

SESSION THIRTEEN

OUR GOAL: TO ENTER IN TO GOD'S "REST"

Heb 4:1-13

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The "rest" in relation to chapter 3

1. The first mention of *rest* came in ch. 3:11 with the quotation from Ps 95. Therefore, it is important to understand the connections that "rest" has to chapter three.
2. The primary concern of chapter three is the matter of being "faithful" (as Jesus our perfect example) and "enduring to the end" (*holding fast*). The issue for the wilderness generation was not soteriological; neither is it for the author's audience.
3. Hence, there must be some relationship of "rest" with the matter of faithfulness and endurance.

B. The Old Testament Background

1. The idea of "rest" in the Old Testament was a repeated motif (see Kaiser's article¹ for elaboration). In regard to Ps 95, the "rest" pertained to God's offer to give the Hebrews coming out of Egypt the land of Canaan. There are a number of passages using "rest" in this way, such as Deut 12:9-11 (cf. Deut 3:18-20):

"for you have not as yet come to the **resting place** [יְהַנְּנֵנוּ]; LXX κατάπαυσιν] and the **inheritance** [יְהַנְּנֵנוּ; κληρονομίαν] which the LORD your God is giving you. When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to **inherit** [יְהַנְּנֵנוּ; κατακληρονομησῆ], and He **gives you rest** [יְהַנְּנֵנוּ; καταπαύσει] from all your enemies around *you* so that you live in security, then it shall come about that the place in which the LORD your God shall choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you."

It is very clear from this passage that "rest" meant for them the possessing of the land that had been promised to them. Notice, further, the close association of the concepts of

¹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Promise Theme and the Theology of Rest," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 130:518 (Apr-Jun 1973): 135-150.

²Ms A has κατακληρονομησει.

"rest" and "inheritance." The possessing of the land would be both their *rest* and *inheritance*. Many of the passages mentioning "rest" in Genesis-Joshua emphasize rest from enemies. Take note of Heb 1:13—Christ is waiting for the subjection of all His enemies (cf. 10:13).

2. Yet, the motif of "rest" was not limited to the possessing of the land of Canaan. Toussaint has provided a helpful summary of the various aspects of "rest" in the Bible:

"As one studies the passage he comes to the conclusion the writer of Hebrews is looking at several facets of rest. First, there is the seventh-day rest of God when he ceased from his creative work (4:4,10). There is a second aspect of rest, the rest which involved Israel's taking the promised land (3:11, 18-19). That the conquest of the land was viewed as a form of rest is seen in such passages as Deut 3:20; 12:9; 25:19; Josh 11:23; 21:44; 22:4, and 23:1. The third facet of rest in Hebrews 3 and 4 is the promised rest."³

Hence, as we consider the background of the "rest" motif, we must also keep the seventh-day "rest" in mind from God's creation (an aspect which the author of Hebrews will call to our attention).

C. Various Views of the "Rest" of Hebrews 4

1. Rest = "eternal bliss" in Heaven

- a. Proponents:

F. F. Bruce (110); Philip E. Hughes (161-62); Homer Kent (86-87); and Westcott (98-99). Lane (?) - see 1:102,105.

- b. Elaboration:

Some may see this as "heaven" which awaits the believer's earthly pilgrimage, or perhaps more generally as "eternal bliss." Bruce leaves the question open as to whether the timing is at *death* or at *resurrection*, but in either case the "rest" is the *eternal bliss* that awaits those who trust Christ as Savior. Bruce remarks, "One way or the other, this **blissful rest in unbroken fellowship with God** is the goal to which his people are urged to press forward; this is the final perfection which has been prepared for them by the sacrifice of their heavenly high priest" (110).

- c. Support Offered:

- (1) The *promise* of entering the rest (4:1) implies that the blessing is a future one (cf. 4:11).
- (2) The heavenly state described in Rev 14:13 refers to rest.

³Stanley Toussaint, "The Eschatology of the Warning Passages in the Book of Hebrews," *Grace Theological Journal* 3 (Spring 1982): 71.

