

**Christ is Superior to Moses**  
**Hebrews 4:3-5**  
**Part Nine**

When Jesus, the Son of God, offered Himself up on the cross of Calvary as His Father's atoning sacrifice for sin, He made it possible for individuals to enter God's rest by grace through faith.

So does every individual who exercises faith in Christ enter that rest? Yes! Will they always appreciate this fact? No! Will they always live in the experiential blessedness of this fact? No! But it doesn't change the fact of it. When an individual exercises faith in Christ they enter into God's rest.

And we need to understand this? And why is it so important for us to understand this? If we can understand this fact and better appreciate what this fact means, and by faith consistently claim it to be true, we will invariably find ourselves living in the experiential blessedness of this fact.

And hopefully this thought will come alive for us this morning as we return to our study of the Book of Hebrews, which was written to a group of Hebrew Christians who were suffering a great persecution and who under that persecution had begun to struggle in their faith. And some of them had begun to struggle so much in their "faith" that they were even thinking about returning back to Judaism.

And how did the author seek to minister to them in this struggle? He sought to strengthen their faith. And how did he seek to strengthen their faith? He sought to strengthen their faith by focusing on the superiority of Christ, which has led us to the question that we are now asking. How did the author of Hebrews see Christ as superior?

The author of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to the prophets (Hebrews 1:1-4).

The author of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to the angels (Hebrews 1:5-2:18).

And now we are in the process of seeing that the author of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1-4:13). This section that we are

presently examining began in **Hebrews 3:1** and will continue all the way down through **Hebrews 4:13**. So, what have we seen so far within this section?

First of all, we have seen that Christ, as an example of faithfulness, is superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1-6). We saw this in **Hebrews 3:1-6**. And why would the author of Hebrews have considered Christ to be superior to Moses as an example of faithfulness?

It was because the author saw Christ, the Son of the living God, as the faithful builder and overseer of the house of Israel while he only saw Moses as a faithful representative and servant within that house. This is why the author of Hebrews considered Christ as an example of faithfulness to be superior to Moses and his example of faithfulness.

So after the author of Hebrews had made this point in **Hebrews 3:1-6**, what did this lead the author to do next? Christ's superior example of faithfulness led the author to warn his readers against the sin of unbelief (Hebrews 3:7-4:13). This is the section we are now examining. And we have divided this section into two parts.

The first part of the author's warning against the sin of unbelief focused on Israel's past failure in the wilderness and subsequent judgment after they left Egypt (Hebrews 3:7-19).

In this section the author began with a basic overview of Israel's past failure in **Hebrews 3:7-11**. He then, in light of Israel's past failure, exhorted his readers to do certain things in **Hebrews 3:12-13** that he believed would promote perseverance and thus protect his readers from repeating Israel's past failure. And why was this so important to this author? The author, based on **Hebrews 3:14**, believed that perseverance in matters concerning the Christian faith is a necessary component in confirming whether or not a person is in fact a partaker of Christ or not a partaker of Christ. And then how did the author conclude the first part of this warning section on the sin of unbelief? He concluded this section by once again returning to the failure of Israel and their subsequent judgment, which prevented them from entering the rest of the Promised land in **Hebrews 3:15-18**. And what did the author identify as the cause of their failure and subsequent judgment in **Hebrews 3:19**? He identified the cause of their failure and subsequent judgment to have been "**unbelief.**" Let me now read for you **Hebrews 3:19**

and see if this is not so. **“So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.”**

So this was the first part of the author’s warning against the sin of unbelief. And now we have started to look at the second part of the author’s warning, which involved a change of focus. And what was this new focus?

The second part of the author’s warning against the sin of unbelief focused on the promise of rest “today” (Hebrews 4:1-13). This part started, as we learned last week, in **Hebrews 4:1** and goes all the way down through **Hebrews 4:13**.

So how did the author begin? The author in Hebrews 4:1-2 provided a transitional statement linking what he had said about Israel’s past failure to enter the rest that God had promised them and the ongoing promise of rest today, which, as we discovered last week, was described by this author as **“His rest”** or in other words as **“God’s rest.”**

And what was the point this author was seeking to make within this transitional statement? He wanted his readers, as well as himself, to fear lest they like Israel might come short of their promised rest, not the rest of the Promised Land, but rather the promised rest that this author described as **“His rest”** or in other words **“God’s rest,”** which he implied in **verse 2** could only be accessed by faith in the gospel of Christ.

