

# CHAPTER 4

## INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 4

From the punishment inflicted on the unbelieving Hebrews, who died in the wilderness, and entered not into the land of rest made mention of in the preceding chapter, the apostle proceeds to caution the present Hebrews of his time, and who professed faith in Christ, lest seeing there was a rest, and a promise of entering into it, they should seem to come short of it, (<sup><3001></sup>Hebrews 4:1), and the rather, since they that fell in the wilderness had the Gospel preached to them as well as they; and the reason why it did not profit was, because it was not received by faith, (<sup><3042></sup>Hebrews 4:2) as also seeing it is by faith that believers now enter into rest, (<sup><3043></sup>Hebrews 4:3) which rest is not the rest of the seventh day, on which God rested; nor, the rest of the land of Canaan, which Joshua led the Israelites into; for if he had entered them into the rest the apostle means, David, so many hundred years after him, would not have made mention of another rest, (<sup><3044></sup>Hebrews 4:4-8) wherefore it follows that there is another rest for the people of God, which he that enters into ceases from his own works, as God did from his, (<sup><3049,10></sup>Hebrews 4:9,10) and this is the rest that everyone that professes faith in Christ, should be solicitous and diligent to enter into, lest he should fall short of it through unbelief; as the unbelieving Israelites did of their rest, (<sup><30411></sup>Hebrews 4:11) and the arguments engaging to such a concern are taken from the properties and perfections of Christ, the essential Word of God; particularly from his omnipotence and his omniscience, (<sup><30412,13></sup>Hebrews 4:12,13). And seeing he is by nature the Son of God, and by office a great high priest that is entered into heaven for his people, the encouragement is great to hold fast the profession of faith in him they have made, (<sup><30414></sup>Hebrews 4:14) and the rather since he is a sympathizing high priest, as he must needs be, since he has been tempted, afflicted, and has suffered every way as his people, and is in all respects like them, excepting that he has no sin, (<sup><30415></sup>Hebrews 4:15) and this consideration should engage believers to come to the throne of grace with all boldness, and in expectation of having grace and mercy bestowed on them for the supply of their daily wants, (<sup><30416></sup>Hebrews 4:16).

**Ver. 1.** *Let us therefore fear*, etc..] Not with a fear of wrath and damnation; nor with a fear of diffidence and distrust of the power, grace, and goodness of God; but with a cautious fear, a godly jealousy, a careful circumspection, and watchfulness:

*lest a promise being left [us] of entering into his rest*; not the land of Canaan, the type of heaven, but rather heaven itself, the ultimate glory: there is a rest of the body in the grave, from work, service, and labour, and from distempers and diseases, where it rests under the guardianship of the Spirit, until the resurrection morn; and there is a rest of the soul before the resurrection, in the arms of Christ, with whom it immediately is, upon its departure from the body; and there is a rest both of soul and body after the resurrection, from sin, from afflictions, from Satan's temptations, from unbelief, doubts, and fears, and from all enemies: and this may be called the rest of God, because he is the author and giver of it; and it will lie much in communion with him; and besides, heaven is the place of God's rest, (<sup><2301B></sup>Isaiah 66:1,2) and the possession and enjoyment of the heavenly glory is often signified by an entering into it: and there is a promise of this, which is left in Christ's hands, and shall never fail; though some who have hoped for it may come short of it, or at least seem to do so: but rather a rest under the Gospel dispensation is here intended, since it is a rest believers enter into now, (<sup><301B></sup>Hebrews 4:3) and since the Gospel church is represented as a state of peace and rest, (<sup><2105></sup>Isaiah 11:6-10) and which lies in a more clear and comfortable application of the blood and righteousness of Christ to the saints; in a freedom from a spirit of bondage to fear, and from the yoke of carnal ordinances, and in the enjoyment of Gospel privileges and ordinances; and this is God's rest, which he has provided for New Testament saints, and into which they enter by faith, and a profession of it; and the Gospel is the promise or declaration which was left among these Hebrews, and in the world, to encourage them so to do: lest

*any of you should seem to come short of it*; either of the promise, or the rest promised; which if understood of the heavenly glory, the sense is, that though true believers shall not come short of that, yet they may "seem" to others to do so; and therefore should be careful of their lives and conversations, that they might not seem to come short; and this they should do, for the glory of God, the honour of Christ and his Gospel, and the good of others; but if the rest, and the promise of it, intend the Gospel and its dispensation, the meaning is, that saints should be concerned so to behave, that they might not seem to fail of the doctrine of the grace of

God, and to be disappointed of that rest and peace promised in it. One of Stephens's copies read, lest "any of us"; which seems most agreeable both to what goes before, and follows.

