

Translation of Two Conjunctions, One Aorist Participle and One Present Verb in Hebrews 4:3

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1. Introduction

The Greek text of Hebrews 4:3 reads as follows:²⁾

είσερχόμεθα γὰρ εἰς [τὴν] κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες, καθὼς εἶρηκεν, Ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου, Εἰ³⁾ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου, καίτοι τῶν ἔργων ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου γενηθέντων.

Since the Greek text involves some peculiar features, various translations are suggested by English and German versions as well as Korean versions of the Bible. Comparisons will clarify the differences:

For we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, “As in my anger I swore, ‘They shall not enter my rest,’” though his works were finished at the foundation of the world. (NRSV)⁴⁾

Only people who have faith will enter the place of rest. It is just as the Scriptures say, “God became angry and told the people, ‘You will never enter

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2) Underlined words indicate peculiar words and phrase which require explanation.

3) This particle is usually used for the conditional sentence denoting ‘if’. In strong assertions, it delivers a negative effect without the apodosis, ‘certainly not’. Walter Baur and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1957, 3rd ed. 2000), 278. This is why most English translations render ‘they shall not enter the rest’ for the conditional clause. Cf. KJV and GNV in which the particle is translated as ‘if’. See also 21th KJV: “As I have sworn in My wrath, ‘If they shall enter into My rest’”.

4) NKJV is almost identical to NRSV in the translation of this verse except for trivial matters, of which the representative is the conjunction ‘so’ instead of ‘as’ in the beginning of the quoted text. It is unclear why ὥς is translated as ‘so’ instead of ‘as’. NIV and God’s Word Translation also interpret the conjunction as ‘so’: “So I angrily took a solemn oath that they would never enter my place of rest.”

my place of rest!” God said this, even though everything has been ready from the time of creation. (CEV)

Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, “So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’” And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. (NIV)

We who are already believing enter that rest. This is just as what he has said, “As in my anger I swore, ‘They shall not enter my rest’, but the work has been accomplished since the creation of the world. (New Korean Revised Version)⁵⁾

These translations illustrate that the peculiar features are variously interpreted, which requires an explanation.⁶⁾ We will thus attempt to determine the meaning of the sentence(s) in Hebrews 4:3 by investigating such characteristics. In order to precisely grasp the meaning of the verse, problems raised by scholars concerning Hebrews 4:3 will be enlisted and they will be examined in turn.

2. Problems

Problems and issues concerning the Greek text in Hebrews 4:3 may be summarized as follows:

First, the conjunctions γάρ in Hebrews 4:3, where five conjunctions appear, calls our attention. Some English versions (NIV, NJB) do not interpret the conjunction as indicating a causal sense (‘now’ in NIV and ‘however’ in NJB), which represents the most frequent usage,⁷⁾ while others understand it as

5) Other translations are presented here for comparison: For we that have believed, shall enter into rest, as he said, As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest. And when the works were made perfect at the ordinance of the world, (Wycliff New Testament).

Denn wir, die wir glauben, gehen in die Ruhe, wie er spricht: “Daß ich schwur in meinem Zorn, sie sollten zu meiner Ruhe nicht kommen.” Und zwar, da die Werke von Anbeginn der Welt gemacht waren, (Luther’s Bibel) ingrediemur enim in requiem qui credidimus quemadmodum dixit sicut iuravi in ira mea si introibunt in requiem meam et quidem operibus ab institutione mundi factis. (Vulgate).

6) Needless to say, numerous expositions are also presented by scholars concerning these characteristics. For details, see below.

7) According to NA, οὐν appears in some reliable variants: ⋈ A C etc. This requires a textual-critical examination. For details, see below. The New Jerusalem Bible interprets the conjunction γάρ as indicating an adversative force, ‘however’: We, however, who have faith, are entering a place of rest... It is unclear why the conjunction is understood as ‘however’. It seems that the

indicating a causal sense. Still others, including most Korean versions, simply omit it (Good News Translation, NCV, New Korean Revised Version etc).

