***Faith Rest  
  
Colossians 1:3-8  
  
COL-031***

Our subject is "Thanksgiving for the Colossians," number nine, in Colossians 1:3-8 (Faith Rest).

In the long Greek sentence of Colossians 1:3-8, the apostle Paul begins to explain why he thanked God for the Colossian Christians – the many things about them that moved him very deeply. The first cause of his gratitude that he mentions is their faith in Christ Jesus. Faith is believing. It is believing in some authority, and acting upon that authority as a source of truth. Faith in the Christian life is Jesus Christ for the purpose of salvation, and faith to live the Christian life is in the Bible and the Word of God.

We have shown that the particular preposition in which is used in this fourth verse, "we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus," refers not just to the fact that they trusted in Christ as Savior, but that it was the sphere of their living. This is like a fish lives in water, and a bird lives in the sphere of the air. This faith unto Jesus Christ is a different idea. That was a different Greek preposition that rests upon him for Salvation, but to move in the sphere of Jesus Christ, which is what Paul had in mind here, is to speak about the action where these people live, and to identify them in the environment of faith that they move in, and that environment is the body of doctrine. We looked at the book of Jude 1:3, if you'll slip over to that for one moment again. Jude 1:3: "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation", he was going to write a book about salvation. The Holy Spirit said, "No, I want you to write about apostasy:" "I felt the necessity to write to you, appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith, which was once-for-all delivered to the saints."

The faith that he refers to here is the body of Christian doctrine. He calls upon them with great diligence to oppose attacks against that body of doctrine, and Satan, of course, seeks to intimidate us from that kind of a stand. He does not want Christians standing up for doctrinal truth. He does not want Christians to be exact in what they believe. The body of doctrine has been completed and delivered to Christians, and he calls upon us to act as those who keep it safe.

So, this expression "was delivered" means that it was entrusted for safekeeping. Doctrine alone is used to produce divine good, and this is the Christian's life. What is written in scripture is the product of the work of the Holy Spirit, and it was once-for-all delivered.

In the Greek Bible, there's another thing that shows up – that we are to contend for the scriptures once-for-all delivered. Which comes first? The scriptures, and then we contend for them; or, we contend for them, and then comes the scriptures. Well, the Greek says, "You contend most diligently for what was previously once-for-all delivered." "Once-for-all" precedes the main action of this sentence, which is" earnestly contend."

Now, obviously, before you can earnestly contend for doctrinal truth, which has been once-for-all delivered, you have to know what that is. That's what local church services are all about – teaching you the principles of the Word of God.

I must tell you that I shudder when I look upon the lives of Christians about us who are so indifferent about coming into the church services for instruction, and they drift out, and they drift off, and they think it's nothing more than going to another shoe store to get another brand of shoes as something that might appeal to them. They don't realize how serious is the problem.

Congregations after congregations are prosecuted by the man in the pulpit because he trivializes their Christian lives by what he teaches them; what he fails to teach them; what he fails to give them; and, what he fails to explain to them. Consequently, people grow up, and what can they depend upon? Their emotions. You cannot think with your emotions. You cannot decide properly with your emotions. You cannot be under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit with your emotions. The mind has to be in gear with the mind of the Spirit of God for you to have a life that maximizes its potential. And this "once-for-all" is the Greek word "hapax" (hap'-ax), H A P A X. And what that means is that there is no more Scripture "once for all delivered to the saints". Once-for-all.

We had a terrific training union session tonight on the practical working out of how you get the Bible; that is, how we got it in the first place – the method that God used (the very realistic approach) that makes this book awesome, such that it is indeed a work of God. But what is in this book is done. For when John wrote Revelation, the Bible was finished, and it was "hapax" (once-for-all) delivered.

So Mormons, eat your hearts out. You can keep advertising in the TV Guide and the Reader's Digest about the Last Testament of Jesus, but it's all humbug. This little word in the Greek Bible says there's no more Bible to be written. The Scripture and the revelation of God is "hapax" (once-for-all). It's closed down. So, you cannot recognize apostasy, Jude is saying, unless you know what is the truth. Unless you know doctrine, you can't know what is false. Unless you have Scripture as your frame of reference, you don't know what the truth is.

