



# CHRISTADELPHIAN ISOLATION LEAGUE

## EXHORTATION

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020

### SECTION LEADER:

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Readings: Joshua 17, Isaiah 23, Hebrews 3-5

## Let Us Labour Therefore to Enter Into That Rest

The writer to the Hebrews, who many scholars believe to be the apostle Paul, exhorts us in today's reading from **Hebrews 4:11** (AV): *"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."*

What is "that rest"? The idea behind the word in Greek is to settle down, abode, cease. To be able to settle down, abode or cease you need to first be active and in motion. After the six days of creation we read in **Genesis 2:2-3**: *"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."*

As immortal beings, the angels who did God's bidding in creation did not need to rest because they were tired. Jesus tells us in **Mark 2:27**: *"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. A day of rest each week was given, why? Hebrews 4:10: "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."*

It is this ceasing "from our own works" that is the key reason God gave the sabbath day. The people were not to be idle and take a break from working to please themselves, but to use the opportunity to focus on spiritual things. A time to stop, reflect, think and study. This did not mean that for the other six days they could do what they wanted and just remember God once a week. The reading of God's word and keeping his commandments were to be done every day. **Deuteronomy 6:2, 6-9**:

*"That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."*

The reading and study of God's word was to impact every aspect of their lives. This in itself would take effort. In **Hebrews 4:11** we are told to: *"labour therefore to enter into that rest."* The Greek word for labour according to Strong's concordance is SPOUDAZO which has the idea of 'to use speed, to make effort, be prompt or earnest, be diligent or study'. It is the same word used in **2 Timothy 2:15**: *"Study (spoudazo) to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* Can this be said of us? Are we making an effort and being diligent in our studies of God's word?

We live in an evil world where every man does that which is right in his own eyes, a world which, on the whole does not believe or acknowledge that there is a creator. People are busy doing their own thing, living their lives as they see fit, making plans, getting wealth just like they were in the days of Noah; **Matthew 24:37-38**: *"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage."* Notice that there is no mention of God in their lives. There is nothing wrong with eating, drinking or marrying but it was to the exclusion of God.

In **Hebrews 4:11** we are told why we need to labour to enter into the "rest" of God: *"lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."* In **Hebrews 3:7-11** we get the context to this: *"Wherefore (as the Holy Spirit saith, to day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So*

*I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.)” In **1 Corinthians 10:11** we are told: “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition.”*

Over the past few weeks in our first reading for the day we have been journeying with the children of Israel led by Moses and then Joshua. Before they were able to enter into the Promised Land they first had to wander through the wilderness, cross the river Jordan, and then fight to rid the land of its existing inhabitants and their wicked ways. Only then could the land and its people be ‘at rest’. In today’s reading the parallels between the wilderness wanderings and our own journey towards ‘that rest’ is expanded. **Hebrews 3:12-19:**

*“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”*

Could this be said of us? Do we appear to be walking faithfully to the Kingdom but in our hearts doubt we will get there? Do we grumble and murmur in the way like Israel? Do we harden our hearts? Do we do our duties for the ecclesia but do it grudgingly? We can fool our brethren and sisters but we can’t fool God. **Hebrews 4:12-13:**

*“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”*

As we take of the bread and the wine today, let us stop, pause, consider, and reflect on what God can see in our hearts. Let Him see that we are indeed labouring to entering into that rest. As we read in **1 Corinthians 11:27-30:**

*“Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”*

Notice the reason for being spiritually weak, sickly and asleep is a lack of self-examination and discernment of the “Lord’s body”. We need to read the word of God and think on it daily. To reflect, to study what is written of the faithful of old. To look to the example of the Lord Jesus Christ and how his mind was full of the scriptures so he was able to answer all his critics. Peter exhorts us in **1 Peter 2:21-24:**

*“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”*

Whatever the challenges you face this week, whatever trial of your faith, whatever weakness of the mind or body, take courage that soon there will be that time of everlasting peace and rest from the things of man. Our Lord will return. Let him find us active and working to be like him so that we might find some small place in that glorious kingdom through his mercy.

**Hebrews 4:14-16:** *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*