

# Hebrews 4:3-5 Commentary

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CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST  
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The Epistle to the Hebrews				
INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18				EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25
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MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST			MINISTERS FOR CHRIST
DOCTRINE				DUTY
DATE WRITTEN: ca. 64-68AD				

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(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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Hebrews 4:3 For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [eiserchometha \(1PPMI\)](#) [gar eis \[ten\] katapausin oi pisteusantes. \(AAPMPN\)](#) [kathos eireken. \(3SRAI\)](#) [Os omosa \(5656\)](#) [en te orge mou. Ei eiseleusontai \(3PFMI\)](#) [eis ten katapausin mou. kaitoi ton ergon apo kataboles kosmou genethenton. \(AAPNPG\)](#)

**Amplified:** For we who have believed (adhered to and trusted in and relied on God) do enter that rest, in accordance with His declaration that those [who did not believe] should not enter when He said, As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest; and this He said although [His] works had been completed and prepared [and waiting for all who would believe] from the foundation of the world. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** It is we who have made the decision of faith who are entering into the rest, for of them God said: "I swore in my anger, 'Very certainly they shall not enter into my rest.'" This he said although his works had been finished after the foundation of the world. ([Westminster Press](#))

**KJV:** For we which have believed do enter 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.

**NLT:** For only we who believe can enter his place of rest. As for those who didn't believe, God said, "In my anger I made a vow: 'They will never enter my place of rest'", even though his place of rest has been ready since he made the world. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** It is only as a result of our faith and trust that we experience that rest. For he said: 'So I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest'; not because the rest was not prepared - it had been ready since the work of creation was completed, ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** For we enter into this rest, we who believed, as He has said, As I swore in my anger, They shall certainly not enter into my rest, although the works from the foundation of the universe had come into being.

**Young's Literal:** for we do enter into the rest -- we who did believe, as He said, 'So I sware in My anger, If they shall enter into My rest -- ;' and yet the works were done from the foundation of the world,

#### **FOR WE WHO HAVE BELIEVED ENTER THAT REST: eiserchometha (1PPMI) gar eis ten katapausin oi pisteusantes (AAPMPN):**

- Heb 3:14; Isaiah 28:12; Jeremiah 6:16; Matthew 11:28,29; Romans 5:1,2
- Hebrews 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For only we who believe God can enter into His place of rest. He has said, "I have sworn in my anger that those who don't believe me will never get in," even though he has been ready and waiting for them since the world began. (TLB)

**For** (because) explains or reinforces (see discussion of importance of querying **terms of explanation**) the Heb 4:2 that faith is the manner in which one possesses the promises of God, be they rest in a land (Promised land of Canaan) or rest in a life (the Messiah).

**We who have believed** - So you say that you understand His offer of rest and the writer's urgent call to enter this blessed state, but you might still wonder "How do I enter?". This verse (among others in this section, e.g., He 4:2) tells us we enter by trusting, and in context, that trust is to be in the Messiah. Joining a church won't bring you rest (in fact most of us who have been in churches for a while would sadly have to testify to quite the opposite experience!) any more than being a member of the 12 tribes of Israel guaranteed entrance into the Promised Land. It is not enough simply to hear the gospel (which sadly is becoming more and more "watered down" in the American evangelicalism!) or even to understand the gospel. The **gospel must be received by grace through faith** or you will not enter into God's spiritual rest of salvation. In fact, if a person hears the clear announcement of God's good news and refuses to combine the **hearing** with personal **believing**, those very **words**, which He 4:12 (You may never have considered this "familiar" passage in its full context and it's immediate significance!) describe as "**sharper than a two-edged sword**" will become the source of condemnation instead of salvation! As our writer affirms if one hears but does not believe, regardless of what else they do the Lord Himself makes the pronouncement "**As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest**" (He 4:3)!

#### **Faith is the condition for entering God's rest**

**Believed** ([4100](#)) (**pisteuo**) refers not just to head knowledge (the "dead" faith of James 2:17, 26) but a belief that is shown to be

genuine saving faith by the fruit of a changed life (not a perfect life but at least some evidence that there is a new life which manifests a new heart). Saving faith is dynamic and holds fast, obeys, endures, brings forth fruit and conversely does not shrink back, drift away or fall away.

**Pisteuo** is derived from **pistis**; **pistos**. (See related studies on **the faith**, the **obedience of faith**) and means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. It means to accept as true, genuine, or real and so to have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone.

In secular Greek literature, as well as in the New Testament, **pisteuo** (pistis, pistos) has a basic meaning of an intellectual assent or a belief that something is true. However **belief** that gains interest into the **rest of salvation** is not mere intellectual assent to divine promises, no matter how correct is one's doctrine. This assent is insufficient, because it rises no higher than faith of the unsaved, unregenerate demons (cp Jas 2:19)!

I walked life's path with "Worry,"  
Disturbed and quite unblessed,  
Until I trusted Jesus;  
Now "Faith" has given rest.  
— G.W.

**Bruce Metzger** adds that "According to [James and Paul], a man is saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is not alone—it is followed by good works which prove the vitality of that faith. (B M Metzger, The New Testament. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965)

**Vincent** notes that **pisteuo** "means to persuade, to cause belief, to induce one to do something by persuading, and so runs into the meaning of to obey, properly as the result of persuasion

**Michel** says that this use arose during the Hellenistic period. During the struggle with skepticism and atheism, it acquired the sense of conviction concerning the existence and activity of the Greek gods. Thayer calls this the intransitive use of the word which conveys the idea of to be sure or be persuaded that something is a fact. This kind of faith does not require any action on the part of the believer but only an intellectual acceptance. As discussed, James used this type of faith as an example of a dead faith stating that "The devils also believe, and tremble" (Jas 2:19).

The other secular Greek meaning that is the more common use in the New Testament is the transitive or active use which means to "put faith in" or "rely upon" someone or something. Sometimes it has even stronger meaning: "To entrust something to another." In classical usage it denoted conduct that honored a previous agreement, such as the honoring of a truce between opposing armies (Iliad 2.124). The meaning of entrusting something to someone is found in Xenophon (Memorabilia 4.4.17). An example of this use in the New Testament is 2Timothy 1:12. Paul said

I know whom I have **believed**, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (2Ti 1:12-note)

**Comment:** Here **pisteuo** means to trust in or rely upon Christ to save us.

**Pisteuo** then means to entrust oneself to an entity in complete confidence. To believe in with the implication of total commitment to the one who is trusted. Christ is the object of this faith that relies on His power and nearness to help, in addition to being convinced that His revelations or disclosures are true.

**Spurgeon** - It is by believing that we get rest—by no other means, not by scheming and plotting and planning and thinking and criticizing and judging and doubting and questioning, but by believing—the submission of the soul to God's truth, the yielding of the heart to God's salvation. This once done, we lie down in green pastures, and are led beside the still waters.

The text does not say that we who have believed shall enter into rest. That is a very great truth, but it is not the truth that is taught here. We "enter into rest," even in this present life; all who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are already enjoying rest of heart. And in proportion as faith possesses their souls, in that proportion they enjoy perfect rest. It is not a future privilege, it is a matter of present enjoyment; and I pray my brothers and sisters in Christ not to impoverish themselves by making the text apply to the future, but to seek for the spiritual enrichment that God has given them by accepting the text just as the apostle wrote it, and so realizing that "we who have believed enter into rest."