Second, it is also noteworthy that another conjunction in the verse, *καίτοι* may denote either concessive ('although') or adversative meaning ('and yet'). With the meaning 'and yet' or 'but', the punctuation problem of the preceding sentence in v.3b emerges; period (NIV, NIB, Holman Christian's Bible, NET; cf. Luther's German Version) or comma (NAB and Korean New Revised Version). A more serious punctuation issue arises at the end of v.3; period (NIV, NCV, Holman Christian's Bible), comma (Luther's Bibel) or semicolon (NJB). Another punctuation matter revolves around the conjunction, with its concessive meaning ('although') concerning the preceding sentence. Though most English versions employ a comma before the conjunction with the meaning 'though' (NRSV, ESV, CEV, NASB, NKJV, NLT), some adopt a semicolon (Bible in Basic English) or colon (KJV, ASV, GNV, RWB) which imposes a rather independent status on the concessive clause.

Third, the translation of the participial phrase *οἱ πιστεύσαντες* also draws our attention. While most English versions translate the phrase as 'who (have) believed' (NKJV, NRSV, NET, NASB, GNV, ESV), some versions like NJB and NLT as well as God's Word Translation understand it as denoting 'who have faith' or 'who believe.' Luther's German Bible and Korean New Revised Version also interpret the participle as indicating or at least involving the present reality. The peculiarity of the Greek participle of the verb 'believe' needs to be investigated.

Finally, the function of the present tense for the verb *εἰσέρχομαι* has to be determined in this verse, since the present tense may point to either future or present action. Intriguingly, many scholars interpret the verb as indicating future, although almost all the English versions understand the verb as delivering the present.⁸⁾

Now we attempt to resolve these problems.

addition of the adversative 'however' in NJB is not the literal rendition of the Greek conjunction, but reflects its understanding of the meaning of the text.

8) NJB translates the verb as 'are entering', while other versions as 'do enter'. See also Luther's Bibel which renders the verb as 'gehen' (present). In contrast, Latin Vulgate understands the present verb as indicating future.

3. Solutions

3.1. Meaning of the conjunction γάρ⁹⁾

Some reliable manuscripts include variation οὖν instead of the conjunction γάρ in NA27,¹⁰⁾ which makes the flow of the sentence more logical with the meaning ‘therefore’ ‘then’ or ‘however’.¹¹⁾ It is admitted, of course, that the external and the internal evidences lend support to the reading of the text in NA27. Nevertheless, the presence of variations in some reliable manuscripts indicates that the causal conjunction did not seem fitting to the context to the eyes of some copyists.

Interestingly, the NIV interprets the conjunction in v.3 as indicating ‘now,’ which implies that the following verb εἰσρχομαι most probably denotes the present meaning, ‘are entering’ or ‘enter’. In contrast, the NRSV, which variously translates the conjunction γάρ in other places of Hebrews, considers it as betraying a causal sense.¹²⁾ Which one is, then, more accurate? The analysis of the passage 4:1-13 demonstrates that the conjunction γάρ is connected with the sentence of v.1: ‘Let us fear, because the promise of entering his rest still stands.’¹³⁾ The content of v.3 provides a reason for the warning as well as the promise in v.1 with the inferential meaning of the conjunction.¹⁴⁾ Though the rest still stands as God’s promise, people have to be careful not to behave like

9) The conjunction γάρ occurs about eighty-eight times in Hebrews. Its frequency is quite high considering that it occurs 1041 in the whole New Testament. It is also noteworthy that this particle is found in the three consecutive verses, vv. 2-4, in the second place of each sentence. The statistics are based on Bible Works.

10) Bruce M. Metzger argues that the conjunction γάρ is more appropriate both because “early and good external evidence” lends support to the conjunction and “because it suits the context” (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994; 2nd ed.], 595). It seems unclear, however, how it fits the context.

11) The conjunction basically conveys an inferential meaning, ‘therefore’, but it also denotes ‘then’ or an adversative force ‘however’. For details about this conjunction, see BDAG, 736-37.

12) For instance, “now” in 2:5,8; 3:16, “yet” in 3:3, “indeed” in 4:12, “because” in 2:18. See also 5:1 where the particle is omitted.

13) In Greek, this sentence appears in the first place, whereas NIV places it in the latter part.

