

April 2009

Frank W. Nelte

### **WHAT IS 'THE REST' OF HEBREWS CHAPTER 4?**

What does Hebrews 4:3 mean when it says "we which have believed DO ENTER INTO REST"? What does "rest" mean to you? Is this a correct translation?

The English word "rest" has a considerable range of meanings. For example, The Unabridged Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary lists 10 distinct meanings for the noun "rest", 14 meanings for when "rest" is used as an intransitive verb (i.e. without a direct object), and 6 meanings for when "rest" is used as a transitive verb.

The first few meanings applicable to our discussion for THE VERB "rest" are:

- 1) to get peace, ease, and refreshment, by sleeping, lying down, etc.
- 2) to get ease and refreshment BY CEASING FROM WORK OR EXERTION.
- 3) TO BE AT EASE OR PEACE, to be tranquil.
- 4) to become or remain quiet or inactive for a while. etc.

And the first few meanings applicable to our discussion for THE NOUN "rest" are:

- 1) peace, ease and refreshment.
- 2) refreshing ease or inactivity after work or exertion
- 3) A PERIOD OR OCCASION OF INACTIVITY AFTER WORK.
- 4) peace of mind, mental and emotional calm.
- 5) absence of motion, state of being still. etc.

[COMMENT: The meaning "the remainder of something" does not feature in our discussion of "rest".]

In the Book of Hebrews in the KJV the word "rest" appears 12 times, twice in chapter 3, and 10 times in 8 different verses of chapter 4. Exactly what do all these references mean when they speak about "rest"? Also, do any of these occurrences of "rest" represent correct translations of the Greek words involved, or is the word "rest" a mistranslation in some or even all of these verses?

Depending on which of the above meanings people attach to the word "rest", this can have a major impact on how people view life after death. And a considerable part of how we understand these verses in the Book of Hebrews depends on THE EXPECTATIONS we have when we see the word "rest".

## **ACTUAL MEANINGS vs EXPECTATIONS**

When we look at different religions, we see that they have attached certain expectations to the word "rest". For example:

The Catholic idea of salvation involves being in heaven and looking at "the beatific vision" (i.e. looking at God) for all future eternity. There is nothing to do and there are no responsibilities. This is based on interpreting "rest" to mean: inactivity, peace of mind, being still.

The Protestant ideas of salvation are not much different, generally speaking. They, too, picture salvation as "inactivity in heaven", sometimes referred to as "sitting on a cloud and playing a harp". This is based on how they interpret the word "rest" in verses that refer to the future state of the saved.

Even the strict Jewish rules surrounding Sabbath-keeping are based on interpreting "rest" to mean: inactivity, being still, absence of expending any energy (as far as is possible). Since Hebrews 4:4 is clearly a reference to the Sabbath, the Jewish perception of the Sabbath commandment also ties into this subject.

The eastern religions also focus on the ultimate "rest". In both Hinduism and Buddhism that ultimate rest is "nirvana". In Hinduism nirvana is the blowing out or extinction of the flame of life, enabling a reunion with Brahma. In Buddhism nirvana is the state of perfect blessedness achieved by the extinction of individual existence. Both of these are somewhat like "the beatific vision" of Catholicism. And in both of these religions "nirvana" represents the ultimate "rest".

So the perceptions regarding "rest" are really quite similar across various different religions. Basically, they take references in the Bible to "rest" for the saved to be references to blissful peace and inactivity. This is in stark contrast to the ancient pagan religions of Greece and Rome, which pictured their gods being involved in all kinds of wheeling and dealing and shenanigans, with lots of fun and games (rather active ones at that).

The question is: what does GOD mean when He tells us about "REST" in Hebrews 4? Is GOD also speaking about "blissful inactivity" and "being still" as much as is possible? Or does God have a somewhat different meaning and expectation when He uses the words that are translated into English as "rest"?

Let's examine the words that are involved in this subject. References to "rest" in the New Testament are based on an understanding of the Sabbath. So before we look at the Greek words involved here, let's start with a look at the word "Sabbath".

## **THE WORD "SABBATH"**

The word "Sabbath" is not used in the entire Book of Genesis, the first occurrence being in Exodus 16:23. The Hebrew word is "shabbath", and this word is formed from the Hebrew verb "shabath". (The verb has a single "b" and the noun has a double "b".)

This verb "shabath" is used three times in the Book of Genesis: Genesis 2:2; 2:3; 8:22. In Genesis 2:2-3 it is twice translated as "rested" in the expression "rested FROM all His work". In Genesis 8:22 it is translated as "CEASE" in the expression "day and night shall not cease".

It is Genesis 8:22 that reveals the correct meaning for the verb "shabath". It means "to cease" or "to stop

doing something". Rather than saying that God "RESTED from all His work" in Genesis 2:2-3, it would have been clearer and also a more correct translation if the translators had said that God "CEASED from all His work" on the seventh day (as Young's Literal Translation has it). The reason this option would have been more correct is that the verb "to cease" has a much narrower and more pointed meaning than the verb "to rest". The word "rest" is much more ambiguous, since it can introduce factors (like ease, inactivity, lying down, sleeping, etc.) that don't really apply to the Hebrew verb "shabath".

Above all, the word "rest" has a completely different focus from the word "cease". The focus of the word "cease" is on ACTIONS; i.e. certain actions being discontinued. The focus of the word "rest" is on THE MIND; i.e. how the mind perceives and responds to any or all actions being stopped.

Considering the above definitions for the verb "rest" from Webster's Dictionary, the Hebrew verb "shabath" means "ceasing from work" (definition #2 above for the verb). However, with "shabath" the meaning "TO GET EASE AND REFRESHMENT" is only OPTIONAL! "Shabath" MAY involve getting ease and refreshment from stopping some activity, but "shabath" does not require this aspect. The focus of "shabath" is purely on "ceasing some activity", even if no "refreshment" is involved. The use in Genesis 8:22, as well as in other verses, makes this quite clear, and scholars acknowledge this.

So it is not really correct to translate "shabath" as "rest". However, IF the verb "rest" is used to translate the Hebrew "shabath", THEN it must really always be presented in the form of "REST FROM ..." (some specific activity or category of activities being identified for the verb "shabath" to apply to). And then it must be read with the understanding that "rest" only means "cessation of the specified activities". It should NEVER be translated as "rested" without any parameters that apply to this "resting".

To be quite clear: The verb "shabath" DOES NOT MEAN "INACTIVITY"! The total activity level of the person is not at all under consideration with the verb "shabath"; this verb ONLY refers to "ceasing from certain SPECIFIED activities", while OTHER ACTIVITIES are not at all affected by this verb.