- (3) Bruce sees a connection with Heb 11 and references to an eternal homeland (e.g., 11:10,16) — "better country, that is, a heavenly one"

d. Implications:

Those who take this view see the warnings directed at *professing believers* who in actuality were "unregenerate." Thus, the author was concerned that they place faith in Christ as Savior and persevere to the end. Those who do persevere are the truly regenerate, and they will be entitled to their *heavenly bliss* after death. But this flies in the face of the more likely alternative that the audience were indeed true believers (see Session Three).

Furthermore, this view carries the implication that *true believers* need not be concerned about endangering their "rest."

e. Against this view:

- (1) Even if the "rest" is future, this does not prove that it must be taken as the "heavenly bliss" that all believers will experience.
- (2) Even if there is a connection to the "heavenly country" (Heb 11), this does not mean that the "rest" is to be equated with admittance to heaven (there could be some other connection to the heavenly state).
- (3) The "rest" in ch 4 depends on Ps 95 for its analogy, and as was seen in the previous session, this has OT believers in view (and the issue for them was not soteriological faith). Notice carefully Heb 4:11 - "lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience."
- (4) The general thrust of the epistle suggests that the audience were true believers who needed to endure in faithfulness (see notes on Session 3).
- (5) Notice carefully what the author commends as the remedy for the danger of coming short of the "rest":
 - (a) Note that he never admonishes them to *believe in the gospel* or to exercise *saving faith*.
 - (b) On the other hand, he encourages them to be "diligent" (4:11; see notes on this verse).
 - (c) He also exhorts them to "hold fast their confession" and to "draw near" to the throne of grace for help (4:14,16). Think about the logic involved here for a moment: if the audience was in danger of thinking that they were believers when in actuality they were not, would you try to help them by telling them to "hold fast their confession" (i.e., to keep believing what they had), or would you try to reason with them that they had a false confession to begin with and therefore needed to exchange their present false confession for the true gospel?

2. "Rest" = the present Christian experience of peace (or, the "faith-rest life")
 - a. Proponents:

W. H. Griffith Thomas, Charles C. Ryrie, R. B. Thieme (see Toussaint, p 71 for references)
 - b. Elaboration:

In this view, the "rest" is not our eternal destination after death but a present experience of *peace* in our present Christian life. This is not the automatic experience of all Christians, but only for those who have learned to "walk by faith." Some would describe this as the "faith-rest life" whereby the believer learns to stop trying to live the Christian life in his own efforts (stops his *fleshly* works) and learns to walk with God by faith.
 - c. Support Offered:
 - (1) The verb εἰσερχομεθα ("enter") in 4:3 is in the present tense (implying that this is a present experience rather than a future one).
 - (2) There is similarity in thought to Christ's invitation to the weary to come unto Him to find "rest" (Mt 11:28-30).
 - (3) Some would argue for an analogy to the Hebrews who came out of Egypt, in which the Exodus marks redemption, the wilderness portrays the pre-rest state of the believer, and being in the land portrays the believer experiencing "rest."
 - d. Objections:
 - (1) The present tense of the verb εἰσερχομεθα in 4:3 should not be overstressed. This could be a "futuristic present" (see Wallace, p 536; cf. Mt 17:11; Jn 14:3; and 1 Cor 16:5), or better still this statement should be taken as a *principle* (a gnomic present = timeless fact; see Wallace, pp 523-24; cf. 2 Cor 9:7, "God loves a cheerful giver"): it is those who believe who get to enter into God's rest (the point is the requirement of "faith," not the timing of the experience).
 - (2) The general context of chapters 3-4 shows that the wilderness experience is in view in regard to rest, not Jesus' mention of rest in Mt 11:28-30. "Rest" is better seen as an inheritance that awaits us.
 - (3) The most problematic issue for the "faith-rest" view is that it understands the believer's "works" to be bad or carnal. Heb 4:10: "For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His." But that does not suit the analogy, for God's "works" were not carnal but good.
3. "Rest" = the millennial kingdom

This view is advocated by Stanley Toussaint in his article "The Eschatology of the Warning Passages in the Book of Hebrews" (see pp 72-74). Toussaint presents seven arguments in favor of this view. Several of his arguments, however, are not that convincing in my opinion. His strongest arguments succeed in showing that the "rest" is a future experience and that the "rest" has connection to the kingdom. The basic problem I have with this view is that I see no reason to limit the "rest" to the millennial kingdom (i.e., a thousand years on earth). The second problem that I have with Toussaint's presentation is that the "rest" is the millennial kingdom which *all regenerate believers* are destined for (i.e., true believers are not in any danger in regard to the "rest"). But this is a poor parallel with chapter 3, where Old Covenant believers forfeited their rest.

