

2/2/03

Hebrews 4

The author of Hebrews has used the example of Israel's unbelief regarding entering the promised land, to warn these Hebrew Christians of their like danger by rejecting Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

* The section began in chapter three. Heb. 3:7-4:13

The first section centers on Israel's unbelief failed to enter into God's rest by hardening their hearts, disobedience and rebellion, thereby warning these Hebrew Christians against an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, or any of them be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, a real warning against it. Heb. 3:7-19

* The urgency and gravity of their situation is marked by the word "Today", spoken by the Holy Spirit and the author Paul. Heb. 3:7, 13

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The second section centers on the Hebrew Christians regarding entering into God's rest for their salvation by admonishment. Heb. 4:1-13

* The key word is rest, appearing eight times, twice in chapter three. Heb. 3:11, 18; 4:1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11

1. Let us fear lest we fall short of entering into His rest. Heb. 4 :1

2. Let us be diligent to enter into His rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. Heb. 4:11

* These two oratorical imperatives are tied together by the repeat thought of entering into God's rest!

The rests of Jesus in salvation is superior to the rest of Joshua.

4:1-5 The perilous state of not resting in the person of Jesus.

4:1 The practical warning regarding unbelief.

1) The usual statement appears, therefore. vs. 1a

a) This is the conclusion that looks back to the example of unbelief by Israel to receive and believe God's revelation for that day by Moses.

b) Therefore, they should fear because they are in a state of unbelief by not receiving and believing God's revelation in these last days by His Son Jesus.

2) The warning regards the promise of entering into God's rest. vs. 1b

a) First it is an incredible proclamation of certain hope by the exhortation to fear and do something about it, God is patient and merciful and good.

- b) Second it is a stern warning that such a promise may be neglected, overlooked or come short of it.
- 1) The rest Moses spoke of was the land of milk and honey, temporal, physical and material.
 - 2) The rest the Son spoke of was Himself, eternal and spiritual.
Matt. 11:28-30.
- 3) The personal exhortation is, “Let us fear” vs. 1c
- a) The proper response should be to fear God, fear should grip the heart of any believer when they are shown their failure of believing God or rebelling in disobedience to God.
 - * The **fear** of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.
Prov. 1:7
 - * The **fear** of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Prov. 9:10
 - * “And do not **fear** those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather **fear** Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”. Matt. 10:28
 - b) The potential problem is clearly stated, “lest any of you seem to have

come short of it”, the promise of entering God’s rest.

- 1) It is an actual state they are in.
 - * One commentator say the following about the fear of God, “It preserves from slothful security, checks self-confidence and high-mindedness, and makes us cautious and vigilant in reference to everything which may endanger the safety of the soul.” John Brown
 - 2) It is a reminder of their personal responsibility by the phrase “come short” “husterekenai”, which has the idea of one's own fault.
 - 3) In other words, beware lest you fall short or too late by unbelief to enter the rest of God for their salvation like those in the wilderness who presumed too late and were smitten by the enemy.
Num. 14:44
 - * One commentator put it this way, “The apostasy of some, and possibly the apostasy of mere professors, should not weaken any man’s faith: but rather terrify him from misbelief”. David Dickson
- c) One great mistake man often makes is thinking that he can come to God when he chooses and yet unless God

calls you can't come, and if you come it's evidence that He has called you, come rest and abide in Christ and walk in the blessing of salvation which are yours. Jn.15:16

4:2 The personal parallel to those in the wilderness.

- 1) Their accountability was due to the fact that they had heard the gospel preached as well as those in the wilderness. vs. 2a
 - a) Both had been delivered from the world, Egypt being a type.
 - b) Both had been redeemed by blood, as the atonement for their sins. vs. 2a
* Heb. 1:2; 2:3
 - c) The gospel "euangelizo" simply means to announce good news, God's word to them, the physical rest in Canaan to them and the spiritual rest in the Son for their salvation marked the greater privilege revealed in the last days final revelation of ultimate rest..
* Consciousness of God's love and presence!
- 2) Their failure to receive the benefit of what was preached or promise was in the fact that they did not mix what they heard with faith. vs. 2b
 - a) Faith to be Biblical must be based on the revelation of God.