Strictly speaking, NONE OF THE WEBSTER'S DEFINITIONS CITED ABOVE APPLY TO "SHABATH"! Those definitions all focus on THE MIND, how the mind perceives "rest". But the Hebrew verb "shabath" does not in any way consider the effect on the mind; "shabath" is concerned exclusively with the specified activities being stopped, irrespective of how that stoppage is perceived by the mind.

To fulfill the meaning of "shabath" it is sufficient for ONE category of activities to be stopped (i.e. the one that is specified, as in Genesis 8:22), even if some other activities are started or continued. When Genesis 2:2-3 twice tells us that God "SHABATH from all His work", that statement does NOT mean that therefore God was INACTIVE for the next 24 hours. Not at all! In these two verses "shabath" is focused exclusively on "all His work which He had made". Whatever else God may have done on that original Sabbath, He did NOT "create" things or "make" things on that day.

But Jesus Christ also said the following in John 5:17:

"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Most modern translations (including ASV, NAS, NIV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, Rotherham, etc.) state this in more modern language with more or less these words: "My Father works even until now, and I work". The NIV says: "My Father is ALWAYS at His work to this very day, and I, too, am working".

The point is that the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27), and God does not keep the weekly Sabbath in heaven. God the Father is ALWAYS working. God never gets tired and never "rests". Isaiah 40:28 tells us that "the everlasting God ... faints not, neither is weary".

The Hebrew noun "shabbath" does NOT mean "rest day"! It correctly means "DAY OF CESSATION FROM SPECIFIED CATEGORIES OF ACTIVITIES".

This is something the Jewish religion does not seem to understand! They wrongly believe that "shabbath" requires the total cessation of any and all activities, as far as is humanly possible. They don't understand what God means by "work". They don't understand that God's use of "work" has nothing to do with, to consider just one example, walking a lot further than "a Sabbath day's journey". God's reference to "work" in Exodus 20:10 is focused on a specific CATEGORY of activities, from which we are to cease on the Sabbath; it is not focused on any level of energy that may or may not be expended on the Sabbath.

The account of the original Sabbath in Genesis does NOT in any way refer to "resting". The concept of "resting" is only introduced in Exodus 20. The first part of the commandment (verses 8-10) spells out WHAT IS REQUIRED OF US! And in these verses the focus is on the cessation of all activities that can be classified as "our work".

Then verse 11 tells us that GOD "rested" on the seventh day. Now while in Genesis 2:2-3 the verb "shabbath" is mistranslated as "rested", here in Exodus 20:11 God used a different verb, the verb "NUWACH" (or "nuah").

This root verb signifies being settled or settled down, with overtones of finality or of victory. This Hebrew verb "nuwach" also includes the meaning of the verb "to rest". So here in the days of Moses God (i.e. Jesus Christ was speaking) says that He RESTED on that first Sabbath. God "rested" to set us an example. It seems likely that God used that first Sabbath to teach Adam and Eve many things. "Teaching" is not the same as "resting", but it is a "cessation of the other activities" in which God had engaged during the previous six days.

So regarding the Sabbath:

- 1) Genesis 2:2-3 tells us that on that first Sabbath God CEASED from His activities of creating and making things.
- 2) Exodus 20:11 then ADDS the element of actual RESTING to the Sabbath.
- 3) Isaiah 58:13 then ADDS certain other categories of activities from which God wants us to CEASE on the Sabbath. Those additional categories of activities are: not seeking our OWN WAYS, nor finding our OWN PLEASURES, nor speaking our OWN WORDS.

Isaiah 58:13 explains how God wants us to apply the principle of Genesis 2:2-3 to our circumstances. GOD ceased from creating on that Sabbath day. But we human beings don't really have the ability to "create" things the way God creates things. So the way God wants us to apply the principle of Genesis 2:2-3 to our physical lives is by having us CEASE from engaging in our own ways and pleasures and words. Those three categories cover a large part, though not all, of the things we do on the other days of the week.

At any rate, it is clear that the Hebrew verb "shabbath" does not mean the same as the Hebrew verb "nuwach". Where "nuwach" refers to resting, the verb "shabbath" simply focuses on the cessation of one or more specified categories of activities.

Scholars understand this distinction quite clearly. For example, Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words makes the following statement under the Greek word "SABBATON" (Greek for "Sabbath day"):

"THE IDEA IS NOT THAT OF RELAXATION OR REFRESHMENT, BUT CESSATION FROM ACTIVITY."

To get an idea of how strongly even scholars are influenced by their own prejudices, consider the following about Mr. W. E. Vine. Vine correctly understood that "Sabbath" refers to cessation of activity WITHOUT any focus on rest or relaxation. Now under the heading of "REST" Vine lists the noun "SABBATISMOS", which simply means "the keeping of a Sabbath", i.e. "the keeping of a period of cessation from specified activities". And for this noun "SABBATISMOS" Vine states:

"HERE THE SABBATH-KEEPING IS THE PERPETUAL SABBATH REST TO BE ENJOYED UNINTERRUPTEDLY BY BELIEVERS IN THEIR FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON."

Here Vine has totally ignored the actual meaning of "Sabbath", and instead he has simply interpreted this word to conform to the idea of "sitting on a cloud and playing a harp", with nothing to do for all future eternity, a perpetual uninterrupted rest. Clearly Vine is not applying his own definition of the word "Sabbath" to the word "Sabbatismos".

To summarize thus far: The word "Sabbath" literally means "a day of cessation from specified categories of activities". The ideas of "rest" and "refreshment" are optional to the actual meaning of the word "Sabbath". God's statement in Exodus 20:11 (i.e. that God "rested") shows that we are to understand that this day of cessation is ALSO to be used for resting. But the concept of "rest" is not a part of the intrinsic meaning of the word "Sabbath". And other Scriptures (Isaiah 58:13, etc.) then provide additional information about the Sabbath.

With this background let's now look at the Greek words in the New Testament that apply to the discussion of "rest" in the Book of Hebrews.

### **SOME NEW TESTAMENT GREEK WORDS**

In order to grasp the correct meanings of the Greek words that are involved in this question, we should look at one root word. We'll keep this as basic as possible.

The following information is based mostly on Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. Other dictionaries of New Testament Greek (Thayer's, etc.) provide basically the same information.

**THE VERB "ΠΑΥΟ"**: This is a root verb which is used 15 times in the NEW TESTAMENT: 12 times it is translated in the KJV as "cease", twice as "leave" and once as "refrain". It is clear that this verb of itself has nothing to do with "resting". It means "to stop doing something". In fact, it is the root of our English verb "to pause".