Now if ever since you've been a little kid, you've been growing up in a congregation, and if you want to be honest with yourself, you go home, and you say, "What do I learn in church? What do they teach me in church every Sunday? I've been watching the signs outside the big-time churches. They put up signs: here's the subject, and here's what the preacher's going to do. And I'll be – how shameless they are: that every Sunday the subject is the same. It's always the gospel. Every Sunday, hundreds of people are going to shove into these auditoriums; they're going to muscle in; they're going to sit down; and, then they're going to sit up there while a preacher gets up and he explains to them the doctrine of the gospel (the doctrine of salvation). Tomorrow morning, I'll check the signs again for next week. And I'll just bet you that it'll be a variation of the gospel. Every Sunday I'm hearing the gospel: 52 times a year (104 if you go in the evening service). And the only message I hear is the gospel. Now you tell me, if I'm a born-again believer, do I need to listen to an explanation of the gospel again?

In Berean Christian Academy chapel, we're going to start a series of studies which I will hope will train every child to be able to lead a person to salvation. We're going to teach them how to tell people the bad news, and teach them how to tell them the good news. We're going to give them the appropriate verses that they'll memorize, and then we're going to let them practice on one another, and see if they can make a clear presentation of the gospel. And we're going to tell them that they don't do any cutesy-pooh, stuff like telling them to invite Jesus into your heart; to bring him into your life; to turn your life over to Jesus; and, all those subtle, satanic deceptions which don't mean a cotton-picking thing to anybody with half-a-brain.

We will teach them to use John 3:16 or Act 16:31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ". Now, any human being with half-a-brain understands that. I know what it means to believe something or not to believe. I know what it means to listen to God, and to say, "He's telling the truth," or "He's lying." That's no problem. I know what it is to believe to be saved, but that's not what a church service is for.

Evangelistic services in a big stadium – that's for the gospel, the missionary out in a foreign field going from place to place – that's for the Gospel. But once you're born-again, then you need the faith. Then you need the content of Scripture. And you need to learn how to live within the content of the Word of God.

This is a bad church to visit, by the way. You heard Patty Daley. Her husband is a sharp guy in the Air Corps, but his background in the Word of God was thin. Now, the two of them, since they've been married, have been studying the Word of God through the tapes. And her husband has developed, after several months, a frame of reference of understanding of doctrine, and suddenly his soul has been transformed. His human spirit has now been filled with God's viewpoint. Gradually, the cloud of human viewpoint on his mind, and all the entertainment stuff, and all the pithy little sayings have been wiped out; and, their stands, within him, the mind of Christ. And suddenly she said, "You've spoiled our being able to go to church now," because they no longer can stand there and sit there and listen to the gospel and these trivialities, and then walk out, and by Monday morning say, "I can't remember a thing that I was told. I remember the jokes, but I can't remember anything that's going to take me through the crises of this week. All that emotional kick-up is gone. All that fun of seeing people trudge down the aisle, supposedly to get saved, and to throw in something to confuse them – that, "I do something to be saved," rather than to say, "I sit in my seat, and I say, "Yes, God, You are telling me the truth, and I believe the gospel, and I accept the gift of free grace salvation through Jesus Christ.

Well, all this truth, Jude says, was delivered to us once-for-all, and until you know the truth of the faith (that's another word for doctrine), you'll be subject to apostasy. You'll be subject to drifting off into that which is false. All of this is delivered to us as Christians so that we may be of good cheer, and we may be confident as we go through life, whatever may come.

**Abraham**

Now, one of the all-time great examples of a believer who lived in the faith (which is what Paul is commending the Colossians for, and which he is indeed calling upon all of us to do) is Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation. In Genesis 12:1-3, we have what we refer to as the Abrahamic Covenant. This is a one-sided covenant. It's a deal that God made with Abraham, but it was not a two-way deal. Abraham didn't have to do anything. He just had to believe that God was telling the truth – that everything was done for him. All that God promised him, God was going to carry through on his own. And what God promised him was to make out of this one man an enormous nation, and to give him a posterity that would go down through the generations (through the ages). And this posterity (the descendants of Abraham) would, in time, become the possessors of the whole world. We know that's still future because the Jewish people have never been possessors of the whole world. They have never ruled the whole world. That's just on the horizon: I see the sun coming up – the horizon of the dawn of the age of the Jewish reign through Jesus Christ upon this earth. The signs are everywhere for people who know doctrine, and who can see it.