14) Paul Ellingworth understands the conjunction γάρ in v.3 is linked with 2a (we were evangelized) or 1a (God’s promise). See his book, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 244. The content in 1a, however, includes the exhortation (‘Let us fear’) as well as the promise, since believers who will also have a chance to enter the rest should be careful not to follow Israelite forbears.

those OT Israelites who failed to enter the rest.¹⁵⁾

Considering the context, therefore, the conjunction here is to be interpreted as conveying inferential sense, ‘for’ or ‘because’.¹⁶⁾

3.2. Function of the conjunction *καίτοι*

Different from the conjunction *γάρ*, which occurs frequently in the NT, the particle *καίτοι* takes place only twice in the NT, here and Acts 14:17. According to BDAG, the conjunction conveys the meaning ‘yet’ or ‘on the other hand’ with the finite verb or the genitive absolute construction used in the present verse.¹⁷⁾ In other words, the particle conveys the meaning ‘nevertheless’ or ‘and yet.’ In Acts, the conjunction denotes the meaning of ‘but’ or ‘nevertheless’. In the LXX, where the particle occurs four times, it never conveys the concessive meaning.¹⁸⁾ The conjunction thus should not be interpreted simply as introducing a subordinate clause like ‘though,’ which delivers only a secondary idea to the main content; it functions here to show that the following sentence is in parallel with the previous one.¹⁹⁾ It is connected with the conjunction *γάρ* in the beginning of the sentence in v.3, which refers to the sentence in v.1:²⁰⁾

v.1 Let us fear that none of you, though(or while) the rest remains, may not

15) The meaning of ‘fear’ should not be misunderstood. Calvin precisely explicates its meaning as follows: “the fear which is recommended not that which shakes the confidence of faith, but such as fills us with such concern that we grow not torpid with indifference.” See his book, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Hebrews*, John Owen, trans. and ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979; rep.), 93.

16) H. W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 122.

17) For an extended explanation about this particle in the NT, see BDAG, 496.

18) All instances are found in 4 Macc: 2:6, 5:18, 7:13, 8:16. In the first instance, the conjunction denotes ‘indeed’ which is used in Homer. H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1843; 1958, rep. of 9th ed.), 860. In 5:18, *εἰ* is accompanied with the conjunction indicating ‘although’; *καίτοι εἰ*. The concessive force, if it exists there, comes from *εἰ* rather than *καίτοι*. In 7:13 where the particle occurs with the genitive absolute construction, it signifies ‘and yet’. See 8:16, where it conveys an adversative meaning ‘and yet’ with the subjunctive mood.

19) Liddell and Scott note that the particle conveys the same meaning much as *καίπερ* (although). *A Greek-English Dictionary*, 859. Their description, however, is not precise, since the particle with the genitive absolute does not usually denote the concessive force, at least in the LXX.

20) See Luke Timothy Johnson, who notes that the conjunction *γάρ* “makes best sense if we see the statement as referring back to the exhortation ‘not to short of entering his rest’ in 4:1”. *Hebrews* (Louisville; London: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 126.

enter the rest...

v.3 because we who believe(d) (shall) enter the rest, as he said “As in my anger I swore ‘they shall not enter my rest’”, but His works have been done since the foundation of the world.

The sentence(s) in v.3 is loosely constructed with rather ambiguous conjunctions, i.e. γάρ and καιτοί and its (their) meaning will be manifested in the following verses, especially in vv. 4-6 and v.11. Vv. 4-6 emphasize that the rest existed at the creation of the universe and the OT Israelites fell short of it. Reflecting the rest at the creation, the author claims in v.11 that believers must make a great effort to enter it.²¹⁾

Considering the usage of the conjunction in Acts and the LXX and the context of the following verses, the καιτοί clause has to be interpreted as having a rather independent value. This indicates that the conjunction has to be understood as denoting an adversative force of ‘but’ rather than the concessive one.²²⁾

3.3. Implication of the usage of the aorist participle οἱ πιστεύσαντες

The aorist participle of the verb πιστεύω may refer to either present or perfect in this context, especially because the participle is used as a ‘substantial participle’.²³⁾ In fact, the aorist participle usually indicates antecedent time to that of the main verb. Nevertheless, many are the exceptions that make it difficult to claim that this is an absolute rule.²⁴⁾ It is understandable since the

21) Yune Sun Park, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews and the General Epistles* (Seoul: Yung Eum Sa, 1977), 45.

