

Hebrews Chapter 4 Continued

Hebrews 4:7 "Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

Those who hear the Word of God have an obligation to receive the Word. God will not always strive with man. God offered salvation to the Jew first, but when they refused to accept it, He turned from them and sent the message to the Gentiles, who readily accepted it.

God deals with each of us on an individual basis. There is a time when God will say, That is enough, and will not call us any longer. We must accept salvation, the day it is offered.

2 Corinthians 6:2 "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation".

How can we neglect so great salvation, knowing that today might be the last time it is offered to us?

Verses 8-10: God's true rest did not come through Joshua or Moses, but through Jesus Christ; who is greater than either one. Joshua led the nation of Israel into the land of their promised rest. However, that was merely the earthly rest which was only the shadow of what was involved in the heavenly rest.

The very fact that (according to Psalm 95), God was still offering His rest in the time of David (long after Israel had been in the Land), meant that the rest being offered was spiritual, superior to that which Joshua obtained. Israel's earthly rest was filled with the attacks of enemies and the daily cycle of work.

The heavenly rest is characterized by the fullness of heavenly promise (Eph. 1:3), and the absence of any labor to obtain it.

Hebrews 4:8 "For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day."

This is just explaining that this day of rest offered to the believers is not for their time here in the flesh, but is a promise of things to happen in the future at the second coming of Christ. This time of rest is not for the world to experience, but for those who endure to the end, and remain faithful.

Acts 14:22 "Confirming the souls of the disciples, [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

Verses 9-11: "Rest": involves more than mere inactivity. It follows the satisfactory completion of a task. Salvation-rest is the gift to the believer, resulting from Christ's finished work (Romans 5:1-2).

Hebrews 4:9 "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

"Rest": A different Greek word for "rest" meaning "Sabbath rest" is introduced here, and this is its only appearance in the New Testament. The writer chose the word to draw the readers' attention back to the "seventh day" (mentioned in verse 4), and to set up the explanation in verse 10 ("rested from his works, as God did for His").

This means that the people of God will have a time when they cease from labor. In fact all of the troubles of this sinful world will be no more for those who have chosen Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Revelation 7:14-17 "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Hebrews 4:10 "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God [did] from his."

Revelation 14:13 "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed [are] the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

We know that after we are dead we can do no work for the Lord. We must do our work while we are alive, because after we are dead, it is too late. Work is for this earth, and the rewards come in heaven, as we see in Jesus' own words in the next Scripture.

Revelation 22:12 "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

The earth, and heaven, and all therein contained were created in 6 days and God rested; Jesus worked 6 hours on the cross, and now is resting, sitting at the right hand of the Father. We, also, will rest with Him at the right hand of the throne, if we continue in the faith of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:21 "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Verses 11-13: The concluding third part of the exposition of (Psalm 95:7-11), emphasizes the accountability which comes to those who have heard the Word of God. Scripture records the examples of those in the wilderness with Moses, those who entered Canaan with Joshua, and those who received the same opportunity in David's day. It is the Word which must be believed and obeyed and the Word which will judge the disobedient (1 Cor. 10:5-13).

Hebrews 4:11 "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

2 Peter 1:10 "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:" "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The sad thing sometimes, is that some who start out with Jesus do not remain steadfast. When troubles come, they falter. Trials of this world have a way of separating those who truly belong to God, from those who are just pretenders.

Verses 12-13: "For the word of God:" The reason given for one's careful scrutiny of his life involves the reality that God is intently scrutinizing it. His word is "Quick" (living). This word is first in the Greek and is the emphasis.

God's Word is not old or archaic; it is alive. It is not inept or inactive; it is "powerful" (active). It reaches into the inner secrets of man's mind to discern even his "thoughts and intents." Likewise, God's eye sees man as though he were naked, unable to hide behind excuse or pretense.

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

"Twoedged sword": While the Word of God is comforting and nourishing to those who believe, it is a tool of judgment and execution for those who have not committed themselves to Jesus Christ.

Some of the Hebrews were merely going through the motions of belonging to Christ. Intellectually, they were at least partly persuaded, but inside they were not committed to Him. God's Word would expose their shallow beliefs and even their false intentions (1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Pet. 4-5).