This promise that was given to Abraham included that he would be given the land of Palestine as an eternal possession; that he would be given a seed (that is, a nation) that would always exist; and, that he would be given a great blessing which would then be shared with the gentiles as well. That blessing was personal regeneration. He'd be born again. This promise was unconditional, depending only upon the character of God and His faithfulness – not Abraham's faithfulness. The promise was extended as a grace gift from God, and thus could only be received by faith. Abraham couldn't do any religious rituals to get this. He couldn't make any promises. He couldn't perform any good works. All he could do was believe God – that God was going to do this.

So, he sits there on the banks of the Euphrates River. He's there in the pagan society of Babylon. His whole family is pagan, and somehow, as always in salvation, nobody chooses to be saved. God reaches down and suddenly opens your eyes, and jerks you into the family of God. He gives you the capacity to believe. But suddenly, because God contacted him in some way, God gave him the promise which included his personal regeneration, so that he would have an eternal life in heaven, and God promised him a great city over a nation that his descendants would reign over. And Abraham believed the promise. It was a grace gift from God.

Now, disobedience on the part of Abraham of not living in the faith of this promise, or on the part of his descendants would bring discipline upon them, but it would not terminate the promise of God. It is very important that you understand that. The amillennialists are all fouled up on this. They think that the church has replaced Israel. They think that the Jewish people will never run this world. They think that Jesus Christ will never reign over the whole world as King of Kings and Lord of Lords from the city of Jerusalem. Yes, the Jews have been disciplined. Where are they now? They're the dog's tail of human society. They're constantly under fear of somebody's threat. They are hated by the Muslim world. They are under attack wherever they cannot protect themselves. But it is because of their disobedience in rejecting their Messiah Savior, Jesus Christ. However, the promises to Abraham have never been canceled. They're still in force.

Now, the purpose of this promise to Abraham was the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth, in place of the kingdom of man, which Satan has built. The kingdom of man is based on the world view of atheistic evolution. That's Satan's viewpoint. The kingdom of God is based on the world view of theistic creationism. That's God's viewpoint.

So, Abraham was raised up to produce a counterculture to the one that Satan has built in the form of the kingdom of man. This counterculture, the Kingdom of God upon this earth, is to be achieved by the seed of Abraham.

Now today, human viewpoint is in high gear, building the kingdom of man. And human viewpoint is the norm, and it is spreading primarily through the institutions of our society, not the least of which are the religious institutions. They're spreading total human viewpoint outlook. And certainly, the secular school system is doing that. Divine viewpoint is spread by Christian education, and doctrinal concepts, as they are taught in a doctrinally oriented church and school, are what enable a society to get itself oriented, and to a line of thinking (and of conduct) such that God can bless that society.

The full establishment of the Kingdom of God will be in the millennium. The world, at that time, will have to be totally reeducated. All of the misinformation that comes to you every night on the television news program – all of that is going to have to be corrected. All the misinformation you kids get at school out in the public school system – all of that is going to have to be revised and reeducated. All of the sympathy toward a low moral standard that is commonplace in society today – all of that is going to have to be changed. People are going to have to be reeducated to the standard of God.

Please turn to Romans 4:13. This chapter deals with this marvelous promise to Abraham that we've been reviewing. And beginning at Romans 4:13, the Abraham Covenant is reviewed, and the promises made to Abraham, and the salvation which was brought to him, and all it stands for the Jewish people on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant. And this little section here sets up very clearly the contrast between trying to be saved through something you do, and being saved by an act of faith in Jesus Christ, where God does it all. And Abraham is the example to the Jewish people.

The Jews, early on, made a terrible mistake. The apostle Paul fought that all the while of his ministry. Romans chapters 9, 10, and 11 deal with the great problems of the Jewish people. And the great problem they had is that they assumed that, because they were descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they were going to go to heaven. That was mistake number one. Secondly, they assumed that if they kept the Mosaic Laws and the code of Law, like the ten commandments, that they would go to heaven. So, they were completely works-oriented, and that's what the Jews are to this day. And, of course, none of them kept the ten commandments. The Bible said that if you break one of them, you've broken the whole dish, and therefore it is now spoiled. And the Bible says that we've all sinned, and we have all fallen short of God's absolute righteous standard.