**Ver. 2.** *For unto us was the Gospel preached*, etc..] The Gospel is the good news and glad tidings of salvation by Christ; and this may be said to be preached, when men preach not themselves, nor read lectures of morality, nor mix law and Gospel together, nor make justification and salvation to be by works, nor set persons to make their peace with God, or get an interest in Christ; but when they preach Christ and salvation alone by him; and so it was preached to the Hebrews, and that more fully, and with more clearness, power, and success than formerly; and which is a privilege and blessing; and is sometimes blessed for the conviction of sinners, for regeneration, for the implanting of faith, and the comfort of believers. The words may be rendered, we were evangelized; as such may be said to be, who have a spirit of liberty, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; who live by faith on Christ alone; who derive their peace and comfort, not from their works, but from him; whose repentance and obedience are influenced by the love of God; and who desire to perform all duties aright, and depend on none: now though this was true of the apostle and others, yet is not the sense here, because of what follows,

*as well as unto them*, or "even as they"; for though the Gospel was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness, in the ministry of Moses, and by types and sacrifices; yet they were not evangelized by it, or cast into a Gospel mould, or brought into a Gospel spirit: however, it was preached unto them; which shows the antiquity of it; the sameness of the method of salvation in all ages; the necessity of salvation by Christ, and the unity of Christ's church under different dispensations:

*but the word preached did not profit them*; that is, the Gospel, which is here called the word of hearing, as it may be rendered; because it is and may be heard; and there is a necessity of hearing, in order to faith in Christ: the word signifies a rumour, or report: the Gospel is a report of Christ, his person and offices; of his great love to sinners, and of what he has done for them; but though it is a word of hearing, a report made, and the word preached, yet to some it is unprofitable; it has no good effect upon them; yea, it is the savour of death unto death to them, and the aggravation of condemnation; and the reason of the inefficacy and unprofitableness of the word to the Israelites was, its

*not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*; the Gospel is as food, and faith is the hand that receives it, and takes it, and tastes of it, and eats it, and concocts and digests it; and when this is the case, it is profitable and nourishing; but when it is otherwise, it is not. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and five of Beza's ancient copies, and as many of Stephens's, with others, read, "they were not mixed" referring it not to the word, but to persons; and so read the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: and the sense is, that the generality of the Israelites did not join themselves in faith, in believing in God, to Caleb and Joshua; who hearkened to the Lord, and received and obeyed his word; and so the word became useless to them: there ought to be an union or conjunction of the saints, and the bond of this union is love; and the thing in which they unite is faith, believing in Christ, and the doctrine of faith, which is but one; and though the word may be profitable to others who are not in the communion of the saints; yet forsaking the assembly of the saints, and not constantly attending with them, or not mixing with them continually in public worship, is one reason of the unprofitable hearing of the word when it is preached to them.

**Ver. 3.** *For we which have believed do enter into rest*, etc..] Not eternal rest; all believers shall enjoy this, and they only; but this is not now, or at present enjoyed, unless things future may be said to be present, because of faith in them, and the certainty of them but spiritual rest in Christ under the Gospel dispensation, which is a rest from the burden of the law of Moses, and from all toil and labour for life, and salvation by works, and lies in an enjoyment of much inward peace of soul, notwithstanding the world's troubles and Satan's temptations; and such who believe the word or Gospel preached, and Christ in it, not with a general and historical high, or only in profession, but with the heart, and in truth, these enjoy this rest; they are kept in perfect peace, and have much spiritual ease and comfort: this character distinguishes them from the unbelieving Israelites of old, and from present hypocrites and formal professors:

*as he said, as I have sworn in wrath, if they shall enter into my rest*; the words are in (<sup><99B1></sup>Psalm 95:11), and are before cited in (<sup><89B1></sup>Hebrews 3:11) they entered not in because of unbelief; none but believers enter into spiritual rest. The apostle applies this proof to his design, by removing all other rests, and particularly by showing that does not mean God's rest from the works of creation:

*although the works were finished from the foundation of the world*; that is, though the works of creation, that God designed to make, were finished and perfected within the first six days of the world, and then God rested, or ceased to work in a creative way; yet this is not the rest designed in the passage of Scripture cited, nor is it that rest which believers enter into.

