet failed to respond (*"To whomsoever much is given. . . much shall be required"*; cp. Ja. 3:1).

"If you run a red light and a policeman pulls you over and starts to give you a ticket, you do not show him your copy of the state driving laws as your defense. You do not try to establish your innocence by telling him you have read the booklet many times and know most of the regulations by heart. Far from making you innocent, this would make you all the more responsible for living up to the laws and all the more guilty for breaking them. Knowing the law is an advantage only if we obey it. "For indeed circumcision is of value, if you practice the Law," Paul says, "but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision" (Rom. 2:25)." (MacArthur, p. 100)

God's equation for spiritual profit is. . .
Listening & Believing = Benefit
Knowing & Trusting = Blessing
Hearing & Heeding = Heaven

II. You will miss God's eternal Rest
although He has already finished the work for your salvation, if you don't believe (v. 3-15)

V. 3a
In every dispensation God's requirement has remained the same for salvation:
Belief
While believers will certainly rest, unbelievers will certainly experience God's wrath.
What God promises, He performs both positively and negatively.
Positively, we who believe will rest. And negatively, those who do not believe, will not.

"Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world" - No unbeliever will benefit from God's provision even though that provision may have been provided for them from the foundation of the world.

The kingdom was provided before the foundation of the world. Matt. 25:34 - *"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

Christ was *"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"* (Rev. 13:8).
He was scheduled to die and shed His blood before the foundation of the world (I Pet. 1:20).
In God's mind, the world of Christ at Calvary's cross was so guaranteed to occur, that He states it as already having occurred (a "done deal").

Even though Christ has already paid the price for everyone's sins, no unbeliever will benefit in the payment that has been made on their behalf (II Peter 2:1 - *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction."*).

V. 4
"Seventh day" - Incidentally, the Sabbath (Saturday Rest) was a foreshadowing of the Rest to come in Christ (Col. 2:16-17). The New Testament believer is under no obligation to keep the Sabbath, which was a sign between Israel and God (Exod. 31:12-17). However, you are wise to rest one in seven (this principle still applies).

A future rest was provided by God in the past.

Creation / Rest

God worked six days and rested on the seventh and has been resting (ceasing from creative activity) ever since. You can enter into His rest, if you trust the work He did for you from the foundation of the world.

V. 5
"My rest" - The rest God promises is His rest; the rest He provides because of His finished work.

III. You will miss God's eternal Rest if you gamble with tomorrow, when you should believe <u>TODAY</u>! (v. 6-11)

V. 6

Although others rejected God's invitation, the invitation still stands today; God's door to rest still remains open for you to enter.

Christ is that *"door"* (Jn. 10:9).

The word translated *"unbelief"* means to be <u>unpersuaded</u> of something.

The song "Almost Persuaded" is the saddest song in our hymnbook.

V. 7

By appealing to ***"David"*** (in Ps. 95:7), God is showing that His promise of rest was <u>not</u> limited to the Old Testament Israelites who exited Egypt. But the invitation is still open <u>today</u>.

"After so long a time" - The time difference between God's invitation for Israel of the exodus to enter His rest, and David's quote in Ps. 95:7-11 was a long time. That span of time proves that the call to enter rest was <u>not</u> limited to the wilderness wanderers, but still applies <u>today</u>!

God does not promise you a "tomorrow" on earth; He calls for you to heed His voice <u>today</u>!

When God repeats something, He does so for emphasis. Note the word "Today" in 3:7, 13, 15, and 4:7.

II Cor. 6:2 - *"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."*

V. 8

"Jesus" - not Jesus Christ, but the man whose name was "Jesus" in the Old Testament - namely, Joshua. Jesus (*iesous)* is the Greek form of the Hebrew word *Yashua* (Joshua).

If Joshua gave Israel the only "Rest" God had intended, David would not have spoken of another day of Rest. Canaan's rest was not the only rest God had in mind. In fact, Canaan's rest is sort of a type or foreshadowing of the ultimate rest God had planned for the future.

"Many cults promise their followers happiness, wealth, and health in this life. The bible does not. The Rest God promises is spiritual, not physical (macArthur, p. 104) and eternal not temporal.

