

WARNINGS

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Hebrews 3:7-19; 4:1-13

LESSON 434 **Senior Course**

MEMORY VERSE: "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" (Hebrews 4:12).

[BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

Hebrews 3:7-19

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

8 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 alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

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

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

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

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

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

18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

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

Hebrews 4:1-13

[Bible References:](#)

[Notes:](#)

Israel's Murmurings

WE know of the murmurings of the Children of Israel during their wanderings. Their first uprising was at the border of the Red Sea where they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" (Exodus 14:11). They said that to Moses, but God heard it. Nevertheless God brought them through the Red Sea with a mighty hand.

That, incidentally, was one of the outstanding experiences in Israel to which the writer, the psalmists, and the prophets looked as being one of the great deliverances in their history. But they were scarcely out of sight of that great miracle which God wrought in leading them through upon dry ground when they came out into the desert place and murmured for bread.

God at that time performed another miracle and sent them manna from Heaven, which rained down daily for a period of 40 years. God's care over them in providing manna never ceased until the Israelites crossed over Jordan and went into the Promised Land, where they had food. So there were two great miracles wrought, the latter one a daily miracle, a constant reminder of God's providential care over them, of His miraculous provision for them.

Shortly after this, they were out in the desert where they had no water, and again they murmured, and again the Lord came to their rescue and commanded Moses to speak to the rock, and water came forth. Then they came up to Mount Sinai; and while Moses was up in the mount for a period of 40 days they said, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him" (Exodus 32:1).

"But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

"Now these things were our examples, . . ." (I Corinthians 10:5, 6).

We have a splendid example of the New Testament writers' using the historical incidents and the successes and failures of God's people as admonitions, examples, inspirational warnings for you and me today.

Backsliding

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

That word "departing" from God is the word from which we get "apostasy," to "fall away." It means a backsliding from God to the extent that it becomes chronic, fixed, unchangeable. When a man is in that state he has a reprobate mind. The Word of God teaches that it is possible for those who once had the light and had known the truth of God's Word, to reach such a state.

We have a comment by a very devout man living in Wesley's time upon this particular point, which we want to read.

"These words [extending from the 7th verse to the end of the

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.

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*.

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.

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:

7 Again, 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.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 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.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

12 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

chapter] strongly imply, as indeed does the whole of the Epistle, the possibility of falling from the grace of God and perishing everlastingly. And without this supposition these words and all such like, which makes more than two thirds of the divine revelation, would have neither sense nor meaning. What contemptible quibbling have men used to maintain a false and dangerous tenet against the whole tenor of God's Word. Angels fell, Adam fell, Solomon fell, and multitudes of believers have fallen; and for all we know, arose no more. And yet we are told we cannot finally lose the benefits of our conversion. Satan preached this doctrine to our first parents; they believed him, sinned and fell and brought a whole world to ruin."

No other Epistle brings out more definitely than the Book of Hebrews that there is no such thing as unconditional eternal security.

Rest

Now turn to verse 11:

"So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest."

The word "rest" has reference to Canaan. It did not mean that they would be idle when they reached Canaan. There were conquests to be made, but with the completion of their conquests they would enjoy peace and the blessings of the land of Canaan. They had vineyards which they had not planted, olive groves for which they had not laboured. Cities which they had not built were to be theirs. Such was the rest that God had promised for them in the land of Canaan.

There is an earthly rest typical of a heavenly rest that God has provided for His children. That is the theme, which the writer is taking up in this particular place. I do not believe that our heavenly rest is any more an experience of an idle rest than was the experience of the Children of Israel in the land of Canaan. I believe that we are going to work in that Beautiful Land that God has promised for His own. What the nature of it is we do not know. But there is one thing about it, we will have a body: these vile bodies changed into the likeness of the glorified body of our Lord and Saviour. Our present physical bodies could not endure the rapture or the joys of that Land. We will enjoy its blessings just as Israel was to be brought into the Promised Land to enjoy those blessings.

Those blessings are beyond human conception. Paul tells us, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9).

John, on the Isle of Patmos, caught a glimpse of them and it was hard for him to find human language by which they could be described and brought within the range of our finite minds, so great are those blessings.

To Come Short

The Israelites who perished shut themselves out of those blessings voluntarily. It was possible for them to enter in, but when they came up to the border of the land and saw the difficulties and obstacles that confronted them, what little faith they had failed; and they could no longer see the mighty Jehovah with His arm laid bare. All they could see were giants, high walled cities -- obstacles against their entering into the land.

They forgot about the miracles God had wrought, and the result was that they were turned back into the wilderness to wander for 38 years. The Lord swore that they should not go in. The fact that their carcasses fell in the wilderness was not any arbitrary judgment that the Lord sent upon them; it was simply the logical conclusion to the choice they had made.