- b) Faith to receive what is promised believes God for what He promised or has done and acts on it in full trust.
- c) Those in the wilderness refused to believe that God to enter into the promised land, allowing the giants, the walled cities to discourage them and not believe God!
* My presence shall go with thee, and I will give you rest. Ex. 34:14
- 3) The problem is with the heart of man as mentioned already. Heb. 3:8, 10, 13
* Jesus in the parable of the Sower interpreted the soil where the word falls, it is the heart. Matt.13
 - a) The way side is the hard heart that rejects the word, it makes no sense to them, Satan snatches away what was sown in their hearts.
 - b) The stony ground is the heart that is compromised their commitment under persecution for the word.
 - c) The thorny ground is the heart that allows the care and deceitful riches to choke the word.
 - d) The good ground is the heart that hears and understands the word, bears fruit and produces in varying degrees, 100, 60, 20 fold.
* The fault is with the hearer not the word of God or the preacher!

- 4:3** The affirmation of the believers faith.
- * The warning is no longer at the forefront but hope and encouragement!
 - 1) The author once again include himself, “for we who have believed do enter that rest”. vs. 3a
 - a) The word believe “pisteuo” means to think it to be true and persuaded, faith united with the word heard
 - b) That rest is regarding their salvation in Jesus, present tense, but the verb enter “eiserchomai” is linear action, emphasizing the process of those who have believed.
 - * The believer is in the process of entering into rest constantly!.
 - 2) The quotes again is from Psalm ninety-five. vs. 3b-d; Ps. 95:11
 - a) The same quote appears in the previous chapter. Heb. 3:11
 - b) The example is of disobedience. Heb. 4:11
 - c) Wrath and judgment is God’s strange way of dealing with men, He rather they live. Is. 28:21; Ex. 18:32; 33:11
 - 3) The greater guilt lay in the fact that the works were finished from the foundations of the world. vs. 3e
 - a) The implied rest is regarding the works of Creation and quoted directly in the next verse.

- b) God knowing the end from the beginning, had already made provision, as good as done for that day and since they sinned by rebellion and disobedience to enter through lack of faith, they brought God’s judgment on themselves by an oath.
- 4:4** The perfect work of creation is to teach them.
- 1) The quote is from Genesis, six days God created and the seventh He rested. Gen. 2:2
 - a) God rested, which means He desisted from His creative work because they were created and perfect in their design.
 - b) But did not cease from His involvement with His creation or the creature of man.
 - 2) The salvation of man was finished, God had rested from the work for salvation as Jesus cried from the cross, “It is finished” Jn. 19:30
 - a) But God is still involved in calling men and women to salvation by faith, through the preaching of the gospel.
 - b) But God is not adding or attempting to complete it, nor should or could any person add to the work of salvation.

* My Father works till now and I work. Jn. 5:17

4:5 The repeated emphasis of Israel's past failure, emphasizes the urgency of their own position.

1) The Psalm again is the same. Ps. 95:11

* This is the fourth times the oath of God is mentioned that they would not enter the promise land. Heb. 3:11, 18; 4:3

2) The context is the failure to rest in the promises of God to receive the blessings of Canaan.

* Three times it says, "My rest", it was God's rest, He had provided the protection and provision but they did not believe. Heb. 3:11; 4:3, 5

4:6-10 **The perilous state can be avoided.**
The explanation.

4:6 The rest of Canaan was to all but all did not take advantage of it.

1) There remained that some must enter in. vs. 6a

a) All did not enter in except for Joshua and Caleb because of unbelief which led to disobedience.

b) Their children possessed the land, who they feared would perish.

2) Those who heard did not enter in due to disobedience. vs. 6b

a) The word preached "euaggelizo" means to announce good news or news of victory, parallel to the gospel.

b) Canaan represented the life of faith in dependence on God to conquer the enemy, not heaven. Josh. 5:13-14

* In heaven there will be no giants or enemies!

b) They failed to enjoy their inheritance.