22) The connection with the following verse, i.e. v.4, is more logical with this interpretation, since v.4 includes the causal conjunction γάρ pointing to the last clause in v.3: εἶρηκεν γὰρ πού περὶ τῆς ἑβδόμης οὕτως· καὶ κατέπαυσεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ. (“For he has spoken somewhere concerning the seventh day in this way: “and God rested on the seventh day from all his works.”)

23) The aorist participle used as a substantial participle may be used in generic utterances. For instance, ὁ ἀπολέσας (aorist participle) does not mean ‘the one who has lost’ but ‘the one who loses’ in Matthew 10:31. Even in the adverbial and supplementary usages of the participle, the aorist tense may point to present or perfect. For details about this matter, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 615.

24) Wallace emphasizes ‘by no means always,’ but only ‘normally’ concerning the time relation between the participle and the controlling verb. See his book, *Beyond the Basics*, 624.

orist tense of the participle in principle describes the whole action of the verb-which is called ‘aspect’ of the participle.²⁵⁾ Relative time of the participle results from the aspect of the participle. In determining the time for the participle, therefore, lexical analysis and context play an important role.²⁶⁾

To make a decision about the time of the participle, the substantival participle of the verb πιστεύω need to be investigated. It occurs nine times in the NT and the aorist participle renders the action antecedent in time to the controlling verb:

Mark 16:16-17 The one who will have believed and been baptized will... these signs will follow those who will have believed...²⁷⁾

Luke 1:45 blessed is she who believed since there will be a fulfillment...;

John 7:39 those who believed or came to believe (not those who believe) in him were to receive:²⁸⁾

John 20:29 Blessed are those who did not see and believed;²⁹⁾

Acts 4:32 those who had believed were one heart;

Acts 11:21 a great number that had believed turned to the Lord;

2 Th. 1:10 (when he comes to be glorified on that day) among all those who

25) For the meaning of the verbal aspect of New Testament Greek, see S. E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament: With Reference to Tense and Mood* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989) and B. M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in the New Testament Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon; New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

26) “The aorist participle, in itself,” P.T. O’Brien avers, “does not indicate whether it should be rendered in English by a present tense or a past.” “The context, however,” he concludes, “points to the past.” P. T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 163, nt. 36. BDF.

27) Most English versions render the aorist participle as the present: the one who believes and is baptized ... those who believe. However, the aorist participle more probably refers to the antecedent action in time to the main verb. Cf. NASB translates the aorist participles as present perfect: has believed and has been baptized ... those who have believed.

28) The participle in this verse requires a textual-critical investigation. Even though the external evidence does not support any of the two variants- the aorist or the present participle- Bruce M. Metzger notes that “the majority of the (Editorial) Committee (of the UBS’ Greek New Testament) judged that the tendency among copyists would have been to replace the aorist participle ... with the present participle”(Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 186). This indicates that the aorist tense seemed awkward to some copyists, probably because the aorist participle of the verb πιστεύω did not convey, they believe, the present state of believing in Jesus. See also Edwin A. Abbot, *Johannine Grammar* (Wipf & Stock: Eugene, 2006; rep. of 1906 ed), 2499, in which John 7:39 is translated as follows: “Now he spake concerning the Spirit which they (lit.) were destined to receive that should [hereafter] have believed on him.”

29) The aorist participle points to ‘those who already came to believe in Jesus though not seeing Jesus.’

have believed;

2 Th. 2:12 all who have not believed may (will) be condemned;³⁰⁾

These instances illustrate that the aorist participle of the verb πιστεύω always indicates the action of believing, which happens antecedent in time to the controlling verb. Although the context makes the final decision, the aorist participle of the verb πιστεύω itself always refers to the action antecedent to that of the main verb. In other words, the lexical ingredients of the verb more probably indicate that its aorist participle signals antecedent time to the leading verb.³¹⁾ Intriguingly, although the tense of the controlling verb in the present verse is present, it may refer to simple present or emphatic future in this context. If the present tense denotes simple present, the aorist participle refers to present perfect- an action antecedent to the main verb; if the main verb indicates future, the aorist may denote future perfect or present perfect; the context determines its temporal meaning. In Hebrews 4:3, ‘we’ points to Hebrews who have already become believers. Even if the present tense of the main verb εἰσερχομαι indicates future action, the aorist participle points to an action of believing that has already happened.³²⁾