**Ver. 4.** *For he spake in a certain place*, etc..] (<sup><0012></sup>Genesis 2:2) that is, Moses, the penman of that book spoke, or God by him:

*of the seventh day on this wise*; of the seventh day of the world, or from the creation of the heavens and the earth:

*and God did rest the seventh day from all his works*: of creation, but not of providence; for in them he works hitherto; nor does this rest suppose labour with fatigue and weariness, and ease and refreshment from it; only cessation from working in a creative way, and the utmost delight, complacency and satisfaction in what he had done. The Alexandrian copy leaves out the phrase, “the seventh day”.

**Ver. 5.** *And in this place again*, etc..] In (<sup><0951></sup>Psalm 95:11) he speaks again of another rest distinct from that on the seventh day; which, and not the latter, is what believers under the Gospel dispensation enter into:

*if they shall enter into my rest*: that is, unbelievers shall not enter into it; as the unbelieving Israelites did not enter into the typical rest, so neither shall any unbeliever enter into the Gospel rest, the antitype of the former.

**Ver. 6.** *Seeing therefore it remaineth*, etc..] It follows by just consequence,

*that some must enter therein*; for God's swearing concerning some, that they should not enter into his rest, supposes that others should: and

*they to whom it was first preached*; to whom the Gospel was first preached, namely, the Israelites in the wilderness: entered not in because of unbelief; (see <sup><0319></sup>Hebrews 3:19).

**Ver. 7.** *Again he limiteth a certain day*, etc..] Since the seventh day of the creation was a day of rest which God entered into, and not man; and since the land of Canaan was a typical rest, which the unbelieving Israelites did not enter into, because of unbelief; and yet there must be persons, and there must be a time for them to enter into the true rest which God has left a promise of; therefore he has limited, fixed, and appointed a certain day, the Gospel dispensation, for believers to enter into it:

*saying in David*; or by David, who was the penman of the 95th psalm, as may be learned from hence; and this is agreeably to, and confirms a rule which the Jews give, that those psalms which are without a title were written by David<sup>f54</sup>; the Spirit of God spake in him and by him, and plainly pointed out another day of rest from the above mentioned:

*today, after so long a time*; as two thousand five hundred years from the first seventh day to the time of Moses, and five hundred years from the times of Moses and Joshua, to his:

*as it is said*; the Alexandrian copy reads, “as it is before said”, or, “above said”, as the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; that is, in (<sup><1987></sup>Psalm 95:7,8) before cited, (<sup><1987></sup>Hebrews 3:7,8)

*today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*; (see Gill on “<sup><1987></sup>Hebrews 3:7-8”)

**Ver. 8.** *For if Jesus had given them rest*, etc..] That is, Joshua; for Hosheah, Joshua, and Jesus, are one and the same name; or Jesus himself, as two of Stephens's copies read; and so Joshua is called Jesus by the Septuagint interpreters on (<sup><1270></sup>Exodus 17:10 24:13) and other places where he is mentioned; and also, by Josephus<sup>f55</sup>, and Philo<sup>f56</sup> the Jew. The Syriac version, lest any should mistake this for Jesus Christ, adds, “the son of Nun”: who is certainly the person designed, as the apostle's reasoning shows; who was an eminent type of Jesus Christ: there is an agreement in their names, both signify a saviour, Joshua was a temporal saviour, Christ a spiritual one; and in their office they were both servants; and in their qualifications for their office, such as wisdom, courage, faithfulness, and integrity. Joshua was a type of Christ in many actions of his life; in the miracles he wrought, or were wrought for him; in the battles he fought, and the victories he obtained; in saving Rahab and her family; in receiving the Gibeonites, who came submissively to him; and in leading the children of Israel into Canaan's land, which he divided to them by lot: but though he brought them into a land of rest, into the typical rest, where they had rest for a while from their temporal enemies, yet he did not give them the true spiritual rest: had he,

*then would he not afterward have spoken of another day*; that is, God, in David's time, and by him, would not have so long after appointed another day of rest; meaning, not any particular day of the week, but the whole

Gospel dispensation, in the times of the Messiah; wherefore the apostle concludes as follows.