4. "Rest" = experience of receiving one's inheritance in the *Messianic kingdom*

a. Elaboration

The Timing of the "Rest"

Although I agree with Toussaint that there will be a thousand year *millennial kingdom* on earth following the Lord's return, I see no reason to restrict the "rest" of Hebrews 4 to this period. I would prefer to use the term *Messianic kingdom*, which I understand to mean the rule of Messiah Jesus forever following His Second Coming. The *Messianic Kingdom* will have two phases, the millennial phase on earth in the present creation (1000 years) and an eternal phase with the new creation. From the broad perspective, however, the latter is dominant. By viewing the *kingdom* this way, we can easily accommodate the references later in the book to the "heavenly country" (11:16) and "the heavenly Jerusalem" (12:22) [and I tend to agree with F. F. Bruce that the "rest" has some connection to these].

The Nature of the "Rest"

However, I would differ with Toussaint even more on what this "rest" involves. For Toussaint, it is the matter of being *in* the kingdom, which depends simply on the matter of trusting Christ as Savior (and persevering in that profession). In other words, all regenerate believers get the "rest." In contrast, I see the "rest" as more than being given access to the kingdom. Rather, it is the inheritance and reward that *faithful believers* will experience (and which *unfaithful believers* may very well jeopardize). Those who are truly regenerate, but who do not hold fast their confession, are certain to miss the entitlements of God's rest. Primarily, this "rest" will involve a share (as one's inheritance for faithfulness) in the dominion over God's creation which the author has already set forth in Heb 2.

b. Support Offered:

- (1) This view is consistent with other factors of the book.
- (a) The book began by pointing out that Christ is the *heir* of all things, a promise which finds its fulfillment at the Second Coming.

- i) Several aspects of Heb 1 point to the Second Coming (e.g., the Kingdom in 1:8).
 - ii) Heb 1:13 suggests that the Son's victory is not yet complete—He still must wait for the subjection of all His enemies.
- (b) The author was concerned about the "world to come" (2:5) and those who would *inherit salvation* at that time (1:14). The author understood that Christ would usher in a time of "salvation" at the Second Coming (cf. 9:28).
 - (c) This period of "salvation" commencing at the Second Coming will bring about a fulfillment of *man* having dominion over the created realm as he was originally intended to have (2:5-9).⁴ Christ, as the *leader* (ἄρχηγος) of our salvation is "bringing many sons to glory" (i.e., the glory of resurrection and sharing in dominion over God's created realm).
 - (d) This view is consistent with the analogy to Ps 95 in which God's children (not unbelievers) failed to gain their potential inheritance on account of unbelief and disobedience.
 - (e) This view (like views #1 and #3) understands the "rest" to be in the future in keeping with Heb 4:1 ("a promise remains of entering His rest").
- (2) The matter of rewards for faithfulness is an ongoing motif of the book (cf. 6:11-12; 10:35-36; 11:6,26,39).

Note: Heb 11 is not concerned with *saving faith* but of living a life of faith (those who believed God and took Him at His word were pleasing to Him and could expect to be rewarded).

- (3) Ps 95 (which the author uses to introduce the theme of "rest") is taken from one of the *enthronement psalms*. These are clearly eschatological and anticipate the establishment of the Lord's rule over this world (cf. Ps 93:1-2; 96:10; 97:1: 99:1). This observation should not be used to argue that the "rest" is the millennium (so Toussaint), but the "rest" does commence with the millennium.
- (4) The connection of the "rest" with *Messiah's kingdom* is also elaborated in other prophetic portions of the OT (e.g., Isa 11:10; 14:3; 32:18; Ezek 34:15). As Kaiser has pointed out ("The Promise Theme," 150), the Isaiah 11:10 passage shows that this "rest" is at the time when the nations of this world will turn to the Messiah (hence, it is *future* as well as distinct from *heaven*).

⁴When the author says, "but now we do not yet see all things subjected to him," he implies by the words "now" and "yet" that one day we shall.

