

Hebrews Chapter 4

Verses 1-10

The second section of the writer's exposition of (Psalm 95:7-11), goes beyond the description of unbelief and its dire consequences (3:12-19), to define the nature of the "rest" which the disobedient had forfeited.

The first section had dealt primarily with (Psalm 95:7-8); the second section deals primarily with (Psalm 95:11).

Hebrews 4:1 "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left [us] of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

"Promise":

This is the first use of this important word in Hebrews.

The content of this promise is defined as "entering His rest."

"His rest":

This is the rest which God gives, therefore it is called "My rest" (Psalm 95:11), and "His rest."

For believers, God's rest includes His peace, confidence of salvation, reliance on His strength, and assurance of a future heavenly home (Matt. 11:29).

"Come short":

The entire phrase could be translated "lest you think you have come too late to enter into the rest of God" (12:15).

With reverential fear, all are to examine their own spiritual condition (1 Cor. 10:12; 2 Cor. 13:5), and to actively press for commitment on the part of others (Jude 23).

We will see in many Scriptures throughout the Bible that it is possible for a person to have walked with God, and then turned their back on God and missed heaven.

The best example is of course, Judas Iscariot.

One of the best explained Scriptures of a person missing the Promised Land because of backsliding is:

Numbers 14:34 "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, [even] forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, [even] forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise."

Numbers 32:13 "And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed."

The Promised Land of God is not for the sinful man, whether it be the Holy land promised to the descendants of Abraham in the flesh, or whether it be his descendants in the spirit, (Christians).

The thing that concerns me in our society today is that too many people believe that just the fact that they were baptized will get them to heaven.

They are really not living in the will of God.

They act as if they have purchased their (fire insurance), and they will go ahead and live just like all the other people in the world.

They believe that they are safe, because they have made that one-time confession of faith.

Salvation is a day to day walk.

We will either grow stronger in the Lord each day, or we will return to sin.

This next few Scriptures in Jesus' own words tell it all.

Matthew 7:21-23 "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Matthew 25:1-12 "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." "And five of them were wise, and five [were] foolish." "They that [were] foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:" "But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." "But the wise answered, saying, [Not so]; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us." "But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

This leaves absolutely no doubt that our walk with God is every day until He returns.

Hebrews 4:2 "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard [it]."

“Faith”:

Mere knowledge of God’s message is not sufficient.

It must be appropriated by saving faith.

Later in the epistle a much longer exposition will take up this topic of faith (10:19-12:29).

We see that the writer’s point of comparison is that, like the Jews who left Egypt (see 3:16-19), his generation had also received God’s message through the preaching of the gospel, they had been evangelized.

I truly believe, that all who are the true ministers of God desire, more than they desire life itself, to see everyone saved.

1 Corinthians 1:21 "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

There are two things that happen when we preach.

Some, who hear the Word of God, receive it unto salvation: then there are others who do not receive it and are damned.

We see in the next few verses that God sent the message first to His chosen family.

When they refused it, then God sent it to the unbelieving world that all who would receive His message might live.

2 Thessalonians 2:12-13 "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:"

Hebrews 4:3 "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."

“We ... enter”:

Those who exercise faith in the message of God will enter into their spiritual rest.

This is the corollary of (Psalm 95:11) which states the opposite side: that the unbeliever will not enter into the rest which God provides.

“Finished from the foundation of the world”:

The spiritual rest which God gives is not something incomplete or unfinished.

It is a rest which is based upon a finished work which God purposed in eternity past, just like the rest which God took after He finished creation (verse 4).

“If they shall enter into my rest”:

This should be rendered exactly as it was (in 3:11): “They shall not enter into my rest.”

Revelation 20:4 "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

We see in this next Scripture that God Himself established 6 days of work and one day of rest.

It really does not matter whether this day is 24 hours or one thousand years.

Exodus 20:11 "For [in] six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them [is], and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

One of the greatest promises that Jesus made was the rest for the believer.