So, this little section is the apostle's proof that the father of the Jewish nation was saved by an act of believing God – His promise that He was going to bring a Messiah Savior, and that He was going to fulfill all these promises given to Abraham.

Let's read it through, beginning with Romans 4:13: "For the promise to Abraham, or to his descendants, that he would be heir of the world, was not through Law (through keeping rules), but through the righteousness of faith." Abraham was going to have descendants who would rule the world. How would that come about? Through something he did? Through something he obeyed? Through some rules he kept? No. It would be through something that God was going to do for him and the nation. It would be an act of faith.

Romans 4:14: "For those who are of the law are heirs. Faith is made void, and the promises nullified." Paul says, "If you can go to heaven on the basis of rules of one kind or another, such as in the Mosaic Law, then what good is faith. And yet, everywhere the Bible says, "Faith is the victory." Faith is the victory for Salvation. Faith is the victory for godly living.

So Paul says, "We have a big contradiction here. You Jews are telling us that you're going to be saved through your works, but the Bible says that it's through faith. And if it is through works, then faith is no good. It's worthless.

Verse 15: "For the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no Law, neither is there violation." And here Paul says, "The only thing that the Mosaic Law ever did for a person was to show him how sinful he is." You couldn't keep it. You broke the ten commandments left and right in one way or another. Consequently, you were under the judgment of God.

And he said that this was true: "Even before there were any commandments." Now God gave them 613 commandments to keep in the Old Testament. That was the Mosaic Law. The ten commandments were just part of them. But what Paul is pointing out here is that until you make a law, you can't break a law. You can't say that it's against the law to drive down Sixth Street 100 miles an hour." It would be hard to do now. You'd end up in a hole someplace. But you can't say that it's wrong to drive down Sixth Street at 100 miles an hour unless the city of Irving has an ordinance that says that the speed limit is 30 or 35. Then it's a breaking of the law. And what he's saying is, "You people were headed for the lake of fire before God ever gave you any rules to break. So, don't worry about breaking rules. You're already doomed, because you're in Adam. The minute you took your first breath into this life, and they sucked that air into your lungs – in it you brought the condemnation of the sin nature's death upon you.

Verse 16: "For this reason, it is by faith." Salvation is by faith: "That it might be in accordance with grace." If you're going to get a gift from God, you can't have rules to live by to get it. You must have grace salvation. It has to be a gift. So, it has to be by an act of faith, believing God's gospel message, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all."

Now, in this respect, we are all the children of Abraham – we Christians who are born-again. We are his spiritual children. Please do not make the mistake of equating that to that we are his natural, national Jewish children. We are not. We have none of the Jewish promises. We have none of the claims of the Old Testament. We have no land that is ours forever. We have no kingdom that will be ours forever. That is entirely the privilege and the right of the Jewish people.

However, through Abraham was told: "You are going to get salvation. And that grace of eternal life is going to extend from you, through your people, to all gentiles (to all people). The whole world's going to learn how to be saved. And the Savior will come through your people, and the provision for covering sin will be made. So, everybody who chooses to believe the gospel will be saved.

Romans 4:17 says, "As it is written, a father of many nations I have made you. In the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead, and calls into being that which does not exist." This is a wonderful promise.

Abraham used to be called Abram. Then God said, "I want you to be called Abraham now, because “Abraham” means 'father of many nations.'" So, Abraham would gather with the boys down at the local club, and they'd say, "Well, I see that your name is Abraham." And he introduced himself as "Abraham." And they would say, "Oh, father of many nations. How many children do you have?" And he would say, "Well, I don't have any now." And they would say, "Oh, really? Where'd you get that name?" He said, "God gave it to me. I'm going to be the father of many nations." And they would say, "How old are you?" And he would reply, "75." And they would say, "How old is your wife?" And he would say, "65." and they would say, "Hmm, she's kind of a sprung chicken, isn't she? Well, okay, Abraham. Good luck buddy. Father of many nations."