The believer rests from the guilt of sin because he has seen his sins laid upon Christ, his scapegoat, and knowing well that nothing can be in two places at one time, he concludes that if sin were laid on Christ, it is not on him; and thus he rejoices in his own deliverance from sin, through its having been imputed to his glorious Substitute. The believer in Christ Jesus sees sin effectually punished in Christ Jesus, and knowing that justice can never demand two penalties for the same crime, or two payments for the same debt, he rests perfectly at peace with regard to his past sins. He has, in the person of his Surety, endured the hell that was

due on account of transgressions. Christ, by suffering in his stead, has answered all the demands of justice, and the believer's heart is perfectly at rest.

I do not say that the believer's life is all peace, for his condition is peculiar in this way. When the children of Israel entered into Canaan, they were a portrait of a saint entering into rest. First, they had to cross the Jordan: the believer has to cross the Jordan of his sin. That is dried up, and he marches through by divine grace. Then there stand, inside the promised land, the walls of Jericho, namely, his own corruptions and his own sinful nature. It takes time to bring them to the ground, but after that, when the walls are leveled, there are Canaanites still in the land. Canaan was not a good type of heaven, for they were always fighting in Canaan, always having to war against the adversary. That is a good type of the rest to which believers come. They do rest. They know that heaven is theirs; that they are saved; that all their troubles work for their good; that they are God's people. Still they have to fight against sin, and that is no more inconsistent with their being at rest than it was inconsistent with the fact of the holy land belonging to the Israelites, though they had still to go on fighting against the Canaanites. That is God's rest, the rest of a finished work, and into that rest many never enter. The work by which they might live forever, the finished work by which they might be saved, they refuse, and so they never enter into God's rest.

## FAITH - RESTING YOUR WHOLE WEIGHT ON JESUS YOUR REST!

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When missionary [John Paton](#) was translating the Scripture for the South Sea islanders (New Hebrides islands), he was unable to find a word in their vocabulary for the concept of believing, trusting, or having faith. He had no idea how he would convey that to them. One day while he was in his hut translating, a native came running up the stairs into Paton's study and flopped in a chair, exhausted after a long jungle hunting excursion. He said to Paton something like this...

"It's so good to stretch myself out and rest my whole weight in this chair."

John Paton had his word: **Faith** is resting your whole weight on God. That word went into the translation of their New Testament and helped bring that civilization of natives to Christ. Believing is putting your whole weight on God. If God said it, then it's true, and we're to believe it. By faith, the weary sinner stretches out to rest on Jesus Christ, upheld by His glorious gospel. Substituting Paton's translation, the loose paraphrase would sound something like this...

"Stretch yourself out" on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved (Acts 16:31).

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever "stretches out" on Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)

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As noted **pisteuo** can refer to a "**heart belief**" (saving faith, genuine belief that leads to salvation, this believing involves not only the consent of the mind, but an act of the heart and will of the subject) or an **intellectual belief** (mental assent, "head" knowledge, not associated with bringing salvation if it is by itself), both uses demonstrated by Jesus in the gospel of John...

**John 11:26** Everyone who lives and **believes** (**pisteuo** - Jesus uses **pisteuo** here to refer to genuine saving faith) in Me shall never die. Do you **believe** (**pisteuo** - intellectually - The idea is "Do you believe My teaching?") this?

**James 2:19** You **believe** (**pisteuo**) that God is one. You do well; the demons also **believe** (**pisteuo**), and shudder.

**Comment:** In this passage, James explains that not all believing will result in salvation (for in **depth discussion** on what constitutes a "faith that works" or that truly saves, see notes beginning with Jas 2:14-note through Jas 2:26-note). The belief which the apostle James is describing in this passage is mental or intellectual belief unassociated with any change in one's heart and one's behavior or actions.

Belief in the New Testament sense that effects the **new birth** denotes more than a "demonic" like, intellectual assent to a set of facts or truths. The demons believe but they clearly are not saved. Yes, genuine belief involves an intellectual assent and consent of one's mind to truth, but also includes an act of one's heart and will. Biblical saving faith is not solely passive assent but is an active staking of one's life on the claims of God in the Gospel. The respected Greek lexicon author **W E Vine** defines belief as consisting of...

- (1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth -
- (2Th 2:11 -"in order that they all may be judged who did not **believe** [**pisteuo**] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")

(2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** [pisteuo] in His name") and

(3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender (see notes on the obedience of faith or the relationship of faith and obedience)

**Enter** (1525) - Emphatic (first word in Greek) and in the **present tense** expresses the idea that we continue to enter that rest. The middle voice adds the idea that is our own choice and we participate in the results/effects of the entering. So the rest of God does not cease when you enter into salvation, but is a dynamic entering, even as walking in the Spirit is a continual need (present tense) lest we walk in the flesh.

### **I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say**

by Horatius Bonar

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'Come unto me and rest,  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon my breast.'

I came to Jesus as I was -  
Weary, and worn, and sad:  
I found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made me glad!"

**Rest** (2663) (**katapausis** from **katá** = intensifies the meaning of the following word or signifies "down" which figuratively conveys the sense of permanency + **pauo** = make to cease) describes literally a ceasing from one's work or activity. **Thayer** cites a use in the active sense of a putting to rest as used in the sentence "a calming of the winds". Metaphorically as used in the present verse, **katapausis** speaks of the spiritual fulfillment God provides for His people. **Katapausis** is a ceasing from one form of activity IN ORDER TO give oneself to a wholly new enterprise, in the context, to believe God's promise. (See excursus on **Rest in Hebrews 4**)

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek **katapauō** carries the meaning of "to stop" or "to put an end to" in relation to all kinds of actions and conditions. With reference to persons, **katapauō** can even carry the very negative aspect of "to kill" (cf. Moulton-Milligan). However, the Septuagint uses **katapauō** in the more positive sense of "giving someone good rest." The most common Septuagint usage of **katapauō** is to translate the Hebrew **nuach** which means "rest, settle down, be quiet." **Katapauō** is used in connection with God giving one "rest" from his enemies (Exodus 33:14; Deuteronomy 3:20) and with reference to "rest" in the Promised Land (Joshua 1:13). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Barclay** has the following analysis of **katapausis** in Hebrews 3 noting that "In a complicated passage like this it is better to try to grasp the broad lines of the thought before we look at any of the details. The writer is really using the word rest (**katapausis**) in three different senses. (i) He is using it as we would use the peace of God. It is the greatest thing in the world to enter into the peace of God. (ii) He is using it, as he used it in He 3:12-note, to mean The Promised Land. To the children of Israel who had wandered so long in the desert the Promised Land was indeed the rest of God. (iii) He is using it of the rest of God after the sixth day of creation, when all God's work was completed. This way of using a word in two or three different ways, of teasing at it until the last drop of meaning was extracted from it, was typical of cultured, academic thought in the days when the writer to the Hebrews wrote his letter. ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press](#))

Since the Israelites were already established in Canaan when David wrote the Psalm 95 (Ps 95:11), its warning about missing out on **God's rest** must refer to something beyond the possession of literal property.

**Matthew Henry** elaborates on this temporal distinction (ie, written in the time of David, some 400 years after the Exodus and wilderness wandering and at a time when Israel was now in the physical land of Canaan, "the land of milk and honey") commenting that...

