

Yeshua's Rest Is Superior To That of Moshe and Y'Hoshua ~ Part 3a Messianic Jews 4:1-10 Letter to the Messianic Jews

In my last post, I continued to explore that concept of the necessity of persevering faith to enter **Yeshua's** rest contained in **Messianic Jews 3:12-19**. In this post, I start the conclusion of this topic of rest with a warning against missing **Yeshua's** rest in **Messianic Jews 4:1-10**. [I originally wanted to go through verse 13, but there was just too much material to cover.]

A Warning Against Missing Yeshua's Rest ~ Part 1

¹ Therefore, let us be terrified of the possibility that, even though the promise of entering His rest remains, any one of you might be judged to have fallen short of it; ² for Good News has also been proclaimed to us, just as it was to them. But the message they heard didn't do them any good, because those who heard it did not combine it with trust.¹ ³ For it is we who have trusted who enter the rest. It is just as He said, "And in my anger, I swore that they would not enter my rest." He swore this even though his works have been in existence since the founding of the universe. ⁴ For there is a place where it is said, concerning the seventh day, "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works."⁵ And once more, our present text says, "They will not enter My rest."⁶ Therefore, since it still remains for some to enter it, and those who received the Good News earlier did not enter, ⁷ He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David, so long afterwards, in the text already given, "Today, if you hear God's voice, don't harden your hearts."⁸ For if Y'hoshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later of another "day."⁹ So there remains a Shabbat-keeping for God's people. ¹⁰ For the one who has entered God's rest has also rested from his own works, as God did from his. ~ Hebrews 4:1-10 (CJB)

In a problematic passage like this, it is better to try to grasp the broad lines of the thought before we look at any of the details. According to Barclay, the writer is using the word **rest** in three different senses.

1. He is using it as we would use the peace of God. It is the greatest thing in the world to enter into the peace of God.
2. He is using it, as he used it in Messianic Jews 3:12, to mean The Promised Land to the children of Israel who had wandered so long in the desert the Promised Land was indeed the rest of God.
3. He is using it about the rest of God after the sixth day of creation when all God's work was completed.

This way of using a word in two or three different ways was typical of intellectual, academic thought in the days when the writer of the **Messianic Jews** wrote his letter.

The **Good News** the Israelites heard was **the promise of entering His rest** in the Promised Land; the **Good News** which **has been proclaimed to us** is, of course, that we enter the rest that comes from knowing that our sins are forgiven. The **rest** we are to **enter** is nothing less than the rest which God has been enjoying **since the founding of the universe**, even though he continues working (see Yochanan 5:17).

The seventh day recalled Psalm 95 quoted previously in **Messianic Jews 3:8-11** and explained in the subsequent verses, was sung on **Shabbat** in the Temple and remains part of the **Shabbat** liturgy in the synagogue. Therefore, it is natural for the author to make his point about **rest** by introducing a quotation from another **Shabbat**-related passage, **B'resheet 2:1-3**.

Although the author may be thinking of the **rest** that comes to Believers after they die (Revelation 14:13), it seems more likely that he has in mind Jewish traditions that equate a day with 1000 years and is, therefore,

¹ As a reminder, Stern translates "faith" as "trust."

speaking of the *rest* that comes in the **Messianic Age** or **Millennium**. For example, in Sanhedrin 97a Rav Kattina teaches that a millennium of Shabbat will follow six millennia of ordinary history; the passage draws on Psalm 90:4 and is quoted in 2 Kefa 3:3-9, and see Revelation 20:2-7. ²

The close reasoning in verses 6-8 and the exact use of texts is typically rabbinic; compare **Yeshua's** logic at Matthew 22:31-32. Verse 7 repeats the *today* theme of **Messianic Jews** 3:7, 13, 15.

By leading God's people into the Promised Land, **Y'hoshua bin-Nun** (Joshua the son of Nun) prefigured the **Messiah** whose name he shares; and just as God's people Israel rested in *Eretz-Israel*, so God's **Messianic Community** (Kehilah) rests in Yeshua.

A Shabbat-keeping is used only here in the **Brit Hadashah**. In the Septuagint, the related Greek word *sabbatizein* was coined to translate the Hebrew verb *shabat* when it means *"to observe Shabbat."* The usual translation, *"There remains a Sabbath rest,"* minimizes the observance aspect and makes the role of God's people entirely passive.

Christians often assume that the **Brit Hadashah** does not require God's people to observe *Shabbat* and go on to claim that Sunday has replaced Saturday as the Church's day of worship (see 1 Corinthians 16:2). But this passage, and in particular verse 9, shows that *Shabbat*-observance is expected of Believers. From Colossians 2:16-17, which says that *Shabbat* was a shadow of the things that were to come, but the substance comes from the **Messiah**, we learn that the essence of *Shabbat*-observance for Believers is not following the detailed rules which *halakhah* sets forth concerning what may or may not be done on the seventh day of the week. Instead, as verse 10 explains, the **Shabbat-keeping** expected of God's people consists in resting from one's *own works, as God did from his*; it consists in trusting and being faithful to God.

In my next post, we'll explore **Messianic Jews 4:11-13** to conclude our exploration of this topic.

² Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern.