

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

We need frequent rest when we work. Our body gets tired and our mind clogs up. We take breaks for snack or a drink. We stretch or walk outside to catch some fresh air. We look forward to evening and weekend leisure activities. Students are off school in the summer and winter. People ponder on retirement when they approach a certain age. Rest for any duration rejuvenates us. But we will get exhausted again. At the end of a vacation, realities of laundry, cooking, school and work set in. We hate to go home! We long for a complete rest when we can truly be worry free. God has our need in mind. In our passage today, God tells us that He has planned a superior rest for His people. There will be a finish-line for His faithful followers. Our earthly journey leads to that final stop. God's rewards is far better than our success in this life. Our suffering cannot be compared to the joy and glory we will receive. But we can only get there if we rely on God. As such, we must hold onto our faith because the best has yet to come.

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 寧靜的歸宿 Peaceful Land

God has prepared a peaceful land for His children. The author uses the term "rest" to describe it. He uses God's creation and entry into Canaan to illustrate his points. God created everything in six days. Then He rested on the seventh day. Of course, God will not feel tired like we do. There are a few meanings in His rest. First, it denotes a completion. After God had finished creating the whole universe, no more modification was needed. God looked at all He did and He said everything was "very good." Second, God set a pattern for the Israelites to follow. The Fourth Commandment is about observing the Sabbath. When God declared this Commandment, He recalled His creation and rest. From then on, the Israelites rested on the seventh day of the week. They did not go fishing or shopping on the Sabbath. Rather, it is a day to worship God. Even today, you can see traditional Jews walk to and from their synagogue on Saturday because they are not supposed to drive. God's command is also a way to show compassion. Owners allowed workers and animals to have a break. There is even a Sabbath year every seven years. God asked His people to cancel debts from their peers and set Israelite slaves free in that year. They were not allowed to grow crops either. God is a great ecologist. He is mindful that the field needs rest to replenish its nutrients! God promised that He would supply three years' worth of harvest on the sixth year so that people did not have to worry about food. God taught His people to show grace to others because He was gracious to them first. We mentioned last week that Canaan was a resting place God reserved for the Israelites. God promised to provide for their needs and protect them. Both Canaan and the Sabbath are just temporary rest. Those are metaphors to foretell a superior rest God prepared for His people. The author says in verse 8-9: **8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. 9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God.** The author creates the word "Sabbath-rest" to describe this rest. The word means rest-rest. It is like double the volume of product with the same price you pay, or a double bonus at the end of the year. It is way better! Canaan was a transient rest for this life. People still had to labor for food and suffer from diseases and death. But God had prepared a

peaceful land for His people. It is an eternal rest like God's rest from creation and Jesus' rest on the right side of the Father. In later chapters, the author depicts this rest as "the city with foundations" that God builds (11:10), "a better country" in heaven (11:16), "the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God" (12:22) and "a kingdom that cannot be shaken" (12:28). It is an everlasting home God prepared. It will never deteriorate or depreciate. The New Testament calls that place heaven. Jesus gives His disciples a preview of heaven in John 14:2-3 – "2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." Jesus told them that He would be leaving. But they should not feel sad because Jesus will return to welcome them. What a beautiful promise! Heaven is beautiful not only because it is a place without death, mourning, crying or pain. Or it is because we will recover our youth, and we will not worry about gray hair, wrinkles and weight. Heaven is a place of superior rest because there will be no more separation. All the believers will be together. But most importantly, we will be in God's presence forever. But eternal rest does not mean idling. It will be a torture if you have endless time to surf the internet, play computer games, shop at stores or chat with friends! The Bible tells us that we will worship God day and night. Some people get bored with an hour of worship in a church. They get tired of singing the same lame songs or hearing the same drowsy sermons. It is hard for our finite mind to imagine how an unending worship will be like. For sure the worship in heaven is out of this world! Besides worship, Jesus said in His parables that God will assign us work in eternity. We will stay creative and productive but will not get tired. Everything will be better in the superior rest.

