

H E B R E W S

Chapter 4

Our Future 'Kadesh Barnea'¹ at the end of the Sixth Millennium

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We should fear then, if at such time,² any of you might appear to have fallen short³ of the remaining promise⁴ to enter into His⁵ Rest.⁶ 2 For we also have been told the good message as they were (but the message heard [by them] had no benefit, not having been mixed with faith in the hearers).⁷ 3. For we – the ones who believed – are entering⁸ the Rest, (just as He said: “*As I swore in My wrath, whether they shall come into My Rest!*”⁹), although¹⁰ work was performed¹¹ since¹² the foundation of the world.¹³

¹ In this chapter, Paul transports the reader to a future 'Kadesh Barnea' when Christians will be faced with exactly the same test as the Israelites in the wilderness, (Deut. 1). The “Rebellion” in the wilderness is parallel to the apostasy that will accompany the time of Antichrist (Matt. 24:9-13; 2 Thess. 2:2-3).

² μηποτε – “if at such time” refers to the future 'Kadesh Barnea' when the believer's faith in God's promise of the inheritance (Rest) will again be put to the test in the time of great tribulation.

³ “have fallen short” – the verb is in the perfect tense (a past completed action with continuous results). The sense is that “at such time” as the future trial of our faith comes, one might discover that he has fallen short. Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish virgins illustrates the same point.

⁴ The “remaining promise” is the future fulfillment of the promise of entering His rest implied in the quotation of Psalm 95.

⁵ The personal pronoun “His” refers to the Creator, whom Paul has already identified as Christ (Heb. 1:2; Heb. 2:10).

⁶ The word “Sabbath” in Hebrew means “rest.” The original “Sabbath day” on which God rested (Gen. 2:2-3) and the weekly Sabbath day the Jewish – Christian readers observed (Ex. 20:11) was symbolic of the ultimate eschatological “Rest” of Christ the Creator.

⁷ The “good news” was preached to the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea by Joshua and Caleb, but they rejected it, (Num. 13:30; 14:6-9). “*And all the congregation said to stone them with stones.*” (Num. 14:10)

⁸ Paul was still speaking from the perspective of the future Kadesh Barnea (the time of testing just before Christ's Kingdom arrives) which he introduced in verse 1 with the words, “at such time.” This is why he used the present tense “we ... are entering,” and the aorist tense “the ones who believed,” just as in verse 1 he used the perfect tense “appear to have fallen short.” His verb tenses in verses 1-3 are from the perspective of the future 'Kadesh Barnea' to which he has transported the reader.

⁹ Psalm 95:11 LXX

¹⁰ A word indicating a contrast with what comes before it.

¹¹ Some translations read “finished.” But the Greek word means to occur, to come to be, to be performed.

¹² απο – from beside: since

¹³ Commentators struggle to understand this clause, as is apparent from the widely diverse, yet unsatisfactory, interpretations. Yet, the meaning is quite plain to the Jewish mind. Paul was contrasting the future “Rest” of Christ's Kingdom with the “work” (labor) of mankind under the curse since the

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4 For He has declared somewhere concerning the seventh [day] thus:

“And God ceased in the seventh day from all His works.”¹⁴

5 And thus again:

“whether they shall come into My Rest.”^{15 16}

6 Since then it remains for some to enter into it, and those to whom it was previously announced did not enter because of stubbornness, He specifies another set day – ‘Today.’ 7 After such a long time¹⁷ He says in [the Psalm of] David, according as was previously proclaimed,¹⁸ *“Today if you should hear His voice, you should not harden your hearts.”¹⁹*

8 For if Joshua [had provided] them the Rest, He²⁰ would not have been speaking of another day after those. 9 Consequently, a Sabbatical²¹ awaits for the people of God.

10 For the one entering into His Rest, he has also ceased from his own labor²² just as God did from His. 11 Therefore, we should be diligent to enter into that Rest, so that none fall into the same pattern of stubbornness.

“foundation of the world.” It is the same contrasting relationship that the 6 days of creation had to the Creator’s Sabbath rest, and the 6 day work week had to the Sabbath day for the Jewish – Christian reader.

¹⁴ Gen. 2:2

¹⁵ Psalm 95:11 LXX

¹⁶ Paul stated plainly that the future “Rest” (Messiah’s Kingdom inheritance) for believers is the “seventh day.” God has spoken of the “seventh day” in both Genesis 2:2 and in the promised “Rest” of Psalm 95, according to Paul. He stated unmistakably that the Kingdom of the Messiah is the “Seventh Day.” This is extremely significant in demonstrating that Paul held the same Chiliasm (Millennial Sabbath) view as the early Christian writers: Barnabas, Justin, & Irenaeus. The promised ‘Rest’ in the Kingdom spoken of in Psalm 95 is the “Seventh Day.” Just as the weekly Sabbath is the seventh day of the 7 day week, a “Seventh Day” Kingdom necessitates six previous “days” also. And since “days” are of equal length, the Kingdom ‘Rest’ will be the 7th of seven ages. There is no escaping the clear implication of six ages followed by the seventh Kingdom age. The only component of Ante Nicene Chiliasm that is not explicitly stated here is the length of each of the seven ages. Yet, this is implied in Psalm 90:4 & 2 Pet. 3:8, and plainly stated in Rev. 20 as a millennium. The obvious conclusion is that man will toil under the curse for 6 millennia, and the believing ones will inherit the 7th millennium.

¹⁷ Such a long time after the rebellion in the wilderness David wrote this Psalm which offered a second opportunity to realize God’s Rest.

¹⁸ Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14:6-9) and Moses (Deut. 1:29) previously pleaded with the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea to trust God and go into the land.

¹⁹ Psalm 95:8 LXX

²⁰ God through David in Psalm 95

²¹ A Sabbath to be kept (a Sabbath awaits). Paul has clearly called the Kingdom age the “Sabbath.”

²² When the faithful believer enters God’s rest (the 7th Millennium, the “Sabbatical”), he also ceases from His own labors, just like God did at the very end of His Creation labor.