

God Spoke - and God Speaks   
A Study Through The Epistle Called ebrews

6 Labor To Enter Into Rest

Rock Hill Baptist Church

605 Rock Hill Road  
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Brother David Buffaloe  
731-845-6104

[bibleteacher.org](http://bibleteacher.org)

**6.1 The Phobia of the Christian**



Hebrews 4:1-2 (KJV) "Let us therefore fear<sup>1</sup>, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. {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."

This is very interesting. The Lord tells us that we who believe are to have a *phobia*<sup>1</sup>. A phobia is, by the way, a *fear of things*. Some people have phobias over heights. Myself, I don't care for height, and when I get over twenty feet off the ground I start getting scared. Other people have phobias over large bodies of water. Yet others have phobias over aging, crowds, snakes, spiders, certain foods, and so on. The list is nearly endless among modern man. But in the Scripture we who have accepted Christ as Savior are commanded *not* to have phobias over things that most people worry about. For instance, we are not to worry about things we have no control over. We are to work as the birds of the field toil, but we are not to become obsessed or have a phobia about obtaining goods. We know that God will provide for those whom He loves:

Matthew 6:25-30 (KJV) "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? {26} Behold the fowls of the air:

<sup>1</sup> phobeo {pronounced fob-eh'-o}, Aorist Passive Subjunctive, to have a fear of, have a *phobia* of.

**for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? {27} Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? {28} And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: {29} And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. {30} Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"**

The Christian is not to have a *phobia* about what is going to happen tomorrow. We have no control over tomorrow, nor, in fact, do we have much control over today. We are just to trust our Savior, and believe that He will protect His own:

**Matthew 6:33-34 (KJV) "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. {34} Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."**

1. The Christian is not to have a \_\_\_\_\_ about what is going to happen tomorrow. We have no control over tomorrow, nor, in fact, do we have much control over today. We are just to trust our Savior, and believe that He will protect \_\_\_\_\_.

The believer is not to worry about *the confused*, those who refuse to hear the Word of God. God has

emphasized to me over and over again that I must trust Him and do what He has called me to do - and He'll take care of the rest. There are always those confused religious people who hang around the outskirts of the Christian parameter, who are *ever yearning but never coming* to the knowledge of the Truth (**2 Timothy 3:5-7**). There is always the *Pharisee or Sadducee* who hang on the outskirts of true knowledge of Christ, but never reach that knowledge. Jesus tells us not to fear them, but to pity them.

**Matthew 15:12-14 (KJV) "Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? {13} But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. {14} Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."**

The blind leading the blind will both fall into the ditch. We who are the children of *the Light* need not fear, for we follow Jesus.

Phobias, phobias, phobias! Those who know Jesus Christ as Savior are told

**2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV) "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear<sup>2</sup>; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."**

The *phobia* of the Christian is not the phobia of the

<sup>2</sup> here the word is not *phobeo* but is instead *deilia* {pronounced di-lee'-ah}, meaning "cowardice, timidity, fearfulness".

world. The thing that we need to be fearful of is what Israel *was not* fearful of. Israel followed Jesus in the wilderness, followed the Lord as she came out of Egypt. In fact, the writer of Hebrews tells us that she heard the *same Gospel* we have heard:



**Hebrews 4:1-2 (KJV) "Let us therefore fear<sup>3</sup>, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. {2} For unto us was the gospel<sup>4</sup> preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed<sup>5</sup> with faith in them that heard it."**

The words **gospel preached<sup>4</sup>** is a Greek Perfect Passive Participle. The Perfect tense in the Greek corresponds to the Perfect tense in English, and describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated. Israel *heard the Gospel* preached, the Gospel that God is our Savior, that God loves us, that God was our redemption. Though Israel heard the pre-Cross Gospel, they heard the Gospel nonetheless. **It is not possible that *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16)*, and this great Love did not proffer salvation to the old Testament Saint. Israel heard the Gospel preached, just as we did and do. But Israel did something that we should have a *phobia* against doing. Israel *disbelieved God*.** They refused to follow where He led. They heard

3 phobeo {pronounced fob-eh'-o}, Aorist Passive Subjunctive, to have a fear of, have a *phobia* of.

4 euaggelizo {pronounced yoo-ang-ghel-id'-zo}, Perfect Passive Participle.

5 sugkerannumi {pronounced soong-ker-an'-noo-mee}, Perfect Passive Participle, to mix together, commingle, unite so that it remained mixed.

the Word preached, but did not mix the preaching of the Word *with faith*. They did not believe God and, because they mixed unbelief and inaction into the partnership they had with God, they never profited by that partnership.

