

I occasionally feel an uneasiness or slight dread as the end of the Sabbath approaches. Over the years, I have learned to truly cherish the weekly Day of Rest. I usually get to sleep a little longer, I can generally take my time doing things instead of the usual rush, I often choose to go for a walk in the forest. It is a time for me to recharge and de-stress after a week of regular life. The English word “rest” has several meanings; as a noun, it can be the remainder or what’s left over (eat the rest of the pie) but we will not talk about that definition at all here. There are three other main categories of use, summarized by “stop,” “support,” and “relax.” For the most part, we can replace the word “rest” with some form of one of these words and the idea will still be communicated. Here is a sample of instances in the Old Testament where the word “rest” is found:

- After God created the heavens and the earth, He rested (stopped.) (Gen 2:1) H7673
- Noah released a dove near the end of the flood that returned because it found no place to rest (support.) (Gen 8:9) H4494
- God went to Sodom to destroy it and Abraham asked them to stay and rest (relax) themselves. (Gen 18:4) H8172
- Every 7th year we are told to not plant crops to give the land a rest (stop.) (Exo23:11) H8505
- We’re told to stop work on the 7th day so that our ox and our donkey may rest (relax.) (Exo23:12) H5117
- After Joshua gave the hill country, Hebron, to Caleb, the land had rest (stop) from war. (Jos14:15) H8252
- When Joab murdered Abner, David declared that the guilt would rest (support) on Joab’s head. (2Sa3:29) H2342
- If you listen to and obey God, you will live in safety and will rest (stop) from the fear of evil (Pro1:33) H7599
- When our work is troublesome and we are stressed out, we are not able to rest (relax) at night. (Ecc2:23) H7901
- Job requests that God stop watching a man work and let him rest (relax.) (Job14:6) H2308
- God says that Israel could have been saved by repentance and rest (stopping) but they were not willing. (Isa30:15) H5183
- We’re told to rest (relax) in God, wait patiently, and do not fret. (Psm37:1) H1826
- When we sin, we have no rest (relaxation) in our bones. (Psm38:3) H7965
- A jealous husband’s rage will not rest (stop) even if you bribe him. (Prov6:35) H14
- God promises that a desolate land will again have shepherds giving their sheep a place to rest (relax.) (Jer33:12) H7257
- God says to stand by, see, and ask for the ancient, good ways and find rest (relaxation) for your souls. (Jer6:16) H4771
- God assures Israel that they will find rest (relaxation) in the wilderness after they survived a battle. (Jer31:2) H7280
- After the city was destroyed, the people of Jerusalem were encouraged to not rest (stop) in their sorrow. (Lam2:18) H6314
- Nebuchadnezzar was at rest (relaxation) in his house before he had some disturbing dreams. (Dan4:4) H7954
- When God restores Israel, He will rejoice with singing and rest (support & relax?) in His love. (Zep3:17) H2790

I’ve paraphrased 20 scriptures here that have the word rest in at least one common English translation. Each of these instances were translated as rest from a unique word in ancient Hebrew. The Strong’s number for the Hebrew word follows the scriptural reference so you can do your own word study if you want. Why do you think there are so many words for rest in the ancient Hebrew? The New Testament also has several Greek words that end up as simply “rest” in our modern translations. This may be interesting, and with some in-depth understanding, it may color the way we view some scriptures, but the meaning will largely remain the same.

Hebrew references to the Day of Rest are generally translated from words that fall under the “stop” category mentioned above. (I.e. Stop working) Most of the instances of the day of rest come from the family of words that are similar to the word “sabbath.” (shabbâthôn, shabbâth, shebeth, shabbethay...) and these all have in common “to cease” or stop. There is good reason that the Day of Rest also fits with the “relax” category. (I.e. sleeping late) Many instances of “rest” around the Sabbath come from the Hebrew word “nûach,” or “nôach” which means quiet or peaceful resting. **The name of the guy who built the arc and filled it with animals is this same word.** We know him as Noah, but in English, his name is “Quiet Rest.” But what about the “support” category? Maybe not a physical support, like a table or a shelf, but there are plenty of medical studies concluding that a regular day of rest is a great way to support strong physical and mental health.

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Because of this comprehensive meaning of "rest" with respect to the Sabbath, I like to see it as **the ultimate rest**. It covers all the bases. I started this letter explaining some of my feelings toward the Sabbath, the day of rest. The day is an amazing gift from God, and I know there is no justification to associate any dread or anxiety with it. My complaint is that it ends! Along with knowing that comes the occasional dread I mentioned above. As the sun gets lower in the sky, signaling the end of rest, the planning and scheduling and stress start building again. Thankfully, this does not happen to me every week. But the end of rest and the feeling of dread that comes with it is not uncommon. The last day of vacation or the final minutes of your lunch break at work can produce similar feelings. You've likely heard the phrase "**all good things must come to an end.**" Rest is arguably a "good thing" and we see how we often dread that it ends. But wait!

God called the light day, and the darkness night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

There was evening and there was morning, a third day.

There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis chapter 1, verses 5,8,13,19,23,31)

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. (Gen 2:1-3)

Each of the six days of work end, but on the seventh day, the work was completed and there was Rest. In this passage, there is no end to the rest. The 7th day of creation doesn't end. That is the eternal rest that we have been promised. There is nothing to dread!

God created the Garden of Eden and rested with his creation there, with Adam and Eve. The garden was intended to be our permanent [Refuge](#). We were in God's rest until Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge and initiated sin. Then we were banished from God's perpetual rest. But **we were invited to enter into it** again. For the ancient Israelites, God gave the Promised Land where there were "great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant..." (Deu 6:10-11) And then again, we are invited into His perpetual rest, both in this life and for eternity. This is explored in Hebrews chapter 4. Through our faith, belief, and obedience, we can claim the promise of rest here on earth and with God in His Rest. Here are some relevant words of Messiah:

"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." (John 14:20-21)

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)

Peace to you and glory to God!

-Nate

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