

**4:1 - "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."**

The communications of God to his people should be taken seriously. The Christian must be diligent in growing in knowledge and grace, making sure he is not falling short of the promised rest. Rest in Christ is freedom from being dominated by sin and by the flesh. It is freedom from the fear of death and assurance of eternal life.

*"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace."*

Rom. 6:6, 11-14

*"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

Gal. 2:20

*"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."*

I John 5:13

Rest in Christ is a gift to every believer, however it is the Christians responsibility to enter into and take hold of this rest.

*"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."*

Col. 3:15

Notice the word 'seem'. Every Christian is given this rest but those who fail to take hold of it 'seem' to have fallen short.

*"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."*

II Peter 1:9

Some may have really fallen short, that is, have not yet come to a saving knowledge of Christ. The invitation remains open to these to come to belief.

*"The lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

II Peter 3:9

The exhortation to fear is given in light of the example of the Israelites, who fell short of the promised rest because of unbelief and a hardened heart. (Heb. 3:8-11)

**4:2 - "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."**

The word of God is effectively communicated to believers as it also was to the Israelites. (Heb. 1:2-3) Faith is the essential ingredient in both the old and new system.

*"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but righteousness of faith.*

Rom. 4:8-13

Allowing themselves to be ruled by a spirit of unbelief, the communications of God to the Israelites were of no profit. Unlike their old system counterparts, these believers are exhorted to exercise faith, being diligent in obeying the communications of God.

**4:3-5 - "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest."**

In accordance with the previous exhortations of this letter, that there remained a promised rest, was probably not understood. The author's intent is to prove its availability, prove they have entered it, and to exhort them to

growth in it. It is stated that those who believe the gospel do indeed enter into rest. It is helpful to think of the rest of God in three stages or degrees. The first degree of rest is salvation, the second is the ramifications of that salvation which was described in verse 1, and the third and final degree is the rest of our final destiny which is eternity with Christ.

Using the old testament scriptures, the author defines this rest and proves its existence. All of the works were finished from the foundation of the world. God did it all and rested from all his works.

*"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made."* Gen. 2:2

The rest God offers is to share in this finished work. Those who believe therefore share in this rest. The parallel is again to the promise land. It was prepared and waiting. The key to entering in is belief.

**4:6 - "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:"**

The author concludes his argument of the last several verses stating that there is still indeed a rest which is entered into by those who believe. The logic of the preceding verses is difficult to understand. It seems to proceed as follows:

- a) The rest spoken of was prepared from the foundation of the world (v. 4)
- b) Belief is the means by which one enters into God's rest (vv. 3, 5)
- c) The same gospel was preached to those of the old system and those of the new system (v. 2)
- d) The offer to share in God's rest applies to both systems, being established in eternity, but is predicated upon belief.

The author repeats himself once again at the close of this verse, stating that those who do not enter in, do not because of unbelief. He wants to emphatically make the point that it is simply and only faith which determines who enters into God's rest. (the rest of initial salvation and the rest available from the ramifications of that salvation)

**4:7 - "Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."**

The author presents another argument proving that the rest offered to man spans time. The words of God through David not only remind its readers of a historical event, but extend an invitation to faithfulness and the resulting rest. The invitation was extended to every man who read these words and to every man that will read these words. The words 'To day' call for immediate action, for the invitation for each man is revoked at death and will be revoked for all on the last day.

*"(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"*

II Cor. 6:2

**4:8-9 - "For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."**

Many thought the rest was the literal promised land eventually entered into by the Israelites as well as Joshua and Caleb of the cursed generation. If the promised land was the rest, then the offer could not have been extended in the Psalms. The rest of God is not the promised land, but is a spiritual rest, attained through faithfulness and obedience. The conclusion of the last several verses is stated in verse 9. There is indeed a rest given to those who believe.

**4:10 - "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."**

The rest of the believer is a spiritual rest. It is not trusting in our own works but in the finished work of Christ.

*"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

Eph. 2:10

*"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."*

Phil. 4:7

*"Every true believer hath ceased from his own works of sin, from relying on his own works of righteousness, and from the burdensome works of the law, as God and Christ have ceased from their works of creation and redemption" Matthew Henry*

The fullness of the believer's rest will be in eternity.

*"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."*  
 Rev. 14:13

**4:11 - "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."**

The exhortation is to labor, to desire, to give diligence to enter into the rest of God. To come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, one must cease from his own works and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ. When the author exhorts the readers to enter into that rest, he is not referring to the positioned rest given at salvation, but to the sanctification process which takes place throughout the believers life.

