

Title: Beginning to End
Text: Hebrews 3: 14
Date: December 30, 2010
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

I am reminded of the believer's life as we approach the end of this calendar year: you began the year Jan 1; you continued through the year (good times and sad--seasons, birthdays, anniversaries, many trials); you prove that you persevered through the year 2010 when you reach the end tomorrow night, Dec 31.

Proposition: The believer is proven to be truly made a partaker of the grace of God in Christ if we continue resting in Christ alone unto the end.

Hebrews 3: 14: For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

Those who wandered in the wilderness are the examples set before us. You can read it in Numbers 14.

Divisions: 1) To You Who Have Not Yet Begun, 2) To You Who Have Begun and Continue 3) To You Who Are Near the End

I. TO YOU WHO HAVE NOT YET BEGUN

Many who hear my voice have not yet "begun", much less continue. Oh, you have begun only in a natural sense, but not a spiritual sense:

1. Born the first time--in that since you have begun
2. You have continued up till now--some a short time, some very long time
3. You began this year, you continued right alongside many who are true believers, but you will finish this year like you started--WITH NO REPENTANCE AND FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. The end is very near--it may be the next hour--it is certainly closer now than when you began.

Hebrews 3: 7: Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8: Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10: Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11: So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)...15: While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16: For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17: But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18: And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19: So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

What did they hear? They heard the gospel.

Hebrews 4: 2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Who did they hear? They heard Christ--they heard and saw the

1. Passover Lamb slain in Egypt
2. They saw the cloud that led them by day--the pillar of fire by night
3. The Manna that God gave from heaven--tired of this light bread
4. The Smitten Rock which followed them--was Christ

The beginning of the believer's confidence is Christ? The word "confidence" means "faith", substance.

- Christ is the beginning of faith
- The Author, and Finisher of faith
- The gift of faith is of God through the faithfulness of Christ

We hold fast Christ, by giving diligence to hear of him in his gospel, whereby faith and assurance is grown within us.

Application: "TAKE HEED".

Illustration: Pigs in the slop trough

Food, clothing, shelter and all extras--against your own flesh and blood, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers--does your life consist of grunting and groping to have the slop all for yourselves?

How have you used this time? "To day"--THIS IS THE DAY OF SALVATION? So first, to you have not believed on Christ, turn from all else and cast your eternal care into his hands. Seek the Lord while he may be found.

II. TO YOU WHO HAVE BEGUN AND CONTINUE

True faith--confidence, substance--is believing God, trusting Christ to save--not just in the beginning, in word, but unto the end, in truth (1 Cor 10).

We have the warning that all those who came out of Egypt did not come out because they believed God.

1. All desired to be free from the taskmasters in Egypt
2. All came out together
3. All tasted of spiritual things

1 Cor 10: 1: Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2: And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3: And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4: And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5: But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Note: These are all various forms of the same sin--unbelief--of tempting God by turning back from Christ the Bread, Christ our Altar, Christ our to idolatrous, false, will-worshipping religion.

1 Cor 10: 6: Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

They turned from Christ the Bread.

Numbers 11:4: And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? 5: We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: 6: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.

They wanted earthly food--food for their belly, for their flesh, to feed earthly appetites. They were fed up with Christ the Bread from heaven. They proved they had no beginning substance, no real faith, no taste for the Bread alone!

They turned from Christ their Altar to imitate heathen worship

1 Corinthians 10: 7: Neither be ye idolaters, as [were] some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

God called Moses up in the mount--he stayed too long for them. They decided to imitate the Heathens, so they made a molten calf and altar and instituted a feast and a play to worship it--calling it a feast to the Lord

They turned from being the chaste virgin to Christ to spiritual and literal fornication in their idolatry. Due to Balaam--the false prophet--whose counsel led to spiritual and literal fornication which both were included in the custom of the heathen worship.

1 Corinthians 10: 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

They turned from Christ their Provider

1 Corinthians 10: 9: Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

Numbers 21:5: And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

They turned from Christ their Prophet, Priest and King by murmuring against Moses and Aaron.

1 Corinthians 10: 10: Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. (Nu 16--Korah)

Paul Gives Us the Application

1 Corinthians 10: 11: Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12: Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Turning from Christ is thinking we can stand, save ourselves.

1 Corinthians 10: 13: There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]. 14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

Man is not faithful. God is faithful. The Way to escape is Christ Jesus the Way. In all of these examples, the Way was Christ Jesus:

- CHRIST IS OUR BREAD
- CHRIST IS OUR ALTAR
- CHRIST IS OUR PROVIDER
- CHRIST IS OUR HUSBAND, WE HIS CHASTE VIRGIN
- CHRIST IS OUR PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING--HE SHALL DELIVER US.

Is Christ the beginning of your confidence? Is Christ the Author of your Faith--the Substance of your Faith? Is Christ the Finisher--Hold to Christ stedfast unto the end?

III. TO MY DEAR BRETHREN WHO ARE NEAR UNTO THE END

Hebrews 3: 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

Some of us have had loved ones who died this year. Some have had loved ones die in years past at this time of year. Some of us have dear brethren who are near the end.

The children of Israel came to the edge of Canaan. The spies went in and came back. It was exactly as it had been told them. The river Jordan was really the river Jordan, there were yet a few giants to face.

So it is now that many are sick, their bodies are failing, disease has taken its toll--these are giants which are larger than anything you have faced as you have journeyed through this wilderness. But God is faithful. The Way is Christ.

Most of those spies began to waver but not Joshua and Caleb. Their confidence was their faithful God and our faithful God confirmed them unto the end.

Hebrews 4: 3: For we which have believed do enter into rest...

The same God of grace that gives us the peace of heart in the beginning--carries us through every trial--makes Christ the Way of escape--he has saved us and is saving us and shall save us--the same God of all grace shall deliver us into the promised land as God has promised.

Illustration: This Friday night will be December 31, it will pass and we will wake up Saturday morning to a new year. So shall it be for those who rest in Christ by faith--as real as you close your eyes at the end of this year and open them to all things brand new--so shall we awake in glory!

Psalm 17:15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

1 Corinthians 15: 55: O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
56: The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57: But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The End--Read Rev 21: 1-7 and think on these things!
The new, never-ending year of jubilee is almost here!

Amen!