

Hebrews

Chapter 4:8-16

⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. ⁹Consequently, there remains a **Sabbath rest** for the people of God.

Walvoord > Behind this argument lies the undeniable fact that the conquest in Joshua's day did not lead to a permanent possession of the land. Such permanent possession of their promised inheritance had become for Judaism an expectation which would only be realized in Messiah's kingdom.

Sabbath Rest > Strong's > *sabbatismos* > An entirely different word than what has been used to this point

Precept Austin > *sabbatismos* > literally means a keeping of a sabbath or a keeping of days of rest. It is used in this passage not in the literal sense (meaning to keep a specific day, the "Sabbath" day) but to describe a period of rest for God's people which is modeled after and is a fulfillment of the traditional Sabbath.

Wuest > The writer uses here a different Greek word for "rest."

- In his previous references to the idea of rest, he has used *katapausis*, meaning "a cessation from activity," thus "a rest," a general word for the idea of rest.
- Now, he uses *sabbatismos*, the word used of the Sabbath rest.
- The word points back to God's original rest and speaks of the ideal rest. It is a Sabbath rest because the believer reaches a definite stage of attainment and has satisfactorily accomplished a purpose, as God did when He finished the work of creation. It is not the believer's rest into which he enters and in which he participates, but in God's unique, personal rest in which the believer shares.

¹⁰For the one who has entered His **rest** has himself also **rested** from his works, as God did from His. ¹¹Therefore let's **make every effort to enter that rest**, so that no one will fall (by following) the same example of **disobedience**.

Rest ... Rested ... Rest > Precept Austin > *katapausis* > describes literally a ceasing from one's work or activity.

Precept Austin > I believe that we see this in Romans 7 and 8. Romans 7 is the description of a Christian trying to live up to God's standards in the power of the flesh, and failing badly. Romans 8 is the solution. The Christian is to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that raised the dead body of Jesus from the grave (Jn 6:63).

By the working of His Spirit in us, we are able, to some degree, to live a godly life (see Ro 8:1-17). This is resting in Him, or we might even say, abiding in Him (see Jn 15:1-14). This is the key to fruitfulness

Rested > Constable > The Hebrew word translated rested in Genesis 2:2 literally means *ceased*. God's work of creating did not exhaust Him, since He never tires. He simply stopped creating on the seventh day.

Make every effort > Strong's > *spoudazo* > to make haste, to give diligence

HELPS > properly, be swift (go fast, be *speedy*); (figuratively) to move speedily by showing *full diligence* (*fully* applying oneself); acting *fervently* (*speedy* commitment)

Wuest > It is used in the papyri in such senses as "do your best, take care, hurry on the doing of something." The verb speaks of *intensity of purpose* followed by *intensity of effort* toward the realization of that purpose. These first-century Jews who were on the point of renouncing their professed faith in Messiah and of returning to the abrogated sacrifices of Judaism, are exhorted to give diligence, take care, exert themselves, hasten to enter the rest in Messiah.

To enter that rest > Dillow > "We enter into rest only when we persevere in faith to the end of life. When we do this, we will obtain a share in the inheritance, the millennial land of Canaan, and will rule with Christ as one of His metochoi [partners] there.

Disobedience > Strong's > *apithiah* > from *a* > not + *peitho* > to persuade, to have confidence

¹² **For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, even penetrating as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.** ¹³ **And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we must answer.**

For > To better understand why we need to stop and understand the "why" of the "for" – take a look below.

The word of God > Precept Austin > Now, don't misunderstand -- this verse is still applicable to the Word of God in general, but that was not the specific intent of the writer. He was primarily referring to the Word of God that he had just **warned** them with (e.g., God's Word from Ps 95:7 quoted in Hebrews 3:7, 13, 15, Heb 4:7) in the long section beginning in Hebrews 3:1 through summary exhortation in Hebrews 4:11. Now in Hebrews 4:12, the writer explains why the Word of warning is effective and why they should take heed to the warning.

Swindoll > But in Scripture itself, the phrase “word of God” can refer to several related things.

- First, it can refer to the written Word of God, Holy Scripture (John 10:35; 2 Pet. 1:19-20).
- Second, it can refer to the ultimate embodiment of truth, the Word of God incarnate, Jesus Christ (John 1:14).
- Third, it frequently refers to the message of God proclaimed—the spoken word of God (Phil. 1:14; 1 Thes. 2:13).

