

Does God Rest?

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God is tired and rests
Exodus 31:17; Jeremiah 15:6

God is never tired and never rests
Isaiah 40:28

In each of the scriptural references above, a different Hebrew word is used to describe God's actions, motives, and feelings. Therefore, none of the above quotations can be considered identical or comparable.

The concept of Almighty God, who is a spirit-being, needing rest in the same manner that a human being does, is foolish. If anything, this might apply to a pagan god because human characteristics are often attributed to them.

And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them (priests of the pagan god Baal) and said, 'Cry aloud, for he (Baal) is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or **perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened** (1Kgs. 18:27; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

King David wrote that Almighty God does not slumber nor sleep. Consequently, He never gets tired as humans do.

I will lift up my eyes to the hills – from whence comes my help? ²My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. ³He will not allow your foot to be moved (slip); ⁴He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He (Almighty God) who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep (Ps. 121:1-4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Because the only true God (cf. Jn. 17:3) does not get tired, the original Hebrew words translated into the English words "rest," "tired," and "weary" need to be examined in order to arrive at the correct meaning. The first scriptural reference used in an attempt to discredit God's word is:

It (the weekly Sabbath) is a sign between Me (Almighty God) and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested (SHD 7673) and was refreshed (Ex. 31:17; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In this Biblical quotation, the Hebrew word translated into the English word "rested," is *shabath* (SHD 7673). Shabath means to cease, desist, or rest from labor. Therefore, on the seventh day God stopped His work of creation because it was finished. He established the law regarding the weekly Sabbath by His personal example. In other words, because God ceased working on the seventh day, mankind is to follow His example and stop their usual work activities. By doing so, mankind is not distracted by the usual cares and concerns associated with everyday work and they can focus more on spiritual matters (cf. Mk. 4:19; Lk. 8:14; 21:34). Therefore, God ceasing from labor is not related to Him being tired whatsoever. Instead, He ceased from His work as Creator in order to teach mankind by His example.

Today, it is commonplace in legal matters for a lawyer to state that they "rest their case" when they finish presenting all their facts to a jury. The lawyer does not rest their case because they are tired. Instead, they have reached the point of completing their work. This same principle applied when God "rested" (sabbathed; SHD 7673) from His work of creating in Genesis 2:2-3.

The next scripture used by some people to claim that God contradicts Himself is Jeremiah 15:6. In this verse, the Hebrew word translated into the English word "weary" is SHD 3811, which can mean a number of different things, but being physically tired or exhausted is not one of them.

You (nation of Judah) have forsaken Me, says the Lord, you have gone backward. Therefore I will stretch out My hand against you and destroy you; I am weary (SHD 3811 – impatient, grieved, offended) of relenting! (Jer. 15:6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The use of the word "weary" is figurative and meant to express God's reaction to Judah's rebellious attitude. It is not uncommon for a parent to say to a disobedient child, "I am tired of hearing your excuses!" Does this mean the parent needs to go to bed and get some sleep? Of course not! Instead, it means that the child's refusal to follow instructions is frustrating to the parent. It is in this context that God expressed His frustration with the nation of Judah.

To summarize so far, the first two Biblical quotations use Hebrew words that do not mean that God gets physically tired and needs rest. However, in the next scripture an entirely different Hebrew word is used to describe weariness, and this word does refer to being "physically" tired and in need of rest.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? **The everlasting God**, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, **neither faints nor is weary** (SHD 3021 – weary, to toil, labor, grow weary, be weary). There is no searching of His understanding (Isa. 40:28; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This last scripture describes being physically tired, but God is not in need of this type of rest. Therefore, it is a false accusation to state that

God contradicts Himself. Instead, all three scriptures describe different aspects of rest, weariness, and tiredness and use completely different Hebrew words with diverse meanings. In reality, it is scorners who are attempting to misuse these scriptures to support their particular agenda by claiming that Exodus 31:17 and Jeremiah 15:6 show that God is in need of rest, when that is not what these scriptures are saying. Only Isaiah 40:28 refers to getting physically tired, and this scripture plainly states that Almighty God does not get tired as human beings do.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor. 11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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