Now this case of Israel may be applied to those of their posterity that lived in David's time, when this psalm was penned; let them hear God's voice, and not harden their hearts as their fathers did, lest, if they were stiff-necked like them, God should be provoked to forbid them the privileges of his temple at Jerusalem, of which he had said, This is my rest. But it must be applied to us Christians, because so the apostle applies it.

There is a spiritual and eternal rest set before us, and promised to us, of which Canaan was a type; we are all (in profession, at least) bound for this rest; **yet many that seem to be so, come short and shall never enter**

into it. And what is it that puts a bar in their door? It is sin; it is **unbelief**, that sin against the remedy, against our appeal. Those that, like Israel, distrust God, and His power and goodness, and prefer the garlic and onions of Egypt before the milk and honey of Canaan, will justly be shut out from His rest: **so shall their doom be; they themselves have decided it**. Let us therefore fear, Hebrews 4:1.(see note)

C H Spurgeon wrote the following comments regarding Psalm 95:11...

**There can be no rest to an unbelieving heart.** If manna and miracles could not satisfy Israel, neither would they have been content with the land which flowed with milk and honey. Canaan was to be the typical resting place of God, where His ark should abide, and the ordinances of religion should be established; the Lord had for forty years borne with the ill manners of the generation which came out of Egypt, and it was but right that He should resolve to have no more of them. Was it not enough that they had revolted all along that marvellous wilderness march? Should they be allowed to make new Massahs and Meribahs in the Promised Land itself? Jehovah would not have it so. He not only said but **swore** that into His rest they should not come, and that oath excluded every one of them; their carcasses fell in the wilderness.

**Solemn warning this to all who leave the way of faith for paths of petulant murmuring and mistrust.** (Ed note: Spurgeon is not saying one can "lose salvation" but that their "faith" was not genuine saving faith in the first place.) The rebels of old could not enter in because of unbelief, "let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should even seem to come short of it."

One blessed inference from this psalm must not be forgotten. It is clear that there is a rest of God, and that some must enter into it: but "they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief, there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." The **unbelievers** could not enter, but "we which have **believed** do enter into rest." Let us enjoy it, and praise the Lord for it for ever. Ours is the true Sabbatical rest, it is ours to rest from our own works as God did from His. While we do so, let us "come into his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms." (Bolding added)

Spurgeon in his hints to pastors and laypersons on Psalm 95:11 adds that...

**Verse 11.** The fatal moment of the giving up of a soul, how it may be hastened, what are the signs of it, and what are the terrible results.

**Verse 10-11.** The kindling, increasing, and full force of divine anger, and its dreadful results.

**Spurgeon** - Do not tell me that there is no rest for us till we get to heaven. We who have believed in Jesus enter into rest even now. Why should we not do so? Our salvation is complete. The robe of righteousness in which we are clad is finished. The atonement for our sins is fully made. We are reconciled to God, beloved of the Father, preserved by his grace, and supplied by his providence with all that we need. We carry all our burdens to him and leave them at his feet. We spend our lives in his service, and we find his ways to be ways of pleasantness, and his paths to be paths of peace. Oh, yes, we have found rest unto our souls! I recollect the first day that I ever rested in Christ, and I did rest that day. And so will all of you who trust in Jesus as I trusted in him.

**JUST AS HE HAS SAID, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST": mou kaitoi ton ergon apo kataboles kosmou genethenton (AAPNPG):**

- Heb 3:11-note; Ps 95:11
- Hebrews 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Again he quotes from Psalm 95:11 (which he had already quoted in He 3:11)

**Said (3004) (ereo)** is in the **perfect tense** which emphasizes the permanent value of God's word (the **perfect tense** is used in Heb 1:13; 4:4; 10:9; 13:5). The point is that God has spoken. That settles it! What He said endures forever.

**Hebrews 1:13** (note) - But to which of the angels has He ever **said**, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET"?

**Hebrews 4:4** (note) - For He has **said** somewhere concerning the seventh day: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS";

**Hebrews 10:9** (note) - then He **said**, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL ." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

**Hebrews 13:5** (note)- Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has **said**, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

**Swore** (3660) (**omnuo**) means to affirm the truth of a statement by calling on God to execute sanctions against a person if the statement in question is not true. However in the present context it is God Himself takes an oath and by doing this, His divine being is then regarded as validating the statement.

Hebrews has six of the 21 NT uses of **omnuo** as shown in the following verses...

**Hebrews 3:11** (note) AS I **SWORE** IN MY WRATH (**orge**), 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST'

**Hebrews 3:18** (note) And to whom did He **swear** that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?

**Hebrews 4:3** (note) For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "AS **ISWORE** IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

**Hebrews 6:13** (note) For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could **swear** by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

**Hebrews 6:16** (note) For men **swear** by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute.

**Hebrews 7:21** (note) (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "THE LORD HAS **SWORN** AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, 'YOU AREA PRIEST FOREVER' ");

Commenting on the fact that God **swore** in **Psalm 95:11** **Robert South** writes that...

The word **swearing** is very significant, and seems to import these two things.

**First**, the certainty of the sentence here pronounced. Every word of God both is, and must be truth; but ratified by an oath, it is truth with an advantage. It is signed irrevocable. This fixes it like the laws of the Medes and Persians, beyond all possibility of alteration and makes God's word, like his very nature, unchangeable.

**Secondly**, it imports the terror of the sentence. If the children of Israel could say, "Let not God speak to us, lest we die, what would they have said had God then sworn against them?"

It is terrible to hear an oath from the mouth but of a poor mortal, but from the mouth of an omnipotent God, it does not only terrify, but confound. An oath from God is truth delivered in anger; truth, as I may so speak, with a vengeance. When God speaks, it is the creature's duty to hear; but when he swears, to tremble. --Robert South.

**Wrath** (3709) (**orge** from **orgaô** = to teem, to swell) conveys the picture of a swelling which eventually bursts, and thus describes an anger that proceeds from one's settled nature. **Orge** does not refer to uncontrollable anger to which men are so prone but to God's settled indignation and controlled passionate hostile feeling toward sin in all its various manifestations. Settled indignation means that God's holiness cannot and will not coexist with sin in any form whatsoever. Orge is not the momentary, emotional, and often uncontrolled anger (**thumos** - 2372) to which human beings are prone. **Orge** is used primarily of God's holy, righteous wrath but occasionally refers to the wrath of men (Ep 4:31-note)

**Orge** refers to to an inner, deep resentment that seethes and smolders. Orge as used of God refers to His constant and controlled indignation toward sin, while **thumos** (which originally referred to violent movements of air, water, etc., and consequently came to mean "well up" or "boil up") refers more to a passionate outburst of rage. **Thumos** type anger represents an agitated, vehement anger that rushes along relentlessly. The root meaning has to do with moving rapidly and was used of a man's breathing violently while pursuing an enemy in great rage!

**Orge** is God's settled opposition to and displeasure with sin. God's wrath is His holy hatred of all that is unholy. It is His righteous indignation at everything that is unrighteous. It is important to note that orge is not God's uncontrollable rage, vindictive bitterness or a losing of His temper (all of which characterize sinful anger so typical of fallen men), but the wrath of righteous reason and holy law.

