

Hebrews 4:1-13 A Sabbath rest for the people of God

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, `They shall never enter my rest.`" And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words.. "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest." It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.

Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before.. "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God`s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God`s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

This passage has links to 2 important subjects:-
the Sabbath and the Word of God

It is a remarkable fact about bible prophecy; there are often multiple fulfilments.

It is seen here with comparison with creation week, Joshua leading the people into the promised land and gospel salvation.

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands,

“Therefore” is a link to previous verses

A logical deduction-

If God says ‘**they**’ will never enter my rest then **others** will.

The marvel of meditation- it doesn’t literally say it but the implication is clear. It’s a promise of entering.

What the writer means by the “rest” is more fully explained in the following verses.

let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.

Let us – we all need to watch

None of YOU - you (the wavering Messianic believers) are in grave danger of falling short (miss the target – full salvation)



For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did;

The gospel in OT times

The writer is thinking about the people of the Exodus

They shall be my people and I will be their God

(It works by faith followed by trust)

What was true of them is also true of us – we have heard the gospel.

but the message they heard was of no value to them,
because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

Hearers who only listen do not benefit from the gospel

Listen – believe – respond



Now we who have believed enter that rest,

The basic message! Enter the rest by faith.

It is the ONLY way in.

Implied warning - escape options are not available



just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger,
`They shall never enter my rest.`"

The alternatives to the gospel will not work –
God emphatically says so.



And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world.

There has always been a “rest” available
since the beginning of creation



For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words..

Notice again the generalised reference – somewhere

He introduces the link to the seventh day in Genesis 2



"And on the seventh day God rested from all his work."

God still 'works' but his acts of creation stopped on the seventh day.

Cf. Jesus conflict with the authorities

John 5:16 And this was why the Jews (Judeans/authorities) were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

The introduction of the word "works" is important and will be used later in this passage

And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."

“

The quote proves that a rest does exist,
even if some don't enter it

”

It still remains that some will enter that rest,

Logical inference

God has provided a rest for some to enjoy.



and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.

Implied warning – how to miss this rest – disobey God!



Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today,

Therefore – conclusion –

God's intention is for some to enter his rest

A certain day (in a certain place in Scripture) but Today always means NOW



when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before..
"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

Long after the Exodus generation God spoke.
David was the voice.

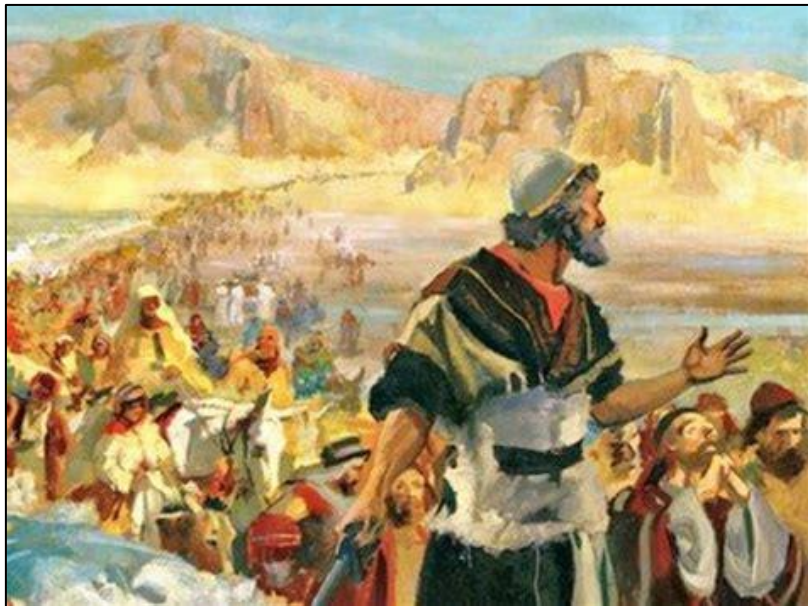
It's a message for you (his hearers) too!
Listen and respond in a right way

For if Joshua had given them rest,
God would not have spoken later about another day.