**Ver. 9** *There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.*] Not all mankind; nor the people of the Jews only; rather the people of God, both Jews and Gentiles, under the New Testament; the people whom God has loved with a special love, has chose in Christ, and given to him, with whom he has made a covenant in him, and whom Christ saves from their sins, and calls by his grace; and the rest which remains for them is not a new sabbath day, but a sabbatism: and this does not so mush design eternal rest in heaven; though the Jews often call that a sabbath; the 92nd psalm they say is a psalm for the time to come, **tbç wl kç**, “which is all sabbath”, and the rest of eternal life<sup>f57</sup>: but rather this intends the spiritual rest believers have in Christ under the Gospel dispensation, which they now enter into, and of which the apostle had been treating; and as for the word “remaineth”, this does not denote the futurity of it, but the apostle's inference or consequence from what he had said; and the sense is, it remains therefore, and is a certain fact, a clear consequence from what has been observed, that there is another rest distinct from God's rest on the seventh day, and from the rest in the land of Canaan; which were both typical ones of the present rest the saints now enjoy: so the Jews call the world to come the times of the Messiah, **l wdgh tbç**, “the great sabbath”<sup>f58</sup>.

**Ver. 10.** *For he that is entered into his rest,* etc.] This is to be understood not of believers, nor of their entrance into the Gospel rest, or into eternal rest, but of the Lord Jesus Christ; for a single person is only spoken of, and not many, as in (<sup><small>S04B</small></sup>Hebrews 4:3) and the rest entered into is his own, which cannot be said of any other; and besides, a comparison is run between his entrance into rest, and ceasing from his works, and God's resting the seventh day, and ceasing from his, which can only agree with him; and besides, Christ is immediately spoken of, and at large described in (<sup><small>S04D</small></sup>Hebrews 4:12-14). Now he entered into his rest, not when he was laid in the grave, but when he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, as having done his work; and this is the ground and foundation of the saints' rest under the Gospel dispensation; for these words are a reason of the former, as appears by the causal particle “for”: and now being at rest,

*he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his;* Christ had works to do, as preaching the Gospel, performing miracles, and obtaining

the redemption and salvation of his people: these were given him to do, and he undertook them, and he has finished them; and so ceases from them, as never to repeat them more; they being done effectually, stand in no need of it; and so as to take delight and complacency in them; the pleasure of the Lord prospering in, his hand, the effects of his labour answering his designs; just as God ceased from the works of creation, when he had finished them.

**Ver. 11.** *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest*, etc..] Not eternal rest; this is not to be entered into now; nor is an entrance into it to be obtained by labour; salvation is not by works; eternal life is a free gift; good works do not go before to prepare heaven for the saints, but follow after: nor is the saints' entrance into it a precarious thing; God has promised it, and provided it for his people; Christ is in the possession of it, and is preparing it for them; and the Spirit of God is working them up for the self same thing, and Christ will give them an abundant entrance into it: but the Gospel rest is here meant, that rest which believers now enter into, and is at this present time for them, (<sup>3018</sup>Hebrews 4:3,10) and though true believers are entered into it, yet their rest, peace, and joy in Christ, is not full; they enter by degrees into it, and by believing enjoy more of it: and this is to be laboured for by prayer, hearing the word, and attendance on ordinances; and this requires strength, diligence, and industry; and supposes difficulties and discouragements, through the corruptions of the heart, and the temptations of Satan; and this is designed to quicken and awaken a godly jealousy in God's people, over themselves:

*lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief*; into the sin of unbelief, and into punishment through it, as the Israelites did; who sinning, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and they entered not into God's rest, as he swore they should not: true believers may fall into sin, and from a degree of the exercise of grace, and of the steadfastness of the Gospel; but they cannot finally and totally fall away, because they are kept by the power of God; yet they may so fall, as to come short, or at least seem to come short of enjoying the rest and peace of the Gospel state: external professors may fall from the Gospel, and the religion they have professed, and come short of the glory they expected; and fall into just and deserved punishment, in like manner as the unbelieving Israelites did.

