

October 22, 2023

# The View

*“Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.” – John 12:21*

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## Welcome Visitors

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly “headquarters.” The five elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask the preacher or one of the elders.

We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

***Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate when is passed.***

***We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.***

## Schedule

### The Lord's Day

#### 9:30 AM Bible Classes

*Auditorium: A Study of the Parables*

Young Adult Class (room 12): “Mind Your King” (Authority)

Room 15/16: The Sermon on the Mount: Relationships

#### 10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

David Posey, Hebrews Series: “Aim to Enter the Rest”

Hebrews 3:16–4:13

*Livestream at 9:30 & 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>*

#### Bible Class: 5:00 PM @ the Building

*“Praying the Psalms” (Auditorium)*

HS/College Class, 5 PM Every Sunday @ David & Christie Posey's home.

Young people monthly meeting (middle school): contact David Sanderson ([david.r.sanderson@intel.com](mailto:david.r.sanderson@intel.com))

or Seth Reagan ([sethreagan@gmail.com](mailto:sethreagan@gmail.com))

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

### Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Classes: same as Sunday 9:30 AM

2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Men's Bible Study: 7 to 8 AM

Bel Air Market on Bidwell in Folsom.

“Iron sharpens iron” (Proverbs 27:17). Mentoring (Titus 2:1-6).

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Articles published in the View reflect only the thoughts and opinions of the author alone, not necessarily the editor, the elders or any member of the church at Folsom.

# Quotes & Notes

## Technology & Godliness

"WE HAVE TO ADMIT THAT, FOR SOME, TECHNOLOGY HAS BECOME A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY IDOL AND, I FEAR, IT IS DISTRACTING MANY OF US FROM OUR SPIRITUAL PRIORITIES."

That technology has changed our lives is indisputable. It's incumbent upon us then, if we aim to please God, to consider how it is affecting us and our children. By "technology" I mean reliance on our devices (phones and tablets) and our ready access to streaming services (Netflix, Prime, Hulu, Roku, etc., etc.) and a huge library of music (on Spotify, etc.) and games. These are commonplace today and when something becomes commonplace and convenient in our lives, it can easily become an idol which makes it ungodly ("godliness" means the inner response to the things of God which leads to reverence for God).

Does the Bible, written thousands of years ago, have anything to say about it? I believe it does. Paul said, "*All things are lawful, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful, but not all things build up*" (1 Corinthians 10:23). By "lawful" Paul isn't saying "legal," like using drugs, in states that permit it, or participating in any other non-criminal but ungodly action. He is referring to things that God permits; but not everything God permits is helpful to us or others. Paul also encourages us to consider the potential consequences of our actions and choices, including our use of technology. While technology can be a useful tool, it can also be harmful if used inappropriately or excessively. When you're in a restaurant and see a family of four all sitting silently, looking at their phones (or playing games on it), it's clear that technology, in that case, is not contributing to a healthy family life that pleases God (cf. Psalm 128).

Another passage that may speak to our excessive use of "devices" is Colossians 3:2. Paul says, "*set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*" This verse encourages us to focus on spiritual and eternal matters, rather than worldly and temporal concerns. We have to admit that, for some, technology has become a 21<sup>st</sup> century idol and, I fear, it is distracting us from our spiritual priorities. A simple test: compare your screen time to time spent in Bible reading and study, in classes, in prayer... which is getting more attention? Addiction to technology is a real thing in 2023.

Lastly, consider Proverbs 4:23, "*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*" This verse speaks to the importance of protecting our heart and being mindful of what we allow into our minds. We have to be aware of the potential of exposure to harmful or inappropriate content online.

There are many other passages that warn us about the dangers of technology without using that term. And there are many men and women who are trying to warn us as well, many without any religious motive at all. Here are a few (many of these are bemoaning the lost art of hand-written letters. Having lived in an era when that was the only reasonable means of communication, I have to agree). — dp