Now NEW TESTAMENT Greek employed 18 different prepositions, which are very commonly used as prefixes to express a whole range of meanings when joined to a basic word. For example, the most commonly used verb in the Greek NEW TESTAMENT is "erchomai", which can mean either "to come" or "to go". By combining this word "erchomai" with the prepositions "eis, ek, epi, dia, kata, para, pros, sun", etc. a whole range of new meanings can be expressed very precisely. Many of these Greek prepositions come in pairs of opposites. Thus: "ana" means up and "kata" means down; "huper" means above and "hupo" means under; "eis" means into and "ek" means out of; "pros" means towards and "apo" means away from; "pro" means for and "anti" means opposite or against; etc.

It should be easy for us to grasp that these prepositions are NOT synonymous! When "eis" is prefixed to

a word then it does NOT mean the same as when "ek" is prefixed to that same word; when "huper" is prefixed to a word then it does NOT mean the same as when "hupo" is prefixed to that same word; when "pro" is prefixed to a word then it does NOT mean the same as when "anti" is prefixed to that same word; when "ana" is prefixed to a word then it does NOT mean the same as when "kata" is prefixed to that same word; etc.

Specifically, we should be able to recognize immediately that when "kata" is prefixed to "pauo", then this new word does NOT MEAN THE SAME as when "ana" is prefixed to "pauo". In Greek "kata" and "ana" are used to express antonyms, not synonyms! The Greek word "katapauo" does not mean the same as the Greek word "anapauo", even if a biased dictionary may claim that these two words are supposedly synonymous. Any claims for synonymity for these two words are based on a lack of understanding what these words are really supposed to tell us. Consider again Vine's claims for "sabbatismos" in spite of correctly understanding the meaning of "sabbaton" as an illustration of this bias and lack of understanding.

Now let's look at the Greek verb "**anapauo**" and the noun "**anapausis**". These words are formed from "ana" (meaning "up") + "pauo" (meaning "to cease"). The prefix "ana" gives these words a positive, uplifting meaning. And so "anapauo" means "TO REST, TO BE REFRESHED". It refers to a state of being stress-free. This verb is used 12 times in the NEW TESTAMENT, and the only ways it is translated in the KJV are: "rest, refresh, take rest, give rest, take ease". **THIS WORD MEANS "REST"!** The noun "anapausis" is used 5 times in the NEW TESTAMENT, and in the KJV it is always translated as "rest". Without belaboring the point, the 17 times these two words are used in the NEW TESTAMENT make very clear that they indeed mean "rest" as we think of "rest". The translations used in all 17 occurrences are correct. None are mistranslations.

HOWEVER, NEITHER "ANAPAUO" NOR "ANAPAUISIS" IS EVER USED IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS!

This should tell us that the Book of Hebrews isn't really speaking about "rest".

Now let's look at the Greek verb "**katapauo**" and the noun "**katapausis**". These words are formed from "kata" (meaning "down") + "pauo" (meaning "to cease"). The prefix "kata" gives these words a negative meaning. Thus Vine's Expository Dictionary has the following parenthetical statement for "katapauo": "kata, down, intensive, and No.1". For "No.1" (i.e. "pauo") Vine's states: "to stop, to make an end". So without actually spelling it out in these words, Vine's has in effect told us that "katapauo" means: **TO STOP AND MAKE AN END IN AN INTENSIVE WAY!** And this really is the correct meaning of "katapauo".

But that also has a completely different focus from the word "rest"! Resting doesn't enter the picture in this meaning of "katapauo".

Now this verb "**katapauo**" is only used four times in the NEW TESTAMENT, once in Acts 14:18, and three times in Hebrews chapter 4. Notice Acts 14:18.

"And with these sayings scarce **RESTRAINED** ("katapauo") they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them."

The translators realized that in this context "katapauo" could only mean something like "enforcing a cessation of a certain activity". And not only is it addressed to causing something to "cease"; it is speaking about **the cessation of something that was BAD**, something that was a "downward" activity. These pagans wanted to bring sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:13). And so "katapauo" tells us that Paul and Barnabas were very intense in their efforts to put a stop to this bad, evil activity.

So considering the meanings of the Greek prepositions "ana" and "kata", when prefixed to the word meaning "to cease", we get the following contrast:

"ANAPAUO" = to cease in an uplifting way that produces rest and refreshment.

"KATAPAUO" = the enforced cessation of activities. This may apply to both positive and negative activities. When it is applied to negative activities, the reason for cessation is self-evident. When it is applied to positive activities the reason for cessation is volition on the part of the individual involved.

Anyone who tells you that "anapauo" and "katapauo" mean the same thing is not telling you the truth. It is **WRONG** to translate "katapauo" and "anapauo" with one and the same English word. These prefixes ("ana" and "kata") create a contrast between these two words.

Shortly we will examine all the occurrences of the word "rest" in the Book of Hebrews. However, for now we should note that in **Hebrews 4:10** "katapauo" is also translated correctly as "**has ceased**". So in two out of four places "katapauo" is actually translated correctly. In the other two places in Hebrews 4 it is wrongly translated as "rest".

The noun "**katapausis**" is used nine times in eight verses in the NEW TESTAMENT. This word is used once by Luke (Acts 7:49). The other eight occurrences are all in Hebrews 3 - 4.

Here is something we should consider:

1) The words "anapauo" and "anapausis" are used 17 times in the following books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Philemon, 1 Peter and Revelation. The only NEW TESTAMENT authors who did not use either of these two words are James and Jude. **But these words are NEVER used in the Book of Hebrews.** So the real meaning of "anapauo" and "anapausis" is NEVER spoken about in the Book of Hebrews!

2) The words "katapauo" and "katapausis" are used 13 times. Apart from one occurrence of each word in the Book of Acts, these two words are NEVER USED outside of Hebrews chapters 3 - 4. So the intended meaning of "katapauo" and "katapausis" is elsewhere in the New Testament (i.e. outside of Hebrews) discussed only without using the words "katapauo" or "katapausis". The Apostle Paul himself addressed the meaning of "katapauo" and "katapausis" in other contexts outside of Hebrews with completely different terminology. Paul also did use "anapauo" in three of his other letters. The Apostle Paul most assuredly did NOT use "katapauo" as a synonym for "anapauo". Paul clearly knew the difference between "kata" and "ana".

Let's look at the two uses of these words by Luke in the Book of Acts.

