

DOCTRINE OF REST

I. Introduction.

- A. The initial mention of the concept of rest is found in the Genesis account and is used of God's rest on the seventh day following the six days of restoration.
- B. Since we recognize omnipotence as one of the attributes of the Divine essence, it is clear that God did not rest because of a lack of strength or energy.
- C. Therefore, we must understand that this is designed to teach a principle that is quite important to every aspect of salvation (Ph₁, Ph₂, and Ph₃).
- D. One should recognize that God's promised rest is first and foremost a spiritual form of rest for the soul. Ps. 116:7; Jere. 6:16
- E. As we will see, for the believer there are two distinct aspects of rest: the soulish aspect, which is primary, and the physical aspect of a settled niche with associated blessings, which is the result of consistently applying doctrine under testing

II. Vocabulary.

A. Hebrew vocabulary.

1. שָׁבַת (shabath), verb, to sever, to stop, to put an end to something.
 - a. שַׁבְּתוֹן (shabbathon), m.noun, 11X, a sabbath rest, a complete rest.
2. נָחַח (nuach), verb, to rest or settle down; the root signifies not only the absence of movement but being settled in a particular place with overtones of finality.
 - a. נַחַת (nachath), f.noun, rest, quietness, physically motionless or of inner peace and security.
 - b. מְנוּחָה (manoach), m.noun, 25X, resting place, a place of security for animals or people.
 - c. מְנוּחָהּ (m^cnuchah), f.noun, 21X, a resting place, denotes either the place or state of rest; used of temporary rest, permanent rest, and the eternal resting place.
3. דָּמַי (d^amiy), m.noun, 4X, to come to an end, to rest.

B. Greek vocabulary.

1. παύω (pauo), verb 15X, actively, to cause one to stop, to restrain or keep someone from something, in the middle voice, to stop oneself, to cease or leave off.
 - a. ἀναπαύω (anapauo), verb 12X, transitively, to cause to rest, to refresh, figuratively, to give spiritual rest, inner peace and refreshment.
 - b. ἀνάπαυσις (anapausis), f.noun, 5X, a ceasing, stopping or interruption, the result of resting from labor or burdens, rest, repose, a resting place.
 - c. καταπαύω (katapauo), verb, 4X, to cause one to cease, to give or bring to a place of rest; intransitively, to rest, cease from work.
 - d. κατάπαυσις (katapausis), f.noun, 9X, ceasing from one's work or activity, cessation, calm, rest.
 - e. συναναπαύομαι (sunanapauomai), verb, 1X, to lie down with or sleep with, to find rest or refreshment in the company of someone else. Rom. 15:32
2. ἄνεσις (anesis), f.noun, 5X, lit. a loosing, a relaxing, relief, rest from troubles, burdens, etc.

