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# Words of Truth

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## Hebrews 4:6-9

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The key to what we are going to study today is that there is still a future rest for the people of God. The land promised to Israel was not the ultimate rest. Furthermore, Israel were not the only ones God intended to have prepared a rest for. Here is the text we will study: *“Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 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. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God”* (Hebrews 4:6-9).

The word translated “rest” [katapausis] in this context (Hebrews 3:11, Hebrews 3:18, Hebrews 4:1, Hebrews 4:3, Hebrews 4:5, Hebrews 4:10, and Hebrews 4:11) means: “reposing down, i.e. (by Hebraism) abode: — rest. A putting to rest; calming of the winds; a resting place. Metaph. the heavenly blessedness in which God dwells, and of which he has promised to make persevering believers in Christ partakers after the toils and trials of life on earth are ended” (Strong’s # 2663). We know that no one has inherited Heaven, the place that is being prepared (John 14:1-3), as of right now. Among the reasons we know that is the world still stands and the final judgment has not yet occurred (Matthew 25:31-46, John 5:28-29, I Corinthians 15:1-26, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, and II Peter 3:9-14).

Jesus came into this world to save the children of Israel (Acts 13:16-23). Yet, Jesus spoke of having other sheep when He was teaching the Jews (John 10:1-18). Unwittingly, Caiaphas the high priest also prophesied of Jesus saving more sheep than just the Israelites (John 11:49-52). We know those other people were [are] the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:1-17). Salvation was to the Jew first, but also then offered to us Gentiles (Romans 2:10). The Jews had previously enjoyed being God’s people apart from all others (Exodus 19:5-6, Deuteronomy 7:1-8, Deuteronomy 10:12-15, and Amos 3:1-2). They then needed to concede and realize that the rest of God was no longer only something for them.

As part of their moments of realization, they needed to account for the fact that they rejected what was once theirs for the taking. Their fathers did not enter into the rest God had for them because of their unbelief. This has been repeated in this context (Hebrews 3:7ff.). It doesn’t end with what happened in the wilderness of old either. In the first century the Jews had the Gospel of Christ preached first unto them (Matthew 9:35-10:6, Matthew 15:21-28, Acts

3:25-26, and Romans 1:16). The Jews in the first century continued to have the problem of hardened hearts and rejected the promises of God as a result of their continued disbelief (John 12:36-43, Acts 7:51-52, Acts 13:44-52, Romans 10:1-21, and I Thessalonians 2:14-16). The Jews disbelief became a benefit to Gentiles. That benefit came with a caution (Romans 11:11-28). The fact that there remains hope for the rest to come doesn't mean that hope should be taken for granted. The Jews of old are the example to learn from in that regard. Without faith, a person or group of people cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6).

The Hebrew writer, through inspiration of God, then comes back to the contextual reminder of "to day". God has spoken. They [we] can read it. Don't harden your heart as the children of Israel did in times past. Urgently obey! That is echoing the Psalm of David (Psalms 95:1-11). The person with the hard, impenitent heart has only set himself or herself up for the wrath to come on the Day of Judgment (Romans 2:5). Jude wrote: *"I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not"* (Jude 1:5). The reward or the end punishment hasn't been rendered to anyone yet. Don't blow it.

In the beginning God gave man a paradise on earth (Genesis 1-2). Adam and Eve blew it (Genesis 3:1-24). God later told Israel to go into a land He would give them that was self-contained, another form of a paradise on earth (Leviticus 20:24). They blew it, as this context we are studying continues to point out, before they even entered into that land (Numbers 13:1-14:38). Once the next generation came about, they could have had that land, rest from their enemies, etc. (Deuteronomy 12:10); they too blew it over and over again as is shown from the book of Joshua forward. Concerning Israel, it was written: *"Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you"* (Deuteronomy 9:24). We would do well to understand that God's patience has run thin (Acts 17:30). What will be is in our hands.

Be thankful that God has not become tired of the failures of humanity. Be thankful that God hasn't given place to frustration. Therefore, as we consider that there remains a rest to the people of God we have to learn not to repeat the mistakes of God's people of old. We have and still look forward to further exceeding great and precious promises (II Peter 1:4). We [faithful saints] are now called the children of God (II Corinthians 6:14-18 and I John 3:1). We have an inheritance with Christ to look forward to (Romans 8:17). Let's not blow it!

When we get later in this letter we will read this about the great people of faith of old: *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth... And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect"* (Hebrews 11:13; 11:39-40). In our next study we will be talking about how the rest ahead is a reason for us to keep working.