

Bible Study Guide - Hebrews 4:1-16

Bellevue Church of Christ – Fall / Winter 2017-2018

Greater Than Joshua
(4:1 to 4:13)

The Greater Mediator (Chapters 1 to 7)

"let us fear"

- There is real danger
- He does not want complacency
- He is reminding them that there was a generation to whom the rest was promised and missed it.

Therefore while the *promise* of **entering his rest still stands, let us fear** lest any of you should seem to have **failed to reach it.** ²For **good news** came to us **just as to them**, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not **united by faith** with **those who listened.**

i.e. those who listened and obeyed

"entering his rest"

- Much more than merely entering Canaan
- Includes all the spiritual and eternal rewards of faith of which Canaan is a type

"good news"

The children of Israel received good news about a promised rest in Canaan

-Num 13:30; 14:7-9

We have received good news about a promised rest with God for all eternity

-Mt 11:28-29

"enter that rest"

- Present tense Ps 95:11 ->
- Some spiritual rewards of being a believer are immediate.

³For we who have believed **enter that rest**, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" although his **works were finished** from the foundation of the world. ⁴For he has somewhere spoken of the **seventh day** in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works."

<- Gen 2:2 - God's rest has been prepared from the end of creation. This rest has continued ever since.

"works were finished"

Their failure to enter God's rest was not because it was not ready.

Ps 95:11 ->

⁵And again in this passage he said, "They shall not enter my rest."

<- Again, the rest spoken of in Ps 95, was much more than just entering Canaan. It was God's rest that began at the conclusion of Creation.

⁶Since therefore it **remains for some to enter it**, and those who formerly received the **good news** failed to enter because of disobedience,

<- This is simply a summary of the argument to this point.

"so long afterward"

- The "rest" referred to by David in Ps. 95 cannot simply mean entering Canaan.

-This Psalm came approximately 500 years after Joshua finally led the Children of Israel into the promised land

-Josh 1:13

⁷again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David **so long afterward**, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

<- Ps 95:7-8

⁸For if **Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on.**

KJV > "Jesus" instead of "Joshua"

"Joshua" is the Hebrew form of the Greek name "Jesus"

"rested from his works"

2 Possibilities

(1) The rest we are promised in heaven - Rev 14:13

(2) Rest from our own works and reliance on the works of Christ

⁹So then, there remains a **Sabbath rest** for the people of God, ¹⁰for whoever has entered **God's rest** has also **rested from his works** as God did from his.

¹¹Let us therefore strive to **enter that rest**, so that no one may fall by the **same sort of disobedience.** <- 3:19



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No-one can escape the warning of Ps 95:7-11

Living / Active
Act 7:38; 1 Pet 1:23

¹²For the **word of God** is *living and active*, sharper than any *two-edged sword*, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and *discerning* the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Two Edge Sword
Isa 49:2; Eph 6:17;
Rev 1:16; 2:12; 19:15

No one can bluff their way into God's rest

Discerning
Heb 2:2-3

¹³And *no creature is hidden from his sight*, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Greater Than the Priests (4:14 to 7:28)

High Priest - 2:17; 3:1

¹⁴Since then we have a **great high priest** who has *passed through the heavens*, Jesus, the Son of God, let us **hold fast** our confession.

<- Eph 4:10;
Ph 2:9-11

Hold Fast
- 2:1-4; 3:6,14; 10:2

Jesus in the ultimate high priest:

- (1) Infinitely Powerful (14)
- (2) Infinitely Compassionate (15)
- (3) Sinless (15)

¹⁵For we do not have a **high priest** who is *unable to sympathize with our weaknesses*, but one who in every respect has been *tempted as we are*, yet *without sin*. <- 7:27; 9:14

2:17-18; Isa 53:3; Matt 4:1-11;
Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-12.

¹⁶Let us then with **confidence** draw near to the **throne of grace**, that we may receive **mercy** and find **grace** to help in time of need.

Confidence
- 3:6; 6:19; 10:19-23
- 1Co 1:27-31; Rom 5:1-11

-Our confidence comes from having the ultimate high priest
-What a privilege it is to be able to approach the throne of God with Christ as our mediator
-7:25

Hebrews Chapter 4 - Questions for Discussion

THE GREATER MEDIATOR – GREATER THAN JOSHUA (4:1-13)

What danger did these Christians face? What does the author tell them to fear? (v. 1)

What is the “rest” spoken of in verse one? What would keep us from obtaining this “rest?” (vv. 6; 3:12-18)

How was the “gospel” preached to those in the wilderness? Why did the word of God not profit them? (v. 2)

What is the significance of God resting on the seventh day? How does this further the argument of the writer? What does this argument tell us about the seventh day? (vv. 4-6, 10-11; Gen 2:2)

Why do some translations list the name “Jesus” at the beginning of verse eight, while most list “Joshua?” Which is correct?