We find this in His own words (in Matthew 11:28-29).

"Come unto me, all [ye] that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Verses 4-5

By way of explanation for the statement in verse 3, the writer cites the illustration of the seventh day of creation and quotes (Gen. 2:2).

Then he repeats the last part of (Psalm 95:11).

Hebrews 4:4-5 "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh [day] on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." "And in this [place] again, If they shall enter into my rest."

We cannot say enough about this rest of the Lord.

Work for the night cometh, when no work can be done.

John 9:4 "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

Verses 6-9

“Today”:

Long after Israel’s failure, David (in Psalm 95), was still looking for a rest in his own day.

Likewise, the author of Hebrews uses that word repeatedly in this passage to declare that a rest can still be experienced.

The reference to “Jesus” (in verse 8), is to Joshua of the Old Testament.

The names Joshua and Jesus are identical in Hebrew and Greek.

The context certainly involves Joshua the son of Nun.

Joshua brought the second generation into Canaan, and they did enter into a rest as the Scriptures record (Deut. 12:9-10; Josh. 21:44; 22:4; 23:1).

Yet the author suggests that there must be a permanent, better rest for the people of God, or David would not have still been looking forward to it in his day.

Verses 6-7

The opportunity to enter God’s rest remains open “a promise remains” (in verse 1).

It is not yet too late.

God had offered the rest to His people in Moses’ time and continued to offer it in David’s time.

He is still patiently inviting His people to enter His rest (Rom. 10:21).

Quoting (Psalm 95:7-8), once again (see 3:7, 15), the author urges an immediate, and a very positive response.

The themes of urgency and obedience are thus combined in a clear invitation to the readers.

Hebrews 4:6 "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:"

Abraham believed, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

There is only one way to heaven and this rest with our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must believe, not only with our mind but in our heart, the Lord Jesus.

Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

One of the best Scriptures, in all the Bible on this is:

Romans 10:10. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Matthew 21:43 "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

Jesus came to His own in power and great glory and they did not receive Him.

John 1:11 "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

We know that Jesus had done everything He could to show them who He was and they just did not believe.

Their lack of belief opened the door for the Gentiles to receive salvation.

Romans 11:11 "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but [rather] through their fall salvation [is come] unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."

Hebrews Chapter 4 Questions

1. What lesson are we to learn from Hebrews chapter 4 verse 1?
2. Who is the best example of someone walking with God and then turning against Him?
3. Where in the Scriptures, do we find a people losing their chance to enter the Promised Land for backsliding?
4. The Promised Land of God is not for whom?
5. Why did God make the doubters wander 40 years?

6. What is the thing that concerns the author in our society today?
7. What does Matthew 7:22 tell us about those who profess Christianity, who do not really live it?
8. Who are all 10 virgins in Matthew chapter 25 symbolic of?
9. Why were 5 of them not acceptable to Jesus?
10. Who are the “them”, in Hebrews 4:3?
11. Why did the message given not become profitable to them?
12. The world by wisdom knew _____. _____.
13. What are the two things that happen when we preach?
14. God hath chosen you from the beginning to salvation through what?
15. For how long have the works of salvation been done?
16. What does Revelation 20:4 say the Christians will be doing, during the thousand year rest?
17. Who established the 6 days of work and one day of rest?
18. What is one of the most wonderful promises Jesus made the believer, found in Matthew chapter 11?
19. What caused the people of the earth to have to work the land for a living for the last approx. 6000 years?
20. Where do we find the Scripture that a day can be as a thousand years with God?
21. When is the return of the Son of man?
22. Abraham's _____ made him righteous in the sight of God.
23. He that cometh to God must _____ _____ _____.
24. Without what, it is impossible to please God?
25. With the _____ man believeth unto righteousness: and with the _____ confession is made unto salvation.
26. What did the Jew do, that opened the door to the Gentile for salvation?