### **THESE TWO WORDS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS**

In Acts 14:18 Luke used the verb "katapauo" with its correct meaning in the expression "with these sayings scarce RESTRAINED ("katapauo") they the people". The people wanted to engage in a BAD activity (i.e. bring sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas), and the apostles scarcely managed to STOP them from this activity. "Resting" does not even remotely enter the picture in this passage. From this use of "katapauo" we would conclude that it applies to NEGATIVE activities.

However, the one use of "katapausis" that goes against this trend is in Acts 7:49. If it were not for the word "katapausis" being used by Luke in Acts 7:49, the negative meaning of this word would be obvious. It is the use of "katapausis" in this verse that has created some confusion and ambiguity. Let's look at it.

"Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what *is* the place of MY REST ("katapausis")?" (Acts 7:49)

Stephen, the first NEW TESTAMENT martyr, was here quoting Isaiah 66:1, which reads as follows:

"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven *is* my throne, and the earth *is* my footstool: where *is* the house that ye build unto me? and where *is* the place of MY REST ("menuchah")?" (Isaiah 66:1)

The Hebrew noun "menuchah" is formed from the root verb "nuwach" which we have already seen. This Hebrew noun "menuchah" is used 21 times in the OLD TESTAMENT, and according to The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT) it "may denote either the place or state of *nuah*" (i.e. "nuwach"). The word also carries "overtones of finality". In plain language: "**menuchah**" refers to **the place or state of finally settling down**.

The context of Isaiah 66:1 shows that the TWOT discussion of this word certainly applies here. God is here asking "where is THE PLACE WHERE I WILL FINALLY SETTLE DOWN?" The answer to that question (not given in Isaiah 66) is "the New Jerusalem" of Revelation 21:2. And so at first "rest" may seem like a suitable translation into English. However, we should understand that **God was NOT asking about a place** where He will "REST" in the sense of being inactive! When we "settle down" in a certain place, that of itself does not address our "activity level"; we could be very busy and very active in the place where we settle down. And as far as God is concerned, even in the New Jerusalem the principle of John 5:17 (i.e. God the Father is always working) will continue to apply. So "rest" may not be the most suitable translation in Isaiah 66:1 and in Acts 7:49 after all. But it is at least a reasonably fair translation.

In addition to this we have the following situation:

When this verse is quoted in the Greek language in Acts 7:49, then "menuchah" should correctly have been translated by the word "ANAPAUSIS", and NOT as "katapausis"! When Stephen, a Jew, was speaking to the high priest (Acts 7:1-2), Stephen spoke either in Aramaic or in Hebrew. But Stephen was NOT speaking in Greek to the high priest! So Stephen did not use the Greek word "katapausis" in quoting Isaiah 66:1, because he wasn't speaking in Greek. Stephen most likely used the Aramaic equivalent of "menuchah" or else he used the Hebrew word "menuchah" itself.

The evangelist Luke, on the other hand, was a Greek-speaking non-Jew who came into the Church, very likely through the preaching of Paul. Luke had not been around during Christ's ministry. Luke may or may not have understood Aramaic? But Luke's first language was Greek, and Luke wrote both of his works in Greek. So **how did Luke end up using the word "katapausis" for this quotation?**

The answer to this question lies with the Greek language **LXX translation** of the Old Testament. In the LXX the Hebrew text for "where is the place of my rest?" in Isaiah 66 is rendered into Greek as "poios topos tes KATAPAUSEOS mou". [Comment: "katapauseos" is the genitive singular of "katapausis".]

### **THIS IS A MISTAKE!**

This expression should correctly have been translated into Greek as "poios topos tes ANAPAUSEOS mou". [Comment: "anapauseos" is the genitive singular of "anapausis".]

THE EVIDENCE in this regard is that in the LXX the Hebrew noun "menuchah" is **CORRECTLY** translated as the genitive case "ANAPAUSEOS" in 1 Chronicles 22:9 ("a man of menuchah" = "aner ANAPAUSEOS"), and in 1 Chronicles 28:2 ("a house of menuchah for the ark" = "oikon ANAPAUSEOS"), and in Psalm 23:2 ("beside the menuchah waters" = "epi hudatos ANAPAUSEOS").



Nine additional places where the LXX has also correctly translated the Hebrew "menuchah" with the Greek word "anapausis" are: Genesis 49:15; Numbers 10:33; Ruth 1:9; Psalm 132:8; Isaiah 11:10; Isaiah 28:12; Isaiah 32:18; Jeremiah 45:3 and Micah 2:10. So the LXX has correctly translated "menuchah" 12 times with the word "anapausis".

Consider that in Psalm 132:8 the LXX correctly translated "menuchah" with "anapausis", yet six verses later, in Psalm 132:14, the LXX incorrectly translated "menuchah" with "katapausis". This represents a clear lack of consistency right within one small limited context.

The 12 times where the LXX correctly translated "menuchah" as "anapausis" should make clear that in Isaiah 66:1 it should ALSO have been translated as "anapausis". Very likely Luke was familiar with a Greek translation of various books of the OLD TESTAMENT (i.e. those that were later compiled by Origen to give us the LXX), and being unfamiliar with Hebrew, he simply accepted the wrong Greek translation for Isaiah 66:1.

There are other instances where Luke, who relied totally on second-hand information for his knowledge of Christ's ministry, has also chosen less ideal words in his accounts. For example, when we compare Luke 12:42 with Matthew 24:45, we see that Luke chose the word "oikonomos" instead of the word "doulos", and that he also chose the word "sitometrion" instead of the word "trophe". See my article on the Gospel of Luke for additional examples, where Luke expressed the things he had not personally witnessed in somewhat different terms from the eyewitness accounts recorded in the other gospels.

So Luke's reliance on the "LXX" translation of Isaiah 66:1 and therefore using the word "katapausis" instead of the word "anapausis" in Acts 7:49 is one more example of this.

But now we should also consider the greater effect of the Greek LXX translation on this question.

## **THE GREEK LXX TRANSLATIONS OF THE WORD "MENUCHAH"**

The Hebrew word "menuchah" (meaning "the place or state of finally settling down") is used 21 times in the Old Testament. In the Greek LXX this word is translated 12 times as "anapausis", six times as "katapausis", and three times (2 Samuel 14:17; Jeremiah 51:59; Zechariah 9:1) by other words. (Zechariah 9:1 is an example of a particularly flawed LXX translation of the Hebrew text.)

Of the six places where "menuchah" is translated as "katapausis", of particular interest to us (in addition to Isaiah 66:1) is PSALM 95:11. The reason is as follows.