**Thomas Brooks** sums up the danger of hearing and yet rejecting the good news - Reader, remember this: if thy knowledge do not now **affect** thy heart, it will at last, with a witness, **afflict** thy heart; if it do not now **endear** Christ to thee, it will at last **provoke** Christ the more against thee; if it do not make all the things of Christ to be **very precious** in thy eyes, it will at last make thee the **more vile** in Christ's eyes.



**MacArthur** - Those who sinned while wandering in the wilderness not only forfeited Canaan. Unless they exercised personal faith in God sometime during the forty years, they also forfeited eternal life-of which Canaan was only a symbol. ([Hebrews. Moody Press](#) )

Other conservative, evangelical writers such as **Ray Stedman** agree that although individual Israelites like Moses, Aaron and Miriam who died in the wilderness did not enter Canaan, their failure to enter the promised land did not indicate that they died eternally. On the other hand Stedman feels that the majority of Israel who came out of Egypt and physically died in the wilderness, not entering the physical land of Canaan, did perish eternally because they did not believe in the Messiah.

Stedman asks "Did all those who died in the wilderness also perish eternally? Clearly not, since Moses, Aaron and Miriam are included in their number. Some, then, died before Canaan because they were unbelieving in relation to the picture of rest (Canaan) but did not perish eternally. But the majority were not only unbelieving about Canaan but also unbelieving about the redemptive provisions that pointed to Christ, and these we must presume to have been lost eternally. " [Hebrews: Commentary Part I](#)

As **Dr Charles Ryrie** rightly emphasizes in his comments on this section that "Only believers enter into salvation rest. ([The Ryrie Study Bible](#))

**My rest** - This phrase occurs 4 times in Scripture (Ps 95:11, He 3:11, He 4:3, He 4:5). It is the very rest God Himself enjoys and which He Himself makes available to us by grace through faith. This phrase is difficult to fully comprehend because it is not just a relaxation of tensions, but a rest that is qualitatively the same rest the Omnipotent God enjoys and is willing to share with us! This truth should motivate a deep love for Him and a strong desire to walk in a manner which is pleasing to Him.

God's rest is a "working rest" for even though He finished His creation work and rested, this did not a cessation from work, but rather the proper repose that comes from completing a work. Jesus emphasized His Father's ongoing work

My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working. (John 5:17)

God's repose is an active rest if you will. Yes, He rests, but in his rest He keeps working.

**MacArthur** explains it this way - God's own rest from His work of creation, and the rest that He gives us in Christ, are not the rest brought on by weariness or the rest of inactivity, but are the rest of finished work.

**Rest** ([2663](#)) (**katapausis** from **kata** = prefixed preposition in its local use means "down," and speaks of permanency + **pauo** = Cease, stop, pause, make an end. (See excursus on **Rest in Hebrews 4**) Applied to men entering God's **rest**, this word speaks of no self-effort as far as salvation is concerned. It means the end of trying to please God by feeble, fleshly works. God's perfect **rest** is a salvation **rest** based on free albeit costly grace laid hold of by genuine saving faith.

As has been alluded to in previous notes on Hebrews 4 is possible to interpret God's "**rest**" in at several ways...

(1) The **rest** associated with placing one's faith in Christ (see Mt 11:28, 29, 30). In the context of the entire epistle, this appears to be the primary meaning, that is, of coming to Jesus by faith and entering His **salvation rest** where self effort is replaced (or at least can and should be replaced) by Spirit initiated and empowered effort.

(2) The **rest** of those who are believers in Christ, and who are living their Christian life in the power of the Spirit, keeping short accounts, and thus experiencing the "peace of God". This aspect of rest is that which is associated with sanctification, our day to day living out of the Christ life. Ray Stedman speaking of those who have entered this salvation rest by faith explains that tragically many believers experience breakdown in their Christianity (not referring to a loss of salvation but a loss of joy and sense of His presence and power) under the pressures of stress or responsibility because they try to work out their salvation in their power (cp Php 2:12-note, Php 2:13-note) and have not learned to "operate out of rest". [Stedman, Ray: The Rest Obtained Is New-Creation Rest](#)

Hebrews 4:3 supports the premise that **rest** is something we must enter into the first time (salvation rest by grace through faith) but is also a daily entering (also by grace through faith) into God's rest in the process of sanctification, that growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Pe 3:18-note). So how does Hebrews 4:3 support this premise? Note that the verb **enter** is in the **present tense**, which indicates as believers we are in the process of entering. We are continually entering into His rest, day by day, even moment by moment. Even our experience as believers bears this out, for what believer when he or she has committed sin and fails to confess quickly, does not sense an inner "restlessness" and loss of peace. On the other hand when we can say as Paul said "I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience" (2Ti 1:3-note), we are surely experiencing some of the fruit of entering into His rest. There is another sense in which we are in



the process of entering God's rest, for there is the sure hope of the **future rest** when we enter into the **Millennium** (see below) and then finally into the New Heavens and New Earth, where "there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." (Re 21:4-[note](#)) Surely this describes in part the ultimate rest into which we are entering.

(3). Some who believe in a literal 1000 year kingdom (see **Millennium**) feel that the **rest** that is promised to Israel (and applies to all believers) will be partially fulfilled in the reign of Christ on earth ("the Messianic Age"), the "rest" of which Isaiah records...

Then it will come about in that day (when Messiah takes His throne in Jerusalem after the **Great Tribulation** - see **Daniel's Seventieth Week** - and the defeat of the Antichrist) that the nations will resort to the root of Jesse (the Messiah), Who will stand as a signal (a banner lifted up to be a rallying point) for the peoples; and His **resting place** (LXX uses the related word **anapausis**) will be glorious. (Isaiah 11:10)

(4). The **rest** associated with the New Heavens and New Earth where righteousness dwells forever. John alludes to this rest writing...

I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may **rest** from their labors, for their deeds follow with them. (Re 14:13-[note](#))

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**TECHNICAL NOTE** - I had a question on the KJV translation of Hebrews 4:3KJV and must admit that the "IF" in the KJV puzzled me as most of the newer translations have no "IF" but the word is actually present in the Greek ("Εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὸν καταπαύσιν μου") Regarding KJV the "if" is very confusing as most translations have no "if" -- most read "**As I swore in my anger, They will never enter My rest!**" KJV says "As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My rest." But the **NKJV** reads this way (THE NEW KJV DOES NOT HAVE THE "IF") "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" I finally found an explanation from Greek expert **Marvin Vincent** on the meaning of the IF -- **Vincent writes** -

They shall not enter into my rest (εἰς τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν μου). Literally - **if they shall enter**, etc. **A common Hebraistic formula in oaths**. Where God is speaking, as here, the ellipsis is "**may I not be Jehovah if they shall enter.**"

So the modern versions are aware that most English readers would not understand or be aware of **common Hebraistic formula in oaths** and so they basically paraphrase the statement. In other words is you read "**may I not be Jehovah if they shall enter.**" Clearly God will NEVER not be Jehovah, so the sense is that they will never enter. Yes, it is a bit confusing but I think that solves the problem, because at first glance when I read "**if they shall enter**," I think he is saying they might possibly enter, but in fact God is saying just the opposite, that they shall **not** enter.

