

HEBREWS – PRESSING ON

“Lord, Please Don’t Let Me Grow Mildew!”

Week 5

Mankind sinned and IMMEDIATELY God promised the Redeemer who would WILLINGLY (Isa. 53:10; Phil. 2:5ff) empty Himself of His glory (NOT empty Himself of deity) and identify with man as the God/man (100% God/100% man – hypostatic union) – die for our sins and receive dominion of the earth by receiving the kingdom from the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:13-14, 22, 27) and the kingdom shall be given to the people – the saints of the Most High God – because believers will rule and reign with Christ (II Tim. 2:12). The destiny of the REDEEMED – victory/glory!

How could Satan have taken over the rule of this earth?

- We know Satan is the prince of the power of the air – the spirit who works in the sons of disobedience – non-believers!
- When we come to know the Lord, we are taken out of the Kingdom of Satan (Col. 1:13) and put into the Kingdom of God!!!!!!!
- II Cor. 4:4 – Satan is the god of this world/age – world system.
- Matthew 4 – Satan offered the kingdoms of this world to Jesus at Jesus’ temptation.
- John 12:31 – Jesus calls Satan the ruler of this world.

Satan deceived Adam and Eve and took over their rule of the world for himself. Thus, Eph. 6:12 – “We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. . . .”

Consider:

- God is sovereign. God is in absolute control eternally!
 - I John 1:5 – “God is light and in Him there is no darkness.”
- God created mankind with freedom to choose.
- Mankind chose wrongly. Mankind sinned – we rebelled against God. Adam and Eve were not satisfied with what God was giving them!
- There are consequences for sin. Mankind lost everything.
- God did not create man to have dominion over a fallen world. God created man to have dominion over an undefiled world.

Why didn’t the disciples “get it”?

- Isaiah 6 – in the commissioning of Isaiah, God told him that He was sending him to a people who wouldn’t understand/perceive.
- The OT speaks of the rejection of the Messiah (Isa. 53:1, 3-4; Psa. 118:22. . . .)
- The disciples appeared to embrace the Jewish mindset at that time that the Messiah would be a conquering King. The suffering servant role was not preeminent in their minds. Matt. 16:21ff – Jesus began to tell the disciples He had to go to Jerusalem and die.

- That there is a first coming and second coming of the Messiah in God's plan:
 - Rev. 13:8 – Jesus had to die for sin.
 - Lev. 17:11 – blood had to be shed – there had to be a life for a life (Gen. 22:8; Isa. 53)
 - The resurrection of the Messiah is the crowning validation of Jesus as the eternal Son of God. The resurrection divides Jesus from the rest of humanity.
 - Matt. 25:5 – in the parable of the 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins – the Bridegroom is seen as *delayed*.
 - Luke 19:11ff – parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom and return.
 - Hosea 5:15 – God speaks of His return. . . . “I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.” (Hos. 3:4-5)
 - Isa. 61:1ff/Luke 4:16-21 – differentiating the acceptable year of the Lord (First Coming - re: salvation) and the day of vengeance of our God (Second Coming – re: judgment).

God's plan has ALWAYS been for the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles and Jews were chosen to be the light to the Gentiles – telling them of the truth of the one true God. Israel didn't obey God in this calling.

God's plan – A!!! God will use the nation of Israel in the future to be His witnesses to the world.

In the meantime, the Jewish leadership rejected the Messiah (Matt. 12) and God is NOT using Israel/the Jewish people as His redemptive tool – as His witnesses.

God is using the Church – comprised of Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus – as His witnesses.

God will pick up with the Jews during the Tribulation (144,000 [Rev. 7 & 14] and the two witnesses [Rev. 11]) and through the Millennial Kingdom (Zech. 8:23).

And what of Israel's history? (preface for Hebrews 3)

- God dealt with mankind for 2,000 years before Abraham:
 - Universal flood due to wickedness
 - Babel – wanted to reach up to God; scattered.
- God chose Abram to create a nation (Isa. 43:1) through which He would bless the entire earth!
 - Abrahamic covenant – unconditional/unilateral covenant – God swore by Himself (Gen. 15:12-18; Heb. 6:13). The foundation of Israel's HOPE as a nation was the covenant God gave to Abraham (Gen. 15:18-19).
 - God promised Abram and his descendants: land, seed, blessing.
 - God revealed to Abram that his people would be strangers in a land that was not their own and that they would serve as slaves and be afflicted for 400 years. God would judge the nation they would serve and afterward the children of Israel would come out with great possessions (Gen. 15:13-14).

