

Commentary on Hebrews 2 through 4

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Heb 2:1 ¶ Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip.

Heb 2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*.

Heb 2:4 God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

The passage begins with "therefore" based upon the entirety of first chapters theme of the Son's preeminence over the angels. The authors point here in the first 3 verses is that we must pay attention to the teachings Yahweh has given through His Son (1:2), taking care to remember them so we don't let these things slip away.

The word spoken by angels was steadfast, and all law-breaking was punished then justly. How much more then will be the penalty for neglecting the message through and about the Son? How will we escape if we neglect this great salvation? The answer is we will not. This is the key theme through chapters 2 through 4, not neglecting the salvation and preeminence of the Son of Yahweh, Yeshua Messiah.

Yahweh bore witness means that Yahweh stands there like a witness for those who verse 3 speaks of at the end - them that heard the Lord. They had Yahweh witnessing to the truth of their ministry. The way He did this was with signs, wonders, miracles, and spiritual gifts. In other words, they are speaking the truth about the Lord (Yeshua), and Yahweh backs them up. The proof was the witness that He bore in all these miraculous occurrences.

Heb 2:5 ¶ For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

Notice that the contrast continues to be between the angels (angelic, heavenly beings) and Yeshua the Messiah. Notice also that the subject is "the world to come" i.e. the Kingdom of Heaven. That's the world that the author of Hebrews is speaking about in this entire section of his letter, all the way up to the end of chapter 4.

Heb 2:6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

Heb 2:7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

Heb 2:8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

Heb 2:9 But we see [Yeshua], who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

The whole thrust of the author of Hebrews (chapters 2 through 5) is to keep our faith in Yeshua the Messiah. We must keep believing and obeying in order to be saved. This is why the author writes in Hebrews 5:9.

Heb 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation **unto all them that obey him.**

Hebrews 1 through 2 is all about remaining steadfast in faith towards Yeshua the Messiah. This section puts it best. Steadfast means obedient. Obedience is the natural flow and outworking of a person dedicated to Yeshua.

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With this in mind, the thought continues in chapter 3 (remember that the chapters are placed in by man).

Heb 3:1 ¶ Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest **of our profession**, Messiah Yeshua.

Notice how Yeshua is lifted up here as Apostle and High Priest. Our faith must be in him because that is how Yahweh planned out salvation long ago.

I want to also point out that Yeshua is "Apostle Yeshua." We don't normally call him that or even think of him as an Apostle. Apostle literally means "sent one," and he was sent out to do the work of the ministry by Yahweh his Father.

Heb 3:2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.

Heb 3:3 For this *man* [Yeshua the Messiah] was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

Heb 3:4 For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God.

Heb 3:5 And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

Heb 3:6 But Messiah as a son over his own house; whose house are we, **if we hold fast the confidence** and the rejoicing of the hope **firm unto the end.**

Yeshua Messiah is greater than Moshe, and we belong in his house IF we hold fast our confidence and hope firmly unto the end.

Heb 3:7 ¶ Wherefore (as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye will hear his voice,
Heb 3:8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

Here the author begins to quote a passage from Psalm 95:7-11. Notice that the author is referencing the time period in the wilderness. He is writing about the Israelites wandering in the desert. His point is that the audience he is writing to doesn't need to harden their hearts like the people did in the wilderness. The children in the wilderness were Yahweh's Israel people, and saw many signs and wonders, but *most* of them did not enter the promised land of Canaan.

Heb 3:9 When your fathers [Israelite fathers] tempted me, proved me, and saw my [Yahweh's] works forty years [notice 40 years in the wilderness].

Heb 3:10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation [those people in the wilderness], and said, They do always err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.

Heb 3:11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) [The rest of the land of Canaan. The rebellious Israelites in the wilderness would not enter into this land of rest.]

Heb 3:12 Take heed, brethren, [the author's current audience; descendants of those who died in the wilderness] lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

Notice that the subject in Hebrews 3 has much to do with the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel and the fact that those who had a heart of unbelief/disobedience did not enter into the rest of the land of Canaan. They are an example to us today. Let's continue.

Heb 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Heb 3:14 For we are made partakers of Messiah, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

The author brings up exhorting one another daily to not sin, and then notice that he mentions again being partakers of the Messiah, but only **IF** we hold the beginning of our faith firm to the end.

