

This passage starts as a continuation of the commentary about Psalm 95:7-11. Then in verse 14 the commentary changes to be about Psalm 110:4. This is all one section on “Rest for the People of God.”

He is writing in the form of a **Midrash**. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary shares and Midrash: *Jewish commentary or exposition on Scripture. The forms varied considerably but often included reading a text in the light of other texts, with careful attention to all nuances of details supposedly filled with divine significance. Because such methods of reading Scripture were common, early Christians could employ them in relating their message to other ancient Jewish Bible readers.*

Hebrews 4:1-10:

Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. ² For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. 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. ⁴ For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; ⁵ and again in this passage, “They shall not enter My rest.” ⁶ Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, ⁷ He again fixes a certain day, “Today,” saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before,

*“Today if you hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts.”*

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. ⁹ So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. ¹⁰ For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

Verse by verse:

Verse 1:

- rest, think of the millennial rest; you have come this far, but have not really put your trust in the Messiah, don't give up. If you come this close but do not believe you will not enter the millennial reign. People came out of Egypt, but many did not enter the promised land.
- There is an idea of having a fear or being careful not to fall short of God's promise of rest
- In most English translations this verse starts with “therefore.” The verse is looking back to the previous material. As noted above, the previous material has been writing about God's rest.
- The writer acknowledges that there is a promise of entering His rest, God's rest.

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- Rest: **the will of God completed**, but not just in completion but also being in God's will.
- The writer is concerned with the people falling short of God's rest.
 - → obviously with all of his concerns with these people he wants them to be sure they can enter **God's covenant rest**. They will not fall away.
- The Greek word for fear used in this verse has the idea of being afraid, also reverence, or weariness, etc.
 - → this should have strong implications with me and us. We must have reverent respect for the consequences of falling away from God and missing the covenant.
- The writer says "if" a promise remains of entering His rest (NASB).
 - Many times "if" can be translated "since" and in this case I think "since" is a better translation. The NIV translates this passage as "since." It is not in questions whether or not there is still a promise; it is however, in question whether they still have held fast to that promise.

Other passages about receiving the grace of God in vain or being short of God's grace: 2 Cor 6:1; Gal 5:4; Heb 12:15

Verse 2:

- The writer compares the good news preached to them versus the good news preached to some other people. Context dictates that he is referring to the Old Testament people receiving the good news of the covenant under Moses.
- The writer combines the news with faith.
- The message they heard was of no value to them, the writer says why. They didn't combine the message with faith. We are not saved by works but by faith (Eph 2:8-9).
- The writer literally says that they had "good news" preached to them. That is the actual meaning of the gospel. This means that the news the Old Testament people received was "good news."
- There is a contrasting element between the Old Testament people and these New Testament people.
- The Word of God with faith: Rom 10:17; Gal 3:2

IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

*The Israelites rebelled in the wilderness because they did not believe the word Moses gave them; **those who rebelled against the word of Christ were acting like Moses' generation had.**¹*

Verse 3:

- There is now a connection for those who have believed. This idea of rest comes up again. This is only for those who have believed.
 - John chapter 6:31-59 has many who had believed but left Jesus. Dr. Brown, former president of Cedarville University, says that belief alone does not make someone a Christian. We need belief, trust, and commitment
 - The Greek word for belief implies trust and being convinced intellectually
- Verse 3 is once again a quote from Psalm 95:11
- This quote is referring to the same thing it was referring to in chapter 3. This goes back to the Old Testament book of Numbers when the people would not trust in God to deliver the promised land into their hands (Numbers 14:21-35).
- This verse ends by saying that God's work has been finished.
 - This is the idea that since God rested on the seventh day His work has been complete.
 - →we could get some amazing ideas here such as the idea that God set the creation up in a way where the earth is self supporting and takes care of itself. However, it is going too far to get the Deist idea that God set creation up and now He is no longer involved in creation. That idea contradicts Scripture. God is still involved.
 - →I think we certainly can reasonably say that God's work in creation is finished and now He is resting in His covenantal relationship with people.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

4:3. This is precisely what he then affirmed. The words *hoi pisteusantes* should be rendered "we who believe" rather than we who have believed. *The writer's concern was not about their original faith in the past, but their perseverance in it (cf. 3:6, 14). Faith remains the prerequisite for entrance into rest, since it was to those who failed to exercise faith that God*

Christ ***Christ**. The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew term for "Messiah." Some Gentile readers, unfamiliar with the Jewish sense of the term, may have taken it merely as Jesus' surname, a usage that became more common over time.

¹Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 4:1). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

*declared by oath they would not enter into His rest. This exclusion was definitive despite the fact that this rest had been established as far back as **Creation** itself.²*

Verse 4:

- This builds on the idea mentioned above. There is a quote from Gen 2:2 that God rested on the seventh day
- Just because the writer says “somewhere” doesn’t mean he doesn’t know where. This was a common way of bringing up passages. They didn’t have all the Torah in one pocket size book as we do.

Verse 5:

- This is still building on the idea of rest. There is the ongoing commentary of God’s rest.

Verses 3-5 from the IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

The writer now attends to grammatical details as Jewish interpreters in his day normally did. What could the psalmist mean by “my rest,” since God had already rested from his works on the seventh day of creation? (Linking texts by a shared key word was a common Jewish exegetical technique; Jewish liturgy later linked these two texts similarly.) Perhaps he uses this text to point to the future, too; some Jewish writers believed that the world to come would be the ultimate sabbath rest, the final stage of creation.³

Verse 6:

- This verse starts with a causal conjunction in the Greek. This gives the basis or grounds for an action. And then the writer uses an inferential conjunction: The writer is about to make a conclusion based on the former mentioned information.
- Some can still enter the rest
 - →I think the exciting thing here is that though they fell away and didn’t hold on to the teaching by faith, we can still enter the rest.
- This appears to be an explanation verse. Those who are not entering the rest are not entering the rest **because of their disobedience.**
 - →This verse can have some strong applications for obedience and the consequence of disobedience. There are consequences for disobedience.
 - →what are those consequences for Christians today?

²Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:788). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

³Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 4:3). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

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- For starters we lose on the fullness of a relationship with Christ.
- Obedience is also evidence of our faith.
- Chapter 3:18 talked about their disobedience and chapter 4:11 also will challenge us not to be disobedient as they were.

Verse 7:

- This is where the writer is building up the case for today. The writer even says that. He says that “today” is the day and he is even able to quote how the Old Testament authors said the same thing.
- Psalm 95:7 is quoted as it was in chapter 3:7 and verse 15
 - →I think the sin that the Old Testament people committed was a sin of hardening their hearts.
 - →this was expressed in a lack of faith, of trust, in the Lord.

Verse 8:

- This verse is making it clear that Joshua didn’t bring the rest prophesied about.
- Josh 22:4 makes it clear that Joshua did give them rest, but it was not all the rest. This verse of Hebrews makes it clear that there was another rest talked about.

Verse 9:

- Basic conclusion: there is still a Sabbath rest for the people of God
 - →notice this rest is not for all but only God’s people

Verse 10:

- This verse is talking about anyone who enters God’s covenant.
 - →what is the work he rests from?
 - I think it would make since that it is the work from keeping the law, but God didn’t have to keep the law.
 - It still could have to do with that. That is our work which Jesus gives us rest from. God’s work was setting up the earth and the universe. However, God doesn’t work anyways, so I think God set an example for us. Anthropomorphic language, ascribing to God human characteristics.
 - Also, the idea of an “already, but not yet” rest. The rest is still to come.
- Rev 14:13 talks about entering rest.

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