2. It is not possible that *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16)*, and this great Love did not \_\_\_\_\_ salvation to the old Testament Saint. Israel heard the Gospel preached, just as we did and do. But Israel did something that we should have a *phobia* against doing. Israel \_\_\_\_\_ God.



**Hebrews 4:3 (KJV) "For we which have believed do enter<sup>6</sup> into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world."**

The writer of Hebrews now makes a startling claim. He says, *if you have believed* (Aorist Active Participle, have believed in a point of time, have trusted in God) then *you will enter into rest*. You will enter into that place that God has designed for you. God designed the Promised Land for Israel. It was *made* for them from the very *foundation of the world*. If you believe God, you will walk where God says walk, you will move where God says move, and you will possess what God says possess. It has nothing to do with our abilities, but it has everything to do with trusting God!

6 eiserchomai {pronounced ice-er'-khom-ahee}, Present Middle Indicative, shall enter into so as to possess [My rest].

Look at this phrase:

**"although the works were finished from the foundation of the world"**

The God Who made all things knows what is best for your life. He knows about tomorrow, and has known about tomorrow since He created the very foundation of the world. We sing that song:

**I don't know about tomorrow ,  
I just live from day to day.  
I don't borrow from it's sunshine,  
for it's skies may turn to gray.  
I don't worry o'er the future,  
For I know what Jesus said.  
And today I'll walk beside Him,  
For He knows what is ahead.  
Many things about tomorrow,  
I don't seem to understand;  
But I know who holds tomorrow,  
And I know who holds my hand<sup>7</sup>.**

a very old song, but a very true song. God has taught Israel, as well as us, that we are to trust Him in all things.

## **6.2 Trust and Obey!**

Read further in the text:

**Hebrews 4:3b-4 (KJV) "... although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. {4} For he**



**spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works."**

Why did God rest on the *seventh day* after creation? Was He tired from all that work? Absolutely not! Our God is *omnipotent*, all powerful - there is nothing He cannot do. The Bible says:

**Job 42:2 (KJV) "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee."**

**Jeremiah 32:17 (KJV) "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:"**

**Matthew 19:26 (KJV) "But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."**

**Revelation 19:6 (KJV) "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."**

Say this with me: "Our God reigns". Sing this with me,

**Our God reigns! Our God reigns!  
Our God reigns! Our God reigns!**

<sup>7</sup> "I Know Who Holds Tomorrow" by Ira F. Stanphill

**It was our sin and guilt  
That bruised and wounded Him.  
It was our sin that brought Him down.  
When we like sheep had gone astray  
Our Shepherd came  
And on His shoulders bore our shame.**

**Our God reigns! Our God reigns!  
Our God reigns! Our God reigns!<sup>8</sup>**

Our God does indeed reign! He reigns over all things, and yet He rested on the seventh day. His rest was not a rest of weariness, for God never wearies, but His rest was a rest *of example*, to show us that we must *rest* where God has finished the work. The writer of Hebrews quotes both the *Book of Creation* as well as the fourth commandment in *the Book of the Law*:

**Genesis 2:2-3 (KJV) "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. {3} And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."**

**Exodus 20:11 (KJV) "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."**

God set one day apart from the other six to remind man that we must *trust in His finished work*. Just as man did

absolutely nothing to either earn or deserve his creation, we do absolutely nothing to earn or deserve our salvation. Israel did not earn nor deserve their salvation from Egypt. God saved Israel from her captors, in spite of all her flaws. No Christian has ever earned or deserved his salvation. God saves us in spite of ourselves because of His good mercy. Because He in His infinity has determined to save us, to purge our souls from sin, to work in us who believe in Him, we can also trust that He will protect us in this life.

3. God set one day apart from the other six to remind man that we must \_\_\_\_\_.  
Just as man did absolutely nothing to either earn or deserve his creation, we do absolutely nothing to earn or deserve our \_\_\_\_\_.

If He saved Israel from Egypt, He would certainly take Israel into the Promised Land. The giants in the Promised Land were no bigger than the giants that Israel faced in Egypt. The God Who drowned the entire Egyptian Army to save Israel would certainly protect and guide Israel as they followed the Savior *outside* of Egypt.

Now here is where the *phobia* comes in. We need to have a *phobia*, we need to be frightened of anything that will walk us away from our God. Listen up Beloved! The *Infinite* God Who gave Israel the Land of Promise can also *deny* Israel the Land of Promise. Why did Israel not enter into God's Promised Land?

