**A Rest for the People of God**

*Hebrews 3 & 4*

**Introduction**

1. **Hebrews 4:9** says there is a rest for the people of God.
2. This rest is one which God graciously offers us in His eternal scheme of redemption.
3. In order to reach this blessed rest, we must be faithful to Him no matter what the circumstances. (*Like immense persecution the Hebrew Christians faced from the Jews. In such persecution they were turning back to the Old Law instead of remaining faithful to Christ, and turning to Him for help*.)
4. The House of God **(3:1-6)**
5. Jesus and Moses in the House **(vv. 1-5)**
   1. **(vv. 1-2)** – Christ and Moses are introduced as those who both played important roles in God’s house.
      1. **House** – household – people.
         1. ***“people of God” – 4:9***
         2. General assembly (present), and spirits of just men (past – like those in chapter 11) – **12:23**
      2. **Consider Christ Jesus** – one chosen by God to be High Priest (Apostle – one sent – to be High Priest)
         1. Understand who He really is – grasp this.
         2. Better than Moses 🡪
   2. **(vv. 3-6a)** – both served and were faithful, but they held drastically different positions.
      1. **Christ** – builder – not merely a member of the house (like Moses).
      2. **Moses** – servant in the house.
         1. **(v. 5)** – testified of things to come.
         2. Better things, like the better Prophet – ***“The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear” (Deuteronomy 18:15)***.
      3. **Christ** – is Son. (Who is more significant? Son or servant in a household?)
6. Whose House We Are **(v. 6)**
   1. We are of the household of Christ/God – ***“our confession” (v. 1)*** – of faith in Christ, which placed us in His house.
   2. ***“the house of God, which is the church of the living God” (1 Timothy 3:15).***
   3. **IF** – must remain bold in faith, and hold fast instead of wavering.
   4. **Leads to a warning about becoming like the Israelites 🡪**
7. An Exhortation for Faithfulness **(3:7-19)**
8. Do Not Be Hardened, but Be Faithful **(vv. 7-15)**
   1. **Cf. Psalm 95:7-11** – referring to the wilderness wondering Israelites.
   2. **Refers not simply to one instance, but a pattern of faithlessness, and hardening of the heart** (*Psalm references two specific instances, one at the beginning, and the other toward the end of that generation)*:
      1. **(v. 8) – Exodus 17:1-7** – *at Rephidim*.
         1. **Thirsty; questioned the Exodus – why has he taken us out of Egypt to die?; *“Is the Lord among us or not?”***
            1. Times got tough and they lost trust/faith in God.
            2. They hardened their hearts.
         2. ***“So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, ‘Is the Lord among us or not?’” (Exodus 17:7).***
            1. ***“trial”*** – Massah – testing; proving
            2. ***“rebellion”*** – Merribah – rebellion; quarrelling
      2. **(vv. 10-11)** – **Numbers 13-14** – *at Kadesh-barnea*
         1. 10 of 12 (Joshua and Caleb – Good) Spies brought back bad report of Canaan inhabitants.
         2. Did not trust in God.
         3. **(v. 10b) – cf. Numbers 14:22** – ***“and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice”*** (fullness of testing – life of faithlessness)
   3. **(vv. 12-15)** – Do not make the same mistake as did they.
      1. **(v. 9)** – They tested God in spite of the works they saw.
      2. **Exhort one another** – lest you depart from the ***“living God”*** – He is powerful, and will deliver us. (Remind each other of this.)
      3. **Hold your confidence!**
9. The Failure of the Israelites **(vv. 16-19)**
   1. **(v. 16)** – those who failed to enter the rest were those who were saved:
      1. **Hebrews 11:29** – crossed red sea by faith – believed initially.
      2. ***“all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:2).***
   2. **(v. 17)** – they sinned.
   3. **(vv. 18-19)** – were not permitted to enter God’s rest because of their unfaithfulness – disobedient people.
10. A Rest for the People of God **(4:1-10)**
11. Learn from Israel’s Mistake, and Fear **(vv. 1-2)**
    1. **(v. 1)** – fear – understand you can fall short as did they.
    2. **(v. 2)** – we have no advantage over they – gospel (good news – of a rest) – did not have faith.
12. What rest? **(vv. 3-10**)
    1. ***“promise remains of entering His rest”*** – cannot be the Canaan land – already fulfilled, and promised to Israel only.
    2. **(v. 3)** – we DO enter ***“that rest:”***
       1. What rest is he talking about?
       2. ***“believed”*** – ***“do enter”*** – believed when they obeyed the gospel – ***“hold fast the confidence”*** of their confession.
    3. **(vv. 3b-5)** – This rest was that which existed from the beginning of creation.
       1. *Before Abraham was even promised any land.*
       2. **(v. 5)** – The rest they were not allowed to enter was not simply Canaan, but the rest spoken of concerning the 7th day.
    4. **(vv. 6-7)** – They did not enter, but it ***“REMAINS for some to enter”***
       1. David wrote **Psalm 95:7-11** ***“after such a long time”*** that God swore they wouldn’t enter, and even after the Canaan promise was fulfilled.
       2. ***“Today”*** – shows that, ***“while it is called ‘Today,’”*** the rest still remains to be entered.
    5. **(vv. 8-10)** – Joshua led them into the Promised Land, but not the true Promised Land.
       1. The rest remains for God’s people – it is that place that all people of faith, in all times, strived for.
       2. **Hebrews 11:10, 16** – seek a heavenly country.
       3. **Hebrew audience** – ***“partakers of the heavenly calling”*** = called to that same city/rest.
          1. Just as God set out to perform a task, and having performed it, rested…
          2. **So He calls us to a task, and promises rest for us WITH HIM after we have faithfully performed it 🡪**
13. Diligence to Enter that Rest **(4:11-16)**
14. Be Diligent Before God **(vv. 11-13)**
    1. **Diligence** – we must work hard, and strive to enter. (*This requires knowing God’s word, and taking advantage of every opportunity to carry it out*.)
    2. **(v. 12)** – Gospel was preached to them **(v. 2),** but they did not faithfully obey.
       1. The word of God which announced punishment upon them is the same power which exists today.
       2. **It will judge us, and we will be exposed, and the pronouncement will be certain 🡪**
    3. **(v. 13)** – we cannot hide from God.
15. Seek Aid from Our High Priest **(vv. 14-16)**
    1. Full circle ending – **(3:1)** – consider our High Priest.
    2. **(v. 14)** – He has ascended to heaven having performed the work given Him ***“faithfully” (3:2).***
    3. **(v. 15)** – In such work He was subject to temptation, but never sinned.
    4. **(v. 16)** – He is available today for our help.

**Conclusion**

1. God has prepared a rest for His people.
2. That rest remains to be entered, and He has laid out the plan for us to follow.
3. We must follow Him faithfully in order to enter that rest.
4. Jesus is there to help us, that we fail not as the wilderness wondering Israelites.