The fulfilment under Joshua's leadership wasn't the complete fulfilment.

God gave the people rest in the land

But it's more than physical rest so God speaks of more to come.



Joshua 21:44-45 The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hands. Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;

It's a special kind of rest called a Sabbath Rest

This is connected to the Creation week and what Genesis 2 says.



for anyone who enters God`s rest also rests from his own work,
just as God did from his.

An important parallel

God ‘stopped working’

Believers stop working to obtain salvation

– it’s by faith in Christ’s work, not ours

Our subsequent works are for service not for salvation



Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

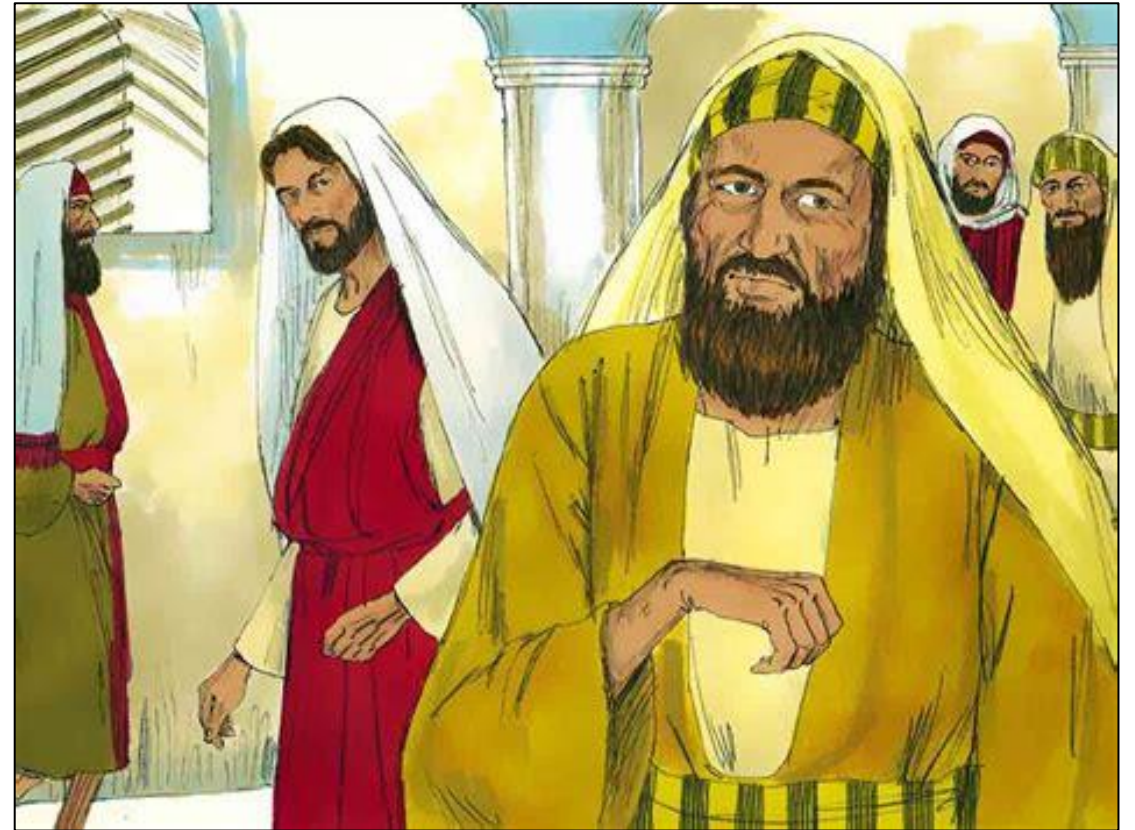
Let us therefore – again a logical conclusion
This is the rest you need to have.

Effort – get this right!
Otherwise it's the end!



In the New Testament the Sabbath is dealt with in the Gospels for the Jews, where Jesus challenges all the extras that had been loaded on the observance.

Matthew 12:11-13 He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other.



When it comes to the book of Acts and the Letters, the Sabbath observance is the only one of the Ten Commandments (the moral law) that appears to be not continued for gentiles. It is not included in the requirements for the gentile believers in the letter from the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.