## 2. 悲慘的結局 Painful End

God had prepared a peaceful land for His people. Sadly, the wilderness generation came to a painful end. Those Israelites perished in the desert. The author builds on his arguments from the previous chapter. His ancestors did not only fail to reach Canaan. They failed to enter the superior rest God had promised. The author quotes the same line from Psalm 95 in verses 3 and 5. God stated clearly that those disobedient people would never enter into His rest. The author reiterates their problems of hardened hearts, disobedience and rebellion. A stubborn mind will turn out in violation of rules. We all inherit that defiance from Adam. We know what is right and permissible. But we often choose to do the contrary. We will end up in serious consequence if not because of God's grace and mercy. But those Israelites insisted on rejecting God. God told Moses that they tested Him ten times despite all the miracles they saw. They grumbled when they had no water and food. They reacted in fear when they saw enemies. God showed much patience to them. Eventually, God told them: "That's it. No more grace!" Verse 2 of this chapter summarizes: **For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.** They did not respond with faith toward the faithful God. The second half of the verse can also be understood as: "they did not share in the faith of those who obeyed." At that time, only Joshua and Caleb had faith that God would help them defeat the Canaanites. But the majority of the people were faithless. The readers of this letter received the same message as their ancestors. The word "gospel" here can mean good news. Both groups of people knew the same promise: believe in God and they will enter His rest. God's promise still stands today despite people's rejection. We said the last time that just like in any church, there were believers and seekers among the recipients of this letter. To the non-believers, the message was a warning. The author quotes

from Psalm 95 again in verse 7 to urge them: ... **“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”** The door to God’s eternal rest is still open. Do not be stubborn like your ancestors. Put your trust in God’s promise. The same invitation is given to seeker friends of any generation. God always welcomes sinners to come home. Do not let your doubts harden your heart to become disbelief. Stay objective and keep an open mind. Jesus assured us that those who seek Him will find Him. But do not delay. Today is the day of salvation. Confess your sins to the Lord and accept His salvation grace by faith. As for the believers, the message was a reminder and an encouragement. They must enter God’s rest by faith. The readers of this letter must be prepared to persevere through hardships too. The ultimate prize was well-worth the cost. God never guarantees us that following Him will be easy. Challenges do not invalidate God’s promise. God assured us that He will never leave us nor forsake us. Very often, we are the ones who abandon God when difficulties arise. Do not fear! God proves that He is always faithful. The Bible is a collection of numerous testimonies. That is why the book is called the Old and New Testaments. The same God who worked in people’s lives thousands of years ago is still working in us. God has a spotless track-record. He will continue to be faithful until we enter into His rest. He wants us to step out in faith. The Israelites must defeat one enemy before they could arrive at the next stop. We will reach the next higher ground when we overcome the current crisis. Our faith will grow in the process. Therefore, do not let problems define us. But let problems refine our faith.

### 3. 大能的話語 Powerful Word

God promised to take His children into a peaceful land. However, the wilderness generation concluded in a painful end. In verse 12-13, the author introduces a new topic about God’s powerful word. How does that connect to the preceding context? These two verses actually serve as an initial conclusion for his discussion beginning from chapter 1. God’s Word proved to be powerful in various ways. God spoke to His prophets in the Old Testament, Moses being a key messenger. God sent Jesus, who is also called the “Word.” God also conveyed His message through angels. He called everything into existence through His voice. God remains faithful in His promises. People’s acceptance or rejection of His Word will result in contrasting consequences. The fate of the Old Testament Israelites is a prime example. No one can stay neutral to His Word. God validates His Word in the Bible, in our world and in our lives. God’s Word is true not believe you believe in it. It is true whether or not you believe it. The earth is always round in shape before people proved it! Likewise, skeptics will not make God disappear even when they question His existence. God knows our hearts. His Word reveals our deepest intents. Verse 12 says: **For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.** God’s Word is more powerful than any weapon. “Soul and spirit” are not two separate entities. By the same token, “joints and marrow” are connected, and “thoughts and attitudes” are related. The point is that God’s Word can divide the indivisible. It goes into our hearts and examines our feelings and motives. That is why God’s Word is living and active. The Bible is a dynamic information that can change lives. You can argue with a non-believer until both of your blood pressure keeps rising. At the end, no one can convince the other person. A wiser suggestion is to ask the seeker friend to read the Bible, for example one of the gospels. Let the Holy Spirit speak to the person through the Scripture. Any believer can share the same experience. God speaks to our hearts through the words. He convicts us of our sins. We are just like the rebellious people in the stories. But God gives us a way to return to Him. Jesus is the