### **6.3 Not *apistia* But *apeitheia***

We are told:



**Hebrews 4:5-6 (KJV) "And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. {6} Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief<sup>9</sup>:"**

I want to correct something in this text. The original text does not say that Israel failed to enter the Promised Land because of *unbelief*. No, that was not the thing which destroyed them. The word rendered **unbelief** by the King James translators actually means *obstinacy*, or an *opposition to follow God*. The Israelites decided that they were going to do things *their own way* regardless as to what God told them. This *obstinacy*, not unbelief, led to their destruction. The New American Standard renders this verse this way:

**Hebrews 4:6 (NASB) "Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience,"**

and the New International Version renders it as,

**Hebrews 4:6 (NIV) "It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience."**

Israel just decided that they wanted to do what they

<sup>9</sup> *apeitheia* {pronounced ap-i<sup>2</sup>-thi-ah}, obstinacy, opposition to the Divine Will

wanted to do when they wanted to do it. They disobeyed God, and their **repeated pattern of disobedience led to their own destruction.**

**apistia = unbelief**

**apeitheia = outward expression of unbelief**

In **Ephesians 2:2** we see that the Christian is a person who has been brought from a state of *apeitheia*, walking in disobedience to God:

**Ephesians 2:1-2 (KJV) "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: {2} Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"**

We *were* children of obstinacy, people who walked in opposition to God. We are no longer in this state! We have been freed from the Egypt of sin to walk in newness of life. The Christian, just like the ancient Israelite freed from bondage, is freed to walk *in union with God*. We are also told in Ephesians:

4. We *were* children of \_\_\_\_\_, people who walked in opposition to God. We are no longer in this state! We have been freed from the Egypt of sin to walk in newness of life. The Christian, just like the ancient Israelite freed from bondage, is freed to walk \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ephesians 4:17-19 (KJV) "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as**

**other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, {18} Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: {19} Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."**

Israel was saved by God with the *eternally determined goal* of entering the Promised Land. The Christian is saved by God with the *eternally determined goal* of entering his own Promised Land. We are warned again, as the writer of Hebrews quotes the Psalms:



**Hebrews 4:7 (KJV) "Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."**

**Psalms 95:7-11 (KJV) "For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, {8} Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: {9} When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. {10} Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: {11} Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."**

Israel was saved by faith in God, but lost the blessing of the Promised Land because they refused to be obedient

to God's leading. The Christian, also saved by faith in God, can lose greater blessings in this life by refusing to be obedient to God's leading. Just as God expected obedience of Israel, He expects obedience of His New Testament saints.



**Hebrews 4:8-10 (KJV) "For if Jesus had given them rest<sup>10</sup>, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. {9} There remaineth therefore a rest<sup>10</sup> to the people of God. {10} For he that is entered into his rest<sup>10</sup>, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."**

We now come to a somewhat complex statement in the Greek, though it is not as complex as it seems. God gave ancient man a *sabbath day* to show him that *creation was finished*, and that what God had made needed *none of our effort* to keep it made. **The ancient Israel rested on the sabbath day (our Saturday) to remind him that God's Provision is sufficient. The Israelite had more than one sabbath, by the way. There was the *seventh day sabbath (Exodus 16:26; 31:16) given only to Israel*, but there was also *special holy sabbaths (Leviticus 23:16; 23:24) on certain feast days, as well as a *sabbatical year* or an entire year where the land was to lay untilled (Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:1-7; Deuteronomy 15:1-11, 31:10-13)*. These sabbaths all served to do one thing - to cause Israel to trust in God for, not just their salvation from Egypt, but for their *provision* after Egypt.**

When God made all things by the word of His power, He

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<sup>10</sup> sabbatismos {pronounced sab-bat-is-mos' }, sabbath, day of rest

made *it right*. So He had no reason to work at all on the seventh day. It is finished! He is done!

If you are in Christ then those same words need to ring through your head.

