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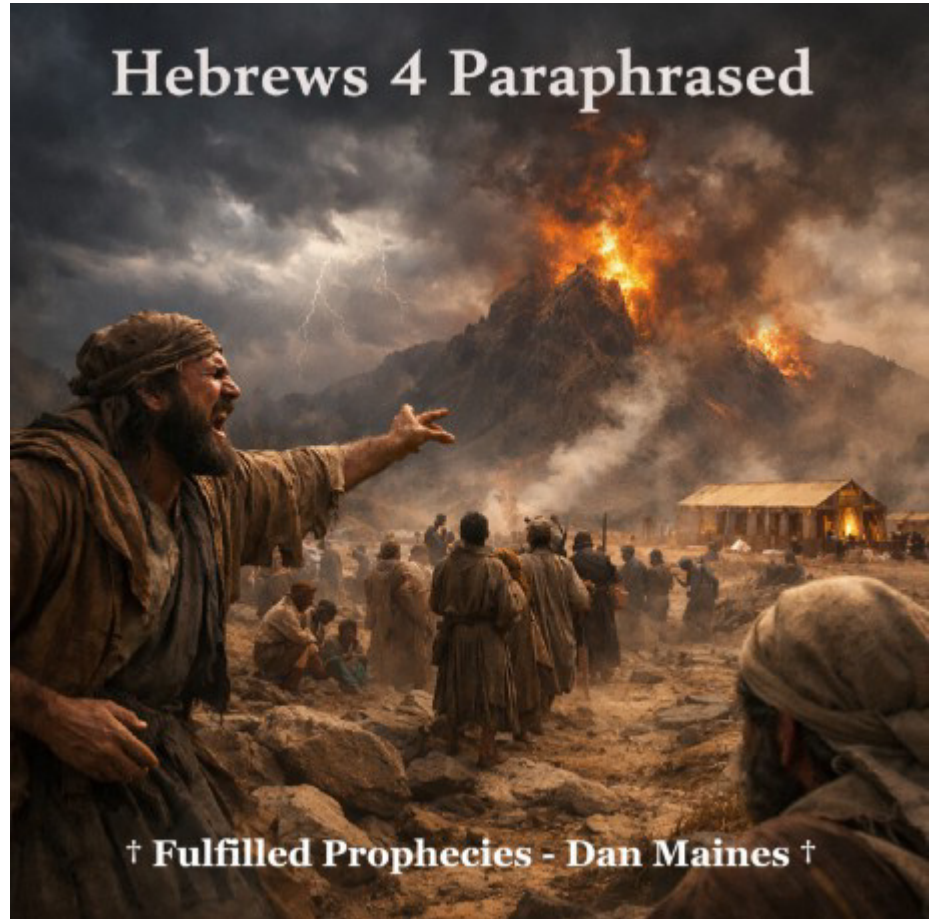
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Hebrews 4 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Hebrews 4 Paraphrased

Introduction

† The writer continues warning the early believers not to repeat Israel's mistake in the wilderness. God promised them rest, yet many never entered it because they refused to believe. The message to the first century church was urgent, because the old covenant age was about to end and the true rest of God was being revealed through Christ.

† The promise of rest was not merely about land or physical peace. It pointed to the completed work of God through the Messiah, where the burden of the law and the old covenant system would finally come to an end (Matthew 11:28-30).

† This chapter shows that the rest of God was still open during the apostolic age, and the believers were urged to enter it through faith before the passing away of the old covenant world (Hebrews 8:13).

Hebrews 4:1

Hebrews 4:1

Since the promise of entering God's rest is still open, we must take it seriously and be careful that none of you misses it.

† The promise still stood during the lifetime of the apostles. That means the fulfillment had not yet fully arrived but was very near (Hebrews 10:36-37).

† Israel failed to enter God's rest in the wilderness because they did not trust Him. The same danger existed for those living during the transition from the old covenant to the new (Psalm 95:7-11).

† Faith, not ancestry or law-keeping, was the requirement for entering God's rest (Romans 4:16).

Hebrews 4:2

Hebrews 4:2

The good news was preached to us just as it was to them, but the message they heard did them no good because they did not combine it with faith.

† Israel heard the promise but refused to believe it. Hearing the truth alone is not enough if the heart refuses to trust God

(Numbers 14:22-23).

† The gospel message was already being preached during the apostolic age as the fulfillment of the promises made long ago (Acts 13:32-33).

† Faith is what connects a person to the promise, otherwise the message passes by without producing life (Romans 10:17).

Hebrews 4:3

Hebrews 4:3

We who believe are the ones entering that rest, just as God said about those who refused to believe, I swore in my anger, they will never enter my rest, even though His works were finished since the beginning of the world.

† God's rest began after creation when His work was completed (Genesis 2:2).

† Yet the promise of entering that rest continued throughout Israel's history, showing that it pointed to something greater than the Sabbath day alone (Psalm 95:11).

† Believers were beginning to enter that rest through Christ during the first century transition (Matthew 11:28).

Hebrews 4:4

Hebrews 4:4

Scripture says about the seventh day, God rested from all His work.

† The seventh day rest established the pattern that pointed to a greater spiritual rest (Genesis 2:2-3).

† The Sabbath law later reminded Israel of that rest, but it was only a shadow of the greater fulfillment in Christ (Colossians 2:16-17).

† The writer uses creation itself to show that God's rest existed long before the law of Moses.

Hebrews 4:5

Hebrews 4:5

Yet again God said, they will not enter my rest.

† This refers back to the warning given in Psalm 95 where God spoke about Israel's rebellion.

† The repetition shows that the promise of entering God's rest was still open after the wilderness generation failed (Psalm 95:7-11).

