

Promise Plus Faith

This week, I am on a short detour. While studying Zephaniah 3:18 I ran into a wall that I am not unfamiliar with. According to some, that passage is the most difficult to understand in all the book of Zephaniah. I was having similar difficulties in studying tonight's passage, Hebrews 4:1-3. So God the Holy Spirit opened the door to this Hebrews chapter 4 passage. It is a call to redouble your efforts to live the Christian life by walking by faith in the promises of God.

Hebrews 4:1 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

Hebrews 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

Hebrews 4:3 For we who have believed enter that rest, just 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.

Hebrews 4:4 For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works";

Hebrews 4:5 and again in this passage, "They shall not enter My rest."

Promise Plus Faith
Hebrews 4:1-2

Hebrews 4:6 Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience,

Hebrews 4:7 He again fixes a certain day, “Today,” saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, “Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.”

Hebrews 4:8 For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.

Hebrews 4:9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

Hebrews 4:10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

Hebrews 4:11 Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.

Hebrews 4:1-2 is a passage I wanted to study for several weeks. As I studied it, I realized I had stepped into some difficulties I was not originally prepared to teach. I am indebted to Robby Dean for his keen insights into the book of Hebrews.

There is a warning that Robby Dean starts with in his study of the book of Hebrews:

Promise Plus Faith
Hebrews 4:1-2

“This is a book that many people love to study. It is also a book that many people don't understand. This is one of the most difficult books in the New Testament to interpret. One of the reasons is because it is so heavily based on Old Testament theology. If you do not have an adequate understanding of Old Testament theology, then it becomes very difficult to interpret the book of Hebrews. It was written to an audience that obviously was well versed in Old Testament ritual. They understood the Levitical offerings, the Levitical priesthood, the operations of the tabernacle, and the doctrinal import of those things from an Old Testament vantage point. So the writer, in an extremely skillful and logical way, builds an intricate web of arguments to support the doctrines of the deity and the humanity of Christ which in turn lead to the doctrine of His high priesthood, His unique Melchizedekian priesthood.¹”

Before delving into the text of Hebrews, first is presented an outline from Robby Dean.² This provides a context for the passage within the book of Hebrews.

Theme of Hebrews: “I would say that the theme of the whole epistle is the implications of the Savior's session on the current sanctification of the saints and their future service in the kingdom.”

1 <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/hebrews-menuitem/message/2005-hebrews-001/read>

2 <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/hebrews-menuitem/message/2005-hebrews-003/read>

Promise Plus Faith
Hebrews 4:1-2

Section 1 Hebrews 1:1-2:4

The writer has an opening salvo in 1:1-4. It is a tour de force introducing the central themes of his message.

Doctrinal Exposition 1:5-14

Practical Exhortation and Warning 2:1-4

Section 2 Hebrews 2:5 – 4:13

In this section we learn that God sent His eternally begotten Son to qualify for the Davidic sonship in the incarnation to the end that He would establish His kingdom on the earth.

Doctrinal Exposition 2:5-3:6

Practical Exhortation and Warning 3:7-4:13

Section 3 Hebrews 4:14-6:20

The High Priesthood of Christ is now emphasized in the third section.

Doctrinal Exposition 4:14-5:10

Exhortation and Warning 5:11-6:20

Section 4 Hebrews 7:1-10:39

In this section he returns to his theme of the High Priesthood of Christ that is according to the order of Melchizedek.

Doctrinal Exposition 7:1-10:18

Exhortation and Warning 10:19-10:39

Section 5 Hebrews 11:1-13:25

Chapter 11 is the familiar Hall of Faith chapter.

Chapter 13 ties things together.

Doctrinal Exposition 11:1-46

Exhortation 12:1-29

Warning 12:25-29

Promise Plus Faith
Hebrews 4:1-2

The passage for this lesson starts with and is focused on Hebrews 4:1-3. This is not an exposition of the book of Hebrews, just these few verses. But the book is based heavily on the Old Testament. This means that there is a thread of the fabric of Scripture we must follow from the Old Testament to our passage.

There are some terms that must be explored before starting our journey in the text.

Intertextuality/Fabric of Scripture.

Something I call the fabric of Scripture is nothing more than the use of or reference to one or more passages in the Bible by another passage. New Testament quotes are the easiest example. You are perhaps familiar with the multitude of Old Testament prophecies that the New Testament writers use to show that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. He fulfilled the prophecies in a variety of ways. That has been explained previously.