Did Joshua lead the children of Israel to a place of promised rest? Explain. (vv. 6-10)

What proof does the writer give to show there remains a rest for the people of God? (vv. 6-10; Psalm 95:7-8)

What exhortation (“let us”) does he give regarding the rest? Is the author suggesting that this “rest” can be entered into in the present life? What is the danger if we do not diligently seek this rest? (v. 11)

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What is meant by the “Word of God” in verse 12? What are the possibilities?

How is the Word of God described? What is the overall message of this verse?
(vv. 12; Isa 49:2; Eph 6:17; Rev 1:16; 2:12; 19:15)

What does verse 13 show regarding "giving account"?

THE GREATER MEDIATOR – GREATER THAN THE PRIESTS (4:14-7:28)

What is the significance of the phrase “passed through the heavens” in describing the priesthood of Jesus? How does this compare with the High Priests from the line of Aaron? (vs. 14; Lev 16)

Why is Christ able to sympathize with our weaknesses? Why is important that the author point this out considering the earlier description that Jesus “passed through the heavens?” (v. 15)

What exhortations ("let us") does he give in view of our great High Priest?

- What does it mean to “hold fast to our confession?” (v. 14)
- Why should we feel confident in approaching God’s throne? (v. 16)

Teacher's Notes

Psalm 95:7–11 (ESV)

⁷ For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.
Today, if you hear his voice,
⁸ do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,
⁹ when your fathers put me to the test
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.
¹⁰ For forty years I loathed that generation
and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart,
and they have not known my ways."
¹¹ Therefore I swore in my wrath,
"They shall not enter my rest."

GOOD NEWS

Numbers 13:30 (ESV)

³⁰ But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it."

Numbers 14:7–9 (ESV)

⁷ and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."

Matthew 11:28–29 (ESV)

²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

WORKS WERE FINISHED

Genesis 2:2 (ESV)

² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

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SO LONG AFTERWARD

Joshua 1:13 (ESV)

¹³ “Remember the word that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.’”

RESTED FROM HIS WORKS

Revelation 14:13 (ESV)

¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

SAME SORT OF DISOBEDIENCE

Hebrews 3:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

LIVING / ACTIVE

Acts 7:38 (ESV)

³⁸ This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us.

1 Peter 1:23 (ESV)

²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

TWO EDGE SWORD

Isaiah 49:2 (ESV)

² He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow;
in his quiver he hid me away.

Ephesians 6:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

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Revelation 1:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

Revelation 2:12 (ESV)

¹² “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.’

Revelation 19:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

DISCERNING

Hebrews 2:1–4 (ESV)

¹ Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ² For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

HIGH PRIEST

Hebrews 2:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 3:1 (ESV)

¹ Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,

PASSED THROUGH THE HEAVENS

Ephesians 4:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

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Philippians 2:9–11 (ESV)

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

HOLD FAST

Hebrews 2:1–4 (ESV)

¹ Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ² For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Hebrews 3:6 (ESV)

⁶ but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

Hebrews 3:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

Hebrews 10:2 (ESV)

² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins?

TEMPTED AS WE ARE

Hebrews 2:17–18 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Isaiah 53:3 (ESV)

³ He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

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Matthew 4:1–11 (ESV)

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴ But he answered, “It is written,

“ ‘Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,
“ ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’

and

“ ‘On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ ”

⁷ Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the

kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

“ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve.’ ”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Mark 1:12–13 (ESV)

¹² The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Luke 4:1–12 (ESV)

¹ And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ² for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. ³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” ⁴ And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’ ” ⁵ And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶ and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸ And Jesus answered him, “It is written,

“ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God,
and him only shall you serve.’ ”

⁹ And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written,
“ ‘He will command his angels concerning you,

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to guard you,'
¹¹ and
“ ‘On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ ”
¹² And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

WITHOUT SIN

Hebrews 7:27 (ESV)

²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

Hebrews 9:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

CONFIDENCE

Hebrews 3:6 (ESV)

⁶ but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

Hebrews 6:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain,

Hebrews 10:19–23 (ESV)

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

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1 Corinthians 1:27–31 (ESV)

²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Romans 5:1–11 (ESV)

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

MEDIATOR

Hebrews 7:25 (ESV)

²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.