

Enter into Rest

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[Hebrews 4: 1-10] Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; 5 and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."

6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains, therefore, a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

The Bible speaks of the following three types of rest for God's people:

- The first rest is the rest that comes after salvation.
- The second rest is the rest from submission in faith.
- The third rest is the eternal rest in heaven

1. The rest of the salvation

When a soul is saved by accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ, the soul is immediately delivered from the hopelessness of death into the realm of life with God.

[John 5:24] Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

This remarkable transformation of the soul brings joy and rest to the soul. Lord Jesus proclaimed that He would give this rest to all who come to Him by accepting Him as their Savior and Lord.

[Matt 11: 28-29] Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

This rest is essentially different from any temporary relief or rest that a person experiences, either physically or mentally, in their normal life. This rest is the rest of one's soul, which comes from being conscious of having been delivered from the darkness of death and of having been brought into the promise of eternal life and the blessing of God.

This rest is typified by the great deliverance of the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, where they had been slaves without hope. The great message and certain proof of their deliverance came in the night before their departure in the form of Passover, when the death angel passed over all Israeli households, which had the lamb's blood painted over their door.

Then, their deliverance was finalized when God divided the seawater of the Gulf of Aqaba, where the Egyptian military drowned after the people of Israel had crossed over the water safely.

Every soul who seeks deliverance from the darkness of this life and wants to be on God's side in eternal safety will come to enjoy this great relief and rest, just as the Israelites enjoyed rest and relief from their deliverance on the other side of the sea.

2. Rest from submission in faith

The second type of rest that God's people can enjoy comes only from submission in faith.

The people of Israel, unfortunately, did not have this rest, except Joshua and Kaleb, because of their disbelief and failure to submit to God's leading, although they had been delivered from Egyptian slavery.

Consequently, they had to roam the western Arabian wilderness for 40 years, whereas they had the opportunity to move into the Promised Land soon after leaving Egypt.

King David acknowledged that their ancestors hardened their hearts and did not believe that God would open doors to victories and their successful occupation of the land that He had promised Abraham.

[Hebrews 4:6-7] Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

Some Christians liken the crossing of the river Jordan to death and the Promised Land to our eternal bliss in heaven. But it is a wrong analogy. Rather, the crossing of the river Jordan symbolizes our submission in the action of wanting to live out our faith in God's leading in our lives.

Also, the Promised Land can be likened to our triumphant life here on earth, where Christians fight the battles as led by God and successfully occupy the spiritual and natural blessings promised by God.

For most of the Israelites who left Egypt, the 40 dreary years of wandering life in the wilderness was a period of living outside of God's favor although they ate the manna and drank from the water provided by God. They had no rest of their souls, although they served God in the wilderness for many years. And they all died in the wilderness except the two who believed.

[Hebrews 4: 3] For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Are you tasting this second type of rest in your Christian lives or are you simply going through the form of Christian worship without this rest?

God swore about these hard-hearted people that they would never enter His rest. There is the danger that modern-day Christians may not be enjoying this rest that comes from submission in faith.

Let us submit to God's leading in our personal battles and struggles so that you come to occupy the promised blessings including the true rest of our souls.

3. The eternal rest with God

The third and final type of rest is the promised eternal rest with God. God rested after His creation work and promised the same rest to humanity.

[Genesis 2:1-3] Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. 2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Thus, the Sabbath was instituted and commanded for the people of Israel to keep as a memorial for God's promise of rest.

We, humans, need rest and the rest day has been changed to Sunday. Yet, many people forget that God instituted the Sabbath after the creation. And He invites the humans to come and enter into His rest for eternity.

But, how can we enter into God's promised rest of eternity without first enjoying the first and the second types of rest during life on earth? Such souls will never have rest after death because God will not grant rest to them.

A picture of a saved soul enjoying comfort and rest of soul in heaven after death is in the parable of the rich man and beggar, spoken by Lord Jesus. The beggar Lazarus did not have a good life on earth but a life of faith approved by God. Thus, he found rest and comfort in heaven in Paradise.

[Luke 16:22-23] So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

The apostle John saw the souls in heaven who have died in the Lord. These souls, who kept God's commandments and the faith of Jesus Christ, are now enjoying eternal rest with God.

[Revelation 21:12-13] Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. 13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

It is my earnest prayer that all Christians come to enjoy the promised eternal rest when their life on earth is over. However, we must submit to God, be willing to fight the good fight of faith, and be brave to occupy the realms of victory while we are here on earth.

"Most holy God our Father! We are very thankful for our salvation from death to life. We are thankful for the joy, peace, and rest that came to our souls as a result. We have learned to fight our battles of faith through submission to the Holy Spirit's leading. And we are grateful for the soul's rest that comes as a result. And we look forward to eternal rest with You in heaven when our struggles are over. Help us keep fighting our battles and prove that You are the Almighty King and Ruler over the universe, Amen!"

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