

**SLB-036**

**12-17-06**

The Rest of Regeneration - 2

# The Rest of Regeneration

- Exodus 17:1 All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?”

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 3 But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” 4 So Moses cried to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 5 And the Lord said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 7 And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”
- Massah = "testing"
- Meribah = "complaining, griping, quarreling."

# The Rest of Regeneration

- An illustration:
- Sister Mary Katherine entered the Monastery of Silence.
- The Priest said, "Sister, this is a silent monastery. You are welcome here as long as you like, but you may not speak until I direct you to do so."
- Sister Mary Katherine lived in the monastery for 5 years before the Priest said to her, "Sister Mary Katherine, you have been here for five years; you may speak two words."
- Sister Mary Katherine said, "Hard bed."
- "I'm sorry to hear that," the Priest said, "We will get you a better bed."

# The Rest of Regeneration

- After another five years, the Priest called Sister Mary Katherine. "You may say two more words, Sister Mary Katherine."
- "Cold food," said Sister Mary Katherine, and the Priest assured her that the food would be better in the future.
- On her 15th anniversary at the monastery, the Priest again called Sister Mary Katherine into his office. "You may say two words again today."
- "I quit," said Sister Mary Katherine.
- "It's probably best," said the Priest. "You've done nothing but bitch since you got here."

# The Rest of Regeneration

- [We pick up the story a little later, just after the spies who have been sent to Canaan to recon the Land returned with a frightening report of the inhabitants dwelling in the land God had promised to them...]
- Numbers 14:1 Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?”



# The Rest of Regeneration

- 4 And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.” 5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. 6 And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, “The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 9 Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them.” 10 Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel.
- 11 And the Lord said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? 12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.”

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 13 But Moses said to the Lord, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, 14 and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O Lord, are in the midst of this people. For you, O Lord, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, 16 ‘It is because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.’

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 17 And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, 18 ‘The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.’ 19 Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now.”

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 20 Then the Lord said, “I have pardoned, according to your word. 21 But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, 22 none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, 23 shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it. 24 But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 25 Now, since the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valleys, turn tomorrow and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.” 26 And the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 27 “How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumblings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. 28 Say to them, ‘As I live, declares the Lord, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: 29 your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, 30 not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 31 But your little ones, who you said would become a prey, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have rejected. 32 But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness. 34 According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, a year for each day, you shall bear your iniquity forty years, and you shall know my displeasure.’ 35 I, the Lord, have spoken. Surely this will I do to all this wicked congregation who are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die.”

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 36 And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing up a bad report about the land—  
37 the men who brought up a bad report of the land—died by plague before the Lord. 38 Of those men who went to spy out the land, only Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive.



# The Rest of Regeneration

- 39 When Moses told these words to all the people of Israel, the people mourned greatly. 40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the heights of the hill country, saying, “Here we are. We will go up to the place that the Lord has promised, for we have sinned.” 41 But Moses said, “Why now are you transgressing the command of the Lord, when that will not succeed? 42 Do not go up, for the Lord is not among you, lest you be struck down before your enemies.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 43 For there the Amalekites and the Canaanites are facing you, and you shall fall by the sword. Because you have turned back from following the Lord, the Lord will not be with you.” 44 But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of the Lord nor Moses departed out of the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- [We pick up the story after 40 years, when all of the 1st generation have died and they return to The Waters of Meribah...]
- Numbers 20:1 And the people of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh. And Miriam died there and was buried there.
- 2 Now there was no water for the congregation. And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. 3 And the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the Lord! 4 Why have you brought the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle?”

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 5 And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink.”  
6 Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of the Lord appeared to them,  
7 and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 8 “Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle.” 9 And Moses took the staff from before the Lord, as he commanded him.
- 10 Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?” 11 And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 12 And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.” 13 These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the Lord, and through them he showed himself holy.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- Now we return to the book of Hebrews 3:15-19
- 15 while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME." 16 For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- “Today, if you would hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”
- The quotation is taken from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint.
- The Hebrew original of Psalm 95:7b could be translated, "O, that today you would hear his voice."
- The Greek translation, using the word "if," makes it clear that for the Israelites, for the first readers of Hebrews, and for us there is a choice of whether or not to hear the voice of God.
- We are responsible to respond to what God is saying.