only means to receive salvation grace. Do you realize that the Bible never needs any revision? Of course, Bible scholars keep polishing existing translations to bring them as close to the original texts as possible. However, there will be no addition or reduction to the sixty-six books of the Bible. God's Word is a timeless truth. It is applicable to us regardless of our background. God continues to speak to us even after we became Christians. He uses the same passage to speak to you in different ways. You grow in age and maturity. Your life circumstances keep changing. The problems you face five years ago can also be very different than five years from now. However, God's Word gives you new insight to fulfill your particular needs. Therefore, we should never stop reading or stop learning from the Bible. Read it every day, and take advantage of our Friday and Sunday meetings. Someone said it right: you are either a teacher or a student of God's Word. The Lord demands a response from us because His Word is powerful. Verse 13 says: **Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.** God's Word reveals our thoughts and motives. The Lord will use His standard to examine our lives. His holiness and righteousness make us realize that we fall short of His requirements. What follows should be confession and a determination to follow His instructions. God's evaluation will come to us like mid-term tests and a final exam. Every time we finish reading the Bible, we must ask how we should apply those truths in our life. There may be sins to avoid and virtues to pursue. In eternity, God will evaluate our faithfulness. He will check how much we trust Him and how much we love Him.

## 結論 CONCLUSION

We must hold onto our faith because the best has yet to come. The superior rest of heaven is a comfort especially to the suffering Christians. They know that the hardships of this life are only temporary. They must persevere before they arrive at God's eternal rest. The wait is worthy. There is a story about a senior member of a church. Let us just call her Laura. She was faithful to the Lord. People could feel her faith, hope and love when got close to her. One day, Laura asked Pastor Jim to come to her home. She said that her doctor found a tumor on her body. She had about six months to live. Jim felt sorry for the bad news. Laura responded: "Don't be. God has been good to me my whole life. I'm ready to go whenever the Lord calls me home." They spent the rest of the time talking about preparations for the funeral. Laura mentioned some hymns and Bible passages that meant so much to her. "One last thing," she added: "I want to hold my Bible in one hand and hold a fork in another hand." She explained that a beautiful memory she had about church life was the food. Sometimes when a server came to collect her plate, he would ask Laura to keep her fork. She knew some nice dessert would be next. The best was yet to come! That was the passage Laura wanted people to get when they passed by her casket. No matter what we may go through in this life. Persevere! The best has yet to come.

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

我們工作時需要經常休息。我們的身體會累，我們的腦筋也會不靈。我們休息時可能會吃點零食或喝點東西。我們會舒展一下或走到外面呼吸新鮮空氣。我們期待晚上和周末的休閒活動。學生在夏季和冬季會休假。人靠近一定年齡時會考慮退休。休息能讓我們恢復體力。但渡假結束時，我們想到洗衣服、做飯、上班便不想回家！我們沒多久又會覺得累。我們多渴望可以無憂無慮地完全休息。神知道我們的需要。在我們今天的經文中，神告訴我們，祂為子民預備了一個超越的安息。那是祂的忠心追隨者的終點站。神的獎賞比我們今生的成就要好太多。世上的苦難無法與天上的喜樂和榮耀相比。但唯有依靠神，我們才能到達那裡。因此，我們必須堅持我們的信心，因為最好的日子還沒有來到。

