

## Hebrews Lesson 4 Articles

As the writer is urging his readers to persevere to the end he uses the faithfulness of Jesus as the key inspiration (v. 6). It is a valuable exercise deliberately to keep our gaze on the Jesus of the Gospels. He had a unique life and work but we too have a heavenly calling (v. 1), and as he was sent into the world as ‘apostle and high priest’ (v. 1), so we too are sent (compare John 20:21) and need to keep looking in the right direction for inspiration. The powerful incentive for the Christian servant is to remember that the unique Son became a willing servant in fulfilling his earthly ministry (Mark 10:45). In that remarkable drama of Jesus washing his rebellious disciples’ feet, the real punch line is John 13:13–14: ‘You call me “Teacher” and “Lord”, and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.’ He is claiming his rightful position as Master and Lord, even when doing the job of a slave, thus abolishing all status-seeking in the kingdom of God and transforming the whole concept of service.<sup>1</sup>

While Israel was God’s earthly household and the church His heavenly household, we need to keep in mind that God’s household is always marked by faith. People in OT times were saved by faith just as people are today. It is this continuity of faith that tied together the people of God under both covenants. This is why Gal. 3:7 calls true believers “children of Abraham,” for he is the “father of the believing.”<sup>2</sup>

I ran the 100- and 220-yard dashes in college. We learned very soon that you cannot run while watching your feet. You look straight ahead. When we ran sprints we set our eyes on the tape, and we kept our eyes on it until the finish. Looking at the tape helped motivate the desire to win and it kept us going in the right direction. It also kept our attention off ourselves and those running next to us. When we are running in the Christian race, we must get our eyes off our feet, get them off ourselves, and off those around us. We look to Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of our faith. We look at Him and then we are able to run. Looking at Him we know why we are running and where we are running, and have the power and the joy to keep on running.<sup>3</sup>

The warning here is to those who know the gospel, who affirm its truth, but who, because of love of sin or fear of persecution or whatever it may be, have not committed themselves to the truth they know is real. It is as if there were a fire in a hotel and they are on the tenth floor. Because there is a net below, the firemen are yelling, “Jump.” But they do not jump. They hesitate. They are well aware of the danger and they know the net is their only way of escape; but they do not act on what they know is true and necessary. They are concerned about saving some of their possessions, or perhaps they think that somehow they can find another way out. They may be afraid of being hurt from the fall. Some might even be concerned about how they would look while jumping—afraid of embarrassment. But the point is this: simply knowing about the danger and knowing about the way out of it will not save them. If they do not jump they will die. When your very life is at stake, nothing else should matter.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hacking, P. H. (2006). *Opening up Hebrews*. Opening Up Commentary (23). Leominster: Day One Publications.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (682). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>3 4</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1983). *Hebrews*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (78, 86). Chicago: Moody Press.