* Hebrew mind equated persecution with God's disfavor in the Old Testament (Deut. 27-28), yet in the New Testament we are to expect persecution!

4:7 The sin of unbelief that lead to rebellion and disobedience is not limited to one generation nor the procrastination to enter in.

1) So the author calls attention to the call of the Psalmist to enter into God's rest, for the fourth and last time. Ps. 95:7

a) This is 500 years after Joshua.

b) The Holy Spirit is the speaker in the previous chapter. Heb. 3:7

c) David now is the speaker, through the Holy Spirit.

- 2) The proclamation of David was still valid and that was the point, designated a certain day.
- a) If the warning was true for those in the wilderness, the rest was available for a marked out time set out by God not their own.
 - b) If the proclamation of warning was declared by David for his present generation and a future fulfillment in the last days.
 - c) The warning was just a valid for these Hebrews.
 - d) The warning is as valid for the believer today.
 - * God has set out a marked out a boundary, a time to enter His rest, as He did for those in the wilderness.
- 3) The urgency again and the boundary is marked by the word “Today”.
- a) Twice it is repeated in the verse.
 - b) Three time in the previous chapter. Heb. 3:7, 13, 15
- 4) The specific warning is clear.
- a) Do not harden your hearts.
 - b) Three times the heart was mentioned in the previous chapter. Heb. 3:8, 10, 12, 13

- 4:8-9** The rest of Canaan pointed to a future rest.
- 1) The promised rest that Joshua led was only a type of one yet to come! vs. 8
 - a) The name Joshua is Jesus but in the Hebrew.
 - b) Joshua was a type of Jesus.
 - 2) Therefore there is a rest for the people of God beyond Canaan and David’s day. vs. 9
 - a) The rest of the last days and the heavenly calling, Jew and Gentiles in one body, the church. Heb. 1:2; 3:1
 - b) The word rest “sabbatismos” is Sabbath rest, all who believe in Jesus can enter this rest and possibly pointing to the eschatological rest of the kingdom Age, “the age to come”. Heb. 6:5
 - c) All the others are “katapausis”, to be calm and resting and it’s cognate “ “ putting to rest.
 - * This is the only appearance in the New Testament!.
 - c) Jesus is Lord of Sabbath, we rest in His work alone and completely. Mk. 2:27-28
-vs. 1-8 used the word that means cessation from activity.
-Rom. 14; Col. 2 everyday alike!

4:10 The evidence of those who enter the rest of God for salvation.

- 1) He therefore who has entered into God's rest "in the last days" rests on the work and person of Jesus Christ.
- 2) Therefore that person ceases to attempt any merits or works of righteousness to enter, be saved or enter that rest.
 - a) For by grace are you saved through faith... Eph. 2:8
 - b) I have finished the work which thou gave Me to do. Jn. 17:4
 - c) It is finished... Jn. 19:30 I
 - * So Jesus is superior to Joshua's rest!
- 3) The complete and final rest of the believer is eschatological, either when he or she is ushered into heaven to be just like Jesus or Jesus returns for His church in the air.

4:11-13 The perilous state should be removed.

4:11 The personal invitation in view of the danger.

- 1) Let us therefore be diligent to enter into His rest
 - a) The author Paul, once again identifies himself with them, "let us".
 - b) The obedience is the only wise conclusion, "therefore".

c) The word diligent "spoudazo" means to hasten, give diligence, be eager, do one's best as opposed to being negligent or not taking heed.