- "We have lost the ability to be fully present in the moment because we are constantly distracted by screens and notifications." — Unknown
- "Technology has given us the world at our fingertips, but it has taken away the simplicity and joy of face-to-face human interactions." — Unknown
- "The more we rely on technology, the less we rely on our own abilities and intuition." — Amit Ray
- "Technology has made information abundant, but wisdom scarce." — Yuval Noah Harari
- "We have lost our connection to nature and the outdoors, as we spend more time indoors with our screens." — Richard Louv
- "Technology has made us more connected than ever, but we have lost the art of deep listening and meaningful conversations." — Unknown
- "The convenience of technology has made us impatient and intolerant of delays and inconveniences." — Unknown
- "We have lost our privacy and personal boundaries in the age of constant surveillance and data collection." — Shoshana Zuboff
- "Technology has eroded our attention spans, making it difficult to focus and concentrate for extended periods of time." — Unknown
- "We have lost the ability to disconnect and be alone with our thoughts, as we are constantly connected to our devices." — Cal Newport
- "Letter writing is the only device for combining solitude with good company." — Lord Byron (1788-1824)
- "In this digital age, we have lost the art of letter writing, where words were carefully crafted and cherished for a lifetime." — Unknown
- "A letter is a heartfelt connection that transcends time and distance, a lost art in the age of instant messaging." — Unknown
- "Letter writing is a lost art that allowed us to express our deepest thoughts and emotions in a way that no digital message can replicate." — Unknown
- "In a world of emails and texts, we have lost the personal touch and intimacy of a handwritten letter." — Unknown
- "Letter writing was a labor of love, where every word was carefully chosen, and the act of writing itself was an expression of care and thoughtfulness." — Unknown
- "Letters are like time capsules, capturing our emotions and memories in a tangible form, a lost treasure in the digital era." — Unknown
- "With the decline of letter writing, we have lost the art of preserving our personal stories and legacies for future generations." — Unknown
- "Letter writing was an act of slowing down, of taking the time to connect with others in a meaningful and deliberate way." — Unknown
- "Letter writing was a reflection of our individuality and personality, a lost form of self-expression in the age of standardized digital communication." — Unknown

"Letters are like time capsules, capturing our emotions and memories in a tangible form, a lost treasure in the digital era."

# HEBREWS: DIGGING DEEPER

"THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL, THE ORACLE WHICH HIS MOTHER TAUGHT HIM."

## Warning against unbelief [3:7-19]

The second warning section in Hebrews begins here (see the first warning in Hebrews 2:1-4). The gist of this warning extends through most of chapter 4. The preacher recalls the anger of God with Israel in the wilderness and their failure to enter the rest because of unbelief.

The writer quotes much of Psalm 95 in making his point. The writer of the Psalm (note that the writer of Hebrews ascribes the Psalm to the Holy Spirit) begins by praising God and then encourages the people to stay faithful and not harden their hearts as the people did in the wilderness (see Exodus 17:2-7; Numbers 20:9-13). The writer makes his argument from the latter part of the Psalm, using it as a warning against unbelief. Earlier in the chapter, he alluded to Miriam's and Aaron's rebellion, and now he reminds them of the rebellion of the people at Rephidim, where the people, not too long after they had left Egypt, demanded water and murmured against Moses. He argues, at least implicitly, that to return to Judaism, for whatever reason, would be to align oneself with those who rebelled in the wilderness.

The word "rest" (*katapausin*) occurs 9 times in Hebrews 3-4. It occurs here for the first time in the letter.

The failure to enter the rest was a direct result of God's anger with the people and that anger was provoked by the people's rebellion. Notable especially is the statement that the people "did not know my ways" (3:10). Israel seemed to suffer throughout its history from a miscalculation of how God would or wouldn't react; they misjudged His justice and mistook his love for permissiveness (cf. Isaiah 5:20; Malachi 2:17).

The writer offers a prescription for avoiding the deleterious effects of unbelief, and it's one that he repeats on other occasions: "encourage one another" (cf. 10:24ff.). Daily temptations require a daily remedy, so he says to encourage each other "day after day." In other words, develop a sense of urgency about encouraging each other. Why? Because sin is "deceitful." Few of us set out to sin, but circumstances and situations that occur make us seek avenues that are opposed to God's will. We may justify ourselves, especially if we have only ourselves to answer to. Part of the dynamic of church membership is helping each other see the right way and follow it (see James 5:20).

The only way we can stay in a relationship with Christ is if we hold on to what we learned "firm until the end" (3:14, an almost identical statement to v. 3:6). The idea of holding on until the end is a major theme in Hebrews, since it speaks directly to the situation of the readers (cf. 6:11; 10:36; 12:1). They had begun well, and had even suffered for their faith (10:32); some were suffering now (13:3). But they were tempted to let go, to cut corners and not finish the race. The writer reminds them to forsake such a foolhardy course, since it amounts to "unbelief"; the only thing that matters is where you are at the end, whenever that end may come. To illustrate, he refers again to the Israelites who rebelled under Moses — their bodies fell in the wilderness and they never entered the rest that God had planned for them. Why? Because they were *disobedient*. Notice how the writer ties disobedience and unbelief together. "Unbelief" is *apistia*, "without faith" (v. 19) and results in a disobedience as serious as those who rebelled in Moses' day. Taken with 2:1-4, the implication is that it is even more ruinous to rebel under Christ than it was to rebel in Moses' time; yet, it was those rebellious souls in Moses' day whose bodies fell in the wilderness. They could not enter the rest because they were without faith and "without faith, it is impossible to please Him" (11:6).