Now, 25 years roll along, and there isn't a baby. They keep refinishing the nursery. They keep repainting the cradle. They keep moving the stuff around. They've painted it pink: "That's wrong. It's going to be a boy. God knows that. He told us that." So, they go to yellow. Then they say, "We better make it blue. And after 25 more years, there is still nothing happening. And Abraham is getting very uneasy about whether he's just imagining all this, or if there really was a God who told him something that he can live in now.

Don't forget where we're coming from. Our Colossian passage is commending these people for living "en" Christ Jesus – in the sphere of doctrinal truth. It's not the other word in the Greek Bible ("eis"), which means like we believe *in* Christ as Savior, and we just rest upon Him. He's the object. We stop. This is big activity. This is lifestyle. And Abraham wants to live in the lifestyle of the promises of God. But he lacks an heir. This begins to concern him. And he gets up to where he is 85 years old, and his wife Sarah now is 75. God keeps reassuring him it's going to come off: "We're going to pull this off, in time." And then Sarah, his wife, decides to give him some advice.

Well, at this point, Abraham was seriously at fault, just as Adam was at fault in the Garden of Eden when he listened to Eve's human viewpoint advice. Sarah is concerned, understandably, of her age. They're both sexually inactive now, pretty well. And here, he's going to have, from the genetics of his own body, a son, who will form a great nation – a great people who will one day rule God's world, and will create the kingdom of God upon this earth, and through whom will come the Savior of all mankind. How in the world is this going to be brought about?

So, Sarah comes up with a plan. And, by the way, her name was "Sarai" – not a good name. Don't call your little kid "Sarai," because it means contentious. She was contentious. She was always like the rain dripping on the top of your house, drop-by-drop. And it was driving Abraham crazy. But there was great hope for her, because, when she finally decided to live in the faith of doctrine, God said, "Now I have to change your name. You're no longer a contentious woman. You are now a princess. So I'm going to change your name to the Hebrew word for "princess." You're now going to be called "Sarah." That was very dignified; very dramatic; and, a very wonderful change.

Well, you remember the story. She told Abraham, "We have to have a boy. Go ahead. Marry this Egyptian servant girl I have named Hager. And you go ahead. Take her as your wife. And Abraham foolishly takes her advice.

Now, the whole point of this is to remember that living in the faith of the Word of God, first of all, you have to be taught doctrine, so that you know what that faith is that you're living in. And it's not all those kicky stories and those emotional things, like putting a candle in the window, waiting for the wanderer to come home, and all that bit. This is the solid, hardcore, deep things of the Word of God. And when you know that, you are going to be hit by Satan to abandon that solid ground. You're going to be encouraged to compromise your moral character and your integrity, and to compromise your stand for separation from the world – not to look like the people of this world.

When I hit up our kids not to wear their baseball caps backwards, it is because I'm trying to tell them that that is a symbol of people who hate Jesus Christ. And I'm amazed that parents haven't figured that out. They know very well that this is a gang sign. They know very well that this is the rock star (the lizards who crawl out from under the rocks) – this is their symbol of their rebellion. And then we let our sons walk around and honor Satan's people? Whose people do you think they are? "These are the people who hate Jesus Christ, so I'm going to honor Satan's gang?" And I've noticed that when I tell the kids that, their eyes kind of open up. Somebody has made a connection for them, and the cap comes around straight. And I tell them, "Jesus Christ was a straight shooter. You wear your cap straight in honor of Him. Don't wear it as a crooked sign in honor of Satan."

Now, Abraham should have held in solid. It's so easy to go along with the world system. It's so easy to go along with human viewpoint. But he got nervous, and for a while, he stepped out of living in the sphere of the faith.

So, sure enough, when Abraham was 86 years old, his wife Hager bears a son. They name him "Ishmael," and "Ishmael" is the father of a major part of the Arab world today. All of the conflict of the hatred of Arabs toward Jews is the hatred of Ishmael for Isaac. And Abram, the man of faith, to his great sorrow, has now interjected a great deal of contention into his home.

Well, finally they send the servant girl away. They send Ishmael away. But the Lord says, "Take care of them, Abraham. He is your son, and I'm going to make a great nation out of him too. But he is not the line of the promise."