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 寧靜的歸宿 Peaceful Land

神為祂的兒女預備了一個寧靜的歸宿。作者用「安息」這個字來形容它。他用神的創造和進入迦南作為說明。神在六天內創造了一切，然後祂在第七天休息。當然，神不會像我們一樣感到疲勞。祂的安息有幾個含義。首先，它表示完工。神創造了整個宇宙之後，就不需要再修改了。神看著祂所造的一切，說所有都「甚好」。其次，神為以色列人建立了一個模式。十誡的第四誡是關於遵守安息日的。當神宣布這條誡命時，祂回顧祂的創造和休息。從此，以色列人在每週的第七天休息。他們不會在安息日去釣魚或逛街。他們把那一天用來敬拜神。就算在今天，你也可以看到傳統的猶太人在禮拜六步行往返他們的會堂，因為他們在那天不可以開車。神的命令也是一種表達恩慈的方式。主人允許工人和動物休息。甚至每七年有一個安息年。在那一年，神要求祂的子民免除同胞的債務，並釋放做奴隸的以色列人。那一年他們也不允許種田。神是一位偉大的生態學家，祂知道田地需要休息來補充養份！神應許祂會在第六年供應三年的收成，使人不用擔心糧食。神教導祂的子民向他人施恩，因為祂首先恩待他們。上週我們提到迦南是神為以色列人預備的安息之地。神應許在那裡供應他們的需要並保護他們。迦南和安息日都只是暫時的休息。這些類比預告神為祂的子民準備了超越的安息。作者在第 8-9 節中說：**8 若是約書亞已叫他們享了安息，後來神就不再提別的日子了。9 這樣看來，必另有一安息日的安息為神的子民存留。**作者創造了「安息日的安息」這個字來形容那個休息。這個字的意思是雙重的休息。這就像你付同樣的金錢買到一倍的产品，或者在年底得到雙倍的獎金。真是好得無比！迦南是今生短暫的安息。人們仍然需要辛勞種植，並受

到疾病和死亡的威脅。但神為祂的子民預備了一個寧靜的歸宿。那是一個永恆的安息，就像神完成創造後的安息和耶穌在天父的右邊安息一樣。在後面的經文中，作者將這個安息描述為神建造「有根基的城」（11:10），天上「更美的家鄉」（11:16），「天上的耶路撒冷，永生神的城邑」（12:22）和「不能震動的國」（12:28）。那是神預備永恆的家，它永遠不會變質或貶值。新約稱那個地方為天堂。耶穌在約翰福音 14:2-3 向門徒預告：2「在我父的家裡有許多住處；若是沒有，我就早已告訴你們了。我去原是為你們預備地方去。3 我若去為你們預備了地方，就必再來接你們到我那裡去，我在那裡，叫你們也在那裡。」耶穌告訴門徒祂快要離開。但他們不應該感到難過，因為耶穌會回來迎接他們。那是多麼美好的應許！天堂之所以很棒，不僅因為它是一個沒有死亡、悲哀、哭號或疼痛的地方。或者是因為我們會返老還童，不再擔心白頭髮、皺紋和體重。天堂是一個安息的地方，因為不再有分離。所有的信徒都會在一起。但最重要的是，我們將永遠與神同在。但永恆的安息並不等於無所事事。如果你有無限的時間上網、玩電腦遊戲、去購物或與朋友聊天，那將是一種折磨！聖經告訴我們，我們將會晝夜敬拜神。有些人覺得教會一個多小時的崇拜已經受不了。他們厭倦唱同樣的詩歌或聽同樣昏昏欲睡的講道。我們有限的頭腦很難想像無休止的敬拜會是怎樣的。天上的敬拜肯定比世上的聚會好太多！除了敬拜，耶穌在祂的比喻中說，神會在永恆裡指派我們工作。我們將保持創造力和生產力，但不會覺得累。在超越的安息中，一切都會更加美好。