- 1) Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. 2Pet. 1:10a
- 2) Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. 2Tim. 2:9
 - * The "Let us" passages are numerous!
- d) There is no contradiction to resting and to do one's best to enter into the rest.
 - 1) Strive to enter in at the straight gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Lk. 13:24
 - * The word strive "agonizomai" to struggle, contend, root is agon to agonize. 1Cor. 9:25
 - 2) Jesus gives rest to the weary from their sins and they must learn of Him so they can appropriate the rest. Matt. 11:28-29
 - 3) Jesus has made peace with God having justified us before God. Rom. 5:1-2
 - 4) Jesus desires for the believer to have the peace of God for every situation in life. Phil. 4:6-7

- e) The reason being, lest anyone fall according to the example of Israel.
- f) Two reasons why we should labor or be diligent to enter.
 - 1)) The word is efficient.
 - 2.) God sees our diligence to do so.
- 2) Lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.
 - a) The potential is real.
 - b) The parallel is after the same example of unbelief in the wilderness to not enjoy their deliverance and inheritance.
 - c) There are numerous “let us” statements in Hebrews.

4:12 The personal reminder in view of their intentions to trust the works of the Law for their salvation.

Again the failure is not in the word heard but the soil it falls on.

-The ability to enter in is due to the word mingled together with faith in them that hear it. vs. 2-3a

-Rom. 10:17 faith cometh by hearing...

- 1) The word of God is said to be three things. Vs. 12a-b
 - * The word of God in our context is Psalm 95 and this verse is usually taken to be the written word of God and though that is not wrong, I

believe the author is making reference to Jesus the Word of God who has spoken to us in these last days, who they are drifting from and about to reject, for it is almost personified, giving it personal attributes!

* The voice of God has been mentioned throughout and God’s word are the same! Heb. 3:7, 15, 16; 4:2, 7

a) Living “zao” alive, breathing, in other words it offers and imparts life not death. Ps. 138:2; 119:89; 1Pet. 1:23

b) Powerful “energes” meaning active, energy effective, it is efficient to do what declares or promises. Is. 55:11

* Jesus said, “Take heed how you hear and what you hear”, even as the preaching of Jonah save the Nivevites!

c) Sharper than two-edged sword, in other words it cuts both the hear and the preacher, it respects no one. Is. 49:2; Rev. 1:1; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21

* The rebellious fell by the sword of the enemy if you remember.

* The word “machaira” is a short sword or dagger not the judgment sword, implies close contact.

- 2) The word of God does two very important things.

- a) Piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow. vs. 12c-d
- 1)) The word for piercing “diikneomai” means to penetrate or go through and dividing “merismo” to separate.
 - 2)) The word of God deals with the spiritual “pneuma” the spirit of man to be right with God, from the things are of the soul “psuche” that are not of any benefit to his spirit.
* Dealing with the whole man, not just part of him, especially the regenerated person!
 - 3)) The word of God clearly points out the soulish “psuche” the life principle of our intellect, emotions and will, things that we attempt to offer God, do for God or talk to God about, that really center on our intellect, emotions and our will, yet we attempt to present them to God as spiritual.
* Through tears, sad stories, etc.
 - 4)) The joints and marrow refers to those things that are hidden, not made known but God’s word convicts man of his inner most secret sins, past or present.

- * Marrow is where blood is produced, perhaps symbolic of what we are living for?
- b) A discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- 1)) A discerner “kriticaos” means to judge, literally fit for judgment, what is right or wrong, pleasing to God or not, what is Biblical truth or not.
 - 2)) A discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
 - a)) Thoughts “enthumesis” means to pondering or thinking out, Jesus is able to know everyone of our thought from their origin. Ps. 139
 - b)) The intents “ennoia” means the motives, the real reason why we do the things we do.
* For as he **thinks** in his heart, so [is] he. Prov. 23:7a-b
 - 3)) The heart is where a person finds the evidence as to he or she is in true character.
 - a)) The natural heat of man is sinful and evil. Jer. 17:9; Matt. 15:18-19
 - b)) Twice we already have been told, “They always go astray in their hearts and warned them of “A

evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God. Heb. 3:10, 12

c)) Let us draw near with a true **heart** in full assurance of faith. Heb. 10:22

d)) For it is good that the **heart** be established by grace. Heb. 13:9

e)) Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it [spring] the **issues** of life. Prov. 4:23

4:13 The personal caution in view that they can not escape God.