So, Abram comes to his darkest hour. He is now 99 years old. 13 years have passed since Ishmael was born, and that proved to be a pure human viewpoint solution. And at 99, he has all of the sadness of wondering whether what he believed was really true. And yet, at this point in time, God comes into the picture, and He revives, as the Scripture say: "Abraham and Sarah, who were sexually dead, are now brought back to their full capacity, and to their full ability. And the result is that the childless Abraham and Sarah find that, finally, they're going to have occasion for needing the nursery, because Sarah, in her old age, becomes pregnant. And, in time, on the scene comes Isaac.

**Isaac**

Now Romans 4:17 can indeed be fulfilled: "A father of many nations have I made of you". God is going to give that son Isaac the descendants that will make the great nation. So, verse 17 now indicates that at this point, 13 years later, Abraham has moved to the point where he lives in the faith. He has learned the truth. He has learned the principles of doctrine that are involved here. Now he has become a real man who can run his own family; who can direct his wife accurately; who can hold his children in check and direction; and, who can give them the opportunities to do and to know what is right.

Romans 4:18 says, "In hope against hope, he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken: 'So shall your descendants be.'" Abraham believed God's promise that he would make him the father of many nations. And from the time that promise was given, a quarter of a century went by before it was finally fulfilled. And the God who gives life is the one who has made this promise to Abraham. In hope against hope, he believed that he would become the father of many nations.

The result was that, verse 19 says, "Without becoming weak in faith, he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead, since he was about 100 years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb." Now he had to rise to his most magnificent moment. He had to rise to the point where, no matter what he saw, he knew what God had said. No matter what his circumstances were, he knew what God had promised. And he knew that that was where the truth lay.

So, the result was that he knew that the solution was going to come. How – he didn't know. And yet, here he was now, up in the years when all this was impossible. And suddenly, it became a fact: "Yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waiver in unbelief. But he grew strong in faith, giving glory to God." God promised, and now God carried through, and fulfilled what he had promised.

Verse 21: "And being fully assured that what He had promised, He was also able to perform". Therefore, because he believed God: "It was reckoned to him for righteousness.

In verses 23-24, then the Holy Spirit says, "Now notice this about this record. It's not only for his sake that these things were written (that it was reckoned to him), but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead; He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised on account of our justification."

We are to learn from Abraham the magnificent experience of living in the faith (living in the atmosphere – in the environment) of what God has told us.

**Faith Rest**

What Abraham performed was the doctrinal principle that we refer to as faith rest. Faith rest is one of the most important doctrines you should know. When the tough times come in your life, this is the doctrine you're going to have to fall back on. In Hebrews 4:1-4, this doctrine is enunciated. Faith rest is the practice of believing God's promises and relaxing in the confident expectation of their fulfillment by Him. Faith rest on the part of the believer is a great expression of respect for God; for His character; and, for confidence in the Word of God. The consistent faith rest walk is a sign of great advanced spiritual capacity.

Now what is it that God is calling you to do? You recoil from the very thought. You're overwhelmed. It's kind of a business enterprise that He wants you to enter. And you're so clearly led of Him, and yet you are a little uneasy to think of stepping out on that.

Here's a problem. How are you going to solve it? It is a disaster that you never expected. Faith rest in Abraham is a classic example of this principle. God had made a promise to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant. Abraham believed the promise. He mixed the promise of God with his faith. Thereafter, the issue in his life was waiting on God to fulfill God's promise. He was standing at ease. When Abraham did not act in faith rest, he slipped into human viewpoint (carnal actions). He traveled from Babylon as far as Heron, and then he didn't go any further for several years. Finally, he moved on. When things got tough in the Promised Land (the famine), instead of waiting upon God to carry him through, he ran down to Egypt like a scared rabbit, and got into terrible problems there.

There, he found that Pharaoh was attracted to his wife. And the Pharaoh said, "I'd like to have her for my harem." And Abraham said to Sarah, "Boy, if we tell him that you're my wife, he'll kill me. We have to keep that quiet. So, he passed her off as his sister. This wasn't exactly a lie. She was his half-sister. But nevertheless, it was a fact, but it wasn't the truth. And he barely escaped by the skin of his teeth.