V. 9

The ultimate Rest awaits God's people (God's people are those who believe--whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free!)

V. 10

In Heaven, the burdens of life will be over. WE will cease from the travail of this life; from work as we know it, just as God has ceased from His work at Creation and at Calvary.

Believe NOW! and you will rest later! Trust christ as your investment for Heaven now, and you will enjoy the benefits in your future.

V. 11

"Labour" - (*spoudazo)* a different word than the word "works" (*ergon*) in verse 10. God is not teaching a works salvation. He is not saying work to enter His rest; but rather: Be earnest to enter His rest. Be eager about God's future rest. This word describes the attitude not the action of one who would enter God's rest.

The need for God's rest is urgent.

Entering tomorrow's rest, depends on today's faith.

Don't be like the Israelites, who changed their tune too late. At first they said, No, we can't go in, and later they said, We have changed our minds. (Num. 14:40-45).

Once you die, it is too late to change your mind about Christ and His rest.

IV. You will miss God's eternal Rest if you don't let God show you the true condition of your heart (v. 12-13)

A. God's Word reveals all (v. 12)

"The Word" - *logos* - God's written revelation to man -- the Bible.

"Quick" - It's alive (not a dead Book)

"Powerful" - It's energetic (not weak and inoperative)

"Sharper" - It cuts cleaner, quicker, and deeper than any sword

"Piercing" - It penetrates to the very core of a man's being

"Soul & Spirit" - man is a 3 part being (body, soul, and spirit - cp. I Thes. 5:23).

Soul and spirit are two invisible, immaterial aspects of man. Man's "soul" is that invisible aspect of man which relates to life (living in the natural realm) and his "spirit" is his invisible aspect which relates to God (communing in the spiritual realm).

"Joints and marrow" - an expression to show the penetrating power of the Bible to go to the very inner parts of man's being.

"Discerner" - a critic or judge

The Bible accurately critiques man's inner ***"thoughts"*** (judgments; opinions) and ***"intents"*** (attitudes, motives) of the heart.

The Bible tells it like it is (it pulls no punches; beats around no bushes; reveals men --even the greatest of them-- to be sinners in need of the grace of God).

In context, what verse 12 is saying is this: "Let God's Word show you the true condition of your heart." Do you believe or disbelieve? Is your heart one of faith or unbelief? SEE: 3:12 - *"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."*

B. God's Eyes <u>see</u> all (v. 13)

"Manifest" - No one can conceal or hide anything from God.

"Naked" - without a covering

"Opened" - exposed, vulnerable

"With whom we have to do" - All of us will give an account of himself to God.

You may successfully hide the true you from man, but you cannot hide from the one you must one day reckon with!

One day all masks will be removed and all disguises ripped off.

Unmask yourself today, so God doesn't have to in your future!

Conclusion:

We don't believe,

--When we hear but don't heed (v. 2)
--When we know but don't trust (v. 3)
--When we wait, but don't respond (v. 4-10)
--When we conceal but don't let God reveal (v. 11-13)

One word disqualifies you from God's rest. If this one word is true of your life, you will forever forfeit God's rest-- that one word is "unbelief".

Are you at rest in your spirit?

Are you free from fear, anxiety, and guilt? Or are you tossed to and fro, running from one philosophy to another, one religion to another, one lifestyle to another in search for rest?

No rest for the wicked (SEE: Rev. 14:9-13)

God's rest is still available today no matter who you are or what you have done.

"In his younger manhood Mel Trotter was as debauched as can be imagined. His children were starving because he spent his money on alcohol. His little girl died of malnutrition when she was about four. The neighbors gave enough money to buy her some new clothes and a casket to be buried in. In the middle of the night Trotter broke into the mortuary, took the clothes off his dead child, and exchanged them for a drink. Not long afterward, however, Jesus Christ reached down and changed his life, and he became one of the greatest preachers America has ever known." (MacArthur, p. 99).

Rest in God's promise of free grace in Christ today!

Sing Hymn: "Search Me O God."