- While the children of Israel were in captivity, God chose Moses and set him apart to become His people's redeemer/deliverer from bondage to slavery (Ex. 3:10-12).
 - As a redeemer/deliverer, Moses foreshadowed the work of the promised Redeemer Who would ultimately deliver mankind from the bondage to sin.
 - Moses, whom God used to deliver the people, was set apart as a ruler and a judge. While the nation accepted the redemption – the deliverance – that God provided through Moses, they rebelled against Moses as God's ruler over them (Acts 7:34-35)
 - Moses was also appointed as the one through whom God would give revelation to Israel – the Law – which was the foundation of Israel's daily life. The Mosaic covenant was conditional. The promise of their existence as a nation was based on the Abrahamic covenant. God's blessings/curses – Deut. 28 – was based on their obedience or disobedience to the Mosaic covenant.
- NOTE: salvation in the OT – NOT by the law!!!! Salvation is ALWAYS through grace by faith in God's revealed message which ALWAYS points to THE MESSIAH! Gal. 3:24 – the Law was a tutor to lead the people to the Messiah!
- Through the Law (613 commandments), God provided for acceptable worship, for sacrifices through which one who violated the Law might be restored to fellowship with God.
- OT saints – those who had a personal relationship with God through faith in all His promises which included the promises of the Redeemer – displayed their faith in those promises of God by living in submission to the Law – which included bringing a sacrifice to the tabernacle/temple – with the right heart attitude!
 - We who trust in Christ for our salvation should display our saving faith by willfully living in submission to God's word.
 - Those who fail to submit to God's word are either not truly His (I John. 2:19) or they know Him but are willfully forfeiting the blessings that would otherwise be theirs.
- Moses was held in the highest esteem by the people of Israel.
 - His name is mentioned in Scripture over 700X!
 - Moses is listed with the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11.
 - Numbers 12:3 – Moses is cited as the most humble man on earth!
- BUT the children of Israel murmured (“to be discontented”) and rebelled against Moses.
- The author of the book of Hebrews recognizes the possibility that those who now have received a SUPERIOR revelation from the Eternal Son might be guilty of a similar rebellion against Him!

Hebrews 3:1

- “Therefore” – connects to Heb. 2:10-18 – which speaks of Jesus as our faithful High Priest. This will be developed beginning in Heb. 4:14. In this chapter we see the contrast between the faithfulness of Christ and the faithfulness of Moses.

- Some have suggested that the author is speaking to the contrast between the earthly tabernacle and the heavenly tabernacle (Matt. 6:10; Heb. 8:1-5; Heb. 9:11).
- “holy brethren” – believers; holy – set apart by God for a specific purpose.
- “partakers of the heavenly calling” – John 6:37 – “All whom the Father gives to Me will come to Me.” “Partaker” – fellowship, communion, partnership. Heb. 2:14 – Jesus partook of flesh and blood – He literally, genuinely partook.
- “consider” – concentrate carefully or to fasten the mind on to the exclusion of all else.
- “confession” – re: each believer’s testimony of faith in Christ and identification with Him.
- Christ as “the Apostle” – Jesus had been sent by God.
- “High Priest” – Jesus is our representative before God.

Hebrews 3:2

- While Moses was reluctant to assume the role to which God had called him, he was found faithful once he accepted.

Hebrews 3:3-4

- While Moses is a type of Christ, and parallels exist re: the faithfulness of Moses and the faithfulness of Christ – there are contrasts.
- Christ is the Builder; Moses was part of the house being built.
- Christ is over the house; Moses is in the house.
- Christ is the Eternal Son; Moses is a servant.

Hebrews 3:5

- All that was revealed to Israel through Moses anticipated things that were yet to come. God’s revelation through Moses was “a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,” indicating that the Law was temporary and anticipatory – Gal. 3:19.

Hebrews 3:6

- “. . . whose house we are” – assumes the genuineness of his readers’ faith.
- “. . . if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm to the end” – obedience to revelation is an evidence of the genuineness of anyone’s salvation.

