



Strive to Enter God's Rest (part 2)

We should want to enter God's rest. Ultimately, it means going to heaven and spending eternity with Jesus. In the past many who had the chance missed the opportunity. What can we do now?

Why Did Some Fail to Enter?

[Hebrews 4:1-5](#) "Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, **let us fear** lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For **good news** came to us just as to them, but **the message they heard did not benefit them**, because they **were not united by faith with those who listened**. For **we who have believed enter that rest**, 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. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And **God rested** on the seventh day **from all his works**." And again in this passage he said, "They **shall not enter my rest**.""

The Old Testament Hebrews were given a message from God but **"the message they heard did not benefit them"**. Moses and Aaron believed. They listened to God, but everyone else did not. Those who failed to trust in God **"were not united by faith with those who listened"**.

A message from God was been given through Jesus Christ. The message of Jesus gave those who believed in Him the opportunity to enter God's rest. The door was still open. The author of Hebrews proclaimed, "we who have believed enter that rest".

Believers can enter God's rest. Non-believers are prohibited from entering God's rest.

Since creation was complete, “**God rested ... from all his works**”. God’s rest has existed for all that time. However, God declared the Hebrew people of Moses’ time “**shall not enter my rest.**”

God’s rest still exists. In the past some who might have entered God’s rest failed to believe in God and trust His word. As a result of their lack of faith in God, God decreed that they would not enter His rest. Now, through Christ those who believe in Him have an opportunity to enter God’s rest. Some will enter and some will not. Remember that entering God’s rest refers to going to heaven.

Will You Enter?

[Hebrews 4:6-10](#) “Since therefore **it remains for some to enter** it, and **those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience**, again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “**Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.**” For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So **then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.**”

Those who worship with Christians have an opportunity. “**It still remains for some to enter**” God’s rest. Not everyone will enter it. In the past, “those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of their disobedience.” Earlier in chapter 4 the writer of Hebrews said that they did not enter God’s rest because of a lack of faith (Hebrews 3:19 & 4:2). Now in 4:6, he says they were not allowed to enter God’s rest because of their disobedience. Their unbelief produced their disobedience.

The writer of Hebrews repeats the words of Psalm 95, “**Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts**”. The writer of Hebrews is asking us to listen to God. We can't harden our hearts.

Most of the Hebrew people when this was written might have responded, “They entered the Promised Land. Doesn't that prove that God did give them rest.” To this opinion the writer of Hebrews responds, “No. Although they entered the land, they had no rest from their enemies.” In Deuteronomy 12:10, God promised the people of Israel that He would give them “peace from their enemies” if they trusted in Him and obeyed Him. Yet, they never experienced that peace. Long after the time of Joshua, King David, in Psalm 95, wrote that God’s rest was still available. If it was available in David’s time, “**then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.**” The door to God’s rest was not closed in Moses’ time. When Jesus came He declared, “I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Those who believe in Jesus can enter God’s rest.

Ironically, Pharisees frequently accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-14), but Jesus was the Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8). When Jesus completed the work of salvation by His death on the cross and resurrection, He finalized a path to enter God’s rest. The writer of Hebrews claimed that the forefathers of the Hebrews never entered God’s full Sabbath Rest but Jesus did. He now sits at the right hand of the Father. He is resting in heavenly glory at the side of God the Father. Even more important to believers, His death and resurrection created a path of salvation so that “**whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.**” Those who are in Christ no longer work for their salvation. Jesus did the work that needed to be done. All that is left is for believers to receive His gift of salvation, and in time, fully enter God’s rest. Jesus said, Matthew 11:28 “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” God’s rest is available through faith in Jesus Christ. If you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then you will spend eternity with Him, and fully enter God’s rest.

Strive to Enter

[Hebrews 4:11](#) “Let us therefore **strive to enter that rest**, so **that no one may fall** by the same sort of **disobedience**.”