Living > Strong’s > A primary verb; to live (literally or figuratively) -- life(-time), (a-)live(-ly), quick.

Precept Austin relays two passages that speak specifically to this concept:

John 6:63 > ⁶³ *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh provides no benefit; **the words that I have spoken to you are spirit, and are life.***

Acts 7:38 > ³⁸ *This is the one who was in the assembly in the wilderness together with the angel who spoke to him at length on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and **he received living words to pass on to you.***

Active > HELPS > *energés* > properly, *energized*, full-of-energy (operative)

Swindoll > The Greek word translated “active” is *energēs* [1756], from which we get our English word energy. God’s revealed word is effective and powerful. It accomplishes what it sets out to do. This reminds me of God’s own description of the effective power of His revealed word in **Isaiah 55:10-11** > ¹⁰ *For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it produce and sprout, and providing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹ So will My word be which goes out of My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the purpose for which I sent it.*

Two-edged > Strong’s > double-mouthed, two-edged

(The Greek word) occurs three times in the Septuagint

- **Judges 3:15** > *Ehud made himself a sword which had two edges*
- **Psalms 149:6** > *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand*
- **Proverbs 5:4** > *But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.*

Sword > Strong’s > *machaira* > a short sword or dagger

HELPS > properly, a *slaughter-knife*; a short sword or dagger mainly used for stabbing;

Penetrating > (KJV > “piercing”) Precept Austin > means to go through, to reach through, and so to penetrate, pierce, pass through). It was used in ancient Greek of missiles (as moving through a three-dimensional space). The figurative idea is to thoroughly penetrate.

Soul and Spirit > Utley > The Hebrew word *nephesh* (translated here as “soul”) is used of both mankind and the animals in Genesis, while “spirit” (*ruah*) is used uniquely of mankind.

Judge > Swindoll > the word of God exhibits an uncanny ability to judge. The Greek word *kritikos* is not meant in a legal or judicial sense, but in a mental sense of discerning, analyzing, or scrutinizing. In fact, we get our words *critical*, *criticize*, and *critique* from this term.

Thoughts > Strong’s > deliberation, pondering, thoughts

HELPS > literally, inner-passion, the emotional force driving meditation and reflection ... emphasizes the passionate *idea* lodged within, i.e. the inner *affections (emotions)* driving the reasoning

Intentions > Strong’s > thinking, thoughtfulness, moral understanding

HELPS > “engaged in,” which intensifies *noús*, “mind”) – properly, the “engaged mind,” i.e. what a person (literally) has “in-mind” (*BAGD*, “insight”); settled (thought-out) opinions, attitudes.

Wuest translates this phrase as follows > *and is a sifter and analyzer of the reflections and conceptions of the heart*

Creature > Strong’s > creation (the act or the product) (From *ktizo* > *original formation*)

HELPS > properly, creation (creature) which is *founded* from *nothing* (this is also the sense of this term from Homer on); creation out of nothing (Lat *ex nihilo*)

Precept Austin > *ktisis* from *ktizo* = create, form or found) stresses work of original formation of object and represents something which has undergone a process of creation.

Hidden > Precept Austin > *aphanes* > “a” > *negates + phaino* > *to appear* > means literally not appearing and so not manifest or appearing.

Laid bare > Strong’s > *trachelizo* > to take by the throat, to overthrow

To whom we must answer > HELPS > *légō*, “speaking to a conclusion”) – a *word*, being the expression of a *thought*; a saying. *lógos* (“word”)

¹⁴ Therefore, since we ***have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let's hold firmly to our confession.***

Have > Strong's > to have, hold

Great high priest > Barnes > The "object" is

- to show that Christians have a great High Priest as really as the Jews had;
- to show wherein he surpassed the Levitical priesthood;
- to show how all that was said of the Aaronic priesthood, and all the types pertaining to that priesthood, were fulfilled in the Lord Jesus;
- to state and illustrate the nature of the consolations which Christians might derive from the fact that they had such an High Priest.