In the Book of Hebrews the Apostle Paul builds his entire argument in chapters 3-4 on the last five verses of Psalm 95, i.e. Psalm 95:7-11. The whole discussion from Hebrews 3:7 - Hebrews 4:11 (24 verses) is based on these verses in Psalm 95. And the repeated focus of Paul's line of reasoning in this section is based on verse 11. Verse 11 is Paul's punch-line in this reasoning.

The Apostle Paul was obviously completely fluent in Hebrew. He had read the entire Old Testament in Hebrew. He understood the correct meaning of "menuchah". Paul knew and understood that in Psalm 95:11 God is recorded as saying (paraphrased): I swear in My wrath to the generation that came out of Egypt that they should not enter into "My place of settling down". Paul understood that this statement was based on Numbers 14:23, 28-30. Paul understood that here God was speaking about the land of Palestine, referred to in this passage in our KJV as "my rest".

Now the Apostle Paul also understood that there is a very clear distinction between God saying "My

menuchah" in Isaiah 66:1 and God saying "My menuchah" in Psalm 95:11. **Isaiah 66:1** refers to the place where **GOD** will settle down, but **Psalm 95:11** only refers to where God had planned for **ISRAEL** to settle down when God brought them out of Egypt.

Do you follow?

It is the context that shows us what God is speaking about when He uses the words "My menuchah". And I suspect that IF the Apostle Paul had quoted Isaiah 66:1 somewhere in his letters (which he did not do), THEN he would have translated "menuchah" with "anapausis". But in order to distinguish Psalm 95:11 from Isaiah 66:1 **Paul opted to translate Psalm 95:11 as "katapausis"**.

I don't believe that the LXX translators grasped this distinction; their very poor rendition of "menuchah" in Zechariah 9:1, to cite just one example, amply demonstrates their general lack of understanding. Rather, it was a pure coincidence that for Psalm 95:11 they chose a suitable translation into Greek. It is very much the same as with many of our English translations: there are many translations that overall are not reliable at all (Moffatt, NIV, etc.), and yet for a specific verse here or there they may actually provide a very appropriate translation. Hitting the nail on the head here or there doesn't necessarily make the translation as a whole a good one. The same is true for the LXX. Overall it is not very reliable at all. But that doesn't mean that here or there it may not express something in a correct way.

Rather than somehow relying on the LXX, I suspect that in this instance of quoting Psalm 95:11 the Apostle Paul VERY DELIBERATELY used the LXX's "katapausis" to make his point! Paul was fluent in more languages than anyone else around at his time (1 Corinthians 14:18), and he wanted to show that **the "menuchah" that is spoken about in Psalm 95:11 was never going to be "final"**. It is different from the "menuchah" of Isaiah 66:1. Paul used "katapausis" to build up his argument to the point where **he then coined a new word "sabbatismos" in Hebrews 4:9**. Paul's point is that "menuchah" in Psalm 95:11 hadn't offered a settling place that was really going to be "final"; at best it would have been "final for the time being". Anything before the time of the New Jerusalem is not really "final".

Paul had an excellent understanding of both Hebrew and Greek. And when Paul wanted to speak about "rest" in his other letters, he used the word "anapauo". In Hebrews 3-4 Paul wanted to discuss one very specific subject. And so he chose to use a word, "katapauo" (and "katapausis"), which he did not use anywhere else! Paul wanted to make A DISTINCTION between the subject he was discussing in Hebrews 3-4 and everything else he wrote about. And the questionable LXX translation of Psalm 95:11 suited Paul's purposes very well, like the occasional NIV or Moffatt translation may suit me very well in providing an explanation for some verse or other (e.g. the NIV translation of John 5:17 above). It has nothing to do with Paul supposedly endorsing the LXX translation, and everything to do with the LXX translation for this specific verse being a very effective way for Paul to highlight a distinction between the concept addressed by Psalm 95 and the concept addressed by Isaiah 66:1.

This deliberate use of the word "katapausis" is further illustrated by Paul's deliberate switch of another word in this context. Shortly we'll also see that Paul starts out using the word "apistia" (unbelief) in this context, but then **unexpectedly changed this word** to "apeitheia" (disobedience), thereby raising the whole situation to a higher level.

In Psalm 95:11 God was not permanently excluding Israel from salvation; salvation is something to which they will have access during the time of the second resurrection. In Psalm 95:11 God was permanently excluding one specific generation of Israelites from physically crossing the Jordan into the promised land. It is this limitation God imposed on one specific generation that Paul repeatedly refers to in the process of making his point in Hebrews 3-4. In that process Paul also raised the stakes to a higher level than in Psalm 95:11.

However, one point needs to be clearly understood. In Hebrews Paul is NOT speaking about "rest". When Paul used the words "katapauo" and "katapausis", he was assuredly not thinking of "rest".

Now let's examine the key verses in Hebrews 3-4.

### **"REST" IN HEBREWS 3-4**

After explaining to Jewish Christians in the previous sections that Jesus Christ is greater than the angels and than Moses, in Hebrews 3:7 Paul starts to present an admonition. He does this by quoting from Psalm 95.

Psalm 95:7-11 presents a summary account of the 40 years God dealt with Israel in the wilderness. Time and again Israel provoked God, to the point where God did not allow them to cross into the land He had intended for them to inherit. That generation died in the wilderness.

Hebrews 3:7-11 represents a quotation from Psalm 95:7-11. Paul then REASONS FROM this quotation, to help us understand how this information also applies to Christians today. In this process Paul presents a comparison.

Notice.

#### **HEBREWS 3:11**

"So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my REST (katapausis)."

God is here saying: they will not enter into the promised land. Paul used the word "katapausis" because he wanted to emphasize that what God required from the people was that they **CEASE THEIR REBELLION AND PROVOCATIONS!** Crossing the Jordan had nothing to do with then "resting"! It was God's intention that they were to become extremely productive in the land God was going to give them. So "resting" is a wrong focus. But in order to cross the Jordan they had to stop tempting and provoking God. And this they did not do. Therefore they died in the wilderness.

Do you begin to understand why Paul used the word "katapausis" and not the word "anapausis" for this quotation? Let's continue.

#### **HEBREWS 3:12**

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

Paul now applies the lesson from these verses to the NEW TESTAMENT Church. The root cause underlying all of Israel's provocative conduct was a lack of faith (i.e. "unbelief").

#### **HEBREWS 3:13-17**

In these five verses Paul urges Christians to learn the lessons from Israel's faithless conduct.

#### **HEBREWS 3:18**

"And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his REST (katapausis), but to them that believed

not?"