Instead of trying to convince his readers to believe, the writer of Hebrews assumes that they already believe. His great desire is that they will not “fall”, or reject their faith in Jesus Christ. To continue to have faith in Jesus, they must keep focused on living for Jesus. Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, will transform their hearts and minds into His own image. As a result, they will be able to “**strive to enter that rest**.” This is possible whenever a believer is transformed by Jesus Christ (2Corinthians 3:18 “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”) Great danger remains for those who are not transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. They will be filled with unbelief that will cause them to disobey God. The writer of Hebrews is writing these words so that “**none may fall**.”

A believer’s faith is shown to be genuine when they walk in the light as Jesus is in the light (1John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”) On the other hand, disobedience demonstrates that they don’t act according to faith in Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews urges his readers to obey, and to continue to believe what they have already come to believe. He’s saying, “Choose Jesus. Keep on choosing Jesus.”

How Can We Strive to Enter?

Immediately after telling us to strive to enter God’s rest, we are told how:

[Hebrews 4:12-13](#) “For **the word of God** is **living and active**, sharper than any two-edged **sword**, **piercing** to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and **discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart**. And **no creature is hidden** from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

“**The word of God**” cuts us to the heart. Because it is “**living and active**,” like a “**sword**” or surgeon’s scalpel, it discerns “**the thoughts and intentions of the heart**.” If we think we can expose ourselves to God’s word, and remain unchanged, we are mistaken. God’s word is out to get us! “**No creature is hidden from his sight**.” When we read the Bible, and it penetrates deeply into our hearts, God sees us for what we really are, and we become aware of the depth of our sin.

Don’t think that God’s purpose in this this process is simply to cause us pain. When we read the Bible and submit to God, He removes the sinful parts of us. Like the diseased parts a surgeon’s scalpel removes, the healthy parts can heal and thrive when the disease is removed. When God removes something you love, don’t assume He’s doing it simply to punish you. Even when you know He is punishing you, that isn’t the only think He is doing. He uses pain to make His servants into the person He intends for them to be.

God surgically removes sin from our lives so that we can enter His rest. Only by making us like Jesus can we inherit eternal life. Only by removing sin from our lives can we be holy people, who like Jesus will live for all eternity.

We **strive to enter** God's rest by reading the Bible, praying over it, and letting God's word penetrate deeply to our hearts. In the end, it is a process of healing and growing.

When believers read the Bible, God transforms them by the power His word. The word of God created the universe. That same power is unleashed when believers read the Bible and it takes root in their heart.

What if you read the Bible and you feel like nothing is happening? Sometimes believers go through times when God does big and obvious things, but at other times God does hidden things. At all times God is at work. Don't give up or don't slow down on reading the Bible. Strive!

The Promised Rest (Hebrews 4:1–13)

N R R R J H F S L N P T
S E V E N T H E A R D J
K T K U M I S E O D I R
T N R O L A A M E C S W
H E T E P F I G G A O O
H K S H A S D N A M B R
O T T B E C A U S E E D
T D A N B R H G S U D E
A O N L P B E N E F I T
S O D E L I A F M E E I
U G S A W I R G O A N N
V T H N Y S T S E R C U
H O I K H P T S U J E B

Therefore, while the **promise** of **entering** his **rest** **still stands**, let us **fear** **lest** any of you should **seem** to have **failed** to **reach** it. For **good news** **came** to us **just** as to them, but the **message** they **heard** did not **benefit** them, **because** they were not **united** by **faith** with those who listened. For we who have believed **enter** that **rest**, 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. For he has somewhere **spoken** of the **seventh** day in this way: "And God **rested** on the **seventh** day from all his works." And **again** in this passage he **said**, "They shall not **enter** my **rest**." Since **therefore** it **remains** for some to **enter** it, and those who formerly received the **good news** **failed** to **enter** **because** of **disobedience**, **again** he appoints a certain day, "**Today**," saying through David so long afterward, in the **words** already quoted, "**Today**, if you hear his voice, do not harden your **hearts**." For if Joshua had given them **rest**, God would not have **spoken** of another day later on. So then, there **remains** a Sabbath **rest** for the people of God, for whoever has **entered** God's **rest** has also **rested** from his works as God did from his. Let us **therefore** strive to **enter** that **rest**, so that no one may fall by the same sort of **disobedience**. For the **word** of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the **heart**. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

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