

Hebrews 4:3 IF they shall enter into my rest

There are numerous self-appointed Bible critics these days who do not have nor believe in the existence of a complete, inspired and infallible Bible in ANY language (including "the" Hebrew and "the" Greek) and each one has made his own mind his personal authority. The only thing they all have in common is that they all try to pick holes in and find fault with the King James Bible. Such a Bible agnostic is a man who goes by the name of Jovial. Jovial himself does not have a complete and infallible Bible he can give you. He often refers to "the original languages" as being his final authority, but he couldn't show you an inspired, complete and 100 % true "original languages" Bible if his life depended on it. It also appears from his writings that he is at least to some degree caught up in the misguided Hebrew Roots Movement.

In this article I would like to deal with one of the typical objections he has to the accuracy and absolute truth of the King James Bible as found in Hebrews 3 and 4 and the Bible's "quotation" or reference to Psalm 95.

Jovial writes: "I'm addressing the absurdity that is promoted when many KJV Onlyists claim that all the problems with the Hebrew or Greek manuscripts were "fixed" when G-d inspired the KJV to be created, and that the KJV now perfectly preserves His Word, whereas the texts they came from do not.

And it's not just the Gospel, but we find this in a multiple quotation of the Tanakh. For example,

Heb 3:11 "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest" (Heb 3:11 quoting Ps 95:11)

Heb 4:3 "As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest" (Heb 4:3, quoting the same verse)

Ps 95:11 "Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."

Not only does the KJV change the verse when it quotes it, but changes it in 2 different ways. Did G-d inspire the KJV translators to translate this several different ways? The Greek text the KJV translates from in Hebrews is identical in both cases, but the English translation is different.

Ps 95:11 in the KJV says they should not enter (but maybe they'll do it anyway, huh, since you can still do what you shouldn't in English thought?) Heb 3:11 says they won't, not just that they should not. And Heb 4:3 doesn't make good sense, and is a result of an overliteral translation from Hebrew to Greek, and then from Greek to English" (end of Jovial's quote).

The problem here in these verses is NOT the King James Bible. The problem is that Jovial has the spiritual discernment of a cabbage and just doesn't understand the precious "literal" truth of the King James Bible and many others, as we shall soon see. He even admits that the King James Bible is the literal one, but because he has rejected God's Book and made his own mind his authority, its precious truth is hidden from him. Rather than saying the passage "doesn't make good sense", it is the King James Bible that DOES make sense and the other versions that have mistranslated these verses that end up not making sense.

The only point this Bible corrector got right is that the Greek texts are the same in Hebrews 3:11; 4:3 and 5, but they should not be translated in the same way because of the different applications the inspired apostle makes of his "quotes". Apparently Jovial thinks Hebrews 4:3 should be translated as many modern versions like the NKJV, NIV, NASB, ESV and Holman Standard have done.

In the King James Bible we read Hebrews 4:3 as "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."

However in versions like the NKJV, NIV, NASB, ESV, Holman Standard and the modern Catholic Versions we read: "For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER My rest,""although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." (NKJV)

The King James Bible speaks of another rest and the possibility of entering it by correctly translating the literal Greek text as - "IF THEY SHALL ENTER into my rest." These other modern versions like the NIV, NASB, ESV, NKJV, NET and modern Catholic versions simply say "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER into my rest".

The King James Bible reading is the literal one that is found in ALL Greek texts and is the only one that actually makes sense in the context. God has set forth the history of unbelieving Israel in Hebrews chapter 3 and then tells us of ANOTHER rest that He has provided, and this rest is found in Christ and His finished work of redemption for us. Notice how Chapter 4 verse 3 starts. "For we which have believed DO ENTER INTO REST, AS HE SAID". So where did God say that there was another rest and that we could enter into it? Well, it is most definitely implied in Psalm 95 to which he refers in this very passage.

In Psalm 95 we do indeed read of those who provoked the Lord and hardened their hearts and so God swore that they should NOT enter into His rest. This rest was typified by the promised land, to which they were denied an entrance. However in this same Psalm we also are exhorted to "sing unto the rock of our salvation". We are encouraged to "worship and bow down before Him, for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture." And we are told "Today IF ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart" as others did in the past.

Directly implied in this very Psalm itself is the idea that there is another rest into which we may enter.

The King James Bible teaches this truth again in the context of Hebrews 4:1-11. Just read the passage in the King James Bible and you can see that it makes perfect sense. "And in this place again, IF they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that SOME MUST ENTER THEREIN, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day IF ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts...There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that IS ENTERED INTO HIS REST, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to ENTER INTO THAT REST, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." The King James Bible rightly says "IF THEY SHALL ENTER", while the corrupt versions teach a contradictory message in this context immediate by telling us "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER into my rest".

The Greek word used in the verses of Hebrews 3:11 and 4:3 and 5 is the word "ei" and all three verses read "**Εἰ** εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου." This word is almost ALWAYS translated as IF; in fact hundreds of times. The NASB concordance shows that they have translated this word as "IF" 345 times. The NIV concordance shows the word ei translated as "IF" 313 times, 47 times not translated at all, and only once as "no". In the book of Hebrews alone it is ALWAYS translated in the KJB and many other Bible versions as IF except in 3:11 where the context is speaking of those who hardened their hearts, provoked God and knew not the ways of God. In the book of Hebrews alone we have this word ei translated as "IF" in Hebrews 2:2 "For IF the word spoken by angels..."; 4:3 and 5 "IF they shall enter into my rest; 4:8 "For IF Jesus had given them rest..."; 7:11 "IF perfection were by the Levitical priesthood..."; 8:4 "For IF he were on earth..."; 8:7 "For IF that first covenant...;9:13 "For IF the blood of bulls and goats..."; 11:15 "truly, IF they had been mindful..."; 12:7 "IF ye endure chastening...; 12:8 "But IF ye be without chastisement..."; and 12:25 "For IF they escaped not who refused...".