"Dividing asunder of soul and spirit": These terms do not describe two separate entities (any more than "thoughts and intentions" do), but are used as one might say "heart and soul" to express fullness (Luke 10:27; Acts 4:32; 1 Thess. 5:23). Elsewhere these two terms are used interchangeably to describe man's immaterial self, his eternal inner person.

Throughout the Bible, we are taught that the weapon of the Christian is their Bible; the Twoedged Sword. Christians are in a battle between the flesh and the Spirit. You might even say that this war is between the world and God's people. Christians make up God's army. The object of this war is the salvation of the people. We are in the last hours of battle.

True Christians must put on their uniform and come forward to the front lines. Our uniform is the same one mentioned (in the 6th chapter of Ephesians), except we have patches on our knees from praying.

Ephesians 6:13-18 "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;" "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;" "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:" "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"

We must keep our powder dry. We must not water down the Word of God as many of the new Bibles do. Some are watered down to the extent that Jesus is no longer God. The battle is in the last hours and all good soldiers of the Lord are needed in His army now. This army must be willing to fight to the death, if necessary. There is no time left for fun and games, we are at war.

The heart of man is really what he is. If you have a wicked heart, then you are a wicked man, if you have a good heart you are a good man.

Luke 6:45 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

Sometimes to be a Christian, a person has to give up family and friends. Christianity divides families sometimes. The two great powers in the world are the spoken and the written Word. The power of God is in His Word.

Hebrews 4:13 "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things [are] naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

“Opened unto the eyes of him”: “Open”: is a specialized term used just this one time in the New Testament. It originally meant to expose the neck either in preparation for sacrifice or for beheading. Perhaps the use of “sword” in the previous verse triggered the term.

Everyone, is judged not only by the Word of God (John 12:48), but by God Himself. We are accountable to the living, written Word (John 6:63, 68; Acts7:38), and to the living God who is its author.

God knows not only what you have done, but He knows your thoughts and He knows the desires of your heart. His eyes look into the very soul of man.

1 Peter 3:12 "For the eyes of the Lord [are] over the righteous, and his ears [are open] unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord [is] against them that do evil."

Verses 14-15: At this point the author begins his discussion of Christ as "high priest". His priestly ministry is far superior to any other priests, because of the intercession He provides. The earthly high priest, with fear, once a year gained access to the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies; Christ not only has access to but is seated in the very presence of God the father.

Yet, prior to this position, He partook of man's nature and temptations so that He might sympathize (2:14-18), "yet without sin". To imagine that since Jesus could not sin He could not suffer, misses the point of the passage. Temptation can be a reality apart from sin.

"God cannot be "tempted with evil" (James 1:13), yet God is tried or tempted (Greek peirazo), by men (3:9; Acts 15:10). Yet, beyond the statements of this passage, He who was God, though made like man, could not sin (being impeccable); and indeed, He need not sin to be human.

Before Adam sinned, he was completely human. The glorified saint will never again be able to sin, yet he remains human. Temptation is greatest in duration and intensity when one does not accept the "easy" way out by sinning. If man's temptation is greater when he endures it, surely Christ's was great since He had no alternative in His humanity, but to endure it.

Hebrews 4:14 "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession."

"Passed into the heavens": Just as the High-Priest under the Old Covenant passed through 3 areas (the outer court, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies), to make the atoning sacrifice, Jesus passed through 3 heavens, the atmospheric heaven, the stellar heaven and God's abode; (2 Cor. 12:2-4), after making the perfect, final sacrifice.

Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the High-Priest of Israel would enter the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the sins of the people (Lev. 16). That tabernacle was only a limited copy of the heavenly reality (8:1-5).

When Jesus entered into the heavenly Holy of Holies, having accomplished redemption, the earthly facsimile was replaced by the reality of heaven itself. Freed from that which is earthly, the Christian faith is characterized by the heavenly (3:1; Eph. 1:3; 2:6; Phil. 3:20; Col. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:4).

Hebrews 8:1 "Now of the things which we have spoken [this is] the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;"

Hebrews 9:12 "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us]."

Romans 8:34 "Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

These Scriptures above tell us that Jesus Christ is the High Priest for all believers. He is our way into the holy of holies. He is constantly pleading our case to the Father. Jesus' sacrifice of His body on the cross was our payment for all time. He is our High Priest forever.