- (5) This "rest" requires us to be diligent to enter, and conversely can be jeopardized through disobedience (Heb 4:11).
- (6) This view is consistent with some early church fathers such as Irenaeus (*Against Heresies*, 30:4):

“But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that ‘many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’”

Also, Hippolytus (*Commentary on the Prophet Daniel*):

“And 6,000 years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come, the rest, the holy day “on which God rested from all His works.” For the Sabbath is the type and emblem of the future kingdom of the saints, when they “shall reign with Christ,” when He comes from heaven.”¹

II. SELECTED COMMENTS ON HEB 4:1-13

- A. The warning against unbelief in response to God's offer of "rest" (4:1-2)
 1. In Heb 2:3 the author raised the question "how shall we escape if we neglect?" Now, he is more pointed: "Therefore, let us fear!" [The *NIV* "let us be careful" is woefully weak].
 2. Beginning with this verse (4:1), the author points out that the "rest" is yet remaining (cf. 4:6,9,11). In other words, the "rest" of Joshua was only *a fulfillment*, not the exhaustion of what God had in mind. Also, that "rest" was merely a type of the greater reality of "rest," just as the wilderness tabernacle is a type of the greater reality of the heavenly tabernacle with Jesus as High Priest.
 3. The point of using εὐαγγελίζω in 4:2 is not to call attention to the preaching of the gospel. Here, it is used in a non-technical sense of "preaching of good news" (cf. Lk 1:19; 1 Thes 3:6). The Hebrews of the wilderness generation heard the *good news* of the offer of the land of Canaan (especially with the announcement of Joshua and Caleb—Num 13:30; 14:7-9), but Christians of the New Covenant have been offered a far superior *good news*, namely, the privilege to participate in God's rest and exercise dominion with Jesus the Son.
 4. The author's comment that "the word they heard did not profit them because it was not united **with faith** (τῇ πίστει) by those who heard" is an indirect reminder to those of us under the New Covenant that we must respond with faith to God's offer of entering this eschatological rest of God.

B. Proof that the Promise Remains Good (Heb 4:3-9)

1. The Principle for Entering the Rest (4:3a)

In the first part of vs 3, the author says, "For we who have believed enter into the rest." Though he uses the present tense for "enter" (Εἰσερχομεθα), this should not infer that the *entering* takes place at the present time. This is the statement of a *principle*, and the time of the fulfillment is not the issue.⁵ [The view that this is a principle reflects an understanding of the verb as a *gnomic present* (Wallace, pp 523-24); e.g., 2 Cor 9:7 — "God loves a cheerful giver"]. In defense of taking the verb as expressing a principle, the words "just as He has said" show that what he said in vs 3a is extracted from Ps 95 which is quoted in vs 3b. The participle πιστεύσαντες (Aor Ptc Act) is best viewed as a "durative aorist," stressing progress in past time.⁶ In other words, this is not just a single occasion faith (such as believing in the gospel = original faith), but persevering in faith. Support for this is the emphasis on perseverance in Heb 3:6,14. Recall 3:19 where the author had pointed out the *unbelief* (ἀπιστίαν) of the wilderness generation.

2. The Danger of Not Responding in Faith (4:3b)

The principle of *believing* which the author highlighted in 4:3a has its corollary: to not respond in faith may render one disqualified. Thus, the author quotes Ps 95 again, reminding his audience that the wilderness generation was penalized and not allowed to enter God's rest.

3. Lessons from God's Creation Rest (4:3c-5)

Up to this point, the discussion of rest has focused around the penalty that the wilderness generation experienced in not being allowed to enter God's rest of the land of Canaan. Another dimension of God's rest is connected to the rest that God Himself entered into upon the completion of His creation work (Gen 1—2).⁷ The author now draws upon this.

The author points out that God's works were finished from the foundation of the world, and hence one might think that God's "rest" has been in operation ever since. But that is

⁵Although I prefer to take Heb 4:3a as a *principle* (and thus translate it as present tense), it is also possible to understand Εἰσερχομεθα as a "futuristic present." Lane however (1:99), sees this as a "true present." Although he takes the rest as essentially *eschatological* (1:98), he states, "God's promise is predicated upon reality, and believers are already to enjoy the rest referred to in the quotation of Ps 95:11."

⁶The classification of "durative aorist" is treated by Wallace under the topic of "constative aorist" (pp 557-58). For example, see Rev 20:4 — "they reigned with Christ."