## Warning: be careful to enter the rest [4:1-14]

Thirteen times in Hebrews, the writer says "let us." The word used here is derived from *phobia* and is translated "let us fear." Some might accuse the preacher of using fear as motivation instead of love and other positive concepts. Some teach a "gospel" that is stripped of all references to fear. But the preacher here does not shy away from using the word "fear" because it is "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). While it is always better to serve God out of love and appreciation for all he's done, sometimes fear is the only thing that gets our attention (see Matthew 10:28).

The concept of God's promised "rest" takes center stage now. The writer is saying that there is nothing worse than to come short of the goal, the promised "rest." Here, "rest" is clearly future, referring to the eternal rest in heaven. It would be sad beyond description to get to the last day

having fallen short of the goal. Is it possible? Yes, he says, because we're not saved by the preaching of the good news alone. It must be heard and acted on. The Israelites heard the good news, too, but "fell." The missing ingredient was faith. Faith means different things in different contexts. "Faith" (Gk. *pistis*) sometimes simply means mental assent (see James 2:19) and other times the acceptance of some statement as true (cf. Genesis 15:6). But in the Bible it usually involves trust and commitment based upon promises. It's not a mysterious "Bible word." Outside of a biblical context, we exercise faith every day. When you pick up your car from the shop after having your tires rotated, you drive down the freeway 70 miles an hour, you are doing that by faith. You are basing your trust on the implicit promise that the mechanic bolted your tires on properly. The Israelites heard the promises but their actions did not follow because they did not trust and obey. Hearing without faith is just hearing — there is no profit in it (cf. James 1:22-25).

"We don't need to celebrate the Sabbath here because we will celebrate it in eternity when we enter our final, eternal 'resting place' in heaven."

According to 4:3, it is those who have believed (past tense) that are entering (present tense) that rest. Here, the tenses suggest that those who once made the decisive choice to turn to Christ (in baptism, cf. Galatians 3:26-27) are in the process of entering into the rest that God has prepared. In

most instances, the term "rest" refers to the future. But here, the writer points out that there is some sense in which we are entering the rest now. This is similar to John's use of the term "eternal life" as both something we will have in the future (Matthew 19:29) and something that we have now (1 John 5:11-13). God intends for His people to enter that rest since He prepared it from the "foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34), and this rest is prefigured in His own rest after He made the world (4:4; cf. Genesis 2:2). Yet His chosen people (Israel) blocked their entrance to His rest because they rejected the "good news." So they will not enter. Yet it remains for some of His people to enter (4:6).

From the perspective of David, who was writing Psalm 95, God had fixed a "certain day" to make this rest available. Since Israel was already in Palestine when David wrote, the "rest" was not to be completed in physical Israel, but was spiritual in nature, for if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day (v. 8). There is a "Sabbath rest" (one word, *sabbatismos*) that remains, therefore, for the people of God. According to William L. Lane (*Word Biblical Commentary*; Hebrews, Vol. 1, p. 102), the writer probably coined the word from the cognate verb that is translated "to observe/to celebrate the Sabbath." In its only occurrence outside Christian literature (Plutarch), *sabbatismos* means "Sabbath observance." In other documents independent of Hebrews 4:9, it refers to the celebration or festivity of the Sabbath. The Greek term was employed here, then, to signify the special aspect of festivity and joy expressed in the adoration and praise of God. In 4:9, this nuance defines the character of the promised rest which awaits the people of God. The concept of this Sabbath rest, then, takes on a future application. We don't need to celebrate the Sabbath here because we will celebrate it in eternity when we enter our final, eternal "resting place" in heaven.

In 4:10, the writer again refers to God's rest from His labors after he made the world. In his argument, the preacher makes reference to all the "rests" that we read about in the Bible: God's rest is the archetype; the entrance of Israel into the land of Canaan is the type; and our entrance into the "Sabbath rest" to come is the antitype. "Let us, therefore, be diligent (or eager) to enter that rest. . ." (4:11). Again, the writer encourages his readers to stay the course and finish the race (12:1ff.) lest they fall just like their predecessors. He then warns them again, this time on the basis of the power of God's word, which is living and active and sharp, able to pierce and to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart (4:12-13). This is the classic passage on the strength of God's word, but more than that, it asserts the close identification of God with His word — when the word is discerning our hearts, it is God discerning them. God is speaking to us, directly and forcefully and it behooves us to pay attention (2:1-4).

The writer completes this section where he started, pointing our attention back to Jesus, our great High Priest who has "passed through the heavens." As is his custom, he ends with another "let us" and, for the third time, tells us to "hold fast our confession."

DAVID POSEY