

Introduction: ch.1 - the glory of Christ in deity, ch.2 - the glory of Christ in His humanity, ch.3 – the glory of Christ as Apostle, High Priest, and Faithful Savior

- remember the identity of those who are addressed – v.1

I. LET US FEAR – vv.1-10

¹**Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.**

- **Therefore** (based on what was seen in ch.3) - **let us fear** – at front of Greek sentence (author includes himself)
- Two meanings of fear (not mutually exclusive) – (1.) agitation due to perceived danger (2.) worship/reverence/awe
- In this context, the dominance of the 2nd meaning – fear which moves to certain action

Illustration: at ledge of Grand Canyon

- **Lest** (conj. for fear that) **the remaining promise to enter the rest** – he does not picture this as something that they have already entered into, but a promise that remains to be fulfilled
- **any of you** (identified as Christians) **abandon/fall short/fail to reach**
- these verses have frequently been interpreted as a rest that the Christian has already entered into, the rest from one's works that takes place when one trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation
- there is a strong element of truth in that concept, but I suggest not from these verses (seen particularly in Paul)
- this is a warning to fear, not of something already supposed to have entered into, but something that yet remains
- What is this rest? It is more clearly identified in the following verses
- He uses the historical example of Israel as an analogy for these believers

²**For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them;**

- what was "the Gospel" or good news for them? Primarily a promise not only of release from the bondage of Egypt (which has taken place in the past), but of entering into a land of blessing with God's presence - Deut12:10-12 25:19 12:9

but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

- They heard that good news of a place of God's special blessing – but the word did not profit/help/benefit them
- It was not blended/united with faith – hearing it was not enough – knowledge was not enough – past deliverance wasn't enough

Illustration: Mailing of a package vacation – not thrown away, but not completion of the trip to receive it

- the faith here is not a once for all faith, but an ongoing and persevering faith – this was enough so that the word did not profit

³**For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:**

- Lit. for we are entering into [the] rest who believed
- it isn't that those who have believed have already entered (past tense...resting in Christ), but those who have belief (faith mixed with promise) are entering, with future completion

"So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'"

- a quotation of Ps95:11 – God's wrath is against those who do not mix faith with God's promise, and so do not enter **although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.**

⁴**For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way:**

"And God rested on the seventh day from all His works";

- The writer here, and in the next verse, refers to the example of God who rested from His works after the 6 days of creation - Gen2:3 Ex20:11
- The example is of God, who after finishing His work, enters into the rest, blessedness, and enjoyment of the creation
- This is connected to a period of work which prepares for rest, which is for the believer a remaining future promise
- The writer is not teaching salvation by works, but rather the reality there is a "not yet" reality to the believers blessing
- Rev14:13, while not using the same word, points to the same reality
- Until that great Day, there is warfare, there is labor for the kingdom, and this world is not our home
- Just as God once rested in a perfect creation, so the believer looks forward to the promise of a new creation

⁵**and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."** – repetition of Ps95 and the warning against unbelief

⁶**Since therefore it remains that some must enter it,**

- not by way of resting in Christ for salvation, but a remaining promise of entering into a future rest

and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,

- Is it disobedience/unbelief that prevented them from entering into the land of promise

⁷**again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said:**

"Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."

- A call to not put it off, but today to believe God and press forward

⁸**For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.**

- For the first time in the text Joshua is introduced, the one who took the people into the land after the 40 years of wilderness – did they receive rest?
- Yes – Josh21:43-45 22:4 23:1 (same word in LXX)...and no Heb4:8 that this-worldly promise and fulfillment pointed to something else and something greater – the promise to Israel had been clearly fulfilled, and yet there remains a rest

⁹ ***There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.***

- I disagree with the interpreters, many of whom are solid Reformed brethren, who say that this verse is a proof-text for a 1/7 Sabbath keeping (though I believe in it for other reasons)
- The flow of the text and the argument is not for a once a week Sabbath, but rather that the people of God have a future
 - A rest in glory, the everlasting sabbatism of heaven, which is the repose and perfection of nature and grace too, where the people of God shall enjoy the end of their faith and the object of all their desires.*
(Matthew Henry)
- The rest of future glory and blessing is for the **people of God**

¹⁰ ***For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.***

- The rest from works here is not for salvation, but produced by salvation – that rest (from difficulties, sin, fallenness) in the new creation exemplified in the last chapters of Revelation – Rev21:22-22:3 “and all curse not will be” – through v.5

II. Let us Be Diligent – v.11-13¹¹ ***Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest,******lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.***

- This is the 2nd imperative in this section – to be diligent/make haste/be eager/be earnest
- Knowing all that has been said before, he calls them (including himself) and us to all be diligent to press into that rest
- There is no room here for a view of Christianity that merely rests in past experience or faith to the neglect of ongoing labor in the kingdom of God
- To lack this diligence is the same as disobedience – we can be just like the Israelites, those who are apparently holy brethren and partakers of the heavenly calling
- There is a specific reason to remember this (in next verse...for)

¹² ***For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.***¹³ ***And there is no creature hidden from His sight,******but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.***

- This is one of the most well known texts describing the Word of God, and rightly so
- The word of God is not powerless, empty, or vain, but living and powerful because it comes from the living and powerful God
- It is likened to a two-edged sword – to be wielded and received with carefulness
- The word which the writer specifically seems to be referring to are the promise (of future rest) and threat of wrath in response to not mixing it with faith – there are both promises of blessings and of cursing – they are equally true
- It is interesting that in most Bible Book of Promises that only the 1st category are listed – to the neglect of the 2nd
- Fear...be diligent...remember that what God says is true – there are promises more great and glorious than anything we can imagine – there are curses more terrible and dreadful than what we can imagine
- The depth to which the Word goes are more than externals, but strips our externals and reveals what is in the heart, both its thought and intents
- We may fool others, but God cannot be fooled – this calls for sober self-evaluation
- No one is hidden from this God, and all stand utterly bare and naked before Him
- And this is the God to whom we must give and account
- This has a double effect – it strips away hypocrisy and insincerity – it also exposes faith that is but that of a mustard seed where we cry out “Lord I believe, help my unbelief”