

# Rest for the People of God

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Hebrews 3:12-4:11

The Hebrew writer was encouraging his readers to remain faithful in order to receive the promised rest. He would remind them of the example of their forefathers who did not remain faithful. He warned them that they could also fall short of the rest that the Lord had promised. These instructions provide an important lesson for us as well. Let's consider what this passage teaches.

## **Danger of Falling Away (Hebrews 3:12-19)**

- Popular belief among religious people is the “once saved, always saved” doctrine – also called “perseverance of the saints” or “impossibility of apostasy”; contrary to the New Testament (Hebrews 3:12-13); we may not believe “once saved, always saved,” but we could be guilty of living like we do
- We have a responsibility to “encourage one another” (Hebrews 3:13) – this is why the assembly is so important (Hebrews 10:24-25), but this is about more than just that; “day after day,” “Today“
- Remember the failings of the Israelites – they demonstrated a real possibility of falling away; they hardened their hearts, provoked God, sinned, and were disobedient (Hebrews 3:15-18); therefore, God was angry with them for 40 years, their bodies fell in the wilderness, and they lost the promised rest; this demonstrated their “unbelief” (Hebrews 3:19); they may have believed in God, but they did not believe God

## **Let Us Fear (Hebrews 4:1-7)**

- The possibility of falling short of the promised rest should cause us to fear – another fate awaits us if we fall short; discussed later in this letter (Hebrews 10:26-31)
- We have some of the same benefits as the Israelites had – good news preached to us (Hebrews 4:2; cf. Romans 1:16-17); God finishing His work (v. 3; cf. Titus 2:11)
- We will fail to enter His rest because of disobedience (Hebrews 4:6) – only a “few” will enter (Matthew 7:13-14); those who are obedient to God (Matthew 7:21-23)
- God has designated a day for us to resolve to obey Him – today (Hebrews 4:6); we must “hold fast...until the end” (Hebrews 3:14-15); begin this today

## **Let Us Be Diligent (Hebrews 4:8-11)**

- First, we need to understand what “rest” is under discussion – not the rest given by Joshua following the conquest of Canaan (Hebrews 4:8), this was temporary; the rest given by Christ is eternal and it “remains...for the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9)

- Jesus has gone on and has “sat down at the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12) – He completed His work (Hebrews 4:10, 3); we must complete ours
- “Let us be diligent” (Hebrews 4:11) – effort is required on our part to enter this rest; Jesus is the author of salvation to those who “obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9)
- Remember the example of the Israelites – do not follow this “same example of disobedience” (Hebrews 4:11); they were God’s chosen people, but they rebelled and would not enter His rest; we are God’s chosen people (cf. 1 Peter 2:9); we need to appreciate the seriousness of this example

## **Conclusion**

- God has promised and prepared for us a rest with Him in heaven – we must be diligent in serving Him and continue to faithfully serve Him to receive it; we need to be encouraging one another so that we can all enjoy this together
- But let us also consider the example of the Israelites and not fall as they did – let us not just believe in God while living as if we don’t really believe God; we can fall short, but we won’t if we faithfully, diligently, and persistently serve the Lord