**Ver. 12.** *For the word of God is quick and powerful*, etc..] This is to be understood of Christ, the essential Word of God; for the Word of God was



a known name of the Messiah among the Jews; (see Gill on “~~300~~John 1:1”) and therefore the apostle makes use of it when writing to them: and the words are introduced as a reason why care should be taken, that men fall not off from the Gospel, because Christ, the author, sum, and substance of it, is the living God, omnipotent and omniscient; for not a thing, but a person is spoken of, who is a Judge, and a critical discerner of the secrets of men's hearts: and certain it is, that this Word is spoken of as a person, and is said to be a priest in the following verses; to which may be added, that the several things said of the Word exactly agree with Christ: he is “the Word of God”; as the word is the birth of the mind, he is the only begotten of the Father; he is the Word that spoke for the elect in the council and covenant of grace, and that spoke all things out of nothing in creation; he is the Word that has been promised, and spoken of by the prophets from the beginning of the world; and is the interpreter of his Father's mind, and our Advocate with the Father: he is

*quick*, or, as it may be better rendered, “living”; he has life in himself as God, he is the living God; he is the living Redeemer and Mediator, and he lives for ever as man; he is the author and giver of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal: and he is powerful, as he appears to be in the creation and sustaining of all things; in his miracles and ministrations; in the work of man's redemption; in the preservation of his people, and in his advocacy and intercession:

*and sharper than any twoedged sword*; or “more cutting than one”, by the words of his mouth, by the power of his Spirit, and the efficacy of his grace; for his mouth itself is as a sharp sword, and out of it comes forth one, (~~230E~~Isaiah 49:2 ~~669B~~Revelation 19:13,15) by which he pierces the hearts of men, cuts them to the quick, and lays them open. Jehovah is called a twoedged sword with the Jews <sup>f59</sup>; and Philo the Jew speaks of the flaming sword of the Logos <sup>f60</sup>.

*Piercing even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow*; the like property Philo the Jew ascribes to the “Logos”, or Word; he calls him *τομευς*, “a cutter”, and says he cuts and divides all things, even all sensible things, yea, atoms, and things indivisible <sup>f61</sup>; the apostle seems here to have respect to the several names with which the soul of man is called by the Jews, *hmçnw j wr ççqn*, “soul, spirit, and breath” <sup>f62</sup>; the latter of these, they say, dwells between the other two. Some by the soul understand the natural and unregenerate part in man, and by the spirit the

renewed and regenerate part, which though sometimes are not so easily distinguished by men, yet they are by Christ; others think the soul designs the inferior faculties, the affections; and the spirit the superior ones, the mind and understanding; but the apostle's meaning seems to be this, that whereas the soul and spirit are invisible, and the joints and marrow are covered and hid; so sharp and quick sighted, and so penetrating is the divine Word, that it reaches the most secret and hidden things of men: and this sense is confirmed by what follows,

*and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*; Christ knows what is in man; he is the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men; and this will be more apparent at the last day, when he will make manifest the counsels of the heart, and will critically inquire, and accurately judge of them.

**Ver. 13.** *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight,* etc..] Christ is the Lord God omniscient; there is no creature, in general, rational, or irrational, animate or inanimate, but what are known to him, and seen by him; for all creatures are made, and upheld by him, and he is omnipresent; and in particular, there is no man but is manifest to him; so **hyrb**, “creature”, is often used by the Rabbins for “man”; all men, openly profane men, who are enemies to Christ, and his people, are under his eye and notice; he knows their persons, he sees their actions, even those that are most secretly devised and performed against him, and his saints; and he takes such notice of them, as to bring them into judgment for them; he knows formal professors of religion, and upon what foot they have taken up their profession, and how they keep their lusts with their profession; he can distinguish between profession and grace; and he knows and observes the springs and progress of their apostasy: and as for true believers, he knows their persons, and knows them to be his; he sees their sins and their weaknesses; he takes notice of their graces, and observes their wants; and there is nothing in them, or belongs to them, but what is before him, even the secret desires of their souls. So Philo the Jew says<sup>f63</sup> the divine Word reaches to, and comprehends all things, nothing escapes him: and this phrase is very commonly used of the divine Being by the Jews, **wynpl ywl g l kh**, “all things are manifest before him”<sup>f64</sup>; and this being used of Christ, is no inconsiderable proof of his proper deity:

*but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* The words are an allusion to wrestlers, who exercised naked,

and took each other by their necks and collars; and when one was thrown upon his back, as the word rendered “opened” is by some translated, he was publicly exposed and known: or to the putting of a creature in such a posture when sacrificed; or rather to the cutting of it up, and laying open its entrails: and especially to the manner of doing it among the Jews, with which these persons, the apostle writes to, were acquainted: and it was this; when the lamb for the daily sacrifice was slain, the priest hung it up by the foot, and skinned it; and when he came to the breast, he cut off the head; and having finished the skinning of it, he divided the heart, and took out the blood; then he cut off the shoulders; and when he came to the right leg, he cut it off, and then cut it down through the chine bone, and **wynpl ywl g wl wk**, “all of it was manifest before him”<sup>f65</sup>. The very phrase before used. The word here used seems to answer to **Pr [**, which, with the Arabians, signifies, “to know”, or make known; and **Pyr [ m**, with the Rabbins; is used for a companion, a familiar one that is well known; the theme in the Hebrew, is, **Prw [**, the “neck”. The last clause, “with whom we have to do”, manifestly points at the person here spoken of, Jesus Christ: saints have a concern with him now, as their way to the Father, as their Saviour and Redeemer; they have to do with his blood for pardon and cleansing, and with his righteousness for justification, and with his fulness for every supply of grace; and with him as their King to rule over them, protect and defend them, and as their prophet to teach them, and their high priest to intercede for them. Moreover, the words may be rendered, “to whom we must give an account”; and so the Syriac version renders them, “to whom they give an account”; as all men must at the great day: and all this that is said of the Word of God should engage to care, watchfulness, and circumspection in the course of a profession of religion.

**Ver. 14.** *Seeing then that we have a great high priest*, etc..] That Christ is a priest, and an high priest, has been observed already, in (<sup><300></sup>Hebrews 2:1-7) but here he is called a great one, because of the dignity of his person, as follows, and the virtue of his sacrifice; and because of the place where he now officiates as a priest, heaven and with respect to the continuation of his priesthood; and likewise because he makes others priests unto God; and this great high priest is no other than the Word of God before spoken of: so the divine Logos, or Word, is often called a priest, and an high priest, by Philo the Jew<sup>f66</sup>. This great high priest believers “have”, and have an interest in him; he is called to this office, and invested with it; he has been

sent to do his work as a priest; and he has done the greatest part of it, and is now doing the rest; and saints receive Christ as such, and the blessings of grace from him, through his sacrifice and intercession:

*that is passed into the heavens*; he came down from thence, and offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people; and having done this, he ascended thither again, to appear for them, and to make intercession for them; whereby he fully answers to his character as the great high priest: and what makes him more fully to appear so is what follows,

*Jesus, the Son of God*: the former of these names signifies a Saviour, and respects his office; the latter is expressive of his dignity, and respects his person; who is the Son of God in such sense as angels and men are not; not by creation, nor adoption; but by nature; not as man and Mediator, but as God, being of the same nature with his Father, and equal to him; and it is this which makes him a great high priest, and gives virtue and efficacy to all he does as such: wherefore,

*let us hold fast our profession*: of faith, of the grace and doctrine of faith, and of Christ, and salvation by him, and of the hope of eternal life and happiness; which being made both by words and deeds, publicly and sincerely, should be held fast; which supposes something valuable in it, and that there is danger of dropping it; and that it requires strength, courage, and greatness of mind, and an use of all proper means; and it should be held without wavering; for it is good and profitable, it recommends the Gospel; and it has been made publicly before witnesses; and not to hold it fast is displeasing to God, and resented by him: and the priesthood of Christ is an argument to enforce this duty, for he is the high priest of our profession; he has espoused our cause, and abode by it; he has bore witness to the truth of the Gospel himself; he prays for the support of our faith; he pities and succours; and he is passed into the heavens, where he appears for us, owns us, and will own us.