† That meant the rest pointed to something beyond the land of Canaan.

Hebrews 4:6

Hebrews 4:6

Since the promise of entering still remained, and those who first heard the message failed because they disobeyed, others would still be given the opportunity to enter.

† The door to God's rest was still open during the apostolic age.

† The failure of the wilderness generation did not cancel God's promise.

† Instead it pointed forward to a future fulfillment through Christ (Acts 2:39).

Hebrews 4:7

Hebrews 4:7

God again set a certain day called Today, speaking through David long afterward saying, Today if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts.

† David wrote Psalm 95 centuries after Joshua brought Israel into Canaan.

† That proves the promised rest had not yet been fully realized in Joshua's time.

† The invitation to enter God's rest remained open until the fulfillment came through Christ.

Hebrews 4:8

Hebrews 4:8

If Joshua had given them the true rest, God would not later speak about another day.

† Joshua brought Israel into the land but that was not the final rest.

† The true rest pointed to the completion of God's redemptive work through Christ.

† This shows that the old covenant system was never the final goal.

Hebrews 4:9

Hebrews 4:9

So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

† The Sabbath pointed forward to a greater rest beyond the weekly observance.

† That rest was fulfilled in the completed work of Christ (Matthew 11:28-30).

† The believers living in the first century were approaching the moment when that rest would fully arrive with the end of the old covenant age (Hebrews 8:13).

Hebrews 4:10

Hebrews 4:10

The one who enters God's rest also rests from his own works just as God did from His.

† Just as God finished creation and rested, believers would rest from the works of the law.

† The burden of the old covenant system was coming to its end (Galatians 3:24-25).

† Salvation was not achieved through works but through the finished work of Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Hebrews 4:11

Hebrews 4:11

So let us make every effort to enter that rest so that no one falls by following the same example of disobedience.

† The warning again points back to Israel's failure in the wilderness.

† The believers were urged to remain faithful during the approaching judgment on Jerusalem (Hebrews 10:25).

† Faithfulness was necessary during that transitional period before the old covenant system passed away.

Hebrews 4:12

Hebrews 4:12

God's word is alive and powerful, sharper than any double edged sword, able to penetrate deeply and judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

† God's word exposes what is truly inside a person.

† It separates truth from deception and reveals whether someone truly trusts God.

† The prophetic word was actively judging the unbelief of that generation (Jeremiah 23:29).

Hebrews 4:13

Hebrews 4:13

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is exposed before Him and we must all give account.

† God sees the heart, not just outward behavior.

† The approaching judgment on Jerusalem would reveal who truly belonged to Him.

† No one could escape God's knowledge or His justice (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

Hebrews 4:14

Hebrews 4:14

Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we must hold firmly to our

confession.

† Jesus replaced the Levitical priesthood as the true high priest.

† His priesthood is greater than the temple system that was about to pass away (Hebrews 7:23-28).

† Believers were called to remain faithful to Him.

Hebrews 4:15

Hebrews 4:15

We do not have a high priest who cannot understand our weaknesses, but One who was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.

† Jesus fully experienced human life and temptation.

† Because of this He is able to sympathize with those who struggle.

† His sinless life made Him the perfect mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).

Hebrews 4:16

Hebrews 4:16

So let us come confidently to the throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

† Access to God was no longer limited to the temple system.

† Through Christ believers could approach God directly.

† This access demonstrated that the old covenant barriers were already being removed (Ephesians 2:18).

Historical References

† Justin Martyr wrote that Christ brought the true Sabbath rest which the old law only symbolized.

† Irenaeus explained that the rest promised by God pointed to the fulfillment of redemption through Christ.

† Eusebius recorded that early believers saw the destruction of Jerusalem as the closing of the old covenant age.

How It Applies To Us Today

† God's rest has already been opened through the completed work of Christ.

† We are not under the burden of the old covenant law system.

† Our rest is found in trusting what Christ has already accomplished.

† Instead of striving to earn righteousness, we live in the peace that comes from His finished work.

Q & A Appendix

Q: What is the rest described in Hebrews 4?

A: It is the rest that comes through the finished work of Christ, not the old covenant law system (Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 8:13).

Q: Why did Israel fail to enter God's rest?

A: Because they heard the promise but refused to believe it (Numbers 14:22-23; Psalm 95:7-11).

Q: How do believers enter God's rest?

A: By trusting the completed work of Christ rather than relying

on works of the law (Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 3:24-25).

Q: Why does the writer keep warning believers about unbelief?

A: Because the same danger that destroyed the wilderness generation was still present. Hearing God's truth without trusting it leads to judgment. The first century believers were warned not to repeat Israel's mistake (Hebrews 3:18-19; Hebrews 4:1-2; Psalm 95:7-11).

Q: What does it mean to rest from our works like God rested from His?

A: It means trusting the finished work of Christ instead of relying on works of the law. Just as God completed creation and rested, believers rest in the completed work of redemption (Hebrews 4:10; Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16).

Q: Why does Hebrews emphasize Jesus as the great High Priest?

A: Because the old covenant priesthood was temporary. Jesus replaced that entire system and now stands as the true mediator between God and His people (Hebrews 4:14-15; Hebrews 7:23-25; 1 Timothy 2:5).

Q: What does it mean to approach the throne of grace with confidence?

A: Through Christ believers have direct access to God. The temple system no longer stands between God and His people, because Jesus opened the way (Hebrews 4:16; Ephesians 2:18; Hebrews 10:19-22).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Hebrews 4:1-16

† Genesis 2:2-3; Psalm 95:7-11; Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 8:13

† Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho; Irenaeus, Against Heresies; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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