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.

**"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold
the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto
the end" (Hebrews 3:14).**

Note the conditions for entering in. Not all who start in the race finish it. The all-important thing is to finish that race, then everybody will know that you have started in it.

That word "confidence" means foundation. There is no danger of the Foundation's giving way; The Foundation is sure. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3: 11). We are founded upon that Foundation by the experience, which we have through Him. That Foundation will never give way nor ever weaken; it is sounder than the eternal hills. But there is a danger of slipping from our Foundation. More than one has done that.

"While it is said, To day. . ."

That word "today" means the present time. It was for the Israelites in the day that the Psalmist wrote; it was for the Hebrew Christians in the day that Paul wrote; and it is for you and me in the day in which we live. The Lord recognises all ever-present "today" throughout His Word. It was the same thing which Paul meant when he said, "Now is the day of salvation."

**"And to whom swore he that they should not enter
into his rest, but to them that believed not?"
(Hebrews 3:18).**

Unbelief was at the bottom of all the trouble of the Children of Israel in the wilderness. That is what is at the bottom of the world's trouble today. Unbelief started in the Garden of Eden when Satan said to our forefathers, "Hath God said?" and inserted that question in their minds; and it has been a question in the mind of the unregenerated from that day on to the present day. We have all inherited the nature of our forefathers. From that springs all the sin and iniquity and woe to which this world is heir. Unbelief!

**"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" (Hebrews 4:1).**

The words "come short" are taken from the Greek games, which were held. If any man came short of winning the contest, this term was applied. A man, no matter how little he might have failed, if he came short only by a fraction, was ruled out; he was not a winner. The writer has very appropriately chosen that word because all one has to do is simply to fail -- perhaps very little -- of making the goal, and he has failed.

Causes of Failure

**"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" (Hebrews 4:2).**

That word "mixed" is taken as a figure from the digestive processes. Just as food is taken into the digestive system and there is mixed with the elements that the body furnishes before it can be assimilated, so must the Word of God be properly mixed before it can be assimilated and become part of the soul. That opens up a whole field of thought.

We see here what is necessary in order to profit by the hearing of God's Word. What a difference there can be among people who hear the same Word!

There were four classes of people given in a parable of the sower. The same seed was sown in four instances -- and there was nothing wrong with the seed; and there is nothing wrong with the Word. It was the hearing that was wrong. With some it did not profit at all; with some it profited a little but

soon perished. With others it profited a little more, but owing to the cares and the pleasure of this life, it was choked. Then there was the good soil which profited, some thirty, some sixty and some a hundredfold.

Thus we find it down through the entire course of the history of humanity. Some are profiting by it and some are not. What is the difference? It has not been properly mixed -- just as it was with those Children of Israel in the wilderness. They had spiritual indigestion. The Word that was given has all the essential properties nourishment. It has the vitamins, the calories, the minerals and everything else, so to speak. It is lacking in nothing. The Word of God is perfect.

There is no circumstance in life but has a parallel somewhere in the Word of God. That is one of the great advantages in studying the Old Testament: all the things that the Children of Israel went through find a parallel in a Christian's experience. It is true that in the Old Testament it is more or less from a material standpoint; but for the Christian it takes the same steadfastness, the same faith, the same belief, the same courage, the same purpose to make the goal that it took for these Israelites to enter the land of Canaan, and complete the conquest of it.

We likewise have a conquest before us and a land to take. In order to go through successfully, it is going to require the same virtues in your life and mine that were required in the lives of those Israelites. That is why we find a parallel all through their experiences to the Christian life. The Word of God furnishes all the examples, precepts, commandments, exhortations, encouragements, and inspirations which the Christian needs.

It is necessary for us to have some other faculties than this brain of ours; it is necessary for us to have other powers than our intellectual powers if we are going to study this Word profitably. The study of God's Word has often descended to just an intellectual study. That profits a little -- like bodily exercise; but God has a better exercise than that for us. God wants a spiritual exercise and not simply a mental one. He wants that Word to go deeper than our intellect. God wants us to have faculties so exercised that we will assimilate all the virtues and properties of the Word that it may become a part and parcel of our souls, that we may be built up in this most holy faith and attain unto the full stature of Christ.

Christian Perception

The element with which it must be mixed is faith. The carnal mind, the unchanged heart, cannot receive the things of God because they are spiritually discerned. We have a new faculty imparted to us when we are born again, the Spirit of the living God planted within our hearts -- and with it comes faith. It is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; so it comes from above. All we need to do is to conform to the regulations, which God has stipulated, and meet them. Then God will do the rest. He will see to it that the faculty is imparted.