# The Rest of Regeneration

- On the other hand, the Hebrew text presents the verse as the yearning appeal of God asking for our allegiance.
- The call to hear his voice can be easily misunderstood by modern readers.
- We tend to think simply in terms of a sound being heard.
- The Hebrew word for hear and obey is the same word.
- Thus the psalmist was not just appealing for Israel to hear (listen to) the word of God, but also for them to obey that word.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- Hebrew poetry was written with what is called parallelism .
- In this case hear his voice is a parallel thought to not harden your hearts.
- That is, hearing the voice of God means having hearts that are open and responsive to him rather than hard and closed.
- The words of the psalm are directly applicable to the readers of the book of Hebrews.
- Those readers were under pressure for their faith in Christ; they were being tempted to give up their faith.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- But to give up the faith means turning their backs to and closing both their ears and hearts to the entreaties of God.
- The words of the psalm say exactly what the writer of Hebrews want to say, "don't harden your heart" against God's effort to strengthen and encourage you.
- Don't resist God's efforts to help you in the midst of your pressure and trouble.
- To give up the faith in the face of persecution was the moral equivalent of the rebellion against God that took place in Israel's history during the wilderness wanderings.
- The author of Hebrews continued to quote from the Greek translation of the Old Testament in verse 8.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- *“Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as on the day of testing in the wilderness.”*
- The literal translations of the Hebrew text of Psalm 95:8 read, "Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day of Massah in the wilderness."
- The references to Meribah and Massah connect the psalm to Exodus 17:1-7 and several passages in Numbers (14:20-23, 28-35 and 20:1-13).
- At that time Israel had bitterly complained against God (and falsely accused him of bringing them out of Egypt to kill them) at a time when the people had run out of water.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- Massah and Meribah became code words for a testing, complaining, questioning, argumentative spirit that was never satisfied with what God provided.
- It was a quarreling, complaining, bitter attitude.
- That Israel could have fallen into such an attitude so soon after God had brought them out of Egypt should be a reason for humility rather than criticism.
- If Israel could so quickly and easily fall into griping and complaining against the Visible God who had delivered them, so can we.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- The spiritual issue at stake here is trusting God.
- Surely, after God had brought them out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, he could supply water for them in the desert.
- How could they fail to trust him?
- After God had sent Christ and revealed him to be the Messiah to the first readers of Hebrews, surely they could trust him to preserve them through persecution, couldn't they?
- After all that God has done for us, how could we not trust him in any and every circumstance of our lives?

# The Rest of Regeneration

- But we don't! Sometimes after God has performed the greatest miracle of helping us out, we stew and fret and worry that we just can survive the next problem coming down the line.
- The issue for Israel, for the first readers of Hebrews, and for us, is trust.
- Will we trust the God who has brought us safe thus far?
- Will we believe that he can and will safely carry us home?
- Or will we begin to scheme and connive to solve our problems and relieve the pressures upon us in our own strength with our own wisdom?

# The Rest of Regeneration

- Verse 9 describes Meribah and Massah as the place where the Israelite fathers tested God by trying to make him prove himself.
- The demand that God prove himself is the opposite of trust.
- It is the opposite of obedience.
- And the response of God according to verse 10 is anger.  
*“They always are deceived in their hearts and they did not know my ways.”*