Considered these observations, the aorist participle in Hebrews 4:3 is used to contrast the faith which already happened (determined to believe) with the future or present rest; we who have already come to faith (will) enter the rest.³³⁾ The aorist tense of the participle emphasizes an action antecedent to the main verb and places the focus on the fact that a person has already become a believer before the action of the controlling verb begins.³⁴⁾

In sum, the author of Hebrews expresses the past action of believing in this context by employing the aorist tense for the participle.

30) ‘All’ refers to those who did not respond to the Gospel in the past though they had a chance.

31) Johnson argues that the aorist participle provides the meaning ‘we who have come to have faith’. See his book, *Hebrews*, 126.

32) For the meaning of the present verb εἰσερχομαι, see below.

33) Amplified English Bible’s translation explicates the nuance of the participle: For we who have believed (adhered to and trusted in and relied on God) do enter that rest. It would have been much better, however, if the tense of the two verbs (adhere and trust) had been the present.

34) The comparison of the two tenses, present and aorist, of the verb πιστεύω makes the aorist tense of the verb evident. The present tense pays attention to the present state of belief; it does not accentuate the ‘already’ aspect of faith in relation to the main verb. With the present tense, the participle, i.e., πιστευοντες, would expect the action in progress, or simply yields generic utterance; we who believe (or we believers) [will] enter the rest.

3.4. Understanding of the present verb εἰσερχομαι

The Greek present tense indicates either a present process or a future event. In the latter, it expresses an emphatic future.³⁵⁾ Thus, the present tense of the verb εἰσερχομαι may render either a simple present or an emphatic future. Consequently, some Bible versions translate the Greek present in the future (CEV, Wycliff NT, Vulgate) though most versions understand it as indicating the present. Scholars' opinions are also divided basically into two groups concerning this matter, though the division is more complicated.³⁶⁾

Many scholars argue that the present verb tense certainly indicates both the future rest and its present realization. For instance, Attridge succinctly states as follows:

This verb should not be taken simply as a futuristic present, referring only to the eschaton or to the individual's entry to the divine realm at death, but as a reference to the complex process on which 'believers' are even now engaged, although this process will certainly have an eschatological consummation.³⁷⁾

The proponents of this view seem to apply the norm 'already'/'not yet'; believers are now already entering the rest, but its ultimate consummation has not yet come. Postulating that we who believe are entering the rest 'at the moment-in principle but not yet in full realization-', Kistemaker clearly reflects this idea.³⁸⁾

35) The present tense of Greek may be used as "futuristic present". See BDF, 323 who notes that "in confident assertions regarding the future, a vivid, realistic present may be used for the future". See also S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 32.

36) As pointed out above, most scholars insist that the present verb refers to the emphatic future whereas most translations render it as the present. Needless to say, translation is different from interpretation; a translator must choose only one aspect even when the verb involves two or three aspects.

37) H. W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 126.

38) S. J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 107. R. Kent Hughes also suggests that the present verb indicates both the present and the future aspect. R. K. Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993), 111. D. A. Hagner also agrees with these scholars. See his book, *Hebrews* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1983), 69. See also Alan C. Mitchell who avers that "the author suggests that the process has already begun but has not yet been fully realized". *Hebrews* (Collegeville:

Other scholars, however, claim that the present tense refers to only one aspect, either present or future. Westcott asserts, on the one hand, that the present verb does not render the future action but simply the present.³⁹⁾ William Lane also argues that the present tense refers to the present.⁴⁰⁾ Craig R. Koester, on the other hand, claims that the present tense refers exclusively to the future aspect; “To rest in the manner that God himself rested after creation (4:10) remains a future reality.”⁴¹⁾ In this way, opinions are divided concerning the meaning of the present verb. Which one is more probable?

