

I. Review

- A. Our Merciful and Faithful High Priest - The author has presented his arguments for the identity of Jesus as both God the Son (Fully God) and the son of Man (Fully Man). These two realities of who He is have positioned Him to be the perfect Captain and High Priest of our salvation.
1. Perfect Captain - Jesus is the author, pioneer, orchestrator, and pathfinder of our salvation. He charted His own course and ours. He is the originator, source, leader, and finisher of our salvation. (Heb. 2:10, 12:1-2; Rev. 1:8, 11)
 2. Merciful and Faithful High Priest - He shared in “all things” with us in our humanity so that He could be a merciful and faithful High Priest. The writer is currently focused upon the voluntary depths of His temptation and suffering that He endured so He could fully relate to our weakness.

II. Verse By Verse (Heb. 3:7-4:13)

- A. The writer has shown the superiority of the leadership, faithfulness, and mercy of Jesus over all others, greatly surpassing even Moses in His identity as the captain of our salvation. There is no doubt of His deep zeal and steadfastness in His commitment to bringing many sons to glory. The writer now looks at the other side of the coin. Namely our faithfulness to Him. The redemption narrative of humanity is not a picture of a God who walks away from His people, but instead a devastating repetition of humanity turning away from a God who has gone to the depths to keep them in His love. (Jer. 11:7, 25:3-4, 35:14, 44:4; Lk. 20:9-16)

“The grand and terrible lesson of Israel’s history is that it is the case of many to begin well and end poorly. In fact, this tragic human tendency dominates much of human history and experience in God.” Dwight Pentecost

- B. **(Heb. 3:7-11)** - The writer now quotes Psalm 95 which begins with a prophetic look into the great joy and rejoicing of a grateful people who have seen and experienced salvation and fully realize the greatness and worth of Jesus, the great God and king of the ages. The psalm ends with a clarion call to the people who have not yet seen the fullness of salvation and understood the depths of the greatness and worth of Jesus, and calls them to remain faithful to Him in the midst of the waiting. (Ps. 95:7-11)

1. Today - Notice this is a psalm to generations beyond the Israelites exodus and wilderness journey into the promised land. Now as David's son rules all of the promised land, and has rid the land of all enemies on every side, there is an invitation given by the Holy Spirit to press on in faith to see the true promised land and reality of "rest" which Israel's current circumstances only faintly point to. The same reality of "today" speaks to all of us who await the promise of salvation and enter the eternal rest of the restoration of all things. (1 King 5:4; 1 Chron. 22:15-19)
 - a. If those who followed Moses were responsible to surrender, trust, and persevere in following God's leader, we are much more responsible to do the same with a greater leader, Jesus.
 2. They shall not enter my Rest - All scholars agree that the meaning of this word speaks not just about entrance into rest but all the things that accompany an eternal reality of it. In other words, entering God's rest for Israel would not just be crossing over the Jordan into the land of promise, or for the Christian today, rest would not be simply entering heaven one day, but rather the fulfillment of every single promise and reality that accompanies those promises of the age of rest to come.
- C. **(Heb. 3:12-15)** The writer is now going to draw on the truths of Ps. 95 and apply it to the believers of his day, that they need to continue in their faith while it is still "today" and they are just as in danger of unbelief as all of those who died in the wilderness because of their disobedience.
1. Brethren beware of departing from God - Let it be made clear that the writer is talking to saved believers who have confessed Christ as their Lord and Savior. They are actually so bold in their faith in Jesus that they are being publicly persecuted for it. The writer is warning them to beware of the real possibility of them departing from their faith. (Heb. 10:32-34)
 2. But exhort one another daily - One of the greatest strengths, if not the greatest strength, to your faith is your intentionality to join community with an emphasis on giving and receiving encouragement in your walk with God. The writer of Hebrews is adamant on this point to his audience. As far as practical application, this is their primary exhortation. (Heb. 10:24-25)

“This emphasis on the importance of fellowship stands in the face of society’s thinking. A United States survey found that more than 78% of the general public and 70% of churchgoing people believed that “you can be a good Christian without attending church gathering or small group” (Roof and McKinney)

3. For we are partakers if we hold steadfast to the end - There is no room here for a false teaching that says if you get confirmed and baptised at fifteen years old, you're eternally secure, or if you have truly confessed Christ at eighteen, you're always saved no matter what you choose to believe and confess throughout the rest of your life. This letter is being written out of real concern for long-term believers who are in danger of losing their inheritance of salvation by denying Jesus. (2 Thess. 2:3-4; 1 Tim 4:1)

D. **(Heb. 3:16-19)** - The writer now shows that the disqualifier or the hardening of the heart in disobedience was not related to obedience to walking out the commandments of the Torah but rather unbelief to and response to the promise of God to enter the promised land and inherit salvation.

1. They did not obey and could not enter because of unbelief - The common thought of most believers is to think the key to entering rest is obedience. However, the writer shows the disobedience mentioned in this passage is an outgrowth of unbelief. The unbelief came first, then the disobedience. They were saved and qualified by belief or faith in the promises of God and that belief stirred up obedience to His commands. They departed from God through their unbelief which stirred up disobedience to His commands. (Num. 13:30-14:11; 14:28-32)
2. Israel in the Wilderness, the Prophetic Picture - It is imperative that we understand the context of this story and the application that the writer is making to believers in his day and in ours. You cannot take away the reality or historicity of the Israelites exodus from Egypt, but you also must recognize the prophetic significance of their story. Their story is our story.
 - a. They all were longing for the promise of God given to their Fathers and crying out for deliverance.
 - b. They all were brought out of the house of death and bondage by the mighty hand and outstretched arm of God.

- c. They all encountered the word, heart, and jealous fiery love of God on the mountain and in the pillar and cloud
 - d. They all were fed and watered daily through miraculous miracles of God's provision.
 - e. They all were chastened and reproved as children by their loving father who desired to keep them from going astray.
 - f. They all were destined and qualified by God to enter into the fullness of Salvation and had all said yes to God in their desire and diligence to enter into His rest.
 - g. They all hardened their hearts over and over until they all eventually died in their unbelief and never inherited salvation.
3. It is astounding to realize that it was not their sinful actions that disqualified them from entering the promised land or promised rest. It was not the difficult circumstances, or lack of evidence of God's existence or power or clarity concerning God's person or intentions. It was their conscious choice to not believe that God would or was able to come through on His promise. (Rom. 4:13-5:5)