

DAY THIRTY-SEVEN

“ENTERING HIS ETERNAL REST”

PSALM 95:1-7

For Day #37 of our Omer Count, we are given a significantly important Psalm to consider. The Psalmist reminds us that we are to sing multiple songs of praise and worship to our Creator. We need to never forget that He does not tire of our praise and adoration! By worshipping Him, we can grow more intimate in our relationship with Him, and knowledgeable of how truly awesome He is as the Eternal One. Yet when we go before His presence in worship, we are to not only be humble—but be especially reverent and remindful of the past misdealings of previous generations toward Him.

When we can truly devote the time, making Him a focus for meditation, the Lord is pleased and great blessings come forth. He will then be able to mold and transform us to be more like Himself, and our mortal proclivities can finally then be a thing of the past.

PSALM 67:1-7

For the choir director; with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song. God be gracious to us and bless us, *and* cause His face to shine upon us—Selah. That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for You will judge the peoples with uprightness and guide the nations on the earth. Selah. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all

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the peoples praise You. The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. God blesses us, that all the ends of the earth may fear Him.

PSALM 95:I-II

O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the LORD is a great God and a great King above all gods, in whose hand are the depths of the earth, the peaks of the mountains are His also. The sea is His, for it was He who made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness, “When your fathers tested Me, they tried Me, though they had seen My work. For forty years I loathed *that* generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart, and they do not know My ways. Therefore I swore in My anger, truly they shall not enter into My rest.”

I suggest that you take the time to carefully consider the message of Psalm 95, as this passage is referred or alluded to in rather significant places within the Apostolic Scriptures. When I read our selection for today, I was reminded of the opening chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The theme of Believers entering into the magnanimous rest that has been provided via the atoning sacrifice of Yeshua is a major focus of this text (cf. Hebrews 2:14-15). Turning to Hebrews ch. 3, comparisons abound about the difference between the Exodus generation, and those in the First Century who understood that the Messiah had accomplished much more—and what they would be giving up if they ever jettisoned Messiah faith. The author of Hebrews makes remarks based on the words of Psalm 95:

“He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Messiah *was faithful* as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, ‘TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED *Me* BY TESTING *Me*, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS. THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, “THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS”; AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, “THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.”’ Take care,

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brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God” (Hebrews 3:2-12; cf. Psalm 95:7-11; Exodus 17:7; Numbers 20:2-5; 14:21-23).

After quoting extensively from Psalm 95, the subject of entering into God’s rest continues:

“Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, ‘AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST’ [Psalm 95:11], although His works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Hebrews 4:1-3).

Once again, the reference to Psalm 95:11, and the contrast of those who did not enter God’s rest, is described. This is followed in short order by an additional quotation that links the rest of Believers to the rest God engaged upon after completing His Creation:

“For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh *day*: ‘AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS’ [Genesis 2:2]; and again in this *passage*, ‘THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST’ [Psalm 95:11]” (Hebrews 4:4-5).

By the time the Psalmist finishes his thought, the author of Hebrews is again compelled to refer back to Psalm 95:7-8. This is to instill in his audience how if the Ancient Israelites rebelled and did not enter into the Promised Land, what would happen if they gave up on Yeshua? *What would they fail to enter?* What (greater) consequences would they bring upon themselves?

“Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, He again fixes a certain day, ‘Today,’ saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, ‘TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS’ [Psalm 95:7-8]” (Hebrews 4:6-7).

Finally, the author of Hebrews concludes these thoughts with the encouraging admonition for Believers to enter the Sabbath rest designated for the people of God. This should confirm how the weekly Sabbath we are all to enjoy, should give us some foretaste or partial experience of the even greater rest to come in eternity:

“So there remains a Sabbath rest [*Shabbat*-keeping, CJB]¹ for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through *following* the same example of disobedience” (Hebrews 4:9-11).

If you continue on in the text, you will discover one of the most critical and frequently quoted verses among many Believers, which describe the benefits that God’s people have when they pursue a diligent study of the Scriptures:

¹ Grk. *sabbatismos*; “*sabbath rest, sabbath observance*” (BDAG, 909).

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“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

The author of Hebrews clearly understood the blessing of not only studying, but also knowing the Word of God (especially given the wide number of references to the Tanakh in his treatise).² He realized that for the people of God one of the most critical things that should characterize them is embodied in the profundity of the Holy Writ. By taking the time required to inculcate the Words of Life into our hearts and minds, and truly mediate upon them, we will then be equipped to judge the differences between any fallen human thoughts we might have—and the true thoughts and inklings from the Holy Spirit.

This blessing will allow us to discern just what we need to be doing in God’s Kingdom work here on Planet Earth, as we prepare to enter into His eternal rest. We have to be diligent and disciplined as we seek the Lord, so that we are not led off the proper path of faith. The rest that we seek, while surely represented by the weekly *Shabbat*, is much more significant. **Such a rest is eternity spent with our Creator.**

Psalms 95 has historically played a very important role in both the Jewish and Christian liturgical traditions, not only because it declares “Come, let’s sing to ADONAI! Let’s shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation!” (Psalm 95:1, CJB), but because of how it is used to direct its hearers to how God does not want to be provoked, as Ancient Israel did at Meribah and Massah (Psalm 95:7-11). Its opening verse appears in the opening Sabbath prayers, employed in the Synagogue,³ and larger portions of Psalm 95 are seen in various morning and evening prayers in the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*.⁴ Noting these aspects of Psalm 95 and their relation to Hebrews and various Jewish and Christian liturgies over the centuries, F.F. Bruce is right to emphasize how,

“The two parts should not be dissociated from each other: it is a good thing to worship God, but acts and words of worship are acceptable only if they proceed from sincere and obedient hearts.”⁵

Just imagine what could happen to your relationship with the Holy One if you started and ending your day by pondering: **“Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness”** (Psalm 95:8).

For those of you who are Counting the Omer on our journey to *Shavuot*, let me make one concluding remark. It is far more important that you enter into His

² For a further review, consult the commentary *Hebrews for the Practical Messianic* by J.K. McKee.

³ J.H. Hertz, ed., *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book*, revised (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1960), 227.

⁴ *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp 44, 145-146.

⁵ F.F. Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 98.

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eternal rest in the Kingdom, than being too overly concerned about the minutiae of Counting the Omer. The discipline of making note of the fifty days to *Shavuot* or Pentecost is surely something important to do, but the sad fact is that there are people who from Passover to the Feast of Weeks who will Count the Omer—are relying on some form of either Torah keeping or commandment adherence to save them—who may possibly not enter into an eternity with Yeshua. We consider the different Psalm passages every day to prick our consciences, so that we make sure that we have not only advanced beyond the essentials of the faith (cf. Hebrews 5:12-6:6), but most importantly **that we are in the faith**. The Apostle Paul issues a declarative warning to each of us:

“Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Yeshua the Messiah is in you—unless indeed you fail the test? But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test” (2 Corinthians 13:5-6).

Be a transformed man or woman of God with Yeshua resident in your heart, because *only* this will gain you entry into the eternal rest. *Do not provoke the Lord, as previous generations did*. Be victorious in your striving against the world, the flesh, and the Devil—and in so doing, help others who need your prayers, support, and guidance!