## 2. 悲慘的結局 Painful End

神為祂的子民預備了一個寧靜的歸宿。很可惜，曠野那一代的以色列人得到一個悲慘的結局。他們在沙漠中喪命。作者延續前一章的論點。他的祖先不僅沒有到達迦南，他們也無法進入神所應許超越的安息。作者在第 3 和第 5 節引用了詩篇 95 中的同一句話。神清楚地表明，那些不順服的人斷不可進入祂的安息。作者重申他們心裡剛硬、不順服和悖逆。頑梗的心會表現在行為上。我們都從亞當那裡繼承了這種反叛。我們知道什麼是正確和允許的，但我們經常選擇做相反的事情。如果不是神的恩典和憐憫，我們可能會遭遇到嚴重的後果。但是那些以色列人堅持拒絕神。神告訴摩西，儘管他們看到了不少的神蹟，但他們還是十次試探神。當他們沒有水和食物時，他們便發怨言。當他們看到敵人時，他們便害怕。神總是表現出極大的忍耐。最終，神告訴他們：「夠了。再沒有恩典了！」這一章的第 2 節總結：因為有福音傳給我們，像傳給他們一樣；只是所聽見的道與他們無益，因為他們沒有信心與所聽見的道調和。他們沒有用信心回應信實的神。這節經文的後半部分也可以理解為：「他們不與順服的人認同。」那時，只有約書亞和迦勒相信神會幫助他們征服迦南人。但大多數人都不相信。這封信的讀者收到了同樣的信息。這裡「福音」這個字可以表示好消息。兩群人都知道同一個應許：相信神，他們就會進入祂的安息。儘管人們拒絕，神的應許今天仍然有效。上次我們說過，就像在任何教會一樣，這封信的讀者中有信徒和非信徒。對於非信徒來說，這個信息是一個警告。作者在

第 7 節再次引用詩篇 95 篇來敦促他們：…「你們今日若聽他的話，就不可硬着心。」通往神永遠安息的大門仍然敞開。不要像你們的祖先那樣頑固，要相信神的應許。任何年代的非信徒都收到同樣的邀請。神總是歡迎罪人回家。不要讓你的懷疑變成不相信，要保持客觀和開放的心態。耶穌向我們保證，那些尋找祂的人會尋見祂。但不要拖延，今天就是得救的日子。向主認罪，憑信心接受祂的救恩。對於信徒來說，這篇信息是提醒和鼓勵。他們必須憑信心進入神的安息。這封信的讀者也必須準備好忍受苦難。最終的獎賞是值得他們的堅持。神從不保證跟隨祂是容易的路。挑戰不會消除神的應許。神向我們保證，祂永遠不會撇下我們，也不會丟棄我們。很多時候，當困難出現時，是我們背棄神。不要懼怕！神證明祂總是信實的。聖經收集了無數的見證。幾千年前在人的生命中工作的神今天仍然在我們身上工作。神有輝煌的記錄。祂會繼續保持信實，直到我們進入祂的安息。祂要我們憑信心走出去。以色列人必須打敗一個敵人才能到達下一站。當我們克服當前的危機時，我們將到達下一個更高的地方。我們的信心會在這個過程中成長。因此，不要讓問題阻礙我們。讓問題磨煉我們的信心。