- III. Definition and description.
- A. Webster defines rest in a number of ways, but primarily as getting repose by lying down and sleeping, to get refreshment for the body.
 - B. The term also emphasizes the act of ceasing or leaving off, to desist from labor or exertion.
 - C. It also has the nuance of being free from that which is binding, confining, wearying or disturbing.
 - D. Spatially it means to be quiet or still, to remain in the same place or condition, to be fixed or settled.
 - E. Combined, these concepts indicate a state in which one is not bothered by external pressures, does not work or labor, but enjoys a settled status of relaxation, tranquility, peace, and serenity.
 - F. In the spiritual sense, rest is used to denote this great condition in all the three stages of salvation, Ph₁, Ph₂, and ultimately in Ph₃.
- IV. The salvation adjustment provides Ph₁ rest.
- A. Salvation (from the Latin salus, "health," "safety," "well being") is a concept that refers either to the process through which a person is brought from a condition of distress to a condition of ultimate well being, or to the state of ultimate well being.
 - B. Prior to salvation, the unbeliever is on a futile mission to obtain a relationship with God, and his condition is marked by fundamental problems that prevent him from attaining his goal.
 - C. While there are a number of ways people may go about this, the most common method is the concept of manufacturing a relationship with God via human works.
 - D. However, the Bible is quite clear on the fact that man's fallen state and God's absolute righteousness makes this an impossibility.
 1. Man's state is not simply one of some inability; it is one of absolute inability by virtue of the fact that each person is born into a state of spiritual death, residing under the wrath of God. Eph. 2:1,3
 2. In order to share God's life one must attain His standard of righteousness, which is an absolute impossibility due to the indwelling sin nature. Rom. 5:18a; Job 35:2
 3. Any kind of works, even those based on the perfect revelation of God's standards in the Mosaic Law, are insufficient to produce or provide salvation. Rom. 3:12,28; Gal. 2:16, 3:10,21
 - E. The endless and fruitless attempts to acquire salvation via human effort are precisely the reason God provides Ph₁ rest.
 - F. When one recognizes that faith in Christ is the only issue in salvation, he leaves off working to provide his own salvation and rests in the finished work of Christ. Matt. 11:28-30, Jn. 6:28-29
 1. Jesus Christ promised His rest to all who would come to Him for salvation.
 2. The promise is directed toward those that have been futilely pursuing salvation through their works and have been oppressed by the legalistic approach of their religious guides.
 3. The principle of taking His yoke upon yourself is His invitation to serve with Him in the plan of God; the concept of learning from Him involves understanding (and then emulating) the humility that causes Him to submit to the yoke of God.
 4. He states that He is not like their religious leaders (humility was not a virtue among the ancients, but was ranked with slavery) and they will find Him **meek/gentle/unassuming** and **lowly/humble in heart**.
 5. In contrast to the legalistic burden of salvation by works, His service is characterized by that which is **kindly/pleasant/ easy** and His burden **light/limited/easy to bear**.
- V. The believer and Ph₂ rest.
- A. Much of what will be said about this aspect of rest is found in the book of Hebrews, which emphasizes the concept of Ph₂ rest.
 - B. That book makes it quite clear that there is a Ph₂ rest that God provides and one which He desires His people to enjoy. Heb. 4:1

- C. Ph₂ rest is defined in this book and requires the following components if a believer is going to enjoy God's rest.
 - 1. Salvation is the beginning, and is our introduction to this rest. Heb. 4:3a
 - 2. One must continue to manifest positive volition toward the Word of God; unbelief is the enemy that will keep you from God's rest. Heb. 4:11-13, 3:19
 - 3. The believer must not only maintain fidelity to God's word, He must be willing to consistently apply doctrine to his testing. Heb. 4:6
 - 4. In due time, God will bless each believer with a permanent, settled niche and whatever blessings that come to him in that niche. IISam. 7:1
 - a. David is a good example of this state, which is to be contrasted with the years of conflict and persecution under Saul.
 - 5. To continue to exploit God's rest demands an ongoing allegiance to the Word of God to the end of one's Ph₂. Heb. 3:14
 - D. The blessings of Ph₂ rest come after an undetermined period of testing, which eventually leads one to his permanent niche of service and blessing. James 1:12
 - 1. The conquest generation is a good example of entering God's rest after lengthy testing.
 - 2. David exemplifies the truth of this as he is tested severely under Saul and finally settles in the palace in Jerusalem.
 - E. There will be continued testing after one is settled in his permanent niche, but there are temporal blessings for passing the humility test. Prov. 15:33
 - 1. The temporal blessings will vary in degree and type among believers and are not simply to be measured in net worth.
 - 2. In fact, those very Ph₂ blessings can be tested in order to demonstrate whether or not the believer has sufficient grace orientation and mastery of the details of life. Gen. 22
 - F. Therefore, the following exhortations are appropriate with respect to rest and one's continued enjoyment of that rest.
 - 1. Do not harden your heart when you hear the truth. Heb. 3:13
 - 2. Monitor yourself at all times and watch for any signs that you may be falling into the evil, unbelieving heart syndrome. Heb. 3:12
 - 3. Encourage other believers to stick with the straight and narrow, exhibiting your priorities by example in both word and deed. Heb. 3:13, 1Jn. 3:16
 - 4. One should have sanctified fear of failing to enter God's rest and make whatever adjustments and sacrifices are necessary to enter that rest. Heb. 4:1,11
 - G. Those that have entered God's rest manifest the following characteristics.
 - 1. They unite what they hear in Bible class with faith. Heb. 4:2
 - 2. They are obedient under testing. Heb. 3:18
 - 3. They hold fast to the doctrine and continue the course that God is laying before them. Heb. 3:14, 12:1
 - 4. They do not resort to fleshly tactics to advance themselves or procure blessings; they avoid operation energy of the flesh and wait for God to bless them. Heb. 4:10
- VI. The Exodus generation constitutes the supreme illustration of failure under this doctrine. Ps. 95:8-11; Heb. 3:7ff
- A. They heard the Word of God for 40 years under Moses, but consistently refused to believe what they were taught. Heb. 4:2
 - B. They were privy to overt miracles during that time, yet would not abandon their own sufficiency and trust in God's promise. Acts 7:36; Heb. 3:9
 - C. They failed every one of the ten tests that God had designed to prepare them to enter the land of promise. Heb. 3:8

