



JESUS OFFERS A BETTER “REST” THAN JOSHUA

Hebrews 4:1-11

Intro: Are You Tired?

I. What is this “Rest” God Offers to His People?

- A. Originally, God’s promised “rest” referred to the land of Canaan
 - o Heb 3:7-11 cited Psalm 95:7-11 which tells of God’s past judgment on the Israelites who complained and rebelled in the desert
 - o These Israelites were not allowed to enter the “rest” of the promised land
- B. But, Canaan was a picture of the ultimate “rest” Christ could provide: Heaven
 - o In Psalm 95:7-11, God also invites present-day Israel to enter his rest even though they are already in the land of Canaan!
 - David wrote this Psalm when the Israelites had already entered the promised land
 - Thus, God’s invitation has to be about a future, greater rest, namely heaven
 - o The “promise of entering his rest still stands” today (v.1)
 - Notice the author offers this “rest” to the readers of the letter to the Hebrews
 - He doesn’t ask them to move to Canaan, so a different rest must be in mind
 - o The author reminds us that “if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on” (v.8)
 - Even though Joshua led the Israelites into the promised land, God still spoke about another “rest”
 - Jesus is the Greek version of Joshua. Which “Joshua” are you trusting?

***Key implication: Key aspects of OT Israel (land, temple, priest) were not an end in and of themselves they were pointing forward to the full redemption Jesus would bring.*

II. What is This Rest Like?

- A. We essentially join God in his heavenly “Sabbath”



- o Since the time of creation, God has been “resting” in his eternal heavenly Sabbath
 - “For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all his works’” (v.4)
- o In heaven, we will rest from our works
 - “whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his” (v.10)
 - The “works” here refers to the laboring, striving, and enduring the trials of life
- o Thus heaven is essentially an eternal Sabbath: “So then there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God” (v.9)

B. What implications does this have for how we observe the weekly Sabbath day?

- o Instead of Saturday, early Christians set aside Sundays as their weekly Sabbath (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2; Rev 1:10)
- o The weekly Sabbath is (or ought to be) a little taste of the heaven that awaits us!

III. How Do We Enter This Rest?

A. Fear: Realize some among the people of God will miss this rest”

- o “let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it” (v.1)
- o “those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience” (v.6)
- o Spiritual privileges will not save you! Beware of complacency...
- o The author reminds us that “Today” (v.7) is the day of salvation

B. Faith: We enter this heavenly rest through *faith* in Jesus

- o “we who have believed enter that rest” (v.3)
- o We can’t only hear, but must believe: “the message they heard did not benefit them because they were not united by faith” (v.2)

C. Fight: Perseverance is the mark of a true believer

- o “Let us therefore strive to enter that rest...”
- o Although we are not saved by our efforts, the Christian life still involves effort!



Discussion Groups

1. How does this passage change the way you read the Old Testament story of Israel? How does it affect the relevance of the OT for your life today?

2. Do you find yourself with an appropriate level of “fear” when you think about your eternal future? What are some ways that we can wake up from our complacency?

3. How does this passage help you see that effort and striving are good and necessary parts of the Christian life? What are some ways you can “fight” for your faith today?