**ALTHOUGH HIS WORKS WERE FINISHED FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD: kaitoi ton ergon apo kataboles kosmou genethenton (AAPNPG):**

- Genesis 1:31; Exodus 20:11) (Heb 9:26; Matthew 13:35; Ephesians 1:4; 1Peter 1:20
- Hebrews 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The writer now introduces another Old Testament allusion to expand his definition of **salvation rest**, this time making reference to God's Creation in 6 days and rest on the seventh day, as he goes on to explain in He 4:4 below. The writer obviously assumes that his Hebrew readers understand that he is referencing the Creation in Genesis.

**Wuest** - The providing of a rest is implied in the completion of God's works. The unbelieving generation which came out of Egypt did not enter into Canaan rest, although God had provided that rest into which they might have entered. ([Hebrews Commentary](#))

**Finished** ([1096](#)) the processes we observe today are not creation or evolution but in fact reflect devolution and disintegration (enunciated in the 1st and 2nd Laws of Thermodynamics).

The spiritual **rest** which God gives was made available for us in eternity past when He chose us in Christ and was made effective by His Son on the Cross...

When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "**It is finished!**" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit. (Jn 19:30)

It is God who saved us and chose us to live a holy life. He did this not because we deserved it, but because that was His plan (NASB "His own purpose and grace") long before the world began (NIV "before the beginning of time")--to show his love and kindness to us through Christ Jesus. (2Ti 1:9-note)

**Comment:** All that is left for the believer to do is to enter the **rest** God prepared for us before time began and which His Son procured for us with His finished work on the Cross.

**Foundation** (2602) (**katabole** from **kataballo** = to throw down from **kata** = down + **ballo** = throw, cast) is literally a casting down or laying down. The original idea was the laying down of the foundation of a house.

**Katabole** was a technical term for putting seed into the ground, it is also used of the role of the male in impregnating the female and there is one such use in Hebrews 11:11, referring to the casting in or sowing of seed, conveying the idea of begetting.

**TDNT** adds that **katabole** meant...

"laying down," is used for, e.g., the casting of seed, human begetting, the sowing of war, and the establishment of government.

Ten of the 11 NT uses of **katabole** (there are no uses in the LXX) are in the phrase "**foundation of the world**".

**Matthew 13:35** so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the **foundation** of the world."

**Matthew 25:34** "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the **foundation** of the world.

**Luke 11:50** in order that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the **foundation** of the world, may be charged against this generation,

**John 17:24** "Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the **foundation** of the world.

**Ephesians 1:4** (note) just as He chose us in Him before the **foundation** of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love

**Hebrews 4:3** (note) For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest," although His works were finished from the **foundation** of the world.

**Hebrews 9:26** (note) Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the **foundation** of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

**Hebrews 11:11** (note) By faith even Sarah herself received ability to **conceive**, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised;

**1 Peter 1:20** (note) For He was foreknown before the **foundation** of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you

**Revelation 13:8** (note) And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the **foundation** of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

**Revelation 17:8** (note) "The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the **foundation** of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

Believers have entered into a finished work, something finished from the foundation of the world...all that is necessary to rest has been provided.

**World** (2889) (**kosmos**) means the world with its primary meaning being order, regular disposition and arrangement, here referring in essence to God's creation of the heavens and earth that we know today.

**MacArthur** comments that "God has finished His work. God has done it all, and for anyone who wants to enter into His finished work and to share in His rest, it is available by faith. When God had finished the creation, He said (briefly paraphrasing Gen. 2), "It's done. I've made a wonderful world for man and woman. I've given them everything earthly they need, including each other, for a complete and beautiful and satisfying life. Even more importantly, they have perfect, unbroken, unmarred fellowship with Me. I can now rest;

and they can rest in Me.” ([Hebrews. Moody Press](#) )

### REST

"We which have believed do enter into rest."--Heb. 4:4.

"Ich bleib bei Dir! wo koennt ich 's besser haben."

Adolph Moraht

transl., Jane Borthwick, 1855

I rest with Thee, Lord! whither should I go?  
I feel so blest within Thy home of love!  
The blessings purchased by Thy pain and woe,  
To Thy poor child Thou sendest from above.  
Oh! never let Thy grace depart from me:  
So shall I still abide, my Lord, with Thee.

I rest with Thee! Eternal life the prize  
Thou wilt bestow, when faith's good fight is won;  
What can earth give but vain regrets and sighs,  
To the poor heart whose passing bliss is done?  
For lasting joys I fleeting ones resign,  
Since Jesus calls me His, and He is mine.

I rest with Thee! No other place of rest  
Can now attract, no other portion please.  
The soul, of heavenly treasure once possest,  
All earthly glory with indifference sees.  
Poor world, farewell! thy splendors tempt no more--  
The power of grace I feel, and thine is o'er,

I rest with Thee! with Thee, whose wondrous love  
Descends to seek the lost; the fallen raise,  
Oh! that my whole of future life might prove  
One hallelujah, one glad song of praise!  
So shall I sing, as time's last moments flee  
Now and for ever, Lord, I rest with Thee!

## THE REST OF FAITH

### Hebrews 4:3

by Alexander Maclaren

‘We which have believed do enter into rest...’ — Hebrews 4:3.

‘**Do enter**’ — but on a hundred gravestones you will read ‘He entered into rest’ on such and such a day, as a synonym for ‘He died.’ It is strange that an expression which the writer of this Epistle takes pains to emphasise as referring to a present experience should, by common consent, in popular use, have been taken to mean a future blessing. If nominal Christians had found more frequently that their faith was strong enough to produce its natural effects, they would not have so often misunderstood our writer. He does not say, ‘We, when we die, shall enter into rest,’ but ‘We who have believed do enter.’

It is a bold statement, and the experience of the average Christian seems to contradict it. But if the fruit of faith is repose; and if we who say we have faith are full of unrest, the best thing we can do is not to doubt the saying, but to look a little more closely whether we have fulfilled its conditions.

‘We which have believed do enter into rest.’

I. So, then, the first thing to be noted here is the present rest of faith.

I say 'faith' rather than 'belief,' because I wish to emphasise the distinction between the Christian notion of faith, and the common notion of belief. The latter is merely the acceptance of a proposition as true; and that is not enough to bring rest to any soul, though it may bring rest to the understanding. It is a great pity, though one does not quite see how it could have been avoided, that so frequently in the New Testament, to popular apprehension, the depth of the meaning. of that one requirement of faith is obscured because it is represented in our version by the word 'believe,' which has come to be appropriated to the mere intellectual act. But if you will notice that the writer of this Epistle uses two other words as interchangeable with 'belief,' you will understand the depth of his meaning better. Sometimes he speaks of our 'confidence' — by which he means precisely the same thing. Sometimes he speaks of our 'obedience' — by which he means precisely the same thing. So there is an element of voluntary submission implied, and there is an element of outgoing confidence implied in the word. And when he says, 'We which have believed do enter into rest,' he does not mean 'We which acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, But we who, acknowledging, let our hearts go out to Him in trust, and our wills bow down before Him in obedience and submission. We thereby do enter into rest.' Carry with you these two thoughts, then — 'confidence' and 'obedience' — as indispensable elements in the New Testament conception of faith, and then you can understand the great saying of my text.

