
Words of Truth

Hebrews 4:3-5

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The text we are looking at in this study is this: *“For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest”* (Hebrews 4:3-5). The beginning of the text we are looking at here takes us back to the previous chapter in a statement that is reworded here (Hebrews 3:11-14). Under the New Covenant, those which have believed are those justified by grace being made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7-8). Since we have addressed, in previous studies, the beginning of this statement; we are going to cover the information that is new in these passages.

Let’s start with examining what is meant by: “although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” The Greek word translated “finished” [γίνομαι] is very broad. The definition of that term is: *“To cause to be (“gen”-erate), i.e. (reflexively) to become (come into being), used with great latitude (literal, figurative, intensive, etc.): — arise, be assembled, be(-come, -fall, -have self), be brought (to pass), (be) come (to pass), continue, be divided, draw, be ended, fall, be finished, follow, be found, be fulfilled, + God forbid, grow, happen, have, be kept, be made, be married, be ordained to be, partake, pass, be performed, be published, require, seem, be showed, x soon as it was, sound, be taken, be turned, use, wax, will, would, be wrought. To become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be, receive being; to become, i.e. to come to pass, happen; of events; to arise, appear in history, come upon the stage; of men appearing in public to be made, finished; of miracles, to be performed, wrought to become, be made”* (Strong’s # 1096).

Here it is, plain and simple. “The works” were as good and done since the foundation of the world. By the seventh day, when God rested (Genesis 1:31-2:3), what God had foreordained was as good as done. What we need to center in on is what “the works” means. What was as good as done at the foundation of the world?

Notice these Scriptures wherein we find our answers: *“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the*

everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith... Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ... Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord... Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (Romans 16:25-26, Ephesians 1:3-12, Ephesians 3:8-11, and I Peter 1:18-20).

What you have just read is that God’s plan for salvation, through Jesus, was in place at at the beginning. The plan existed before the foundation of the world. When the problem in Antioch was being addressed in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-41), this statement was made: “*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*” (Acts 15:18). The Lord declares the future and His counsel stands (Isaiah 46:10). If God has purposed something and has spoken it, He will do it (Isaiah 46:11). When God rested He had already determined that He would create a rest for His people too.

There is no “rest” to come for faithful saints past, present, or future without what Jesus did in bringing salvation into this world (Romans 5:6-21). This text is leading into the fact that the rest is still ahead for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9). Then, the tie to Christ will be made going forward from there (Hebrews 4:14-5:10). The hope they and we have through Christ Jesus is not just in Jesus. Our hope is in the rest, the resurrection, that is promised in Christ (John 5:28-29, John 11:25, I Corinthians 15:1-58, and I Peter 1:3-12). First century Jewish Christians needed to understand that the rest wasn’t in the past, it was still to come through Christ. Think about how that hope goes back to before the world began (Titus 1:1-3).