Paul repeats the quotation he has already presented in verse 11. Again "katapausis" refers to the promised land they should have entered, a land in which all their evil conduct should have CEASED! It was not to be a land of resting from all work, but a land in which their evil conduct should have ceased.

#### HEBREWS 3:19

The lesson for us is that they did not enter because of a lack of faith.

#### HEBREWS 4:1

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his REST (katapausis), any of you should seem to come short of it."

Now Paul applies the lesson from Israel's 40 years of wandering to the Church today. They had a promise and we have a promise. For them the promise was that they would enter into a physical land across the Jordan. For us the promise is that we will enter into God's Family. For them the entry into the promised land should have signaled the cessation of their rebellious ways. For us entry into God's Family will signal the total cessation of all human conduct and behavior. But for neither OLD TESTAMENT Israel nor for us is the entry supposed to signal the start of a "perpetual, uninterrupted rest".

Neither for OLD TESTAMENT Israel nor for us is the focus on resting. In both cases the focus is on the cessation of certain categories of activities or behavior, to be replaced by other categories of behavior. The cessation of ALL activities (i.e. total rest) never entered the picture for either group. And it is for that reason that "anapausis" (i.e. rest) was not the appropriate word to use in Hebrews 4.

That is why in discussing our potential future existence in the presence of God Paul chose to use the word "katapausis", not to emphasize "rest", but to emphasize the cessation of rebellion (for OLD TESTAMENT Israel) and the cessation of all human endeavors (for us in God's Church).

#### HEBREWS 4:3

"For we which have believed do enter into REST (katapausis), as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my REST (katapausis): although the works were finished from the foundation of the world."

In plain language, once we come into God's Church WE CEASE ENGAGING IN CERTAIN FORMS OF CONDUCT! The predictions for trials and tribulations for us in God's Church (John 16:33, etc.) make quite clear that in coming into God's Church we have NOT entered a period of tranquility, peace, rest and quiet. "Rest" is simply not the right way to translate "katapausis" in this statement. To apply the term "rest" to the Christian existence is to distort the meaning of the word "rest".

What Paul means by us having entered into "katapausis" is exactly the same thing that Peter expressed in 1 Peter 4:4, which reads:

"Wherein they think it strange that YE RUN NOT WITH *THEM* TO THE SAME EXCESS OF RIOT, speaking evil of *you*:"

In other words, Peter was saying that Christians have CEASED engaging in certain forms of conduct. And that is exactly what "katapausis" refers to in Hebrews 4.

## HEBREWS 4:4

"For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God DID REST (katapauo) the seventh day from all his works."

This is a reference to Genesis 2:2, and here the Apostle Paul has used the Greek word "katapauo" as a translation for the Hebrew verb "shabath". We have already seen that "shabath" does NOT mean "to rest". "Shabath" really means "to cease doing something". Paul was very much aware of the distinction between the Hebrew verbs "shabath" and "nuwach". So when Paul here translated "shabath" with "katapauo", Paul was showing that "katapauo" also means "to cease from doing something". See also Young's Literal Translation of Genesis 2:2 in this connection, and also Acts 14:18.

Note! Paul felt that what God did in Genesis 2:2 is correctly described by the word "katapauo", and not by the word "anapauo"! This is significant because the four times Paul used the verb "anapauo" it is always translated as "refreshed" in the KJV (i.e. in 1 Corinthians 16:18; 2 Corinthians 7:13; Philemon 1:7, Philemon 1:20), and "refreshed" basically captures the intended meaning in those verses. Therefore Paul clearly did not understand the verb "katapauo" to somehow also refer to "being refreshed".

To make this quite clear:

The Greek word "katapauo" means the same as the Hebrew "shabath", i.e. to cease.

The Greek word "anapauo" means the same as the Hebrew "nuwach", i.e. to rest.

When we carefully consider the Hebrews 4:4 quotation of Genesis 2:2, it becomes clear that neither "shabath" nor "katapauo" really refer to what we would call "rest".

## HEBREWS 4:5

And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my REST (katapausis)."

For emphasis Paul again quotes Psalm 95:11. This quotation expresses the key point Paul is trying to make. In order for us to enter into God's kingdom we must CEASE doing all the things that are wrong, or else we will not enter, even as the generation that came out of Egypt didn't enter the promised land.

## HEBREWS 4:6

"Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of UNBELIEF."

Now Paul reasons from this foundation to draw a conclusion. Paul's reasoning is: yes, I know that under Joshua Israel eventually DID enter into the promised land, but they NEVER really entered a state of "katapausis", because they NEVER really ceased to sin and rebel against God. Paul is anticipating an appeal to the time of Joshua, and he addresses this in verse 8.

Here Paul's reasoning is: the fact that God clearly refers to a CESSATION in Psalm 95:11 means that God had obviously intended for His people to enter such a state. Paul understood that this cessation (translated as "rest") was not speaking about a geographic location (i.e. the promised land) as much as it was speaking about A COMMITTED STATE OF MIND on the part of God's people. And because it refers to a committed state of mind, therefore any subsequent crossing of the Jordan without a cessation of rebellion on the part of the people could not achieve the intended goal of Psalm 95:11. So the "rest" of Psalm 95:11 was NEVER achieved, not even after they had crossed the Jordan.

Paul also made clear that his real focus was on a state of cessation from rebellion by one other deliberate switch. That switch was made here in verse 6, and again in verse 11. Paul switched ONE WORD to make this point. In the KJV this word is mistranslated as "unbelief".

The (correctly translated) escalation of Paul's reasoning in these verses is as follows:

In Hebrews 3:12 Paul referred to "an evil heart of UNBELIEF".

In Hebrews 3:19 Paul said they could not enter "because of UNBELIEF".

In Hebrews 4:6 Paul said they did not enter "because of DISOBEDIENCE".

In Hebrews 4:11 admonishes us to not fall due to "DISOBEDIENCE".

The word correctly translated as "unbelief" in Hebrews 3:12, 19 is "apistia". But the word wrongly translated as "unbelief" in Hebrews 4:6, 11 (KJV) is "apeitheia". This word "apeitheia" really means "obstinate rejection, disobedience". Many other translations have clearly identified this switch in words by Paul, by in these two verses translating "apeitheia" as "disobedience" (ASV, ERV, NAS, NIV, RSV, NKJV, etc.) or as "obstinacy" (Rotherham).

Paul's reasoning in chapter 3 starts out with identifying Israel's lack of faith in God (i.e. unbelief). They repeatedly failed to trust God for all their needs. But then, when Paul repeats the same information, he changes the charge against Israel from "unbelief" to "disobedience". Paul is showing that Israel never CEASED FROM disobeying God and from rebelling against God, even after crossing the Jordan.

