Hebrews 4:1-10

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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***Hebrews 4:1-10*** (ESV)  
**1** 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. **2** For 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. **3** For 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. **4** For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” **5** And again in this passage he said, “They shall not enter my rest.” **6** Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, **7** again 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.” **8** For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. **9** So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, **10** for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

1. Briefly summarize the first three chapters of Hebrews.

Ch 1: Yeshua sits at the right hand of God. He reigns with God and as the Son of God reigns as God himself. He is greater than angels (messengers), therefore His words and teachings are greater than any message from messengers (whether heavenly or earthly).

Ch. 2: If the Torah given through messengers was reliable and to be followed, how much more so should we then follow the words of the Messiah. Even though Yeshua is greater than the angels, and his message is greater than that given by the angels to Moses, yet Yeshua was for a while lower than angels, having become man, in order to save man from slavery to fear and death. He was sent from God to be our merciful and faithful high priest.

Ch 3: Yeshua is an apostle and high priest, greater than Moses. Moses was a servant. Yeshua was the son. We must hold fast our faith in Him, and not allow sin to harden our hearts like our ancestors did when they disobeyed Moses. And we know the result of that! None of those where disobedient were allowed to enter the promised land. Encourage one another not to fall away. Don’t be like your ancestors who didn’t listen to Moses, and didn’t receive God’s promises. NOW, listen to Yeshua, who is greater than Moses and who brings a message greater than that of Moses.

1. During their time in the wilderness, who were the Israelites who “fell short” in their faith towards YHWH? See the previous chapter (Heb 3:17-19) and Num 14 1-4 for reference.

***Hebrews 3:17–19 (ESV)***

17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

***Numbers 14:1–4 (ESV)***

1 Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?” 4 And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

The Israelites who fell short were those who did not believe Caleb and Joshua’s account and willingness to fight for the promised land. They went on to want to stone them, but God intervened and protected them. God, through Moses’ plea, spares Israel but prevents them from entering the promised land.

1. In Heb 4:1, what is meant by “failing to reach” God’s rest?

In the Old Testament account, God’s people lacked faith in God’s provision. God’s provision was not only Moses, but the spies, the promised land, and strength for battle. Israel did not trust God in the face of these trials, so they did not enter the promised land. On the same note, we are to enter the rest of God by trusting in his eternal provision, his son Yeshua, for forgiveness that allows us into God’s eternal kingdom.

1. In Heb 4:2, the author claims that the gospel was preached to Moses and the Hebrews. There is only one gospel- what is it and how is it possible that the same gospel was preached? See Num 14:8-9, Lev 17:11, Isa 53:10-11.

***Numbers 14:8–9 (ESV)***

**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.”

***Leviticus 17:11 (ESV)***

11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.

***Isaiah 53:10–11 (ESV)***

10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. 11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

To begin, the gospel is *not* Jesus died on the cross for your sins. It is part of the plan of God, but not the entire How could Jesus preach the gospel if he was alive? The gospel is to shema, trust, and repent to God for the kingdom of God is at hand! How are we to be citizens of the kingdom of God if we are not in line with his ways? We are to trust fully in God not only for his provision for a Messiah, but also in every command he gives us to obey. Our obedience shows our faith.

1. The author seems to take a turn during the next few verses, talking about “works”. Prior to this, the author was explaining how Israel was disobedient in their hearts. What then is the connection between disobedience and God’s work being “finished from the foundation of the world”? See Hos 6:6, Psa 50:13-15, and 1 Sam 15:20-23.

***Hosea 6:6 (ESV)***

**6** For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

***Psalm 50:13–15 (ESV)***

13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? 14 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, 15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

***1 Samuel 15:20–23 (ESV)***

20 And Saul said to Samuel, “I have obeyed the voice of the Lord. I have gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.” 22 And Samuel said, “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king.”

While YHWH has commandments, Israel has been known for performing works in order to appease Him and forgetting the heart behind the works. YHWH does not desire sacrifices if your heart and soul are not interested in pleasing Him. While sacrifices of animals were common then, our own sacrifices today are worth nothing if we don’t love God and truly desire to know him more. Why attend bible study if your heart isn’t driven to learn more of God? Why attend a church if your only goal is to get a “ticket into heaven”? God sees the heart *through* the action and would rather have thanksgiving. Works were *completed* at creation, man has only to be faithful to God’s provision with a grateful heart.

1. The word *shema* is the Hebrew word for “hear”, as seen in vv. 6-7. Take a few minutes and watch this interesting word study on *shema*, as it’s a rather important term that means more than the English definition of “hearing (with your ears)”. Go to [www.tinyURL.com/HebShema](http://www.tinyURL.com/HebShema) to access the video.
2. What is significant about the seventh day of creation (the Sabbath)? See Exo 31:16, Isa 58:13-14, Eze 20:11-13.

***Exodus 31:16 (ESV)***

**16** Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever.

***Isaiah 58:13–14 (ESV)***

13 “If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; 14 then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

***Ezekiel 20:11–13 (ESV)***

11 I gave them my statutes and made known to them my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live. 12 Moreover, I gave them my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them. 13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They did not walk in my statutes but rejected my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; and my Sabbaths they greatly profaned. “Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them in the wilderness, to make a full end of them.

God’s Sabbath is an everlasting reminder that we are to rest from works. Resting from your works also means that the believer is in line with God’s provision. Ceasing from works to please God shows that you know His works are sufficient and that yours are rags in comparison. The Sabbath is everlasting, which also means this promised rest the author writes of is also everlasting.

1. Joshua came long before David, but David is still calling for his people to turn to God’s rest “today”. What is the significance of the word “today” and why is it important in the author’s argument?

David knew that the rest offered by God to Joshua was not the eternal and spiritual rest that God truly offers. Just because Joshua and Caleb led Israel into the promised land doesn’t mean that we are left out of that promise today. If we hear his voice at *any* time and we wish to be in communion with God, we are to avoid hardening our hearts with grumbling. The physical rest promised to Israel then was a sign of the eternal rest offered daily by God.

1. *Entering into God’s Sabbath rest is synonymous with believing in Yeshua’s atoning work on the cross.* Is this statement accurate? How would you add to it (if at all) to make it accurate to you?

God has made it clear that giving His Sabbath was a reminder to the people that it is Him, YHWH, who sanctifies them. He is the one who makes them righteous. They were reminded through his Torah and weekly on his Sabbath. His provision, whether it be food in the desert, taking over the promised land, or eternal life, is what allows man to prevail, never our own deeds. When man begins to believe that his efforts are better than God’s, there becomes a breach in faith and a departure from rest.

I would say that “believing in Yeshua’s atoning work on the cross” is the gateway to entering YHWH’s rest. We can’t have that rest without his atoning work, so it is a requirement. But on the other hand, we won’t truly experience the totality of YHWH’s rest until Yeshua returns and does away with Satan forever.

1. What does it mean to be diligent to enter God’s rest? Remember, these believers were Jewish and were being persecuted for their belief in Yeshua.

If entering God’s rest is equated with seeking His provision, then the author is encouraging these Jewish believers to continue seeking Yeshua as God’s provision for sin. We are exhorted to continually rely on Yeshua’s sacrifice, not relying on our own works as a method to please the Father. Since God’s works were completed on the seventh day, there is no need for works beyond that. Only resting in his creation, power, and deliverance through His Messiah is needed. The works of our hands won’t save us, returning to slavery won’t save us, and grumbling won’t save us; all of these lead us away from God.