Acts 15:19-20 "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.



The Apostle Paul develops this point in his letter to the Romans, a congregation of both Jewish and Gentile believers.

Romans 14:5-6 One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.



The letter to the Hebrews looks at the sabbath rest as fulfilled in us, when by faith we cease from our efforts and trust in the Messiah's finished work.



How does this involve the Lord's day as the first day of the week that came to be part of subsequent church (substantially gentile) history?

Briefly the relevant passages are:-

Luke 24 – Jesus' resurrection on the first day of the week.

Acts 2 - the day of Pentecost (7 weeks and 1 day after the Passover and in the Feast of Unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:15)) was on the first day of the week (the Church's birthday!)

Acts 20:7 The church in Troas met to hear Paul's address on the first day of the week

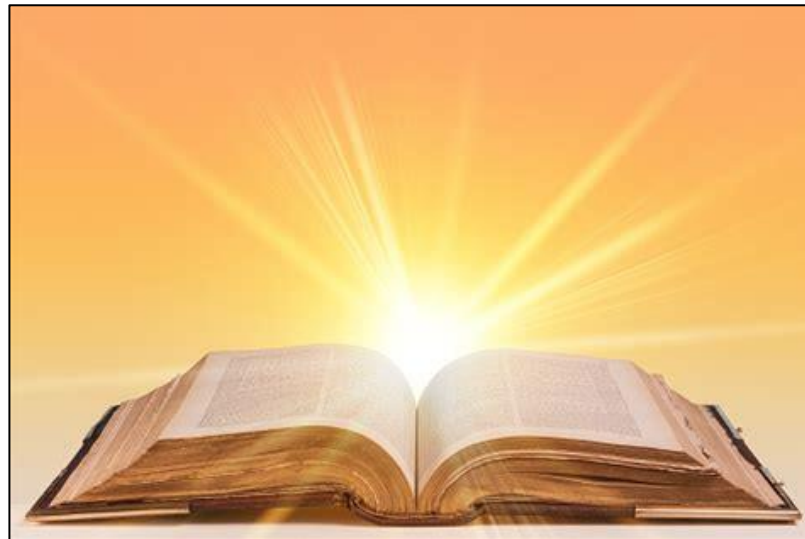
1 Corinthians 16:1 a weekly collection was made on the 1st day of the week in Corinth and the Galatian churches (it had become church practice by this time)

For the word of God is living and active.

The Bible is called the Word of God
It isn't a dead letter. It is alive and powerful

And it's on your case!

This is a very high view of Scripture and should be ours.
We read the Word with reverent faith in order to live it.



Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow;

It gets to the point!

Dealing with the issues on the INSIDE in our lives

It shows us what God approves of (right)

And what he doesn't (wrong)

The biological imagery could be compared to a surgeon's knife.

Cf. Jesus' use of the sword – “It is written...”,
and his messages to the people and the leaders

Ephesians 6:17



it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Why does the Bible behave like a person?
Because the Holy Spirit is the person using it.

It is our judge ...



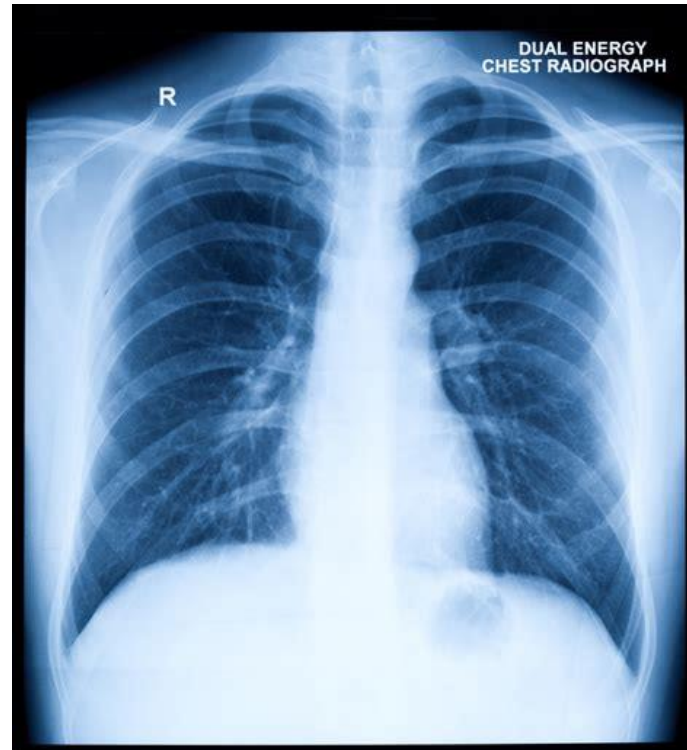
James 4:11-12 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbour?