Hebrews quotes several Old Testament passages. The arguments presented in the book of Hebrews are based upon Old Testament instructions such as the sacrifices in the book of Leviticus.

In our passage, Hebrews 4:3 quotes from Psalm 95.

Psalm 95:8 Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,

Psalm 95:9 “When your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work.

Psalm 95:10 “For forty years I loathed that generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways.

**Psalm 95:11 “Therefore I swore in My anger,
Truly they shall not enter into My rest.”**

But Psalm 95 is based upon events that occurred in Numbers and summarized in Deuteronomy.

Numbers 14:22 Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice,

Numbers 14:23 shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it.

Which leads to

Deuteronomy 1:34 “Then the Lord heard the sound of your words, and He was angry and took an oath, saying,

Deuteronomy 1:35 ‘Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers,

Deuteronomy 1:36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and to his sons I will give the land on which he has set foot, because he has followed the Lord fully.’

Promise Plus Faith
Hebrews 4:1-2

Here is a thread dealing with Israel's failure to use faith plus promise:

Numbers 14 → Deuteronomy 1 → Psalm 95 → Hebrews 4

A vocabulary word that is key to our understanding of this passage.

Salvation

Again from Robby Dean:

“That word salvation is the word *soteria*. When you and I talk about salvation we think of justification. Remember justification is what happens at the instant we put our faith alone in Jesus Christ. At that instant God the Father imputes to you the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. He looks at you in possession of and covered over by the perfect righteousness of Christ. He declares you to be just before His justice. Because you possess the perfect righteousness of Christ, God pronounced you justified. So the technical term that Paul uses for this in Romans is justification by faith alone. Modern Americans and modern evangelicals have taken the word "salvation" to be the equivalent of justification. But that is very unusual in the Scripture. The word group *sozo* the root verb simply means to be delivered. So it can mean to be delivered from a physical malady. Then it has the idea of being healed. It can have the idea of being delivered from a tragedy. It can have the idea of rescued from danger. Or it can have the idea when it is applied to eternal condemnation of being rescued from eternal condemnation. That's the way in which we use it. But the way the noun is used by the Apostle Paul, by James and by the writer of Hebrews is not to refer to what we talk about as phase 1 justification, but the word *soteria* meaning salvation or deliverance usually has a future orientation. You have to look at the context to see when that future event occurs. In the context of Hebrews 1:14 I pointed out that inheritance comes at the Judgment Seat of Christ. So therefore the focus of *soteria* in Hebrews 1:14 relates to our

Promise Plus Faith
Hebrews 4:1-2

deliverance and final glorification and appearance before the Judgment Seat of Christ. When we understand that word in Hebrews 1:14 to have that future meaning then in Hebrews 2:3 which is in the middle of the application or exhortation of that first chapter we read the following.³” Let me interrupt here and delve into the “tenses of salvation.”

This brings us to the realization that salvation, from a believer’s perspective is in three phases or as Andy Woods says, tenses.

Phase	Justification	<u>Sanctification</u>	Glorification
Tense	Past	<u>Present</u>	Future
Saved from sin’s:	Penalty	<u>Power</u>	Presence
Scripture	Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5	<u>Philip 2:12</u>	Rom 5:10

4

The Three Phases/Tenses of Salvation

Phase 1: Justification

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved (Perfect Passive Participle – saved in the past with enduring results) through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

Ephesians 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Phase 2: Sanctification

3 <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/hebrews-menuitem/message/2005-hebrews-036b/read>

4 https://cdn.slbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/13092857/SLBC-001_Soteriology-01_06_2016.pdf

Promise Plus Faith
Hebrews 4:1-2

Philippians 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation (Present Passive Imperative – this is for the here and now) **with fear and trembling;**

Phase 3: Glorification

Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved (future passive indicative) **by His life.**

Now, these each have a time perspective of when it takes place. Phase 1 is when the believer puts his trust in Jesus Christ as savior. Phase 2 takes place in time as the believer combines promises/doctrine with faith in the faith rest life. Phase 3 starts in eternity. But they all are forward looking. Phase 1 is salvation or deliverance from the Lake of Fire (the negative) and entrance into the Millennium and eternity with Jesus Christ (the positive). It also places us into phase 2 in which we can exercise our free will and trust the promises/doctrines of God. By so doing we receive blessings in time and rewards in the Millennium and eternity. Phase 3 is the Judgment Seat of Christ, then entrance into the Millennium and eternity, the eternal rest.

