Jesus, Our Great High Priest

Hebrews: Hearing and Obeying God’s Son

Hebrews 3:1–4:13

Heart Check: Make certain you enter the true Promised Land

* + Jesus is exalted far above the angels and is the brother of all who are in God’s family (1:1–2:18). But He also is greater than Moses the Lawgiver, and so it’s all the more crucial that we hear and follow Him.
  + Jesus is “head of the house” in which Moses (and the Law) were servants. That “house” is God’s family, consisting of all who hold to their confession of faith in Him. 3:1-7
  + For just as there was a generation who hardened their hearts against God and His grace, and perished without entering the Promised Land, we, too, must guard our hearts and continue to trust God until we die or Jesus returns. 3:8-15
  + Remember that a whole generation perished in the wilderness after their miraculous rescue from Egypt, all because their unbelief brought with it sin and rebellion against God. 3:16-19
  + Just as that generation failed to possess the physical Promised Land, we must all the more stay focused upon God’s living, revealing promise of eternal rest to those who trust Him. 4:1-13

*Salvation, Assurance, and Human Choices*

Many are confused by passages which indicate that some who profess to know God and who apparently begin well, in the end are lost. We hear the refrain, “Once saved, always saved” as if salvation were a one-time decision cut off from the rest of one’s life. It is true that we are born again and justified in a moment of time, and that all who are justified will be glorified (Romans 8:30). But it also is true that many who once professed faith eventually reject it.

So can we ever tell if we have been truly converted? Yes, if we use Biblical principles that identify us as God’s children (see 1 John). The test is not whether we sin, for even God’s children sin (1 John 2:1, 2). The test is whether we embrace forgiveness, and hold fast our confession to the end, that is, never renounce our faith. (We certainly can doubt our faith, but that is hardly the same thing.)

As Hebrews tells us, we prove to be in Christ as we love and serve Him to the end. It is not a matter of our holding out, but of His holding us, and whether our heart is alive or hardened. All who are His have His very life, which will not be denied and which inevitably bears fruit that remains. Jn.15; Rom. 5-8; 1 Jn. 2:3-5

*1. God’s sovereignty does not mean we have no responsibility.*

Just as our interactions with other humans are real, so also is our relationship with God. He offers, we respond. Matthew 23:27-39

*2. Our “freedom” as sinners does not mean God is not sovereign.*

Just as a whole generation in Israel saw the love and power of God, and rejected it, so also can we. But why would we? John 6:35-45

*3. Only you can guard your heart (choices, loves).*

All who desire to be saved will be saved. But salvation means we have God’s life. Just as all life has

identifiable qualities, so also does His life. We tell whether or not we are His by what we desire and

whom we love. We can harden our hearts to His truth and love, or cling to Him as our greatest good. Ezekiel 18:30-32; 36:24-28