The word "apistia" (unbelief) focuses on THE MIND. Unbelief is something that takes place in the mind. But whatever takes place in the mind NEVER remains confined to the mind. Sooner or later what happens in the mind will manifest itself in some outward actions or conduct. And the word "apeitheia" (disobedience) focuses on that transition from the mind into outwardly discernible conduct. The word "apeitheia" focuses on the actions which really should have CEASED! We need to recognize the inevitable progression that is involved in going from "apistia" to "apeitheia".

Paul's use of "apeitheia" (disobedience) in Hebrews 4:6, 11 instead of the word "apistia" (unbelief) reinforces Paul's focus on THE CESSATION OF THE WRONG CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR. Paul's switch to "apeitheia" really reinforces Paul's use of "katapausis".

The Christians who received this letter in the Greek language would have recognized that with this switch from "apistia" to "apeitheia" Paul had introduced another punch-line into his argument.

#### HEBREWS 4:7

"Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

"After so long a time" refers to the time lapse between the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, and the time of David. By quoting Psalm 95:7-8 Paul is saying that even at David's time (and therefore also to the time of the New Testament) the problem had not yet been resolved, and therefore Israel had still not entered into that state of cessation from rebellion and from sinning. The expression "TODAY if you will hear His voice" is God's way of stating that the same problem still existed in David's time.

These are the conclusions Paul drew from Psalm 95.

## HEBREWS 4:8

"For if Jesus (i.e. JOSHUA) had given them REST (katapauo), then would he not afterward have spoken of another day."

Most translations acknowledge that this is speaking about Joshua and not about Jesus. Those translations that render this as "Jesus" (e.g. KJV, etc.) display an enormous lack of understanding.

Now Paul addresses the objection that the goal of Psalm 95:11 was fulfilled when Israel crossed the Jordan under Joshua's leadership. Paul's reasoning is as follows: IF Israel had really achieved the "katapausis" that God had intended for them when they left Egypt, THEN God would not have inspired the statement in Psalm 95:11. There would have been no need for it. The fact that God DID inspire Psalm 95:11 was proof to Paul that the state of "katapausis" had NEVER yet been achieved by Israel.

That's Paul's reasoning in this verse. And it certainly makes sense to me!

## HEBREWS 4:9

"There remaineth therefore A REST (sabbatismos) to the people of God."

Here Paul coined a new word to convey his meaning. The word "sabbatismos" is not used by any other author. And this is the only place where Paul used this word. Coining a new word is something authors sometimes have to do in order to express a new concept for which a word does not yet exist in their language.

First of all, since the state of cessation that God speaks about in Psalm 95:11 was never achieved by Israel, therefore, so reasons Paul, that state must still be achieved by "the people of God".

Secondly, Paul wanted to identify that "katapausis" with something that is linked to the people of God. And so Paul exchanged the word "katapausis" for the word "sabbatismos", which he himself had just coined. Literally Paul's statement means: therefore there remains a keeping of a period of cessation for the people of God.

With this word Paul was referring to the 1000-year rule of Jesus Christ. So with this statement Paul LINKED "the state of katapausis" with "the period of time" set aside for Christ's rule over mankind. The switch in words linked a state with a period of time.

By linking Psalm 95:11 to the millennium, Paul was also showing that the state of "katapausis" spoken about in Psalm 95:11 would ONLY have been achieved if Israel had accepted God's leadership over the nation, even as Jesus Christ will rule during the millennium. The fact that under Joshua they had crossed the Jordan was not the deciding factor; the deciding factor was their lack of submission to God's leadership, their lack of achieving a state of "katapausis". That deciding factor is also emphasized by Paul's switch to the concept of disobedience (i.e. "apeitheia").

To be clear: by "sabbatismos" Paul was not in any way speaking about "resting"! By here saying "sabbatismos" instead of "katapausis", Paul was COMBINING a state of existence (cessation of all wrong ways of living) with a period of time when God's rule will be enforced with absolute authority (the millennium). When Israel crossed the Jordan it was God's intention to bless them with millennial-like blessings (see Deuteronomy 28:1-14; etc.). They never stopped rebelling, and so these blessings never materialized. In the millennium obedience will be enforced (Isaiah 30:21; etc.), and these blessings will be poured out without measure.

So Paul's point in this verse is: the people of God have the millennium to look forward to, even as the people who left Egypt had the promised land set before them as a goal.

#### HEBREWS 4:10

"For he that is entered into his REST (katapausis), he also HATH CEASED (katapauo) from his own works, as God *did* from his."

Here Paul again identifies the "sabbatismos" of the previous verse with the "katapausis" of Psalm 95:11. Note that the verb "katapauo" has been correctly translated as "ceased". It follows that the noun "katapausis" should likewise be correctly translated as "period of cessation" (since "sabbatismos" introduced the idea of a period of time). The focus is cessation, not rest. And Genesis 2:2 likewise told us that God "ceased" from all His creating and making.

#### HEBREWS 4:11

"Let us labour therefore to enter into that REST (katapausis), lest any man fall after the same example of UNBELIEF (Greek is "apeitheia")."

This is Paul's conclusion to the reasoning he has presented from Psalm 95. Again Paul has clearly used the word "katapausis" rather than the word "sabbatismos". This shows that Paul's emphasis throughout has been on THE CESSATION OF A STATE OF REBELLION AGAINST GOD. Introducing the idea that this state will prevail for the period of the millennium (i.e. verse 9) is almost incidental. Throughout this discussion the "what" is more important than the "how long".

Note also that, as in verse 6, it should read "disobedience" rather than "unbelief". So right here Paul linked "katapausis" with "apeitheia". This again reinforces the focus on a state of rebellion against God, which needs to stop.

The next few verses deal with unbelief and disobedience.

This (Hebrews 3-4) is the only context in which Paul ever used the words "katapauo" and "katapausis". He did not mean "anapauo"; he did not mean "rest". At no stage in this entire discussion does the idea of "rest" ever enter the picture. The entire focus is on us human beings having to STOP OUR WRONG CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR! That's what Israel should have done when they came out of Egypt. And that's what we in God's Church are expected to do. We must change!

To non-Jewish Christians Paul explained this whole subject in terms of "putting off the old man" (Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9; etc.). To the Jews in the Church Paul presented this as a state of being that Israel really should have achieved after God brought them out of Egypt, but they never did achieve this. Therefore it still remains to be achieved by the people of God.