- D. Because of their refusal to believe and their persistent disobedience God ultimately denied them entrance into Canaan, and killed every one of them in the desert. Heb. 3:17-19, 4:6
- E. When referring to this generation, the majority of whom were believers, God uses the strongest language of disgust to denote His abhorrence of them. Ps. 95:10; Heb. 3:10
- F. Therefore, they constitute a dire warning to believers of future generations. Heb. 3:12, 4:11
- G. On a related note, the recipients of the book of Hebrews were facing a similar test and were in danger of compromising the truth. Heb. 2:1, 4:1, 6:11-12
 - 1. They had made a good start in the Christian way of life by separating from their religion at great personal cost. Heb. 10:32-34
 - 2. They had endured religious persecution, economic deprivation, ostracism by their families and friends, and general public humiliation.
 - 3. The problem was that they were tempted to compromise in order to alleviate the pressure; they were wavering and needed to demonstrate endurance to the end. Heb. 10:36, 12:1
 - 4. Their Ph₂ problems with the Jewish religious establishment were about to be eliminated by the 5th cycle of discipline on the nation.
 - a. This book was written in approximately 68-69 AD (sometime between the death of Paul in the Spring of 68 AD and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD), indicating that their testing was almost over.
 - 5. If they threw in the towel at this point, they would forfeit the blessings of time and come under discipline and God's displeasure. Heb. 6:7-8, 10:38
 - 6. Beyond that, they would forfeit some portion of the eternal blessings associated with the Ph₃ niche. Heb. 10:35

VII. Ph₃ will provide the ultimate in rest.

- A. Like Ph₁ rest, the believer will enter Ph₃ rest in a moment and will enjoy the blessings of that rest for all eternity.
- B. In that niche, all labor, work, or striving will be replaced with glorious peace and rest, as the job is done, the battle has been fought, the race has been run.
- C. That niche is permanent and eternal; nothing can ever disturb the peace and tranquility of God's people there.
- D. All eternal blessings that one has coming will be delivered in full and each believer will have the time, ease, and pleasure of enjoying them forever.
- E. Nothing is admitted to the Ph₃ niche that binds, restricts, or oppresses the believer in any way. Rev. 21:4
- F. While our personal existence will be characterized by ultimate relaxation, peace, comfort, and joy, we will still be serving in whatever capacity God has designed for us. Rev. 7:15-17
- G. The Millennium is referred to as rest since the remnant will begin to enjoy the blessings of this state and physical creation joins in that rest. Jere. 50:34; Isa. 14:3,7
- H. On the other hand, negative unbelievers are informed that their Ph₃ existence will be characterized by a complete lack of rest, as they endure unending torment, regret, despair, etc. Rev. 14:11