Heb 3:15 While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. [another quotation of Psalm 95:7-8 which is a text about the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel]

Heb 3:16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. [notice the reference to coming out of Egypt]

Heb 3:17 But with whom was he grieved **forty years**? *was it* not with them that had **sinned**, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? [Yahweh was grieved with them who sinned, rebelled, unbelief, disobedience - and this all happened in the wilderness.]

Heb 3:18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that **believed not**? [Yahweh swore that they, the unbelievers, would not enter the rest of the land of Canaan.]

Heb 3:19 So we see that they could not enter in [to the land of Canaan] because of **unbelief**.

The whole chapter concerns the children of Israel in the wilderness being an example for the children of Israel under the New Covenant that the author of Hebrews is writing to. The author is exhorting them to remain steadfast in the Messiah to the end. Just because they are part of the "New Covenant Church" doesn't mean they will be saved. In the same way, just because those in the wilderness were part of "Old Covenant Israel," did not mean they would automatically make it into the promised land of rest. Continuing...

Heb 4:1 ¶ Let us therefore **fear**, [be fearful of Yahweh, because what happened to them in the wilderness can happen to us now] lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, **any of you should seem to come short of it** [come short of salvation in the Messiah].

Heb 4:2 For unto us was **the gospel** preached, as well as unto them [the gospel was preached to Israel of old and Israel of new]: but the word preached did not profit them, not being **mixed with faith** in them that heard *it*. [Just like some of them did not have genuine faith, some now do not have genuine faith.]

Continuing...

Heb 4:3 For we which have **believed** [in Messiah] do enter into rest [its beginning], as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although [even though] the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Heb 4:4 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.

His point here is that Yahweh rested from his works of making and creating back in Genesis, but there's a greater rest. This is why he says, "We which have believed do enter into rest, **ALTHOUGH** the works were finished from the foundation of the world." The author is saying that after Yahweh rested from making and creating the heavens and earth (in Genesis), He (Yahweh) still spoke of another rest later on in Scripture. So there is a greater rest than the Genesis, Sabbath rest.

Heb 4:5 And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

The author of Hebrews keeps quoting Psalm 95 to show that another rest was spoken of AFTER the rest of creation.

Heb 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**:

Some will enter, some will not. It all depends on whether you have genuine faith or false faith. Being a visible part of Israel (the ekklesia; church in the wilderness) is not good enough. We must have belief/obedience.

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

Heb 4:8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he [Yahweh] not afterward have spoken of another day.

The author is very intelligent in his argument here. He mentions a certain day spoken about **by David** in the Psalms, and this is none other than the passage he keeps quoting - Psalm 95:7-8. This is why he says "Again" in verse 7, because he is repeating himself.

The author then mentions Joshua in the next verse. The reason the author mentions Joshua is because (1) the whole context has been about the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness who didn't enter the land of Canaan, and (2) because he just got through mentioning David. His point is that Yahweh speaks of a specific REST in the Psalms through David, so this proves that the rest that Joshua gave the believing, faithful Israelites in the land of Canaan is not the rest that Yahweh is speaking of in the future Scripture through David.

Adam Clarke may explain it better than me.

"The apostle shows that, although Joshua did bring the children of Israel into the promised land, **yet this could not be the intended rest, because long after this time the Holy Spirit, by David, speaks of this rest.**"

Albert Barnes explains it well too:

"If Joshua had given them a complete and final rest; if, by his conducting them to the promised land, all had been done which had been contemplated by the promise, **then it would not have been alluded to again, as it was in the time of David.** Joshua *did* give them a *rest* in the promised land; **but it was not all which was intended, and it did not exclude the promise of another and more important rest.**"

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

The rest that remains is the forgiveness that is first received by faith in Yeshua, which is later finalized in the Kingdom of Heaven. That's the rest we are pressing toward to enter, but we must be on guard because we will only enter if we remain steadfast to the end.

Heb 4:10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

When the time comes for us to enter the final rest of the Kingdom, we will cease from all of our labor (belief, obedience) here on the present earth, in a way that mimics how Yahweh ceased from his works of making and creating the earth.

Heb 4:11 ¶ Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Let us labor means let us make sure that we are remaining steadfast in the Messiah, and not falling into unbelief and disobedience.