Barnes > In no part of the Bible can there be found so full an account of the design of the Mosaic institutions, as in Hebrews 5-10 of this Epistle; and were it not for this, the volume of inspiration would be incomplete. We should be left in the dark on some of the most important subjects in revelation; we should ask questions for which we could find no certain answer.

Fanning > "The picture of Jesus Christ as High Priest is the most distinctive theme of Hebrews, and it is central to the theology of the book."

Robertson > The author now takes up the main argument of the Epistle, already alluded to in Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 2:17; Hebrews 3:1, the priestly work of Jesus as superior to that of the Levitical line (Hebrews 4:14-12).

Passed through > Strong's > to go through, go about, to spread

Hold firmly > HELPS > to place under one's grasp (seize hold of, put under control).

Precept Austin > (*krateo*) means to lay hold of and cling tightly to that which has been taken hold. *Krateo* means to cling to tenaciously with the idea of seizing, retaining (using strength)

¹⁵ For ***we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin.***

We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses > Barclay > (This is rather long ... but the information is important in understanding the mindset of the hearers).

To the Jews, the basic idea of God was that he was holy in the sense of being different. In no sense did he share our human experience – and he was in fact incapable of sharing it, simply because he was God.

It was even more so with the Greeks.

- The Stoics, the highest Greek thinkers, said that the primary attribute of God was *apatheia*, by which they meant essential inability to feel anything at all. They argued that if people could feel sorrow or joy, it meant that others were able to influence them. If so, the other people must, at least for that moment, be greater than they. No one, therefore, must be able in any sense to affect God, for that would be to make such a person greater than God; and so God had to be completely beyond all feeling.
- The other Greek school was the Epicureans. They held that the gods lived in perfect happiness and blessedness. They lived in what they called the intermundia, the spaces between the worlds; and they were not even aware of the world.

The Jews had their different God, the Stoics had their feelingless gods, and the Epicureans had their completely detached gods. Into that world of thought came Christianity with its incredible conception of a God who had deliberately undergone every human experience.

Plutarch, one of the most religious of the Greeks, declared that it was blasphemous to involve God in the affairs of this world. Christianity depicted God as not so much involved but as identified with the suffering of this world. It is almost impossible for us to realize the revolution that Christianity brought about in the relationship of men and women to God. For century after century, they had been confronted with the idea of the untouchable God; and now they discovered a God who had gone through all that they must go through.

That had two results. It gave God the quality of mercy. It is easy to see why. It was because God understands..

Hebrews 2:17 > ¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brothers so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people

¹⁶ ***Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need.***

Therefore > Constable > Since we have such a High Priest to intercede for us with God, we can approach God confidently in prayer ... Our Sovereign will be merciful (not giving us what we deserve) and gracious (giving us what we do not deserve).

Approach > Robertson > (The Greek grammar translates it as) "Let us keep on coming to"

Hughes > In the Levitical system that had prevailed up till the time of Christ's advent only the high priest was permitted to approach into the sanctuary of God's presence, and then only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, when he passed from sight into the holy of holies. The people, however, were excluded from the divine presence because of their sinfulness and prohibited from drawing near. But the atonement effected by Christ's sacrifice of himself on the cross opened the way that had hitherto been closed.

Confidence > Strong's > boldness, confidence (From *pas* > *all* and a derivative of *rheo* > *command, make, say, speak of*; all out-spokenness, i.e. frankness, bluntness, publicity; by implication, assurance

Precept Austin > (the Greek word) is literally all speech or speaking all things and thereby conveys the idea of freedom to say all. The basic idea in the word is freedom of speech, when the word flowed freely.

Help > Precept Austin > Luke uses *boetheia* in his description of the storm tossed ship in **Acts 27:17**, writing that ¹⁷ *After they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables (boetheia) in undergirding the ship; and fearing that they might run aground on the shallows of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor and let themselves be driven along in this way.* This procedure of passing ropes under the ship to hold it together is known as *frapping*, (frap is a nautical term that means to draw tight, to lash down or together). So, in the midst of the storm the sailors wrapped cables around the ship's hull and winched them tight. Thus supported, the ship would be better able to withstand the severe pounding of wind and sea. Beloved, do you see the word picture inherent in the Biblical use of this concept in other verses?

At the time of our need > Strong's > timely. Usage > opportune, timely, suitable

Vincent > Lit. for seasonable help, or help in good time