The Christian has, as it were, a sort of sixth sense imparted to him. We can discern the things of this world through our natural senses, our eyesight, our hearing, our taste, our sense of smell, and our sense of touch; but when it comes to the things of God we are venturing into the realm where our five senses are not sufficient. They will not operate. It is true that through our sight we read the Word of God; but there is something beneath those printed words on that India paper that we need to get hold of. And for that it will require this sixth sense which the Lord imparts to us.

It is marvellous how He fits us to comprehend and digest that Word, that it may become bone of our bone and flesh of our

flesh. That was what Jesus meant when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53). A little later on He explained it more fully by saying, "The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

This truth was prefigured in the Old Testament in the slain lamb. The Israelites were to eat the whole lamb; that lamb had to be digested in order to be bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. That Lamb is the Word of God. In just the same way it becomes bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. The extent to which we are going to profit by the Word will be measured by our faith.

Another peculiar thing is this: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). As the digestive fluids are supplied by the food that is taken into the system, and then those fluids used for the digesting of the rest of the food that we take, so also is the Word of God taken into us and becomes that faith within us that enables us to digest this Word. The two work together. The more we receive of the Word of God the more faith we have; the more faith we have the more we are able to digest that Word and receive it into our being.

Progressive Rest

"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" (Hebrews 4:3).

You notice that word "enter" is in the present. We begin an entry into our rest just as soon as the change is wrought; that peace we experience is a foretaste or earnest of our inheritance. So we are constantly entering into that rest, but it will never be realised in its fullness until in that day when the Lord comes to receive His own.

The matter of salvation is a progressive work increasing and ever enlarging and expanding until we come into the perfect realisation, which God intended us to have.

"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" (Hebrews 4:4).

Now he is going back to the first type of this rest, the rest that God took after He completed the work of creation. Upon that type was built all the Sabbaths of the entire Israelitish religious program, which God gave them. They had the weekly sabbaths; they had the Sabbath of Weeks that was later called Pentecost. They had the monthly Sabbaths every seventh month, which was the Feast of Tabernacles. They had the Sabbath of years: every seventh year was a year of rest in which the land was to lie idle, and in which there was an adjustment of debts, and in which servants could go free out of their master's house if they chose. Then there was the sabbath of seven years -- that is, every 50th year was a year of jubilee. All this sabbath system was established upon this first type which was given in Genesis at the time of creation; and because of that we have a right to draw the conclusion that there will also be a millennial Sabbath.

God has seemed to work by thousand-year periods, which, as stated in the Scriptures, are as a day. We are now living in the latter part of the sixth millennial day, about six thousand years. This is one of the reasons why we believe we are very near that great Millennium which soon is to be ushered in upon this world.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

It is significant that the word "rest" here is an entirely different word from that which he has been using for rest all the way through. The rest, which he mentions there in Canaan is such a rest as perhaps one would undergo when he retires from his labours. But this word means a sabbath. He has introduced here the first type, the sabbath which God established in the beginning. Now he speaks of the sabbath rest because this is a grander and higher and greater rest than anything they experienced in entering into Canaan. This is the eternal rest; that rest is for the people of God.

New Creation Rest

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

That applies, no doubt, to every Christian in general, for he who has entered into his rest has ceased from his own works as God did from His. But since Jesus has gone to Heaven after His work on earth was finished, I believe this applies to Jesus, the forerunner of our faith, as well. As God rested from His labours in the old creation, the Old Testament, so has Jesus Christ rested from His labours in the new creation.

Paul says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," (II Corinthians 5:17), or a "new creation," as we might translate it. We are living in the new creation, not in the old. It is another way of comparing the Old Dispensation with the New; and Christ is the Creator of the new order. He entered into His rest when He arose from the grave on the first day of the week.

There we have an argument for our worshiping on the first day of the week. Under the new creation, under which you and I are now living, Christ, having finished His labours, finished His mission. His last words upon Calvary's Cross were, "It is finished." He entered into His rest when He arose the third day from the grave on the first day of the week. So we have abundant grounds for making our sabbath the Lord's Day.

The Sword of God

"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" (Hebrews 4:12).

You can see the necessity for properly hearing that Word. If we do it, it is going to do the work within us.

"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" (Hebrews 4:13).

In other words, every one will stand before Him some day in the judgment, and there will be nothing hid or covered up; it will all be laid bare. That Word which is quick and powerful and sharper than any twoedged sword will judge us at that time. Jesus said Himself:

"I come not to judge the world, but to save the world.

". . . the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:47, 48).

We can take our choice of hearing that Word now and being judged by it and having it search us out, or of standing in that last day and being judged by it then. That is the thought, which he brings out in the closing of this exhortation.