1) And there is nothing hidden in His sight.

vs. 13a

a) God is Omniscience, He knows all things.

b) Somehow man thinks he can hide from God or the things he does.

2) But all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we must give an account. vs. 13b

a)) Naked “gumnos” is self explanatory, without clothing, you see what is beneath the coverings.

b)) Open “trachelos” means to lay bare or exposed and is used three ways.

1)) Used of a wrestler who seizes his opponent by the throat and twists it in combat.

2)) Used of a malefactor whose neck is bent back to face the spectators to face his guilt.

3)) Used of exposing the neck of a sacrificial victim at the altar, flayed and dissected.

c)) Jesus is the judge of the world, for the Father has committed all judgment to Him, both the Bema-Seat and the White Throne Judgment. Jn. 5:22; Rom. 14:10; 1Cor. 3:11-15; 2Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15

* NO one will be able to pull a fast one on Jesus through tears, sad stories, Jesus can not be coned like man!

4:14-16 The perilous state is remedied by running to our High Priest.

1) The first major division is over which dealt with the person of Christ Heb. 1:1-4:13

* This is not so much a conclusion but a transition related and connected to what precedes, namely “the apostle and High Priest of Jesus Christ”. Heb. 3:1

2) The second major division dealing with the work of Christ demonstrating the superiority of the Priesthood of Jesus over Aaron’s. Heb. 4:14-10:18

- * It is the longest section dealing with the importance of the finished work of redemption through Jesus Christ alone!
 - a) As High Priest He can identify with our human weakness. Heb. 4:14-5:10
 - b) As holy saints they are identified as immature and carnal. Heb. 5:11-6:20
 - 3) Remember the chapter and verse division were later applied by man to facilitate passage identification.
 - * Sometimes they are not divided at the appropriate section.
 - 4) The author is now going to treat the subject of The High Priesthood of Christ which is superior to that of Aaron in the Old Testament.
 - 5) To the Jew the High Priest was the only one that could go into the Holy of Holies once a year to offer sacrifice for the sins of the nation on Yonkippor, Oct. 10.
 - * Scapegoat. Lev. 16; Heb. 9:6-10
 - 6) He was to a point the very center of their national life next to God, for he alone could make reconciliation for the people.
- 4:14** Christ our great High Priest
- 1) Seeing that we have a great High Priest. vs. 14a
 - a) He is great because, He is the One who provided spiritual eternal rest.

- 1)) The Old Testament High Priest was a type of the Messiah, the Great High Priest to come!
- 2)) In view of being superior to the prophets, angels, Moses, the First Adam, than Joshua, He is better than Aaron also!
 - b) He is great because, He is the One who sees all things, knows all things.
 - c) He is great because, He is the One who knows the motives and thought of man.
 - d) He is great because, He is the One who will judge all men and women.
- 2) Jesus passed through the heavens. vs. 14b
 - * The Old Testament High Priest only went through the veil into the Holy of Holies, once year!
 - a) He by Himself purged our sins. Heb. 1:3
 - b) He sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Heb. 1:3
 - c) He who is able to able to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Heb. 2:17
 - d) He who is able to succor us who are tempted. Heb. 2:18
 - * The word through “dia” is in the perfect tense, indicating completed action in the past and having existing results in the present.

- e) He who has passed into the heavens.
- 1)) Jesus preached to spirits in prison. 1Pet. 3:19
 - 2)) Led captivity captive. Eph. 4:8
 - 3) Jesus made a public display of his spoiling and triumphing over the principalities and powers. Col. 2:15
 - * Spoiled “apekduomai” means to put wholly of from one’s self for one’s advantage, He disarmed them!
 - * Triumphant “triambeuo” describes a procession of a Roman general of those he has conquered.
- 3) Jesus the Son of God. vs. 14c
- * The Old Testament High Priest was a son of Abraham and Aaron but our Great High Priest, Jesus, the Son of man and Son of God!
- a) The God who became man, through the incarnation to reconcile the world to Himself.
 - b) The God-Man who is the mediator for man.
- 4) Let us hold fast our profession.
- * In view of all that has been said about Jesus this is the only wise exhortation response!
- a) He comes full circle to his earlier statement about Jesus, “Therefore,

holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.”. Heb. 1:3, 13; 2:7; 3:1

* This was what these Hebrew Christians had agreed with God and confessed, that Jesus Christ was the Apostle and High Priest of man before God!

