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29 May 2019

Hebrews Four - Part I

Shortly after entering the wilderness, the Lord provided daily bread, called in Hebrew *manna*, or *what is it?* (Ex 16:4-5, 21-25). The instruction of the Lord was that the people were to *gather a matter*^{h1697} *of a day in its day, so that I may test them, whether they will walk in My Law or not* (verse 4, literal). Forty years later Moses refers to this time:

And you shall remember all the way which the Lord, your Mighty One has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble you, to prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make you know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every (word) that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live. Dt 8:2-3

In Chapter 3 of Hebrews, the focus was on the many of Israel, hardened through the deceitfulness of the sin nature, did not enter the rest because of unfaithfulness, verses 13, 19. In chapter 4, the writer talks about the rest in his present day. Psalms 95:7-11 is quoted and referenced in both chapters.

Read Hebrews 4:1-6:

1. What is the promise of entering ‘the rest?’ Verse 1; Ps 95:7b; 86-8; Isa 11:6-9

{*Today... if you will hear His voice.* Anyone not discerning spiritual things illustrated through the O.T. as allegories, metaphors & parables will not understand the rest of God. Initially, man was given dominion over the earth (birds, fish, animals), & given a choice, Gen 1:2:9, 17. The choice was made to produce self’s own works. This is our human inheritance. We are to FEAR, lest we come short of God’s rest.}

2. What was the gospel (good news) preached to ancient & modern Israel, and why did it not profit them? Verse 1-2; Dt 32:18-21, 28; Ps 95:10-11

{Paul asked the Galatians, *Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing of faith?* Gal 3:2 MKJV. Did you receive God’s character by doing the letter of the law, or by hearing someone explain the spiritual aspect of the law? (Hebrew thought is that the breath of a person is their character. *Pneuma*^{g4151} & *ruach*^{h7307}, both of which are rendered as *spirit*, mean *current of air, breath.*) Cp Jn 6:63. The good news to all is that there is a “rest” (Ps 95:11) available to the people of God; but it requires the faith of God, or His understanding in order to enter His rest.}

2a. What does verse 2 imply about the gospel?

{From the beginning, man has been able to hear God’s voice, Gen 2:16; 3:9-10, via many channels.}

3. What are the works *finished* ^{g1096} *from the foundation of the world* and how does one enter? Verse 3; Ps 8:3, 6-8.

{The Greek word *ginomai* ^{g1096} is in the N.T. 678 times, & this is the only place it is translated *finished*. The word actually means *to cause to be* (“*gen*” -*erate*), *that is, (reflexively) to become (come into being)*. From the Hebrews two study, we saw that God created man to have dominion over the earth (birds, fish, animals), *the works of God’s hands*; Paul said, *But now we do not yet see all things being subject to him*, Heb 2:8. The first three chapters of Genesis are a parable of the spiritual creation of man, who is to have dominion over his thoughts. It is in our future! The works of God are His thoughts, or character, described in figures. In Isaiah mankind is told that God’s thoughts are vastly different from man’s - as high as the heavens are from the earth, Isa 55:7-13. And Psalms states that the heavens declare the glory of God, Ps 19:1-6. The works of God *came to be* from the foundation of the world & still waiting for mankind to enter into them. In Hebrews 4:4, Paul is refers Genesis 2:2 to show where he got his idea, as He had already put it future, Heb 2:8.}

4. Are there other references to show that God has not rested from His works mentioned in Genesis 2:1-3? Jn 6:28-29

{The work of God is to have people believe on Himself. Has He ever stopped trying to get man to believe? Jn 5:16-17.}

5. What conclusions can be drawn from verses 5-6?

{There is a rest available today. To enter God’s rest one must be persuaded to believe that He is, and that He rewards those who diligently seek him, Heb 11:6. *The heavens declare the glory of God*, Ps 19:1. How & what we think about God (our heavens) must be changed to reflect His character, Isa 55:7-9.}

Note: The works of God are described in two manners - one pertaining to Himself, and one pertaining to man. The reference to man is shown in Psalms 8:6-8, animals being the character traits to be overcome by man. Verse 3 describes that pertaining to God: *When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have established*. Note the difference - work of hands, verse 6, and the work of fingers, verse 3. Fingers are a symbol for faith (cp Lk 11:20 & Mt 12:28; 8:16), which here is God’s spirit/understanding. Man was placed *eastward*, Gen 2:8, in the garden of Eden & he had a choice. He could seek God’s understanding (move west toward God) or his own (move eastward). Garden, Isa 58:11; 51:3; Sun, Mal 4:2, Jn 8:12; Moon, Jer 31:35; Stars, Gen 37:9-10; Jude 1:13. (East is a symbol for self. The procedure in the tabernacle moved from east to west. This type is seen in Revelation 7:2 with a messenger ascending into the heavens from the east. The heavens declare the glory of God, Ps 19:1.