Can you see how the word "rest" distorts this whole message? Can you grasp how powerfully this mistranslation has influenced the ideas of "the beatific vision" and of "sitting on a cloud and playing a harp"? The distortion may seem to be ever so slight. What's the big deal about making an issue out of "rest" versus "cease"? Well, this little distortion represents the difference between "My Father works hitherto and I work" on the one hand, and "playing a harp on some cloud" on the other hand. Never underestimate the power of even the slightest distortions of the truth.

Now let's look at correct translations for all these verses in the Book of Hebrews. We should keep in mind that these translations are likely to be somewhat clumsy, simply because Paul used the words "katapauo" and "katapausis" to very succinctly identify a concept that is foreign to our religious



terminology. Paul did the same thing in coining the word "sabbatismos", identifying something that normally requires several phrases to identify with precision. And Paul did the same thing again (succinctly capturing a major thought) by the simple switch from the word "apistia" to the word "apeitheia".

Any concept that is foreign to English language religious terminology will inevitably sound somewhat awkward in translation into English. The translators faced the same problem, and using the word "rest" made for easy-to-read text, even if it did not convey the correct meaning. The word "rest" falls easily into the flow of the text, where a presentation of the correct meaning of the text is likely to be cumbersome and awkward in English.

I mention these things because my intention is to convey the correct meaning, and literary aesthetics have to take a backseat in this process.

### **CORRECT TRANSLATIONS FOR THE KEY VERSES**

Below are correct translations for all these verses. Simply replacing the word "rest" with the word "cessation" creates a very awkward-sounding text. So in the interests of clarity I have expanded the text to convey the intended meanings. We might call this "the corrected amplified text" for these specific verses.

#### Hebrews 3:11

"So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into MY PLACE DEDICATED TO THE CESSATION OF REBELLION AND PROVOCATION (katapausis), the promised land."

#### Hebrews 3:18

"And to whom swear he that they should not enter into HIS PLACE OF CESSATION OF ALL REBELLION (katapausis), but to them that believed not?"

#### Hebrews 4:1

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into HIS STATE OF CESSATION OF ALL HUMAN ENDEAVORS (katapausis), the Family of God, any of you should seem to come short of it."

#### Hebrews 4:3

"For we which have believed do enter into A STATE OF CESSATION FROM ALL FORMS OF WRONG CONDUCT (katapausis), as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into MY PLACE DEDICATED TO THE CESSATION OF REBELLION AND PROVOCATION (katapausis): although the works were finished from the foundation of the world."

#### Hebrews 4:4

"For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God DID CEASE (katapauo) the seventh day from all his works."

#### Hebrews 4:5

And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into MY PLACE OF CESSATION OF ALL REBELLION (katapausis)."

#### Hebrews 4:6

"Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of DISOBEDIENCE (apeitheia)."

#### Hebrews 4:8

"For if JOSHUA had given them THE CONDITION OF CESSATION FROM REBELLION (katapauo), then would he not afterward have spoken of another day."

#### Hebrews 4:9

"There remaineth therefore A MILLENNIAL PERIOD OF CESSATION FROM REBELLION (sabbatismos) to the people of God."

#### Hebrews 4:10

"For he that is entered into HIS CESSATION (katapausis), he also HATH CEASED (katapauo) from his own works, as God *did* from his."

#### Hebrews 4:11

"Let us labour therefore to enter into that PERIOD OF CESSATION OF HUMAN REBELLION (katapausis), lest any man fall after the same example of DISOBEDIENCE (apeitheia)."

That covers the verses in Hebrews which contain the word "rest" in the KJV. Yes, in some cases the translation is cumbersome. But keep in mind that the universal mistranslation as "rest" has prejudiced the terminology available to us to express the concept Paul is actually explaining in these verses.

### **THE BIGGER PICTURE**

You who are a member of God's Church should be able to understand Paul's focus on God requiring us to "cease from all wrong forms of conduct". But without the help of God's Spirit available to guide them, we cannot really expect scholars and commentators to understand this distinction in emphasis.

Without being able to grasp what Paul is really speaking about in this section in Hebrews, it is virtually impossible for language "experts" to know the correct meaning of "katapauo" and "katapausis" in the Book of Hebrews. It follows that assigning the meaning "rest" to these two Greek words in this Hebrews context is the best they could come up with. A prerequisite for a correct translation from one language to another is a correct understanding of what the text in the first language actually means. And none of the translators had a correct understanding of what Paul is speaking about in this section of his letter. So none of them were capable of providing a correct translation.

There is one other thing we should consider.

Earlier I mentioned the views regarding "rest" that are found in various religions (beatific vision, sitting on a cloud with a harp, nirvana, etc.). The ultimate goal in many religions is peace, doing nothing for all

future eternity, restful bliss, even ceasing to exist as an individual, etc. This is in stark contrast to the exciting, never-ending range of activities that await all those who eventually become a part of the Family of God. Blissfully doing nothing, and happiness based on being inactive without producing, achieving and accomplishing anything for future eternity is the last thing that God would ever contemplate doing, because that would be an absolutely MISERABLE existence.

It is SATAN who craves "blissful inactivity". It is Satan who, more than anything else, craves rest!

In Matthew 12:43 Jesus Christ said:

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking REST (ANAPAUSIS), and findeth none."

It is Satan and the demons that seek rest and peaceful inactivity. But "rest" will never, never be available to them! Their future is one of endless mental torment. As Revelation 20:10 tells us:

"And THE DEVIL that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and SHALL BE TORMENTED DAY AND NIGHT FOR EVER AND EVER."

As long as they exist, those who worship Satan and his system will likewise never have real rest. Notice Revelation 14:11.

"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have NO REST (ANAPAUSIS) day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

It is SATAN who craves "nirvana" (i.e. ceasing to exist as an individual) and the peaceful completely inactive state of the "beatific vision". And so it should be no surprise that the ultimate goal of salvation in the religions that are controlled by "the god of this age" basically represent the goal that Satan himself would like to achieve, but which it is impossible for him to attain. It is Satan who craves "anapausis". And it is Satan who inspired translators to translate "katapauo" and "katapausis" in the Book of Hebrews with the word "rest".

The future which God has planned for us involves peace, certainly, but without any connotation of "rest". The Family of God will always be active, but it will exist in a state of permanent peace. "Rest" in the form of "not doing anything" is confined to our physical, mortal lives. In the immortal state there is no place for "doing nothing".

Using the word "rest" to refer to the future that awaits all those who attain to salvation is extremely misleading. And the mistranslations in Hebrews 3-4 are a major component in that deception.

Frank W. Nelte