

# JESUS: The Greatest Life of All

## STUDY SEVEN

### It Is Best to Rest

*Hebrews 4:1–11*

*Following Christ is about turning your life over to Him and receiving in return His life, His power, and His ability to handle life's situations as He handled them.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**G**OD created the heavens and the earth in stages, like a sculptor shapes raw material step-by-step into a beautiful masterpiece.

The earth was without form and cloaked in darkness, so on day one, God pushed back the darkness and made light. On the second day, God separated the waters and formed the sky. On the third, He created dry land and brought plants and trees into being. On the fourth, He set the sun and moon in the sky and flung the stars into space.

On the fifth day, God filled the oceans with fish and the sky with birds. On the sixth, God created animals—from tiny mice scurrying in the grass to wild beasts roaming the forests. Then, with a flourish of His masterful hand, God made human beings as His image-bearers, the pinnacle of His creation.

But the week wasn't over. On the seventh day, God “rested from all his work” (Genesis 2:2). *God rested.*

He rested not because He was tired, but because He was satisfied. Having put the final touch on His masterpiece, He did what all artists do—stepped back and enjoyed His handiwork. He “looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!” (1:31).



## **It Is Best to Rest**

*Hebrews 4:1–11*

God remains in a state of rest—wholly satisfied, eternally contented, completely at peace. What’s more, He makes His rest available to us through Jesus Christ. Wouldn’t you like to join God in His rest and live there? Our passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* study shows you how.



### **PREPARE YOUR HEART**

This is the same rest that the Son of God offered when He said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

What burden are you carrying? Take a moment of silence to lay it before the Lord, and then, lift up this prayer.

*Father, I deeply need Your rest. Often, I collapse in exhaustion, worrying about what’s left to do. But that’s not Your rest. “Enough is never enough” is the motto of my world. In Christ, however, I can find real peace, true satisfaction, and relief from anxious striving. Light the way into Your rest through Your Word. In Jesus’ name, amen.*



### **TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES**

Read *Hebrews 4:1–11* and note the repetition of the word *enter*. How many times do you see the word or a form of the word? \_\_\_\_\_

From your initial reading of the passage, what is the writer of Hebrews intending by this repetition?

The writer addressed his letter to Jewish Christians, and He feared they might make the same error as their ancient Hebrew ancestors. Let’s put our fingers on the pulse of his message and feel this writer’s heartbeat.



## It Is Best to Rest

*Hebrews 4:1–11*



### Observation: Lesson from the Past, Hope for the Future

Hebrews 4 flows out of the previous chapter, which recounts the Israelites' failure to enter the promised land. According to *Hebrews 3:7–11*, what did the Israelites do that resulted in forty years of wandering?

*The main concern of the writer to the Hebrews is that we enter a certain kind of rest that the Israelites refused. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

### Warning—Hebrews 4:1

The Israelites came to the door of the promised land but stopped at the threshold. What warning flare did the writer fire in *Hebrews 4:1*?

The core of the Israelites' problem was "their unbelief" (3:19). Unbelief hardens people's hearts toward God, and they sink into a churning place of worry, fear, complaining, and rebellion. They fail to enter God's rest.

*"There remains available the Sabbath of God." It never ended. This rest in which God engaged Himself is now yours to claim. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



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*Hebrews 4:1–11*

### Explanation—Hebrews 4:2–8

The good news is God still offers His rest. It's so close we just need to take one step to move into it. What is required for people to enter His rest, according to *Hebrews 4:2–3*?

How did the writer say we can be certain God's rest is real, according to *4:4–6*? How did the Israelites miss it?

When the Israelites finally entered the promised land under Joshua, they *still* missed God's rest. Why? Because rest is not in a physical place but in a relationship with God—and the Israelites chose idols over God.

Instead of removing His rest, according to *4:7–8*, God reserved it for when? What evidence did the writer cite to prove God's ongoing offer of rest?



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*Hebrews 4:1–11*

### The Command—Hebrews 4:9–11

What conclusion did the writer make in *Hebrews 4:9–11*?

*You need to have faith in the right person. You can link your life to some religious teacher who promises he or she will get you into the resting place, but you'll miss it by a mile. You need Jesus to get you from where you are to where you need to be.*

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



### Interpretation: Rest from Our Labors

*Interpretation* tackles the meaning of the passage. Those who enter God's rest have "rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world" (Hebrews 4:10). To what "labors" was he referring? For help with the answer, consult your Bible-study resources, such as Pastor Chuck Swindoll's commentary, *Insights on Hebrews*. Or, for an online resource, consult the article, "*How Can We Enter into God's Rest?*" at [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org).

The word *rest* essentially means "to cease." Those who put their faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross *cease* working to earn their salvation. God's rest isn't just found in heaven in the future. The writer to the Hebrews coined a new Greek word: *sabbatismos*, "Sabbath-rest." We can live in God's rest now. Every day can be a spiritual Sabbath as we trust in God to provide for our needs and rest in His care.



## It Is Best to Rest

*Hebrews 4:1–11*

The writer said we must “make every effort to enter that rest” (Hebrews 4:11 NASB). Sounds contradictory, doesn’t it? Make an effort to rest. What did he mean?

*God’s rest is available, but our entering it is not automatic. Entering this rest means we must have the right formula: hearing the truth plus believing it equals rest.*  
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



### **Correlation: Cast Your Burden**

*Correlation* clarifies our understanding of a passage by comparing it to other passages. We *hear* the good news that Christ accomplished the work of our salvation, but then we must exercise *faith* in Him for our present and our future. How did the psalmist say we can demonstrate daily faith in *Psalms 55:22*?

How did Peter echo the psalmist’s counsel in *1 Peter 5:7*?



## It Is Best to Rest

*Hebrews 4:1–11*

*If Christ can handle your sin problem at the cross, He can handle your worry problems all through your life. But you have to be diligent to enter His rest. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



### **Application: Following Jesus to a Life of Rest**

Along life's often troubled path, we'll have to move past three barriers to find God's rest: *presumption*, *panic*, and *pride*.

1. We become *presumptuous* when we think we know how God will act. Instead, we must trust Him to do what He deems best, even when it's not what we expected.
2. We *panic* when, like the Israelites, we see our problems as giants. We must take God's point of view. Our biggest challenges are grasshopper-sized to God.
3. We become *prideful* when we believe we can handle our own problems. Instead, we must give room for God and then give glory to Him.

Identifying the barrier is the first step to breaking through. Which of these barriers stands in front of your entrance into God's rest?

What is the key that will unlock the door to God's rest for you?



## **It Is Best to Rest**

*Hebrews 4:1–11*

It's possible to go about your business today in a Sabbath-state of rest with God. Would you like that? Take a moment in quiet prayer to give your burden to the Lord and enter His rest today.

Now, through each endeavor of your day, walk in close relationship with Him and find Him to be sufficient for every task. Receive His rest.



### **A FINAL PRAYER**

*Father, I release my presumptions, my panic, and my pride to You. I surrender my will completely to Your will. Wherever my path may lead, I am content. I leave the outcomes of my problems in Your hands, knowing that You are my salvation and my sufficiency. I enter Your Sabbath rest today, and, in Christ, I remain satisfied and content with You for now and eternity. In Jesus' name, amen.*