5. The Israelite had more than one sabbath, by the way. There was the \_\_\_\_\_ sabbath (Exodus 16:26; 31:16) given only to Israel, but there was also \_\_\_\_\_ (Leviticus 23:16; 23:24) on certain feast days, as well as a \_\_\_\_\_ or an entire year where the land was to lay untilled (Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:1-7; Deuteronomy 15:1-11, 31:10-13). These sabbaths all served to do one thing, which was \_\_\_\_\_

**John 19:30 (KJV) "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished<sup>11</sup>: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."**

Jesus Christ finished the work of salvation on the Cross. We who believe in Him have been saved from Egypt, and He now lives inside of us. Now we move toward that Promised Land. The Promised Land is *not Heaven*, because Israel had to fight enemies - under the power of God - as they entered the Promised Land. No Beloved, the Promised Land is not Heaven - though that has been promised to us. We are told:

**Philippians 3:20 (KJV) "For our conversation is in**

<sup>11</sup> teleo {pronounced tel-eh'-o}, Perfect Passive Indicative, it is finished with the result that it remains finished!

**heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:"**

**Colossians 1:4-5 (KJV) "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, {5} For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;"**

Heaven has been promised to the Christian, but that is not our Promised Land. The Promised Land for the believer in *either old or new testaments* was a place of victory *on this earth*. We do not labor to be saved, for the

**1 John 1:7 (KJV) "... blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."**

No, we do not work our way to Heaven. Heaven is ours, it is promised, and God does not lie! We labor, not to enter Heaven - but to enter into that place where God leads us. Listen to the *peculiarity* and *oddity* of this text:

**Hebrews 4:11 (KJV) "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."**

We *labor* to *enter* into rest! How odd! We **labor** to enter into **rest**. **Even though we are saved, the Christian still possesses an Old Sin Nature (1 John 1:8-9). This Old Sin Nature draws us away from the things of God. However, the Christian is also *indwelt* by the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Romans 8:9). This sets up a *friction* inside of every believer, a desire to obey God,**

but also a calling to obey self. Thus we struggle against ourselves, and hopefully *not against God*. We struggle against an inclination to do what we want to do, and struggle to bring our minds into unity with God's mind. The Apostle put it this way:

6. Even though we are saved, the Christian still possesses an \_\_\_\_\_ (1 John 1:8-9). This \_\_\_\_\_ draws us away from the things of God. However, the Christian is also *indwelt* by the \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Romans 8:9). This sets up a *friction* inside of every believer, a desire to obey God, but also a calling to obey self. Thus we struggle against ourselves, and hopefully *not against* \_\_\_\_\_.

**Romans 7:17-25 (KJV)** "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. {18} For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. {19} For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. {20} Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. {21} I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. {22} For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: {23} But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. {24} O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? {25} I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

**Romans 8:1 (KJV)** "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The Christian way of life is a *supernatural* way of life. The believer must be *surrendered* to God the Holy Spirit Who indwells him, surrendered to His leading, surrendered to His guidance. *Christianity is not just about the knowledge of the Word*, but it is also about *surrender to His leading*. The Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees all knew the Word of God, but because they failed to *partner with God* in that knowledge they never came to a knowledge of the Truth. *Though work never wearies God, our unbelief wearies Him*:

**Isaiah 7:10-14 (KJV)** "Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, {11} Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. {12} But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. {13} And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? {14} Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Israel demanded sign after sign from God, and God gave sign after sign. The Virgin Birth itself was a sign that God came to dwell among man, and yet Israel refused to believe. Listen Beloved! Knowledge without obedience, without *working out your faith*, is useless! The Christian walk is a power walk, an obedient walk, but never a

disobedient walk.

7. Christianity is *not just about the knowledge of the Word*, but it is also about \_\_\_\_\_.  
The Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees all knew the Word of God, but because they failed to *partner with God* in that knowledge they never came to a knowledge of the Truth. Though work never wearies God, our \_\_\_\_\_ wearies Him.

#### 6.4 The Word of God

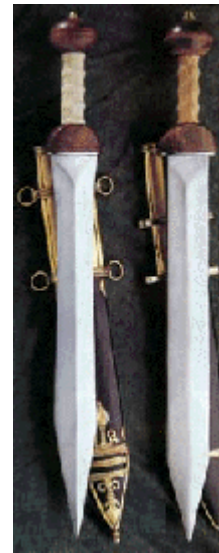


**Hebrews 4:11-12 (KJV) "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. {12} For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword<sup>12</sup>, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."**

The Word of God was *never meant* to be just studied and understood - it was meant to be *used*. The writer of Hebrews now likens the Word of God to a *two-edged sword*. The Scripture tells us several truths about itself that we as Christians NEED TO HEED if we ever expect to grow beyond the foolish or immature stage in our walk with God.