### 3. 大能的話語 Powerful Word

神應許要帶祂的兒女進入寧靜的歸宿。然而，曠野那一代人卻遇到悲慘的結局。在第 12-13 節，作者引入一個新的主題，關於神大能的話語。這與上文有何連繫？這兩節經文實際上是從第 1 章到目前的初步結論。神的話語透過不同的方式證明是大有能力的。神在舊約中對祂的先知說話，摩西是關鍵的使者。神差遣耶穌，祂被稱為是「道」。神也通過天使傳達祂的信息。神以話語創造世界。神的應許堅定不變。人們接受或拒絕祂的話會導致截然不同的結果。舊約以色列人的結局就是一個很好的例子。沒有人可以對神的話語保持中立。神在聖經、我們的世界和我們的生命中證實了祂的話語。神的話語是真實的，不論你是否相信它。就像在人們確定之前，地球一直都是圓型的！同樣，懷疑論者不會讓神消失，縱然他們懷疑神的存在。神知道我們的心。神的話語揭開我們最深的意念。第 12 節說：神的道是活潑的，是有功效的，比一切兩刃的劍更快，甚至魂與靈，骨節與骨髓，都能刺入、剖開，連心中的思念和主意都能辨明。神的話語比任何武器都更利害。「魂與靈」不是兩個獨立的部份。同樣，「骨關與骨髓」相連，「思念和主意」相關。這裡的重點是神的話語可以分割不可分割的。它進入我們的內心，察看我們的感受和動機。因此神的話語是活的。聖經是可以改變生命的動態信息。你可以和非信徒一直爭論，直到你的血壓不斷上升。最終，沒有人可以說服另一個人。一個更有智慧的做法是建議福音朋友讀聖經，例如讀其中一卷福音書。讓聖靈通過聖經向人說話。任何信徒都有以下的經歷。神藉著聖經對我們的心說話，使我們認罪。我們就像故事中的叛逆的人，但是神給了我們一條路回到祂的身邊。耶穌是獲得救恩的唯一途徑。你有沒有發現聖經從來不需要修訂嗎？當然，聖經學者不斷改進現有的翻譯本，使它們更接近原文。然而，聖經的六十六卷書不會增減。神的話語是永恆的真理。無論我們

的背景如何，它都適用於我們。就算在我們成為基督徒之後，神仍然繼續向我們說話。祂可以用同一段經文以不同的方式對你說話。你的年齡不斷增長，你的生活環境也會改變。五年前你面對的問題可能與五年後不一樣。然而，神的話語能夠給你新的洞察力來滿足你的需要。因此，我們不應該停止讀聖經和學習聖經。鼓勵大家每天讀聖經，並出席週五和主日的聚會。有人說得對：你要不然是聖經老師，或是聖經學生。因為神的話語是大有能力的，祂要求我們有所回應。第 13 節說：**並且被造的沒有一樣在他面前不顯然的；原來萬物在那與我們有關係的主眼前，都是赤露敞開的。**神的話語顯示出我們的想法和動機。主會用祂的標準來檢驗我們的生命。祂的聖潔和公義使我們意識到我們沒有達到祂的要求。我們的回應必須是認罪和決心遵從祂的指示。神的評估就像小考和期末考試一樣。每次讀完聖經，我們都必須問，我們應該如何在生活中應用這些真理。有哪些罪我需要避免？有哪些美德我需要去追求？在永恆中，神會評估我們的對祂的信實。祂會看看我們有多相信祂，有多愛祂。

## 結論 CONCLUSION

我們必須堅持我們的信心，因為最好的日子還沒有來到。天堂這個超越的安息是一種安慰，尤其是對受苦的基督徒。他們知道，今生的苦難是短暫的。他們必須堅持，才能到達神的永恆安息。等待是值得的。有一個關於一位年長的教會成員的故事。我們就叫她羅拉吧。她一生對主忠心。靠近她的人都能感受到她的信心、盼望和愛。有一天，羅拉請詹牧師到她家來。她說醫生在她身上發現了一個腫瘤，估計她剩下大約六個月的生命。詹牧師為這個壞消息感到難過。羅拉回答說：「沒關係。神對我一生都很好。如果祂認為該是時候回家，我就回家吧。」接下來他們討論葬禮的安排。羅拉提到一些她喜歡的詩歌和經文。「還有一件事，」她補充說：「到時我希望一隻手拿著聖經，另一隻手拿著叉子。」她解釋說，她對教會生活的美好回憶之一就是食物。有時，當服務員來收她的盤子時，他會要求羅拉保留她的叉子。她便知道接下來會是一些精美的甜點。最好的還沒有來到！那是羅拉希望人們經過她的遺體時能得到的信息。不管我們今生會經歷什麼事情，我們都必須堅持，因為最好的日子還沒有來到。