⁷Lane (1:95) observes, "The argument turns on the fact that in Gen 2:2 LXX the verb used to state that God 'took rest' (κατέπαυσεν) is cognate to the term for 'rest' in Ps 95 (LXX 94):11 (κατάπαυσις). The use of cognate terms permitted the inference that 'my rest' in Ps 95:11 is properly interpreted in terms of God's primordial rest following the works of creation in Gen 2:1-3. The drawing of an inference based on the analogy of words, which is common in rabbinical interpretation, is designated *gēzērā šāwā* in Hebrew (cf. Hofius, *Katapausis*, 55). The fact that the writer and those whom he addressed read the biblical Greek was crucial in this instance, since the MT used different Hebrew roots to describe God's rest in the two passages."

not the case. The author draws two conclusions from the matter of God's creation rest: (1) if God has made a subsequent offer of "rest," then the creation rest is not an end in itself (i.e., it too must be a foreshadowing of something greater); and (2) "rest" follows the completion of works.

Regarding the second point, we must not think of "works" in a negative way. Although "works" are negative in relation to personal salvation, they are not so in regard to the Christian life—at least not for those works done in faith through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. In this context, the author is not thinking about works in a negative way, because His example is the "works" of God Himself. God worked, and then entered "rest" as a model.⁸ The implication is that we should be faithful and doing the works of God in this age while we can; opportunity to do so will one day end, following which we are entitled to enter "rest" if we have been faithful.

In a context of promising the coming of the Holy Spirit, Christ told the disciples, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and **greater works than these shall he do**; because I go to the Father" (Jn 14:12). Eph 2:10, after reminding us that we are not saved by works, teaches us that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**" (cf. 2 Tim 2:21). Lastly, we should point out that there is a connection between faithfulness in good works and ruling with Christ after His return:

"Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. And he who overcomes, and he who **keeps My deeds** (τὰ ἔργα) until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father" (Rev 2:25-27).

Just as God rested after His creation works, so this "rest" is offered to readers who complete their works (4:10). But faithful endurance is required (3:6,12,14,19; 4:1, 2, 6, 10-11).

4. The "rest" that is still available (4:6-9)

Based on the fact that God made an oath that the wilderness generation would not enter "rest," there must be a "rest" other than God's rest on the 7th day. Therefore, he draws the logical conclusion in vs 6: "it remains for some to enter it." In other words, there must be some *ultimate rest* to come or God would not have spoken of a "rest" subsequent to that mentioned in the creation account. Nevertheless, those who are considering this *ultimate rest* should take to heart that the wilderness generation did not enter into their "rest" *on account of disobedience* (δι' ἀπειθείαν), a point that he will bring up again in 4:11. To substantiate that there is yet a "rest" to come, the author (with great insight and exegetical skill) calls our attention to the word "Today" that was uttered in Ps 95. The fact that God made the offer of "rest" again in David's day—hundreds of years after the

⁸This does not imply that God is inactive now and not working (see Jn 5:17). In this context, the works in view are explicitly in regard to God's work in the original creation (not His ongoing work of providence in the world).

wilderness generation—substantiates that there is a "rest" that is a higher fulfillment than that of possessing the land. As Lane (1:101) notes, "It is Ps 95 that calls for an eschatological understanding of *κατάπαυσις*, 'rest.'"

Finally, in Heb 4:9, the author sets the conclusion from his reasoning of Gen 1–2 and Ps 95 before them: "Consequently there remains a sabbath rest (*σαββατισμὸς*) for the people of God." The point could not be more clear: the *ultimate sabbath* has not been realized!⁹

5. An Exhortation in regard to the "Greater Rest" (4:10-11)

- a. Once again, the author draws our attention to *works*. Once we enter into this *ultimate rest of God*, the opportunity for *works* will be over. God has set the pattern: work . . . then rest. So we should be concerned about doing the works that faithful believers in the New Covenant are expected to do. Oberholtzer suggests, "Their 'good works' include being faithful like Christ and Moses (3:2), holding fast their assurance till the end (i.e., having perseverance, 3:14), being obedient (3:18), and exhibiting faithfulness (4:2)."¹⁰