Trust brings rest, for the trust which grasps Jesus Christ, not only intellectually, but with the reliance of the whole nature upon Him to do for me that which my understanding believes that He will do — that trust brings rest because it sweeps away, as the north wind does the banded clouds on the horizon, all the deepest causes of unrest. These are our perverted relation to God, and the alienation of our hearts from Him. Brother! there is no rest deep as life which does not flow from rejoicing confidence in Christ's great sacrifice by which the innermost source of conflict and disturbance in our souls has been dealt with. Most of us are contented if there be a superficial appearance of calm, like the sunny vineyard on the slopes of a volcano, whilst-in the heart of it sulphurous fires are bubbling and boiling, and will burst out some day. What is the worth of a tranquillity which only survives on condition of our ignoring the most patent and most operative fact in our lives? It is only when you shuffle God out of your consciousness, and when you wink hard so as not to see the facts of your own moral condition and sinfulness, or when you sophisticate yourself into illogical and unreasonable diminution of the magnitude and gravity of your sins, that some of you know a moment's rest. If the curtain were once drawn aside, and we were brought face to face with the realities of heaven and the realities of our own characters, all this film of apparent peace would break and burst, and we should be left to face the trouble that comes whenever a man's relation with God is, consciously to himself, perverted and wrong. But trust brings rest; rest from the gnawing of conscience, rest from the suspicion of evil consequences resulting from contact with the infinite divine righteousness, rest from all the burden of guilt, which is none the less heavy because the man appears to be unconscious of it. It is there all the same. 'We which have believed do enter into rest,' because our trust brings about the restoration of the true relation to God and the forgiveness of our sins. Trust brings rest, because it casts all our burdens on another. Every act of reliance, though it does not deliver from responsibility, delivers from anxiety. We see this even when the object of our trust is but a poor creature like ourselves. Husbands and wives who find settled peace in one another; parents and children; patrons and protected, and a whole series of other relationships in life, are witnesses to the fact that the attitude of reliance brings the actuality of repose. A little child goes to sleep beneath its mother's eye, and is tranquil, not only because it is ignorant but because it is trustful. So if we will only get behind the shelter, the blast will not blow about us, but we shall be in what they call on the opposite side of the Tweed, in a word that is music in the ears of some of us — a 'lown place,' where we hear not the loud winds when they call. Trust is rest; even when we lean upon an arm of flesh, though that trust is often disappointed. What is the depth of the repose that comes not from trust that leans against something supposed to be a steadfast oak, that proves to be a broken reed, but against the Rock of Ages? We which have 'believed do enter into rests' Trust brings repose, because it effects submission. The true reason for our restlessness in this world is not that we are 'pelted by the pitiless storm' of change and sorrow. A grief accepted loses most of its power to sadden, and all its power to perturb. It is not outward calamities, but a rebellious will that troubles us. The bird beats itself against the wires of its cage, and wounds itself, whereas if it sat still in its captivity it might sing. So when we trust we submit; and submission is the mother of peace. There is no other consolation worth naming for our sorrows, except the consolation that comes from submission. When we accept them, lie still, let him strike home and kiss the rod, we shall be at rest.

Trust brings repose, because it leads to satisfied desires. We are restless because each object that we pursue yields but a partial satisfaction, and because all taken together are inadequate to our needs. There is but one Person who can fill the heart, the mind, the will, and satisfy our whole nature. No accumulation of things, be they ever so precious, even if they are the higher or more refined satisfactions of the intellect, can ever satisfy the heart. And no endless series of finite persons is sufficient for the wants of any one of the series, who, finite as he is, yet needs an infinite satisfaction. It must be a person that shall fill all the cavities and clefts of our hearts, and, filling them, gives us rest. 'My soul thirsteth for God,' though I misinterpret its thirst, and, like a hot dog upon a road, try to slake my thirst by lapping at any puddle of dirty water that I come across in my path. There is no satisfaction there. It is in God, and in God only, that we can find repose.

Some of us may have seen a weighty acknowledgment from a distinguished biologist lately deceased which strikes me as relevant to this thought. Listen to his confession:

'I know from experience the intellectual distractions of scientific research, philosophical speculation, and artistic pleasures, but am also well aware that even when all are taken together, and well sweetened to taste, in respect of consequent reputation, means, social position, etc., the whole concoction is but as light confectionery to a starving man ... It has been my lot to know not a few of the foremost men of our generation, and I have always observed that this is profoundly true.'

That is the testimony of a man who had tried the highest, least material forms of such a trust. And I know that there is an 'amen' to it in every heart, and I lift up opposite to all such experiences the grand summary of Christian experience: 'We which have believed do enter into rest.'

## **II. Note, secondly, the energy of work which accompanies the rest of faith.**

There is a good deal said in the context — a difficult context, with which we are not concerned at present, about the analogy between a man's rest in God and God's own rest. That opens wonderful thoughts which I must not be tempted to pursue, with regard to the analogy between the divine and the human, and the possible assimilation, in some measure, of the experiences of the creature with those of the Creator. Can it be that, between a light kindled and burning itself away while it burns, and fire which burns and is not consumed, there is any kind of correspondence? There is, however dim the analogy may be to us. Let us take the joy and the elevation of that thought, 'My peace I give unto you.'

But the main point for which I refer to this possible analogy is in order to remind you that the rest of God is dealt with in Scripture as being, not a cessation from work, but the accomplishment of a purpose, and satisfaction in results. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,' said Jesus Christ. And modern speculation puts the same thought in a more heathenish fashion when it says 'preservation is continual creation.' Just as God rests from His creative work, not as if either needing repose or holding His hand from further operation, but as satisfied with the result; just as He rests in work and works in rest, so Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God in eternal indisturbance and repose, in token that He has fulfilled His work on earth. But He is likewise represented as standing at the right hand of God in attitude to help His servants, and as evermore working with them in all their toils.

In like manner we shall much misconceive the repose of faith, if we do not carry with us the thought that that repose is full of strenuous toil. Faith brings rest. Yes! But the main characteristic of Christian faith is that it is an active principle, which sets all the wheels of holy life in more vigorous motion, and breathes an intenser as well as calmer and more reposeful activity into the whole man. The work of faith is quite as important as the rest of faith. It works by love, and the very repose that it brings ought to make us more strenuous in our toil. We are able to cast ourselves without anxiety about ourselves, and with no distraction of our inner nature, and no weakening of power in consequence of the consciousness of sin, or of unconscious sin — into the tasks which devolve upon us, and so to do them with our might. The river withdrawn from all divided channels is gathered into the one bed that it may flow with power, and scour before it all impurities. So the man who is delivered from restlessness is quickened for work, and even 'in his very motion there is rest.' It is possible to blend together in secret, sweet, indissoluble union these two partial antitheses, and in the midst of the most strenuous effort to have a central calm, like the eye of the storm which whirls in its wild circles round a centre-point of perfect repose. It is possible, at one and the same time, to be dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, and feeding our souls with that calm that broods there, and to be up to the ears in business, and with our hands full of pressing duties. The same faith which ushers us into the quiet presence of God in the centre of the soul, pushes us into the forefront of the battle to fight, and into the world's busy workshop to labour.

So the rest which is Christian is a rest throbbing with activity; and, further, the activity which is based on faith will deepen repose, and not interrupt it. Jesus Christ distinguished between the two stages of the tranquillity which is realised by His true disciples, for He said 'Come unto Me... and I will give you rest' — the rest which comes by approach to Him in faith from the beginning of the approach, rest resulting from the taking away of what I have called the deepest cause of unrest. There is a second stage of the disciples' action and consequent peace; 'Take My yoke upon you... and ye shall find rest' — not 'I will give' this time — 'ye shall find' — in the act of taking the yoke upon your necks — 'rest to your souls.' The activity that ensues from faith deepens the rest of faith.