He decided to take Hager for a wife, and got a son that was nothing but trouble. So, Abraham would sometimes stop living in faith. And that's what faith rest is. The Colossians lived in the sphere of faith. That means that they went on the principle of faith rest.

Here it is. Hebrews 4:1. "Therefore, let us fear, lest while the promise remains of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to have come short of it." He says, "God has promised you Jewish people to come into a place of rest. These people to whom he is writing were still trying to hang on to the Old Testament ways. The writer says, "Forget that. Christ is the Way. 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 mixed by faith in those who heard it." God made great promises to the Jewish people, but they didn't mix the promise of God with their belief. That's what faith rest is. Faith is believing what God has promised to do, and then you lean back, and you rest, while you watch how God unravels this. One of the toughest things is to let God do it in His time. What you may have asked for Him to do is exactly what He wants to do, but the timing is His own.

Verse 3 says, "For we who have believed entered that rest (this is a spiritual rest here), just as He has said, 'As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest.' Though his works were finished from the foundation of the world." When they got the Kadeshbarnea, they said, "We won't go in. Those people are giants in there. They'll slaughter us." Caleb and Joshua said, "No, you're wrong. Let's live in the sphere of faith of the Word of God. He has promised that He will take care of these dudes. Yes, they're big, but the bigger they are, the harder they fall." That's where that expression first originated: "The bigger they are, the harder they fall." But the other 10 spies said, "No they'll really crush us." They wouldn't go with it. And they never got to the Promised Land. Only Joshua and Caleb, of the 12, got in.

But these people made God angry because they would not live in the sphere of believing the Word of God. Hebrews 4:4: "For he has thus said, 'Somewhere concerning the seventh day, and God also arrested on seventh day from all His works.'" God has a place of works, and He rests from it.

So the principle enunciated here is simply this. It is a dangerous thing to fall short of the promises of God. What God has promised to you in the great rest, both in time and in eternity, He will bring. The people of the Old Testament blew it. Why? Because they did not mix their faith with the promises of God.

Now to be able to faith Rest, you have to know doctrine. So, we've come full circle. The less you know about the promises; the prophecies; and, the doctrines of scripture, the less you'll be able to operate on faith rest. This means that entering faith rest is not a program of Christian service, or some worked-up emotional experience. Terrible things happen.

I have a Christian friend who is a minister, whose little boy was off to kindergarten. He was walking along, and the child head across the road. They heard this car screeching. They came out. Their boy was dead on the street. And he was crushed, and he wasn't prepared for this. And he had a Christian friend who said, "Let me tell you about a doctrine that I've learned from a great preacher. It's called a doctrine of faith rest." And he took him here to this passage in Hebrews, and he says, "God has given you great promises, and what He has brought into your life now, with the loss of this child, is in His plan. And He is going to bring this out to great joy and to great blessing. And in eternity, you will look back upon this, and you'll see what a great thing this was that God has done. But for you to be able to rise to that moment, you will now have to have faith in the promises of God – that He would not do anything to you that He would not do to His Son, Jesus Christ. And then you have to lean back and rest."

He said, "When my wife and I learned that doctrine, it took all the load and all the burden off our shoulders. Our little boy was dead, but we had a new joy; a new confidence; and, a new depth of walking with the Lord."

It's not some program. It's not some preacher giving you an emotional story at the end of the sermon to get you to make some public move, so that he can look good. It is simply you and God making a decision between yourselves, and dealing privately as the priest of God that you are. God's moment-by-moment rest, while the angelic conflict surrounds each of us, is dependent upon our knowing the principles of doctrine.

The Bible, we are told, is a living book. The Bible, we are told, is a powerful book. Hebrews 4:12: "The Bible is sharper than any two-edged sword." The Bible has great piercing power. And the Bible makes you a discerner. Are you're going to be a fool, or are you going to be a smart person? Are you going to be like the rest of the gang that goes through your peer group and the people you associate with? Or are you going to be head-and-shoulders above them, because you're a royal prince, or you're a royal princess. You know faith rest, and you know how to live within the sphere of doctrine.

Father, we thank You for this time together in Your word, and we pray that You will seal these truths to our hearts, and enable us to rise to this great biblical challenge. Thank you for these offerings which the priests of God have brought this day.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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