Hebrews 4:15 "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin."

“Tempted like as we are”: The writer here adds to his statements (in 2:18), that Jesus was sinless. He was able to be tempted (Matt. 4:1-11), but not able to sin.

Impeccability of Christ: Two words, temptability and impeccability, describe Christ in His temptation. The basic idea of temptability is “to be appealed to.” Christ was in this sense tempted, but He was not tempted with evil nor was He tempted by evil desires (James 1:13).

As God, He could not be tempted with evil. The word impeccability means Christ as God could not have sinned. The comparative attributes of God made it impossible for him to sin when He was tempted.

As you read about Christ’s temptation, notice that He did not rely on His attributes, but on the Word of God to resist the temptation of Satan. In this same way, the Christian today can overcome temptation (Psalm 119:9-11).

Jesus Christ the Righteous “our Lord”, took on flesh so that He might relate to us in our flesh. Jesus fasted 40 days and was tempted by the devil. Jesus Christ was the only one who ever lived above sin.

Philippians 2:7-8 "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:" "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Hebrews 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

“Come boldly unto the throne of grace”: Most ancient rulers were unapproachable by anyone but their highest advisers (Esther 4:11). In contrast, the Holy Spirit calls for all to come confidently before God’s throne to receive mercy and grace through Jesus Christ (7:25; 10:22; Matt. 27:51).

The Ark of the Covenant was viewed as the place on earth where God sat enthroned between the cherubim (2 Kings 19:15; Jer. 3:16-17). Oriental thrones included a footstool, yet another metaphor for the ark (Psalm 132:7). It was at the throne of God that Christ made atonement for sins, and it is there that grace is dispensed to believers for all the issues of life (2 Cor. 4:15; 9:8; 12:9; Eph. 1:7; 2:7).

“Grace to you” became a standard greeting among believers who celebrated this provision (Rom. 1:7; 16:20, 24; 1 Cor. 1:3; 16:23; 2 Cor. 1:2; 13:14; Gal. 1:3; 6:18; Eph. 1:2; 6:24; Phil. 1:2; 4:18; Col. 1:2; 4:18; 1 Thess. 1:1; 5:28; 2 Thess. 1:2; 3:18; 1 Tim. 1:2; 6:21; 2 Tim. 1:2; 4:22; Titus 1:4; 3:15; Philemon. 3, 25).

Only Christianity provides such boldness for sinful men before a holy God, and that boldness is possible only because of our High Priest. The figure of a “throne” suggests place of authority and provision. It is the place to obtain God’s grace when it is especially needed.

Jesus Christ tore down the curtain separating God from mankind when He died on the cross.

Matthew 27:51 "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;"

The way to the Father is provided through the name of Jesus. Jesus gave us the right to use His name. We pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. When we pray in the name of Jesus, God answers our prayers.

John 14:13-14 "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do [it]."

Hebrews Chapter 4 Continued Questions

1. What is the warning given in Hebrews 4:7?
2. What is the obligation of those hearing the Word of God?
3. When is the acceptable time of salvation?
4. When is this day of rest for the believers?
5. We must through much _____ enter the kingdom of God.
6. These who have come out of great tribulation have done what to make them righteous?
7. Who is the Lamb?
8. Describe the problems that we had on earth, that we will have no more in heaven.
9. Work is for the earth, and what is in heaven?
10. God is going to give us according to what?
11. How long did Jesus work on the cross?

12. Who will sit with Jesus on His throne?
13. What is a sad thing about some Christians?
14. What is the Word of God called in Hebrews 4:12?
15. The battle that Christians are in is between whom?
16. What is the object of this war?
17. What is the difference in our uniform, and the one in Ephesians chapter 6?
18. Describe the uniform in chapter 6 of Ephesians.
19. What is meant by keeping our powder dry?
20. Why is there no time for fun and games?
21. Out of the abundance of the heart the _____.
22. The power of God is in His _____.
23. The eyes of the Lord are over the _____.
24. Who is Jesus called in Hebrews 4:14?
25. With what did Jesus acquire eternal redemption for us?
26. Why is Jesus able to relate to our feelings?
27. Jesus was obedient to what extent?
28. Where do we read that the veil of the temple was torn from the top to the bottom?
29. When did this occur?
30. What was the purpose of the veil being torn?