This now brings us to the text that we will be examining this morning, which will be **Hebrews 4:3-5**. So, what is the significance of these verses?

The author in Hebrews 4:3-5 expanded on the nature of the rest that is available “today” through faith in the gospel of Christ.

So now let me read these verses for you and what do these verses say? **“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.’”** So did the author in these verses expand on the nature of the rest that is available today through faith in the gospel of Christ? I believe

he did, and I would hope that this would become clear to us as we march through these somewhat difficult verses this morning.

So let us begin with **verse 3**. **“For we who have believed enter that rest.”** So, what did the author, using these words, say here to his readers?

He declared to his readers, based on what he had just said in **Hebrews 4:1-2**, that those **“who have believed,”** or in other words who have exercised faith in the good news of Christ, or in other words the gospel of Christ **“enter that rest”** or in other words **“God’s rest,”** the very **“rest”** that he had referenced in **verse 1**.

So why was this so important for these readers to know? What is the big deal about whether a person enters God’s rest or not? What makes entering God’s rest so special? There is a twofold answer to this question.

Entering God’s rest is so very special, not only because it can it provide us in the here and now a peace that the world cannot possibly understand, but it also provides us a foretaste of what is yet to come (Romans 8:28 cf. Hebrews 12:22-24, 13:14).

Let us, first of all, look at the peace that can be produced in the here and now! When we enter God’s rest by faith in Christ, we are no longer God’s enemies but rather we, by faith, become a part of His family or in other word we by faith become His sons and daughters. What does **1 John 3:1** tell us? **“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are.”**

So if this is true, then what should we know? We should know is that our heavenly Father God will want the very best for us, and as the sovereign God of this universe He certainly can and will bring that about regardless of what might be happening around us or to us. And this is the truth!

This is exactly what **Romans 8:28** tell us. **“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”**

And what will this produce in us, as we by faith focus on this promise? It will produce within us a kind of peace that this world cannot possibly

comprehend, for this kind of peace will continue to reign within our hearts no matter what might be happening around or to us.

So is this kind of peace a big deal? Absolutely! Who would not want this kind of peace in the here and now. And who are the only people who can enjoy this kind of peace? According to this author based on the initial words of **Hebrews 4:3**? It will only be those who have exercised faith in Christ.

But this is not the only reason why entering God's rest is "oh so very special." It is also "oh so very special" because once we begin to experience this inward peace it becomes, for those who experience it, a foretaste of its future consummation in a place the author referred to as the "**mountain of Zion,**" "**the city of the living God,**" "**the heavenly Jerusalem**" in **Hebrews 12:22** and as the "**the city which is to come**" in **Hebrews 13:14**. This is where our inward peace will be matched with an outer peace in God's Holy City.

So is entering the God's rest "oh so very special?" Amen! And who are the ones, according to this author, that are going to enter this "oh so special place" according to his words at the beginning of **verse 3**? It will be those who have exercised faith in Christ, for what did he say? "**For we who have believed enter that rest.**"

So, what is the implication of this? The implication is if only those who believe enter this "oh so special place of God's rest," then what about those who don't believe? The implication is clear. Those who don't believe will not enter His rest. And how did the author support his point? He used Israel's past failure in the wilderness to support his point.

Let us continue to read and see if this is not so. "**Just as He has said, 'As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest.'**" So based on these words did the author use Israel's past failure to support his earlier implication in **verse 3** that those who do not exercise faith will not enter His rest? Yes! I believe he did.

The author, after having stated the fact that those who exercise faith in Christ enter God's rest, then quoted Psalm 95:11 to make the point that Israel had not entered His rest (Hebrews 4:3). If we believe in Christ we enter God's rest, and if we do not believe in Christ we will not enter God's

rest and if there is any doubt about this all we have to do is to look at Israel who failed to reach their promised rest because of unbelief, which the author of Hebrews obviously considered to be analogous to the rest that He is referring to here to God's rest here in **Hebrews 4:3** that we enter through faith in Christ.

So based on **Psalm 95:11**, as quoted in **Hebrews 4:3**, how certain can we be that Israel did not enter what is described by King David and which is being quoted by this author as "His rest?"