The Word of God, our Holy Scriptures, are not just writings from a bunch of dead guys, but are writings that came to us from God's own heart. The Word of God is

QUICK (Greek *zao*, meaning ALIVE), and POWERFUL (Greek *energes*, full of ENERGY), and SHARPER than any two-edged sword. Most people read this text quickly then move on, never comprehending the great truth that the Lord shares here.



In ancient times Rome conquered the entire known world using a short, two edged sword called a "machaira"<sup>12</sup>. Up until the time of its invention, most warriors were equipped with long, bulky swords when they went into battle. These long and heavy weapons were wonderful if you hit your enemy with a direct blow on your first swing. It's a fact that a heavier sword will generally kill your opponent with one blow if you squarely deliver that blow. The problem was, your opponent rarely stood still waiting for you to

disembowel him ... and if you missed with your first swing, the weight of the sword generally threw you off balance. This could well be your own downfall! So someone in the Roman war department came up with the concept of a short, double edged sword. It was light, so you could quickly correct yourself if you missed your opponent on the first blow. Further, its reduced weight kept you from premature exhaustion. The double edge meant that you were just as effective delivering upward as well as downward blows. This weapon was so

<sup>12</sup> or in the Latin, *gladius*, was designed for the stabbing and thrusting (rather than slashing) style of hand-to-hand combat favored by the legions; it was short (approximately 20-22 inches long), with a two-edged blade that tapered to a sharp point and was carried in a scabbard suspended from a shoulder belt. Information and picture from [www.vroma.org](http://www.vroma.org)

effective that Rome literally conquered the world with it ... no mean feat.

The Word of God is different from all the other "swords" out there. One person wrote me and told me that there were "many ways to God", and "What did it matter" if someone followed another Way? Well, you are correct. There are a lot of swords out there, a lot of words, a lot of Zen and writings, thoughts and prophets. But there is only One Machaira, one Holy Bible. Do the other "ways" get you to God? No, because there is only one Word of God, and only One Jesus Christ. Here's what Jesus said in that One Word:

**(John 14:6 KJV) "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."**

Jesus Christ established Himself, clearly and without apology, as the ONLY WAY to God the Father. If there are, as many of you believe, "many paths" to God, then Jesus was a liar or a lunatic - for His words cannot be misunderstood. What does it matter? It matters a lot that we reject all "other ways" to God but Jesus Christ. Here's another clear text of Scripture:

**(John 3:17-19 KJV) "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. {18} He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. {19} And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light,**

**because their deeds were evil."**

Again, very clear text. If you believe on Jesus, you are not condemned ... but if you reject Jesus for, for instance, one of those other "ways", you are condemned already. What did the Scripture mean by "condemned already"? Well, how did Jesus regard the Scribes and Pharisees who reject Him as the Only Way to God?

**(Matthew 23:24-33 KJV) "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. {25} Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. {26} Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. {27} Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. {28} Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. {29} Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulcher of the righteous, {30} And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. {31} Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. {32} Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. {33} Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"**

Jesus believed in, and preached, a hell where the unbelieving were condemned to suffer. He did not nod, wink His eye, and say "well, I believe that there are many ways to God ... I'm just one of them". No, Jesus said He was the ONLY WAY - and if you compromise this truth in order to be pleasing to your friends, you are condemning them to an eternity of damnation. Does that matter to you? It does to me, for my heart breaks to consider anyone leaving this life for an eternity with Satan and his bunch:

**(Matthew 25:41-46 KJV) "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: {42} For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: {43} I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. {44} Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? {45} Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. {46} And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."**

As Christians we need to be very careful to rest on God's Word and not on our abilities. Just as we could not work our way to Heaven, we cannot work our way to where God wants us to be. We trust in Him, and walk where He directs we walk. Like the ancient Hebrew, we are saved

by faith in God. Also like the ancient Hebrew, we have a High Priest that goes before God for us. However, unlike the ancient Hebrew our High Priest is God *Himself*, the Son of God, Jesus Christ:

**Hebrews 4:14-16 (KJV) "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. {15} For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. {16} Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."**

We have a High Priest Who suffered and died for us, but rose again to bring us to a place of perfect peace with God. The ancient Israelite went to the High Priest to receive forgiveness for sin. The Israelite took an animal with him that the High Priest would sacrifice in order that atonement be made.

Jesus is better! Unlike the Old Testament High Priest, Jesus does not require that we bring an animal to be sacrificed. We bring ourselves to Him, and surrender ourselves to Him, and He saves us. He Who was tempted just as we are tempted never sinned. He secured us a place in the family of God through the shedding of His own dear Blood, praised be His Holy Name!