**Ver. 15.** *For we have not an high priest*, etc..] That is cruel and unmerciful; the saints have an high priest, but not such an one:

*which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*; such as bodily diseases and wants, persecutions from men, and the temptations of Satan; under all which Christ sympathizes with his people; and which sympathy of his arises from his knowledge and experience of these things, and the share he has had of them, and from that union there is between him and his

people: and it is not a bare sympathy, but is attended with his assistance, support, and deliverance; and the consideration of it is of great comfort to the saints:

*but was in all points tempted like as we are:* of the temptations of Christ, and of the saints, (See Gill on "~~scrips~~ Hebrews 2:18")

*yet without sin;* there was no sin in his nature; though he was encompassed about with infirmities, yet not with sinful infirmities, only sinless ones; nor was there any sin in his temptations; though he was solicited to sin by Satan, yet he could find none in him to work upon; nor could he draw him into the commission of any sin.

**Ver. 16.** *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace,* etc..] Either to Christ, who is before spoken of as an high priest, and who was typified by the mercy seat, to which there seems to be an allusion; and coming to him as a priest upon his throne is very proper: to him saints come for pardon and cleansing, and for a justifying righteousness, for the acceptance of their persons, and the presentation of their services, and for every supply of grace; and to him they may come "boldly", since he stands in the relations of a Father, husband, and brother, and from him they may expect receive mercy, since it is kept for him, and with him, and is only dispensed through him; and in him they may hope to find grace, since all fulness of it dwells in him; and help in every time of need, since their help is laid on him. Or else to God the Father, since Christ, the high priest, is the way of access to God, and it is by him the saints come unto the Father; who is represented as on a "throne", to show his majesty, and to command reverence; and as on a "throne of grace", to encourage distressed souls to come unto him; and to express his sovereignty in the distribution of his grace: and this coming to him is a sacerdotal act, for every believer is a priest; and is not local, but spiritual, and with the heart, and by faith; and chiefly regards the duty of prayer, and a drawing nigh to God in that ordinance with spiritual sacrifices to offer unto him: and this may be done "boldly"; or "with freedom of speech"; speaking out plainly all that is in the heart, using an holy courage and intrepidity of mind, free from servile fear, and a bashful spirit; all which requires an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, faith, in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, a view of God, as a God of peace, grace, and mercy, and a holy confidence of being heard by him; and such a spirit and behaviour at the throne of grace are very consistent with reverence of the divine Majesty, with submission

to his will, and with that humility which becomes saints. The Jews often speak of *ʿydh ask*, “a throne of judgment”, and *ʿymj r ask*, “a throne of mercy”<sup>f67</sup>; and represent God as sitting upon one or other of these, when he is dispensing justice or mercy<sup>f68</sup>; and the latter they sometimes call, as here, *ʿymj r w dsj ask*, “a throne of grace and mercy”<sup>f69</sup>: and so they make the first man Adam to pray to God after this manner<sup>f70</sup>;

“let my prayer come before the throne of thy glory, and let my cry come before *ʿymj r ask*, “the throne of thy mercy”.”

The end of coming hither is,

*that we may obtain mercy*; the sure mercies of David, the blessings of the everlasting covenant; particularly pardoning mercy, and the fresh application of it, and every other blessing of grace that is needful: and there is reason to expect it, since there is mercy with God; and it is with Christ, as the head of the covenant; and it is ready for those that ask it; and it has been obtained by many, and is everlasting.

*And find grace to help in time of need*; the Syriac version renders it, “in time of affliction”; which is a time of need, as every time of distress is, whether from the immediate hand of God, or through the persecutions of men, or the temptations of Satan: and help at such times may be expected; since not only God is able to help, but he has promised it; and he has laid help on Christ; and gives it seasonably, and at the best time; and it springs from grace, yea, it is grace that does help; by which may be meant, the discoveries of God's love, and the supplies of grace from Christ: which may be hoped for, seeing God is the God of all grace; and he is seated on a throne of grace; and all fulness of grace dwells in Christ: to find grace often, signifies to find favour with God, to be accepted by him, as well as to receive grace from him.