Paul was likewise speaking to saved individuals in Phillipi and yet exhorted them to 'work out their own salvation' (Phil. 2:12). Paul's exhortation is synonymous to the terminology 'enter into his rest', which is used throughout this chapter.

The Christian must give every area of his life over to Jesus Christ. The Christian learns to trust more in Jesus Christ and less in himself.

*"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*  
 II Cor. 12:9

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* Rom. 12:1

*"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exhalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."*  
 II Cor. 10:5

By taking his responsibilities seriously in this area of Christian growth, the believer will increase in faith, have greater assurance, and have true peace. By not laboring to turn every aspect of ones life over to Christ, the believer thinks he can be sanctified through his own efforts. Hanging on and wanting control shows an unbelieving heart. Falling into sin is inevitable and the rest described above becomes something desired but impossible to achieve.

It is truly labor to turn every aspect of our lives over to Jesus Christ. To give up the control we love to have over ourselves as well as over others. It is difficult to give over our marriage, our finances, our friends, our relationships, and our careers. All things must be put under the authority of the word of God and our action be in accordance with it.

**4:12 - "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."**

The motivation to take the communication of God seriously, to obey it in fear (v. 1) and to labor in it (v. 11), is the greatness and character of this communication which is his word. The word of God is living. It's relevance transcends time. It never becomes old or outdated.

*"This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us:"*

Acts 7:38

*"For the flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass, The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." I Peter 1:24-25*

Coming from God, the word is powerful. It is backed-up by the God of the universe. Every man is held accountable to it and every man will be judged by it. (Heb. 10:31, 12:29)

As a twoedged sword the word of God pierces and divides. The desires of the flesh are strong. Even the Christian can be deceived by his emotions. The word of God pierces to the heart of an issue, cutting through complex emotions and dividing proper motivations from improper.

*"And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."*

Rev. 1:16

The word of God is able to judge thoughts and motivations. It will detect and point out a hardened heart.

*"It will discover to men the variety of their thoughts and purposes, the vileness of them, the bad principals they are activated by, the sinister and sinful ends they act to. The*

*word will turn the inside of a sinner out, and let him see all that is in his heart."*

Matthew Henry

**4:13 - "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."**

If the word of God constantly divides and judges every thought and motive, it follows that God perfectly knows all his creatures. God is whom we have to deal with. Man may deceive others and even deceive himself, but with God man is face to face with the perfect truth.

*"And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."*

Rev. 2:23

*"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whence shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there."*

Psalms 139:1-8

There can be no disputing his judgments for they are true and just. God is fully aware of our every thought and every action.

*"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."*

Matt. 10:30

When a man was brought before a judge a dagger was placed under his chin so he couldn't look away. This idea is behind the phrase 'naked and opened'. Many will dread being face to face with perfect truth.

*"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:"*

Rev. 6:15-16

**4:14 - "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."**

In light of the fact that no man can stand face to face with the perfect truth, the readers are confronted by being reminded that the faith which they profess provides a great high priest. Priests were mediators between God and his people Israel under the old system. Only the high priest, once a year, could enter into the presence of God and offer the highest sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. Jesus the Son of God is called the great high priest. He is superior to all former high priests and is the one true and everlasting mediator between God and man.

*"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus:"*

I Tim. 2:5

Not as the high priest who entered God's presence for a short time and left, Christ dwells in the presence of God, having passed into the heavens. (Heb. 1:3, 7:26) The believer must firmly hold onto his faith, growing in knowledge and grace through Jesus Christ. Just as the believer could not save himself, he also cannot now sanctify himself through his own efforts, apart from the doctrines of Christ.

**4:15 - "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."**

Jesus Christ is the perfect mediator. He is exalted in the heavens as God and yet a partaker of the nature of man. Being a man, Christ experienced temptation, he experienced human emotion, and he experienced the frailty of our nature. Being God, he never sinned. He never gave in, but remained pure in every way. Not having sinned, Christ experienced something no other human being had or will experience. He knew the full force of temptation.

*"And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."*

I John 3:5

**4:16 - "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."**

Because of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, all of the resources the believer needs are constantly available. This is the rest the believer is called to enter into. Jesus Christ our high priest has already taken the sacrifice to the throne of judgment. For the believer what remains is a throne of grace which can be boldly approached.

*"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."*  
Rom. 5:1-2

Mercy and help are constantly available to the believer. Understanding our weakness and the strength of sin, he is compassionate, forgiving those who come with a repentant heart in faith. He knows exactly what we need physically, mentally, and spiritually in every situation.

*"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."*  
I John 2:1

*"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."*  
I Cor. 10:13

Jesus Christ is our mediator, our strength, our rest, and our final destiny is in him and through him.