## **III. Lastly, to consider the future perfecting of the present rest.**

In a subsequent verse the writer uses a different word from that of my text to express this idea; and it is rather unfortunate for the understanding of the progress of the thought that our version has kept the same expression in both cases. 'There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God' — which follows a few verses after my text — had better have been rendered, 'There remaineth the keeping of a Sabbath to the people of God'; although probably the writer is pointing to the same facts there as in my text, yet he introduces a metaphor which conveys more clearly than the text does the idea of an epoch of rest following upon a week of toil.

So I may venture to say that the repose of faith which is experienced here, because the causes of unrest are taken away, and a new ally comes into the field, and our wills submit, and our desires are satisfied, is but the germ of that eternal Sabbath day to which we look forward. I have said that the gift spoken of here is a present thing; but that present thing bears in all its lineaments a prophecy

of its own completion. And the repose of a Christian heart in the midst of life's work and worry is the best anticipation and picture, because it is the beginning, of the rest of heaven.

That future, however it may differ from this present, and how much it differs none know except those who are wrapt in its repose, is in essence the same. Yonder, as here, we become partakers of rest through faith. There, as here, it is trust that brings rest. And no change of bodily environment, no change of the relations between body and spirit, no transference of the man into new conditions and a new world will bring repose, unless there is in him a trust which grasps Jesus Christ. Faith is eternal, and is eternally the minister of rest. Heaven is the perfecting of the highest and purest moments of Christian experience.

So, Christian men and women, the more trust the more rest. And if it be so that going through this weary world you have but little confirmation of the veracity of the great saying of my text, do not fancy that it is a mistake. Look to your faith and see that it is deepened.

And let us all, dear friends, remember that not death but faith brings present repose and future perfecting. Death is not the porter that opens the gate of the kingdom. It is only the usher that brings us to the gate, and the gate is opened by Him 'who openeth and no man shutteth; and who shutteth and no man openeth.' He opens to them who have believed, and they enter in and are saved. 'Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.'

**Hebrews 4:4 For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS" ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** [eireken](#) (3SRAI) [gar pou peri tes ebdomes outos](#). [Kai katepausen](#) (3SAAI) [o theos en te emera te ebdome apo panton ton ergon autou](#):

**Amplified:** For in a certain place He has said this about the seventh day: And God rested on the seventh day from all His works. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** For somewhere in scripture it speaks thus about the seventh day: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his labours." ([Westminster Press](#))

**KJV:** 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.

**NLT:** We know it is ready because the Scriptures mention the seventh day, saying, "On the seventh day God rested from all his work." ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** as he says elsewhere in the scriptures, speaking of the seventh day of creation, 'And God rested on the seventh day from all his works'. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** For He has spoken in a certain place concerning the seventh day thus, And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.

**Young's Literal:** For He has thus said somewhere concerning the seventh day, "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS";

**FOR HE HAS SAID SOMEWHERE CONCERNING THE SEVENTH DAY: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS: eireken (3SRAI) gar pou peri tes hebdomes outos Kai katepausen (3SAAI) ho theos en te hemera te hebdome apo panton ton ergon autou:**

- Genesis 2:1,2; Exodus 20:11; 31:17
- Hebrews 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For (gar)** introduces his explanation of what God did when He finished His works from the foundation of the world (He 4:3).

**He has said** - Appeals to the witness and authority of God Himself.

**Somewhere** (cp similar wording in He 2:6-note) - The writer may have made this statement somewhat indefinite because the quotation is found in three places (although it is in fact a direct quote from Ge 2:2) ...

And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and **He rested on the seventh day**

from all His work which He had done. (Ge 2:2)

For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and **rested on the seventh day**; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex 20:11)

It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on the **seventh day He ceased from labor**, and was refreshed. (Ex 31:17).

**What is the writer's point in quoting from the Creation account?** The point is that the rest which God offers to sinners in His gift of salvation is similar to the very rest He Himself has enjoyed since the completion of His creation work!

**Phillips** amplifies the importance of this seventh day of rest...

We remember from Genesis 1 that God labored for six days, each day adding more to his creation wonder. Then on the seventh day God rested. This rest was not a temporary state, but God's abiding condition. The first day was concluded with these words: "There was evening and there was morning, the first day" (Ge 1:5). That phrase was repeated for each of God's six working days. This pattern, however, does not continue into the seventh day. Unlike the other days, this Sabbath day of rest does not end; it is not brought to completion, but goes on forever.

When we say that God rested, we do not mean that he went on vacation or removed his care from our world. The picture is rather that after having made and ordered and subdued the creation according to his desired plan, his control was so absolute, his sovereignty so unquestioned, that God enthroned himself without effective opposition. His reign is one of rest— that is, of absolute supremacy and unassailable sovereignty—so much so that he exerts all his rule from the position of rest. It is the kind of rest possible to a God who could say,

"I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand'" (Isa. 46:9, 10).

So when we think of God's Sabbath rest, we should immediately think of his utter, uncontested sovereign rule.

To enter God's eternal Sabbath rest, therefore, means to enter into saving relationship with such a God. When God becomes our Savior, we become part of that kingdom in which he so utterly and sovereignly rules over us and for us. His work in our lives is established, even as the writer of Hebrews says of God's work in creation, "His works were finished from the foundation of the world" (Heb. 4:3).

This means that if you have put your faith in this saving God, if you have trusted his gospel in Jesus Christ, you now can rest. You can stop worrying about whether or not you will have a place in heaven. You can stop fretting about whether you will endure as a Christian. You can stop being afraid of what the world will do to you. You can face the prospect of loss in this life, of suffering, and even of death, for ours is the God of the Sabbath, who established his purposes forever from the beginning. Through faith in him you enter into his rest. He is the God who says to us, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer 29:11). So you can rest in his saving purpose for you. (Reformed Expository Commentary - Hebrews)

**Rested** (2664) (**katapauo** from **kata** = down, here intensifying the meaning of + **pauo** = make to cease) means to cause to cease some activity (resulting in a period of rest), to make quite, to cause to be at rest, to grant rest. There is one NT use with the nuance of to restrain (Acts 14:18).

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek *katapauō* carries the meaning of "to stop" or "to put an end to" in relation to all kinds of actions and conditions. With reference to persons, *katapauō* can even carry the very negative aspect of "to kill" (cf. Moulton-Milligan). However, the Septuagint uses *katapauō* in the more positive sense of "giving someone good rest." The most common Septuagint usage of *katapauō* is to translate the Hebrew *nuach* which means "rest, settle down, be quiet." *Katapauō* is used in connection with God giving one "rest" from his enemies (Exodus 33:14; Deuteronomy 3:20) and with reference to "rest" in the Promised Land (Joshua 1:13). The predominant New Testament usage of *katapauō* is in Hebrews. The two Old Testament pictures of Joshua leading Israel into rest (Hebrews 4:8) and that of God's resting on the seventh day (Hebrews 4:4) are contrasted. The writer used *katapauō* to illustrate a spiritual rest available to God's people of the new covenant through faith in Jesus Christ. The writer urged them to look forward to an ultimate rest yet awaiting fulfillment. (See also Hebrews 3:11,18; 4:1,3-5,8-11.)(The Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

Note that the verb **anapauo** can mean to rest inwardly, but not necessarily from a cessation of work as is expressed by **katapauo** [word study].