In Hebrews 3:11 and only there is it correctly translated as "They shall NOT enter into my rest." Here the word ei is equal to one of the two usual words for "not" which is mee (**μή**) and is found in 3:18 "And to whom sware he that they should NOT enter into his rest, but to them that believed not." (**μή** εἰσελεύσεσθαι εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ") The only other instance I know of where the word ei is equivalent to "not" is where the other common word for "not" is used. We find this example in the synoptic gospels where Jesus says that a sign shall NOT be given to this generation. In the account in Matthew 16:4 we read "there shall no sign be given" - σημεῖον **οὐ** δοθήσεται" but in the parallel account in Mark 8:12 we read "there shall no sign be given" - "**εἰ** δοθήσεται τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ σημεῖον."

But in Hebrews 4:3 and 5 the King James Bible is absolutely correct when it translates the

literal phrase as it stands in all Greek texts and says "IF they shall enter into my rest" instead of "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST" as the NKJV, NIV, NASB, RSV, ESV, ISV, Holman Standard and all modern day Catholic bible versions have it.

John Calvin also translated Hebrews 4:3 and 5 in Latin as it stands in the King James Bible - "Itaque juravi in ira mea, *si* introibunt in requiem meam" and comments: "He now begins to embellish the passage which he had quoted from David. He has hitherto taken it, as they say, according to the letter, that is, in its literal sense; but he now amplifies and decorates it; and thus he rather alludes to than explains the words of David. This sort of decoration Paul employed in Romans 10:6, in referring to these words of Moses, "Say not, who shall ascend into heaven!" etc. Nor is it indeed anything unsuitable, in accommodating Scripture to a subject in hand, to illustrate by figurative terms what is more simply delivered. However, the sum of the whole is this, that what God threatens in the Psalm as to the loss of his rest, applies also to us, inasmuch as he invites us also at this day to a rest.

The chief difficulty of this passage arises from this, that it is perverted by many. The Apostle had no other thing in view by declaring that there is a rest for us, than to rouse us to desire it, and also to make us to fear, lest we should be shut out of it through unbelief. He however teaches us at the same time, that the rest into which an entrance is now open to us, is far more valuable than that in the land of Canaan." (End of comments by John Calvin) Likewise Matthew Poole comments on Hebrews 4:3 saying: "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 we which have believed do enter into rest": a further reason setting home this counsel, was the certain benefit of our care in believing; for that the community of real Christians, partakers and exercisers of the same precious faith, as Paul himself, 2 Peter 1:1, have the same privilege as believing Caleb and Joshua had, Numbers 14:24,30, to enter into God's rest; initially having peace with God now, and his love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, witnessing their reconciliation, justification, renovation, adoption, so as they rejoice in hope of the glory of God, Romans 5:1,2,5; and are by believing and obedience making out to the attainment of the final and complete rest of God in heaven, of which they are afraid to fall short. "As he said, As I have sworn in my wrath": God himself confirms this by his oath, Chapters 3:11,18; Psalm 95:11. At the same time that he excludeth all unbelievers from entering in, he inclusively and by consequence sweareth that all believers DO and SHALL ENTER IN. (Caps are mine). "If they shall enter into my rest": That rest which David there speaks of was not God's rest on the seventh day from the creation after the finishing of God's works, nor the temporal rest in the land of Canaan which the Jews had, and were past, as these Hebrews might suggest; but another rest to come, either in the

world to come, Chapter 2:5, or in the heavenly rest in glory, which he takes occasion further to explain to them." (End of comments by Matthew Poole)

Not only does the King James Bible correctly read "IF THEY SHALL ENTER INTO MY REST" in Hebrews 4:3 and 5 but so also do the following Bible translations: the Bishops's Bible 1568 - "For we which haue beleued, do enter into his rest, as he sayde: Euen as I haue sworne in my wrath, **if they shal enter into my rest.**", the Geneva Bible 1587, the Douay-Rheims of 1582, the Emphatic Diaglott New Testament, the Concordant Literal Version, Darby, Webster's translation 1833, Young's 'literal' translation, - "So I sware in My anger, If they shall enter into My rest", Whiston's New Testament, the 21st Century King James Version 1994, The Scriptures 1998 by the Institute for Scripture Research, and the Third Millenium Bible 1998.

Among foreign language translations those that correctly read as the King James Bible has it with IF they shall enter into my rest" are the French Martin Bible of 1744 - "**si** jamais ils entrent en mon repos", the Italian Diodati 1649 - "**Se** giammai entrano nel mio riposo", the Interlinear Greek New Testament and Green's Interlinear Greek N.T. 1985 - "ει IF εισελουσονται THEY SHALL ENTER εις INTO την καταπαυσι μου MY REST", the French Darby Bible - "**S'ils** entrent dans mon repos", the German Elberfelder Bible 1871 - "Wenn sie in meine Ruhe eingehen werden!"

The King James Bible is right 100% of the time and most bible versions out there today are not. Thank God that there IS a rest to the people of God. It is found in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Kinsman Redeemer and in His precious words of absolute truth as found in the Book God has honored far above all others, the Authorized King James Holy Bible.

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find REST for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." Jeremiah 6:16

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"If we would destroy the Christian religion, we must first of all destroy man's belief in the Bible." Voltaire - ex French philosopher and *former* atheist.