Hebrews 3:7-11

- The author quotes Psalm 95 – a psalm of warning against unbelief connected with not entering “My rest.”
- The readers of this book were under pressure to veer, to drift, to be careless with their salvation - due to persecution and rejection. The author draws the parallel between their situation and the situation the children of Israel faced in the wilderness. In the wilderness they were ready to turn back to Egypt instead of pressing on to the Promised Land.

- Psa. 95:8 – “Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion” – this is a reference to Meribah which is translated “rebellion” - the place in the wilderness where the children of Israel demonstrated their lack of faith in God’s provision – they complained about the lack of water (Ex. 17:1-7; Num. 20:13).
 - God had promised them He would provide.
 - Do we complain???
- Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart
 - Harkens back to Pharaoh’s days:
 - Ex. 7 – progression of hardening the heart:
 - Ex. 7:13 -Pharaoh’s heart was hardened and he did not listen
 - Ex. 8:15 – Pharaoh hardened his heart
 - Ex. 8:32 – Pharaoh hardened his heart
 - Ex. 9:7 – Pharaoh hardened his heart
 - Ex. 9:12 – The Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart. He did not listen to them.
- Kadesh Barnea – climactic rebellion – Num. 14 – after leaving Mt. Sinai (after approx. one year’s encampment), they came to the border of the Promised Land – the land which God had promised them.
 - PL – a life of peace and rest in fulfillment of God’s covenant with Abraham.
 - PL – NOT heaven:
 - Moses wasn’t allowed entrance into the PL. He disobeyed God. If the PL symbolizes heaven – then is heaven contingent upon good works (and Moses NOT hallowing God before the people [Num. 20:11-13]?)
 - Heb. 4:1 – “There remains still a promise of entering His rest.”
 - Moses sent 12 spies into the land:
 - Only Joshua and Caleb embraced God’s promises to press on.
 - The people refused to believe either Joshua and Caleb or God Himself. They responded in unbelief to this call to faith (Num. 14:11; Heb. 4:6).
 - This unbelief led to overt rebellion (Num. 14:9)
 - And, it was only through the intervention of Moses that the nation was not judged with immediate physical death (Num. 14:11-12).
 - Because of the faithfulness of Moses, the people were delivered from death but they were deprived of enjoyment of the privileges in the land that had been promised to them. That generation was turned back to wander in the wilderness until there arose a new generation that would possess the land.
 - The author of Hebrews is warning the readers against repeating a similar rebellion. As a result, they would suffer the loss of blessings.

Hebrews 3:12

- Even though they have been justified – declared righteous – they are believers – they may not choose to live by faith.
- “an evil heart of unbelief”:
 - Which would cause them to depart experientially from the living God and they would lose their fellowship with Him.
 - I John 1:9 – “If we confess our sins. . . .” – the Christian’s *bar of soap* – to get back into fellowship with God.
 - Mark 9 – “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.”
 - Now the “departing” – is it departing from fellowship or from God? If it’s from God – then they never were believers! Eternal security. I John 2:19 – if they went out from us – they were never of us.
 - We need to understand the entire context of the book of Hebrews.
 - There were some non-believers in the group most likely and some who were considering the claims of Christ. The majority – believers
 - Hebrews 12: 12-15
 - The author placed responsibility on each believer for his or her own conduct.

Hebrews 3:13

- Only believers would be encouraged to “exhort one another daily”. They should be exhorting one another because they had become partakers of Christ. The author placed responsibility on the readers for the brother who may be weak in faith.
 - Deceitfulness of sin – I John – if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Hebrews 3:14

- AND – the holding of their confidence steadfast to the end proves that they are partakers of Christ.

Hebrews 3:15-17

- With whom was God angry? Those who died in the wilderness – including Moses and Aaron.
- Will we see Moses in heaven? (Matt. 17; Heb. 11).
- Consider: if our fellowship is broken with God – could our hearts become calloused and insensitive to Him?
 - The children of Israel did not lay hold of the help God provides by faith.

Application:

- Those who genuinely know Christ but ignore their responsibility to obey Him are in danger of forfeiting His blessings in their lives.
- Simple doubt concerning God, brought on by hardships or uncertainty can lead to complaining which can lead to lack of fellowship with God.