# The Rest of Regeneration

- The idea of being deceived in their hearts is a powerful word image.
- The word deceived speaks of wandering off track so that person, animal, or thing is not where the observer expects it to be.
- Tempting God to prove himself is thus described as being off track and deceived.
- The Hebrew parallelism suggests that being off track also means not recognizing God's ways.
- God uses the difficult times of life - whether it be the desert, persecution, or the pressures we face in life - to test our trust and obedience.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- To complain and question God and test Him by making our own plans in those times is to usurp the role and way of God.
- That is sin.
- As a result God swore that the Israelites would not “enter my rest.”
- In the context of the Exodus and wilderness wanderings not entering God's rest meant not entering the promised land.
- But the use of the word rest immediately draws Genesis 2:2-3 to mind where God rests at the end of the process of Creation.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- To refuse to trust God, to usurp God's own role in testing, and to harden one's heart is to get stuck in the creation process.
- It is to not reach the goal of God's work in one's life.
- It is to be incomplete, immature, and unfulfilled.
- It is to say, "Not only is God not finished with me yet, he's not going to finish with me."

# The Rest of Regeneration

- GAL 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." St. John 3:6
- "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24

# The Rest in Regeneration

- So, what is this “Rest”?
- The rest to which Hebrews 4:1-11 refers is not the rest that the believer enters into at death, as so many commentators teach.
- The promised land was not meant to be a picture of heaven, which the words of many hymns might suggest.
- Joshua and Caleb entered a land full of enemies.
- They entered because of their faith in a God who would work on their behalf (see Exodus 14:14-"The Lord shall fight for you" and Numbers 14:9-"the Lord is with us").

# The Rest in Regeneration

- If the "rest" of Heb. 4:11 refers to heaven then this verse would be a command to commit suicide!
- The person who enters into God's rest is the person who ceases from his own works (Heb. 4:10), mixes the promises of God with faith (Heb. 4:2), and allows God the freedom to outwork and manifest His life (Heb. 13:20-21).

# The Rest of Regeneration

- The word for “Rest” is the word from the Hebrew, “Sabbath”.
- 1. The word "Sabbath" comes from a Hebrew verb meaning "to cease, stop, desist; to come to an end, rest."
- The basic meaning of this verb is illustrated in such passages as Genesis 8:22 (the seasonal and day/night cycles have no Sabbath!); Jeremiah 31:36 ("cease"); and Job 32:1 (these men gave their mouths a rest!).

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 3. On the Sabbath Day God's people were to cease and stop working so that they might THINK and REMEMBER their God.
- 4. According to Exodus 20:8-11, they were to STOP and REMEMBER their CREATOR. They were to realize that everything they had (even breath to breathe and strength to work) came from their Creator-God (compare 1 Corinthians 4:7), and that apart from Him they would have nothing.
- They were to REST so they might REVERENCE their CREATOR.



# The Rest of Regeneration

- 2. Based on this definition of the word, the SABBATH Day was a "Cease From Work Day."
  - It was a day when God's people were to cease and stop.
  - They were to cease from their normal daily routine.
  - It's important for God's people to have a break from the business and busyness of the daily work schedule.
  - The Sabbath afforded such a break.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- 5. According to Deuteronomy 5:15, they were to STOP and REMEMBER their REDEEMER.
- They were to remember the awful slavery in Egypt and the wonderful deliverance that God wrought for them.
- They were to REST so that they might REVERENCE their REDEEMER.

# The Rest of Regeneration

- Our "New Genetics" is the essence of Christianity.
- Christianity is not a belief-system or a morality code, but is the presence and function of the Spiritual Genetics of the Lord Jesus Christ within Christians.
- Hebrews 4:3 *"For we who have believed enter that rest,"*

# The Rest of Regeneration

- The natural man is hurrying and scurrying to find “rest”.
- They seek it in boats and summer cottages; vacations to the beach or to the mountains; and in hobbies and games.
- They are seeking "rest" - but they are looking for the wrong kind of rest; their weariness and frustration is not from “work”, but from their “works”.
- When we enter into God’s provided rest, we can do any sort of “work” with perfect contentment, happiness and satisfaction.
- This true "rest" can only be found in our "New Genetics", our “Genetic-Union”
- Hence, our study of, “The Rest of Regeneration.”