- b) He is sitting and resting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Heb. 1:3e; 7:26; 9:24
- Come unto me all ye that labor...
Matt. 11:28-30

4:15 Christ our understanding High Priest.

- * The Old Testament High Priest being a man could sympathize with imperfection and weaknesses being a sinner but not all and certainly not without sin!
- 1) Our High Priest can sympathize with our weaknesses. vs. 15a
 - a) The word sympathize “sunpatheo” is made up of two words, one means to “suffer” and the other “with”.
 - b) Having suffered for us as a man, He suffered with us, making Him of a sympathetic nature, in other words, He is compassionate and has pity on his children. Heb. 2:11

- c) The particular is our weaknesses, which regards our physical and moral weaknesses to resist sin or the power of our sinful nature.
- 2) Our High Priest in heaven is such a High Priest because He through the incarnation became man like us. vs. 15b
 - a) Jesus was tempted in **all points** as we are as we are and understands the struggles of our flesh.
 - b) Yet without sin. Heb. 2:17-18
- 3) The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness by Satan, was as real as anyone we encounter and beyond anything any of us will even endure!
 - a) Yet without sin!!! Heb. 7:26
 - * He did not abandon the plan of salvation in the Garden or the cross, so He understands their temptation to abandon Him!
 - b) Angels ministered unto Him after the testing.
 - c) Jesus was tested in all three areas that we are. 1Jn. 2:16
 - 1)) Lust of the flesh - stone to bread. Matt. 4
 - 2)) Lust of the eye - all kingdoms of the world.
 - 3)) Pride of life - cast Yourself down.
 - d) We should hold fast to Him and our profession. Heb. 3:1

- 4:16** Christ our sufficient High Priest.
- * The Old Testament High Priest could only come into the Holy of Holies to see the Shekinah glory between the cherubim on the mercy seat, once a year and that not without blood, after many sacrifices!
 - 1) Let us therefore come boldly or with confidence unto the throne of grace.
 - * This is the only reasonable conclusion based on all that has been presented as truthful fact about Jesus, we should preserve the acknowledgment of Jesus being the Apostle and High Priest of man before God, approaching with full confidence!
 - a) By the Superiority of Jesus over the prophets, the angels, Moses, the First Adam, Joshua and now Aaron.
 - b) By God's grace Jesus tasted death for everyone. Heb. 2:9
 - b) By resting in His finished work on the cross, not my merit or good work.
 - * Notice the throne of Grace not the throne of judgment!
 - 2) Let us come dependent on Jesus.
 - a) To obtain mercy "eleos", which is less than we deserve, kindness towards the miserable.
 - b) To find grace "charis", unmerited favor, that which is lovely, affords joy and pleasure as God intended it.

- c) To help in time “eukairos” of need ,
for seasonable help, that fits the need
- 1)) Not for salvation but for
appropriating the privileged
benefits available to the believer
“in Christ”. Eph. 1:3
* Blessed be the God and Father of
our Lord Jesus Christ, who has
blessed us with every spiritual
blessing in the heavenly [places] in
Christ,
 - 2)) We have boldness and access with
confidence through faith in Him.
Eph. 3:12
 - 3)) Now to Him who is able to do
exceedingly abundantly above all
that we ask or think, according to
the power that works in us, to Him
be glory in the church by Christ
Jesus to all generations, forever
and ever. Amen. Eph. 3:20-21
 - 4)) That we might have the peace of
God that surpasses all
understanding to guard our hearts
and minds through Christ Jesus,
through prayer. Phil. 4:6-7
 - 5)) My grace is sufficient for you: for
my strength is made perfect in
weakness. 2Cor. 12:9