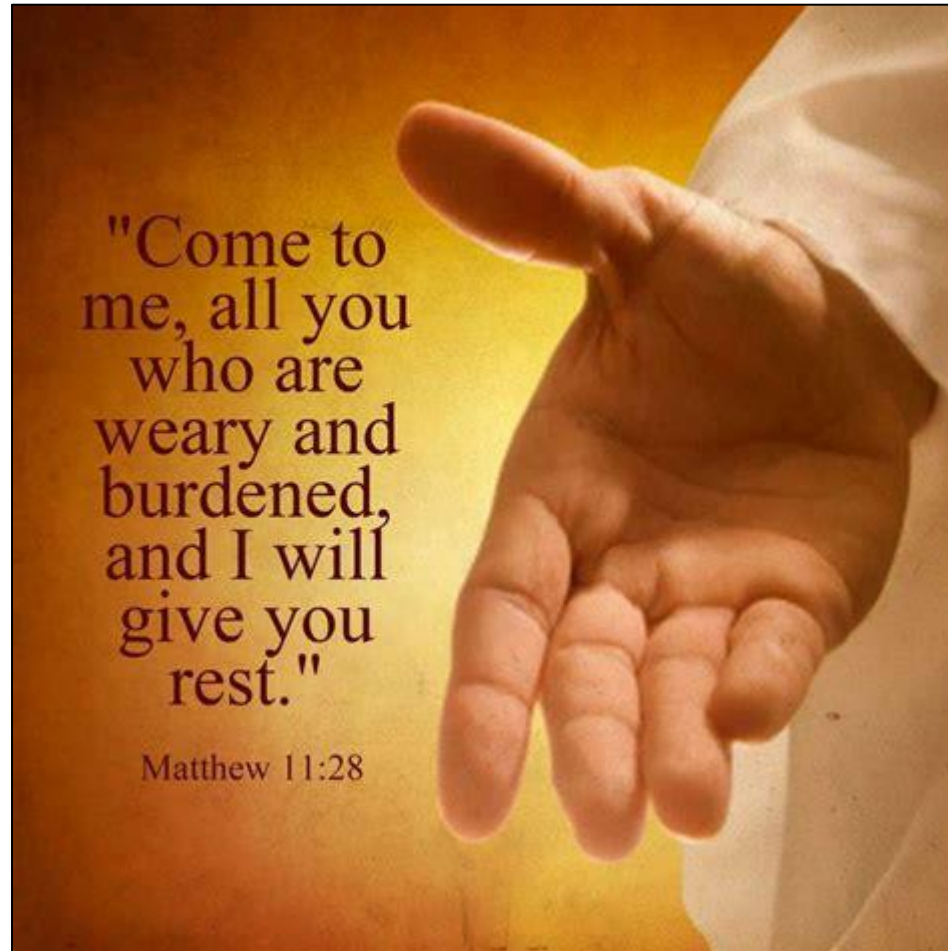
Nothing in all creation is hidden from God`s sight.

Psalm 139:7-12 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

God sees your heart and motives
And you will have to answer to Him.





Matthew 11:29-30 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Questions

Why are some Christians so anxious?

What should be the balance with faith and works?

How has Bible surgery helped you?

What does 2 Timothy 3:16-17 mean for preachers and to you?