In order to answer the question, the context should be examined. The author of Hebrews highlights the tension between promise and obligation in this verse. Rest remains, he explains, because OT Israel had failed to enter the rest- this is certainly a promise. In contrast, he accentuates the danger that the readers of Hebrews could confront-coming short of rest or failing to reach it. The present verb indicates that those who have already believed will certainly have a chance to enter the rest as did OT Israelites, but they must refuse the way the OT Israel walked. The aorist participle πιστεύσαντες implies that those who had already acquired faith should display such faith with perseverance in the present, in order to enter the future rest prepared by God.⁴²⁾ In the context of Heb. 4:1-3, therefore, the present verb εἰσέρχομαι is to be interpreted as indicating a future reality, certain to happen. This interpretation is strengthened by the remark in v.9 and v.11, where the author declares that a rest still remains for the people of God and they have to strive to enter that rest: v.9 “as a result there remains Sabbath rest for the people of God”; v.11 “Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall according to the same example of disobedience.”⁴³⁾

Liturgical, 2007), 97.

39) B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 95.

40) W. Lane, *Hebrews* (Waco: Word Books, 1991), 165. O’Brien, though cautious, includes Attridge in the group of the scholars who argue for the ‘present time’ of the verb. Of course, his understanding is not precise.

41) Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 270. See also O’Brien, who claims that “the arguments in favour of a (solely) futuristic interpretation are stronger.” He listed seven reasons for his argument. For details, see his book, *Hebrews*, 165-166. Paul Ellingworth also stands with these scholars. See his book, *Hebrews*, 246.

42) Richard D. Phillips claims that the passage in 4:1-5 reveals emphases “that are central to overall message” of Hebrews. One of the emphases is “the demand for perseverance under trial”. See his book, *Hebrews* (Phillipsburg: P&R publishing, 2006), 116.

43) Calvin comments concerning v.11 that “a similar end awaits us, if there be in us the same unbelief.” *Hebrews*, 100. See also Sung-Soo Kwon, *Hebrews* (Seoul: Chongshin University

With regard to this matter, a sharp comparison appears between OT Israelites and new believers in v.1. The participial phrase in v. 1, καταλειπομένης ἐπαγγελίας could be understood as ‘concessive’: “though the promise of entering His rest remains”. With this force, contrast and comparison emerge between the state of those who came to believe the Gospel and that of OT Israelites who had had a chance but failed. This comparison recurs in the following verses, including v.3: we who believed will enter the rest whereas people of Israel had failed to enter the rest. In addition, the author of Hebrews has never mentioned “a full and unconditional realization of the Christian hope in the present.”⁴⁴⁾

In brief, the context lends support to the argument that the present tense of the verb εἰσερχομαι indicates the future rather than the present, or both the present and future action.

3.5. Punctuation

So far, we have decided upon meanings of the words which demand examination. It needs to be pointed out that the conjunction καίτοι conveys the adversative meaning ‘but’, which is related to the final task of our work-resolving a punctuation problem. Fortunately, the punctuation matter is not very complicated with the adversative force of the conjunction as much as with its concessive force.⁴⁵⁾ The following outline of vv.3-5, provides a clue to deciding the punctuation:⁴⁶⁾

Press, 1997), 146. He asserts that the author of Hebrews admonishes the people of God to work hard to enter the rest.

44) Paul Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 246.

45) A semicolon appears at the end of v.3 in the NJB and the NEB:

3. We, however, who have faith, are entering a place of rest, as in the text: And then in my anger I swore that they would never enter my place of rest. Now God’ work was all finished at the beginning of the world; 4. as...

3. It is we, we who have become believers, who enter the rest referred to in the words, ‘As I vowed in my anger, they shall never enter my rest.’ Yet God’s work has been finished ever since the world was created; 4.

46) Concerning the punctuation problem, Ellingworth claims that the punctuation of NJB or NEB (period before the conjunction καίτοι in both and semicolon and comma at the end of v.3 respectively) is possible, or very probable. Nevertheless, he postulates that the conjunction γάρ in v.4 raises a serious problem concerning such understanding, because the conjunction καίτοι should be interpreted as ‘concessive.’ In other words, the concessive conjunction in 4:3 makes

There still remains a rest for us (v.3a)
Ps. 95:11 proves its existence (v.3b)
But God's rest existed from the time of creation (v.3c)
Gn. 2:2 attests this (v.4)
This is the same rest (v.5a)
of which Ps. 95:11 spoke (v.5b)

In this outline, the content in v.3c is indirectly related to that in v.3a and 3b, which indicates that the punctuation at the end of v.3b does not matter much; it may be comma (NA27 and NASB) or period (NIV, TNT, Luther's Bibel, New Revised Korean Version). In contrast, v.3c and v.4 need to be closely connected by adopting a comma or semicolon, different from most English versions that employ the period. This punctuation makes the meaning of the sentences in v.3 more evident.

