

Have We Entered Into God's Rest?

1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 11 [NIV] *“For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. Now **these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.**” ... “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as **warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come.**”*

Ancient Israel is to be an example for us to avoid doing those things that caused them to **not** enter into their promised land their “rest” from wandering in a wilderness.

Hebrews 3:7-11 [NIV] *“So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.’ **So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’**”*

Never entered the promised land their “rest”.

The Greek word translated “rest” is “katapausis” [kat-ap-ow-sis] to settle down – to find our resting place or abode.

Hebrews 3:12-19 [NIV] *“See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: “**Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.**” **Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?** And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that **they would never enter his rest** if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, **because of their unbelief.**”*

The problem with Israel is they did **not** believe what God had promised.

Numbers 12:16 [NIV] *“After that, the people left Hazeroth and encamped in the Desert of Paran.”*

Israel came to the very edge of the their “rest” but through lack of faith in God’s Promises failed to enter.

Numbers 13:1-2 [NIV] *“The LORD said to Moses, “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”*

Sent people to explore the promised resting place.

Numbers 13:17-20 [NIV] *“When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, “Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees on it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land.” (It was the season for the first ripe grapes.)”*

All the details of their future life would be revealed.

Numbers 13:25-32 [NIV] *“At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land. They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. They gave Moses this account: **“We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.”** Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, **“We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”** But the men who had gone up with him said, **“We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.”** **And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored.** They said, **“The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size.”**”*

The future trials seemed to be so great because they were looking only to their own abilities.

Numbers 14:1-4 [NIV] *“That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, **“If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?”** And they said to each other, **“We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”**”*

Return to our old way of life.

What was expected of them seemed too great a sacrifice.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.**”*

Christ does expect a great sacrifice on our part.

Matthew 16:24-25 [NIV] *“**Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.”**”*

We have to sacrifice our own will and conform to the will of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 16:26-27 [NIV] *“**What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.**”*

Our reward in God’s Kingdom will be according to what we do with our lives now.

Ephesians 2:8-10 [NIV] *“**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no-one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**”*

We are saved by faith in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

But our reward is according to the work God has prepared for us to accomplish.

Philippians 4:13, 19 [NIV] *“**I can do everything through him who gives me strength.**” ... **“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”**”*

This is how Paul accomplished all he did for Jesus Christ.

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Christ will always be there for us.

This is a promise we have to believe.

John 14:25-27 [NIV] *“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.** I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

We can enjoy the peaceful rest of God now if we have faith in what Christ will do in and through us, by the active presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Hebrews 4:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, **let us** be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.”*

Note the “let us” for we each have personal responsibilities to help others to enter into God’s rest.

Hebrews 4:2-3 [NIV] *“For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. **Now we who have believed enter that rest,** just as God has said, “So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’” **And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world.”***

If we have faith in what God has promised we have already entered His rest.

Genesis 1:26-27 [NIV] *“Then God said, “**Let us make man in our image, in our likeness,** and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” **So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”***

Note two creations:

Image – [a shadow] at the time of the first Adam being created.

Likeness – [the character of God] this is only created in us through the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:18-23 [NIV] *“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, **but with the precious blood of Christ,** a lamb without blemish or defect. **He was chosen before the creation of the world,** but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.”*

Our hope of eternal life in God’s rest is in Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4:4 [NIV] *“For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “And on the seventh day God rested from all his work.”*

The rest of God was to indicate the completion of the first part of His creation.

Hebrews 4:5-8 [NIV] *“And again in the passage above he says, “They shall never enter my rest.” It still remains that some **will** enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it **Today**, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: “**Today**, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” **For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.**”*

The word “will” is a future continuous tense, indicating a process.

“Today” indicates we cannot delay starting or continuing the process of entering into this rest of God.

Hebrews 4:9 [NIV] *“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;”*

The physical sabbath rest remained in place until the true Joshua, Jesus Christ should come.

He, Jesus Christ, opens up to us God’s eternal rest.

By entering into God’s rest Himself through a death and resurrection.

Hebrews 4:10 [NIV] *“for anyone who enters God’s rest also **rests from his own work**, just as God did from his.”*

We rest from our own efforts to obtain salvation through “works of the law” and accept in faith what God has already done for us through the true Joshua, Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4:11-13 [NIV] *“**Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no-one will fall by following their example of disobedience.** For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”*

God entering into His sabbath [7th day] rest was **not** one of inactivity.

Colossians 1:25-29 [NIV] *“I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness, the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end **I labour**, struggling with all **his** energy, which so powerfully works in me.”*

Paul was full of activity in proclaiming what Christ had done for him and the great gift he had received of salvation by God’s Grace.

How then do we rest from our own works and yet be so active in God’s work as Paul was?

It is only in death that we rest from our works.

Romans 6:1-14 [NIV] *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or **don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?** We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life.** If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that **our old self was crucified with him** so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. **Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.** For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. **In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in***

Christ Jesus. *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather **offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life**; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

This is our new life after death.

In the “rest” that faith in Jesus Christ allows us to enter.

The un-converted person says:- *“Not Christ but I”*

The feeble and lazy Christian says:- *“I first and Christ to fill what is lacking”*

The increasingly earnest Christian says:- *“Christ first but still I second”*

The Christian who has died in Christ says:- *“Not I but Christ alone”*

This person has ceased from his own work, for Christ works in and through him by the active presence of the Holy Spirit.

This is what is meant by:- *“Entering into the rest of God by faith”*.