**Mouton and Milligan** list a use of **katapauo** referring to a musical pause.

Here are the 4 NT uses of **Katapauo**...

**Acts 14:18** And even saying these things, they with difficulty **restrained** the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.

**Hebrews 4:4** For He has thus said somewhere concerning the seventh day, "And God **rested** on the seventh day from all His works";

**Hebrews 4:8** For if Joshua **had given them rest**, He would not have spoken of another day after that.

**Hebrews 4:10** For the one who **has entered His rest** has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

**Katapauo** is used 54 times in the **Septuagint (LXX)**

(**Gen. 2:2-3**; 8:22; 49:33; Exod. 5:5; 10:14; 16:13; **20:11**; **31:17-18**; 33:14; 34:21, 33; Num. 25:11; Deut. 3:20; 5:33; 12:10; 25:19; 33:12; Jos. 1:13, 15; 3:13; 10:20; 11:23; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1; Ruth 2:7; 2 Sam. 21:10; 1 Ki. 12:24; 2 Ki. 23:5, 11; 1 Chr. 23:25; 2 Chr. 14:6f; 15:15; 16:5; 20:30; 32:22; Neh. 4:11; 6:3; Job 21:34; 26:12; Ps. 55:6; 85:3; Eccl. 10:4; Lam. 3:11; 5:14; Ezek. 1:24; Dan. 11:18; Hos. 1:4; 11:6). Below are some representative uses in the Septuagint...

**Joshua 1:13** "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God **gives** you **rest**, (Lxx = katapauo) and will give you this land.'

**Joshua 11:23** So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land **had rest** (Lxx = katapauo) from war.

**Joshua 21:44** And the LORD **gave** them **rest** (Lxx = katapauo) on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand.

**Psalms 55:6** And I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and **be at rest**. (Lxx = katapauo)

Katapauo and katapausis appear to differ in meaning from anapauo and anapausis in that the emphasis of katapauo and katapausis is more upon the cessation of activity resulting in rest rather than upon the mere restorative character of rest. (See excursus on **Rest in Hebrews 4**)

**Works** - plural, following the Septuagint. The Hebrew has "work." This does not mean that God entered a state of idleness, for there is a sense in which he is continually at work (Jn 5:17). **Hebrews 1:3** (see note) in fact teaches that

He upholds (present tense = continually) all things by the word of His power

**Hebrews 4:5** and again in this passage, "**THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.**" ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [kai en touto palin. Ei eiseleusontai \(3PFMI\) eis ten katapausin mou.](#)

**Amplified:** And [they forfeited their part in it, for] in this [passage] He said, They shall not enter My rest. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** And it says in the same place: "Very certainly they shall not enter into my rest." ([Westminster Press](#))

**KJV:** And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

**NLT:** But in the other passage God said, "They will never enter my place of rest. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** And in the passage above he refers to "my rest" as something already in existence. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** And in this place again, They shall certainly not enter my rest.

**Young's Literal:** and in this [place] again, `If they shall enter into My rest'

**AND AGAIN IN THIS PASSAGE, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST: kai en touto palin Ei eiseleusontai (3PFMI) eis ten katapausin mou:**

- Hebrews 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And again** - Repetition from Hebrews 4:3. Whenever Scripture repeats words (e.g., "Truly, truly... ", etc), it is not because God is "stuttering" but because He is serious! He wants this truth to penetrate our "thick skulls", our "hard hearts", so that we might bend our "stiff necks"! Today is the day to respond to His repetitive warning.

**They shall not enter** - Why not? Repeatedly the primary impediment is unbelief or a lack of faith which is manifest by disobedience.

**Spurgeon** - There are many professing Christians who do not understand what it is to rest because the work of salvation is done; they do not even seem to know that the work is done. They do not understand that dying word of the Lord Jesus, "It is finished." They think there is something still to be added to His work to make it effectual; but it is not so.

### QUOTING FROM PSALM 95:11

Psalm 95:11 is being quoted by the writer and below is a list of the 9 different quotations from Psalm 95 in Hebrews 3-4...

- He 3:7 <> Ps 95:7
- He 3:8 <> Ps 95:8
- He 3:9 <> Ps 95:9, 10a
- He 3:10 <> Ps 95:10
- He 3:11 <> Ps 95:11
- He 3:15 <> Ps 95:7, 8
- He 4:3 <> Ps 95:11
- He 4:5 <> Ps 95:11
- He 4:7 <> Ps 95:7, 8

It is interesting to note that Psalm 95 is one of a series of Psalm 93 through Psalm 100 which have been referred to by a variety of names - Apocalyptic Psalms, Theocratic Psalms (Delitzsch), Millennial Anthems (Tholuck), Songs of the Millennium (Binnie), Group of Millennial Psalms (Herder), Second Advent Psalms (Rawlinson), Enthronement Psalms (Mowinckel) and Royal Psalms (Perowne). Clearly this group has a strong prophetic flavor and specifically alludes to that time (**Millennium**) when the Lord Jesus Christ alone will be King reigning over all peoples and lands (Ps 93:1 ; 96:10 ; 97:1 ; 99:1). As **Walter Kaiser** says...

each of these psalms alike tells the story of a divine kingdom which is yet to be set up on the earth **Ed**: The 1000 Year Kingdom = the "Messianic Age"). It anticipates the universal outburst of joy which shall greet this future event... Now the interesting point to be made in connection with our study is that the divine rest is set in the context of these psalms celebrating the second advent of our Lord. Participation in this kingdom of God, this rest of God, is to be made now on the basis of a decision in the present moment before those events connected with the second coming overtake anyone. ([Ref](#))

**MacDonald** comments that "To reinforce the idea that the reference to God's rest after creation does not mean that it is a closed issue, the writer again quotes with slight change from Psalm 95:11, where the future tense is used, "They shall not enter My rest." He is saying, in effect, "In your thinking, do not confine God's rest to what happened back in Genesis 2; remember that God later spoke about His rest as something that was still available. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

**My rest** - God has provided **rest**, and this **rest** is to be entered into by faith. Unbelief blocks one's entrance into God's **rest**, while faith opens wide the entrance and thus this **rest** is available only to those who receive it by grace through faith. God's rest is not a cessation of all works but of doing those works in our own strength, not His! In other words, the idea is cessation of dependence on one's own strength and striving according to His power which mightily works within us (cp Col 1:29-note, Php 2:12-note; Php 2:13-note). God's rest is entered spiritually by faith, or forfeited by unbelief. In Mt 11:28, 29, 30 Jesus offers rest from the burden of our sins and rest even in the midst of the troubles of this world. To be sure, we will still experience troubles, but in those troubles we have our rest in Him for He Himself declared...

These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but **take courage** (present imperative = Our Lord's command for us to continually be firm and resolute in the face of danger. Even in the troubles Jesus tells us to be of good cheer and He never commands that which He does not also enable us to obey!); I have overcome (perfect tense = nikao [word study] - experienced victory, prevailed and the tense emphasizes the endurance and permanence of His victory!) the world (kosmos [word

study] = not so much the material world but the prevailing anti-god, self-centered attitude and actions which are indomitably opposed to God and His children). (John 16:33)