Back to Robby Dean for a conclusion:

“So what is the conclusion from this? The conclusion is that we have to take the Christian life seriously. This isn't just about academics. It's not just about understanding the Bible. It's not just some interesting facts. There are serious consequences to what we do with what we learn. To

Promise Plus Faith
Hebrews 4:1-2

whom much is given, much is expected. This is building something in our soul and that is the only thing that goes with us after we die physically. It is what we take with us into eternity. It builds a capacity for responsibility. It builds a capacity for righteousness. It builds a capacity for leadership and a capacity for wisdom that is the basis for our ability to rule and reign with Jesus Christ in the Millennial Kingdom.⁵

That is good news, which we find in

Hebrews 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us,...

Robby Dean's insight on "good news" in this verse:

"By gospel he does not mean to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is simply the Greek word euangelizo that means to announce good news."

"We both had a message of promise. It is not the gospel in terms of how to get justified. It is simply a Greek word meaning the announcement of good news."

"The good news for them is that there is a Promised Land that I am taking you to. The good news for us is that we are headed for the Millennial Kingdom."

"So we have Church Age believers who will be able to enter the rest and you have by analogy these Old Testament believers that can't enter the rest. He keeps going back and forth to this analogy. He is very repetitive here. He wants to make sure that everybody gets the point. They failed to enter the Promised Land and forfeited it because they didn't mix their understanding of God's Word with faith. They continued in unbelief. Don't you do it. Be fearful because you may forfeit future blessings the same way."

⁵ <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/hebrews-menuitem/message/2005-hebrews-036b/read>

Promise Plus Faith
Hebrews 4:1-2

The point is to keep on using faith-rest in your life to advance toward maturity and Millennial blessings bestowed upon us at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Faith rest was a lesson taught in 2021. Below are some excerpts from that lesson. To review that lesson, you can go to:

<http://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Speakers/notes/20210620GuestSpeaker330.pdf>

<http://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Speakers/notes/20210627GuestSpeaker332.pdf>

One student of Thieme said:

“R.B. Thieme, Jr. developed the doctrine of the faith-rest drill early on in his ministry. The term faith rest describes the way of life of the believer in the Old Testament and faith rest is one of the spiritual mechanics in our lives as believers in the Church Age.”

http://kukis.org/Doctrines/faith_rest.pdf

From another student of Thieme, Hal Lindsey, in “Combat Faith” (p 34):

“The faith-rest, briefly described, is that principle taught in the Word of God by which we enter a divinely provided dynamic rest from struggling to live for God. This is done by believing the promises of God’s Word, which releases God to work in and through us with His mighty power and wisdom. Even the indispensable means of living the Christian life called “walking in the Spirit” is appropriated by believing God’s promises of the Holy Spirit’s ministry to us.”

Robbie Dean has a keen insight on how faith-rest works:

Promise Plus Faith
Hebrews 4:1-2

“The first step in the faith-rest drill is to mix faith with a promise. The second step is to think through the doctrinal rationales that are embedded in that promise. We come to a certain conclusion, and the conclusion isn't simply a statement of that proposition. We come to the conclusion that God is in control.” [3John lesson 13]

Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, wrote about being filled with the Spirit by faith:

“How can one be filled with the Holy Spirit? We are filled with the Spirit by faith. We received Christ by faith. We walk by faith. Everything we receive from God, from the moment of our spiritual birth until we die, is by faith. Do you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit? You can be filled right now, wherever you are, by faith. [<https://www.cru.org/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/transferable-concepts.html>]

Hal Lindsey on the power behind faith:

“Faith works because God is faithful and able to keep His promises. The more we learn about God, the more we become certain of the things for which we hope. It is our knowledge and confidence in the object of faith that grows, not faith itself.” [Combat Faith, p22]

“Another important part of the Bible’s definition is that in and of itself, faith has no effective power to accomplish God’s work. The power in true faith comes from its object. Biblical faith must have an object, and that object is God Himself.” [Combat Faith, p24]

“Everything about the biblical definition of faith stresses that it is not something in us that makes it work, but rather the character of God that makes it work. This prevents faith itself from becoming a human work and gives all the glory of our faith exploits to God.” [Combat Faith, p24]