This observation regarding works is what makes view #1 so problematic (that the "rest" is *eternal bliss* for believing in the gospel). Oberholtzer explains,

"If, as some teach, the 'rest' of Hebrews 3:1–4:11 is equated with justification and the readers are seen as professing believers, then a major soteriological problem arises. The problem is that professing believers would be attempting to enter the rest (i.e., justification) through their own good works (i.e., perseverance). This is at variance with the gospel of salvation by grace alone."¹¹

- b. In vs 11, the author reminds us once again about the negative impact that *disobedience* can have upon our future "rest." Just as the wilderness generation fell through disobedience and failed to enter their "rest," so we too can fall through the same example of disobedience.¹² Therefore, we must be *diligent*

⁹It is interesting to study the typology that the sabbath had in early Christianity. See the quotation of the *Epistle of Barnabas* in F. F. Bruce (pg 106; note 20). Although Bruce rejects the validity of the sabbath portraying the millennium, that was a popular view in the early church. Lane takes note of the author's deliberate switch to *σαββατισμὸς* in verse 9. He states (1:102), "The term *σαββατισμὸς* stresses the special aspect of festivity and joy, expressed in the adoration and praise of God In v 9 this nuance defines the character of the promised rest awaiting the people of God in the consummation. . . . In conjunction, vv 9-10 anticipate the festival of the priestly people of God in the heavenly sanctuary, celebrating in the presence of God the eternal Sabbath with unceasing praise and adoration."

¹⁰Oberholtzer, "The Kingdom Rest in Hebrews 3:1–4:13," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (Apr-Jun 1988), 194.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²The author's use of the term "fall" (*πίπτω*) is a deliberate allusion back to 3:17 and the outcome of those who in unbelief disobeyed the Lord—"whose bodies fell (*πίπτω*) in the wilderness." That is, God brought temporal judgment on them in the form of death. A survey of the use of *πίπτω* as used in Genesis-Judges reveals that in addition to the literal sense of falling, the word was commonly used in a figurative sense for being "slain" (i.e., put to death

(Σπουδάσωμεν = "make every effort") to enter the *greater rest*. It is not just any disobedience that might disqualify us, but a disobedience on par with that of the Exodus generation. But keep in mind that it was a progressive hardening of heart that brought them to that point! Therefore, we guard against such a disobedience by preventing a hardening of heart, and we prevent a hardening of heart by learning to wholeheartedly worship the Lord (Ps 95:1-7a)!

6. The Thorough Examination to be Faced (4:12-13)

Having warned the New Covenant believers that disqualification from the *ultimate rest* is possible (which ought to deter them from abandoning their confession of Messiah Jesus!), the author lets his readers know that there is no way to escape the penetrating scrutiny of God.¹³ Now he clarifies why diligence is so much needed. When he says, "there is no creature hidden from His sight," he reminds his audience of their personal accountability to the New Covenant. One day, everything about our lives will be laid openly before the Lord God Almighty . . . down to the very core of our being . . . even our motives being taken into account. God will know who those are that have been faithful and that should be rewarded with His *rest*. These two verses obviously have the judgment seat of Christ in view, for we will all have to one day give an account of ourselves to God (cf. Rom 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:9-10). God is perfectly qualified to judge us, because of His ability to thoroughly look into our lives and know what's there.

LESSON FOR OUR LIVES

This passage in Heb 4:1-13 ought to be a very sobering passage to every child of God. We must take this *ultimate rest* seriously, and we must stand ready to be thoroughly examined by the living and active Word of God. If we were to take this seriously, then I think two things ought to follow: (1) we ought to remain loyal and faithful to Jesus Christ; and (2) we ought to seek all the mercy and grace we can from God for the challenge we face. Seeking mercy and grace, then, is precisely what the author will encourage us to do in the following section of Heb 4:14–5:10. Fortunately, we have a great high priest who stands ready to help us.

physically). Note, for example, Ex 32:28; Num 14:3; Josh 8:25; Jud 4:16; 8:10; and 20:32. The word πίπτω is also used figuratively in the NT (e.g., 1 Cor 10:12; Rom 11:11), but not for eternal punishment in hell.

¹³ France (68) observes, "The unusual adjective κριτικός, 'judging' or 'discerning' (Gk 3217), denotes its ability to break through pretense and confusion to expose the reality of our inmost being."