Extremely! What did the verse he quoted from **Psalm 95:11** say? **"Therefore I swore in My anger, truly they shall not enter into My rest."**

So if Israel did not enter God's rest, did their inability to enter God's rest nullify God's rest? This is the question that the author then sought to answer by providing two facts. And what will these two facts do for us? Not only will these two facts answer our question as to whether Israel's inability to enter God's rest because of unbelief nullifies God's rest, these two facts will hopefully expand our understanding of the nature of God's rest. So, what was the first fact?

The first fact was God's rest has been available ever since His finished work of creation (Hebrews 4:3). So let us now continue to read **Hebrews 4:3** and see if this is not so. **"For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, 'As I swore in My wrath, they shall into enter My rest,' although His works were finished from the foundation of the world."**

Now notice the word **"although."** The word "although" introduces a clause which prevents the false conclusion that God refused His rest to Israel because the rest no longer existed. On the contrary God's rest, according to this author by his statement of fact at the end of **Hebrews 4:3**, has existed since He finished His creative activity at the foundation of the world.

So, what was the first fact that the author presented to counter the thought that God's rest had somehow been nullified by Israel's failure to enter God's rest? The first fact was God's rest has been available ever since creation. So, what was the second fact?

The second fact was after God completed His work of creation, there has been no further resumption of this work that would terminate His rest (Hebrews 4:4 cf. Genesis 2:2). So now let me read for you **Hebrews 4:4** and see if this is not so. **“For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.’”** So did this author here in this verse provide us a second fact about God’s rest? Yes! Here in this verse we learn that not only has God’s rest been available since He finished His creative activity, as he has stated in **Hebrews 4:4**, we learn that there has been no resumption of His work that would terminate His rest.

Does this mean that since God finished His creative activity that He is no longer doing anything? And what is the answer? The answer would have to be no!

The rest that was referred to in Genesis 2:2 and that was quoted in Hebrews 4:4 was not referring to a cessation of all activity, for that would contradict the teaching of Christ in John 5:17. So now let me read for you **John 5:17** and see if this is not so. Jesus in responding to the charges against Him that He was healing on the Sabbath responded to His Jewish accusers by saying, **“My Father is working until now, and I myself am working.”** So based on this verse, when God finished His creative activity did He stop all His activity. No! He continued to work and He is continuing to work until now.

So if the rest that is being referred to in **Genesis 2:2** and is quoted in **Hebrews 4:4** is not referring to a cessation of all activity, what is it referring to?

In order to answer that question let us consider for a moment God’s six-day creative activity. And what do we discover as we do this? Each of the six days of creative activity had a beginning and ending marked by the words, **“There was evening and there was morning.”** But the seventh day, the day of God’s rest, had no such terminus. God’s rest is viewed as still occurring or in other words God did not resume creating on the eighth day.

The work He had done was complete, and He was fully satisfied in the work He had done. The rest that was referred to in Genesis 2:2 and that was referenced in Hebrews 4:4 is a rest that flows from completion, when everything that needs to be done has been done and has been done well.

In fact, using this definition we can establish the beginning of God's rest as having begun when He in eternity established His eternal plan for this universe, not only including its creation but everything else, including God's plan of redemption.

And it is this very kind of rest that we enter into when we enter God's rest by faith in Christ. We enter into a rest that flows from Christ's completed work of redemption, when everything that that needed to be done has been done and done perfectly, that not only makes it possible for us to live in peace throughout our lives but to look forward to its final culmination in glory.

And again what will happen to those who fail to exercise faith in Christ that makes it possible for a person to enter into God's rest? Let me read for you **Hebrews 4:5**. Referring to **Psalm 95:11**, "**They shall not enter My rest.**"

When Jesus, the Son of God, offered Himself up on the cross of Calvary as His Father's atoning sacrifice for sin, He made it possible for individuals to enter God's rest by grace through faith.

So does every individual who exercises faith in Christ enter that rest? Yes! Will they always appreciate this fact? No! Will they always live in the experiential blessedness of this fact? No! But it doesn't change the fact of it. When an individual exercises faith in Christ they enter into God's rest.

Now the only question that is still outstanding is have you by faith entered that rest and are you now enjoying the experiential blessing of that rest? This is a question that only you, with the help of the Holy Spirit, can answer.

May we by God's grace, having exercised genuine saving faith, continually experience the blessedness of God's rest until that day when we finally enter its full glory.