4. Conclusion

Considering the above observations, the sentences in Hebrews 4:3 should be translated as follows:

3. For we who have believed shall enter the rest, as he said, "As I swear in my anger, 'They will never enter my rest' ". But His works have been finished since the foundation of the world,

(4. for He has somewhere spoken about the seventh day in this way "and God rested on the seventh day from all His works".)

According to this translation, the causal conjunction γάρ in the beginning of v.3 refers not only to the promise but comprises the warning: unbelief causes a problem.⁴⁷⁾ In addition, the last clause beginning with καίτοι holds a rather

the flow of the argument difficult because of the causal conjunction γάρ in v.4. See his book, *Hebrews*, 245-46. This demonstrates that to decide the meaning of the conjunction is pivotal to tackling the punctuation problem. As demonstrated above, the conjunction καίτοι does not need to be interpreted as delivering a concessive sense. Rather it is to be interpreted as conveying an adversative force.

independent force related more closely to the following verse with the causal conjunction γάρ. This conjunction connects the sentence in v.4 with the last part of v.3, “But His works have been finished since the foundation of the world”. Such an understanding makes the flow of the logic most smooth and reasonable.

<주요어>(Keywords)

Hebrews 4:3, conjunction γάρ, conjunction καίτοι, Greek aorist participle, Greek tense

히브리서 4:3, 접속사 γάρ, 접속사 καίτοι, 헬라어 과거분사, 헬라어 시제

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47) Calvin clearly declares that “unbelief alone shuts us out; then faith alone opens an entrance.” See his book, *Hebrews*, 95.

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<Abstract>

히브리서 4:3에 있는 두 접속사와 한 과거분사 그리고 현재분사의 번역

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히브리서 4:3의 헬라어 원문은 다음과 같은 독특한 문법 사항들을 포함하고 있으며 이것들을 어떻게 이해하느냐에 따라 본문에 대한 번역과 해석이 달라진다. 주목을 끄는 문법 사항들을 정리해 보면 다음과 같다: 1) 접속사 γάρ는 이유를 나타내는가 아니면 다른 역할을 하는가; 2) 또 다른 접속사 καίτοι는 양보로 해석해야 하는가 아니면 역접으로 해석해야 하는가; 3) 과거분사 구문인 οἱ πιστεύσαντες은 과거 사실을 가리키는가 아니면 현재사실을 가리키는가; 4) 현재 동사인 εἰσερχομαι는 현재를 나타내는가 아니면 강조의 미래를 나타내는가; 5) 구두점을 어디에, 어떻게 찍어야 하는가?

이상과 같은 질문들에 대한 답이 주어질 때 비로소 히브리서 4:3에 대한 올바른 해석이 가능하고 또한 정확한 번역도 가능해진다. 질문들에 대한 답을 찾기 위해서는 우선 헬라어 문법에 근거하여 단어의 용법과 구문에 대한 엄밀한 분석이 이루어져야 한다. 이것은 신약이나 때로는 70인역에서 사용된 용례들에 대한 연구까지 포함하는 것이다. 물론, 문법 사항과 더불어 문맥에 대한 면밀한 검토가 또한 수반되어야 한다. 이러한 작업을 통하여 히브리서 4:3의 원문을 연구해 볼 때 그 구절은 다음과 같이 영어로 번역해야 마땅하다:

For we who have believed shall enter the rest, as he said, “As I swear in my anger, ‘They will never enter my rest’”. But His works have been finished since the foundation of the world,

이렇게 번역하게 되면, 3절과 앞의 두 구절과의 관계가 좀 더 분명해지고, 마지막 부분에 있는 구절은 어느 정도 독립성을 갖게 되어 4절과 잘 어우러지게 된다. 결과적으로 본문의 논리적 흐름이 더 정연하게 정돈되어서 분명하게 그 의미가 드러나게 된다.