

Hebrews

Chapter Three



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Hebrews 3:1

לְכֹן אַחֵי הַקְּדוֹשִׁים חֲבֵרִים בְּקִרְיָאָה שֶׁל־מַעֲלָה הַבֵּיטוּ
אֶל־הַשָּׁלִיחַ וְכֹהֵן הַוָּדָאֲתָנוּ הַגָּדוֹל אֶל־הַמָּשִׁיחַ יֵשׁוּעַ:

“Therefore, holy brothers, companions of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Messiah Yeshua.”

Companions of the heavenly calling.

The heavenly calling is the summons into the Olam HaBa, the New Jerusalem, and the final inheritance. As stated in chapter 2, the goal is not for souls to escape creation forever. The goal is for heaven and earth to be united, for the will of HaShem to be done on earth as it is in heaven, for Eden to be restored, and for the heavenly Jerusalem to descend.

The Apostle and High Priest.

Yeshua is called הַשָּׁלִיחַ, the Sent One, and כֹּהֵן הַוָּדָאֲתָנוּ הַגָּדוֹל, the High Priest of our confession. A shaliach is an authorized emissary, one who represents the sender (meshuleiach). Yeshua is sent from the Father, and as the Sent One. The Talmud says,

שְׁלוּחָא דְּמַלְכָּא כְּמַלְכָּא

“The agent of the ruler is like the ruler himself.” (Baba Kama 113b, cf. Chagigah 10b, Nedarim 72b, Soncino Press Edition)

Tractate Chagigah echoes this,

שְׁלוּחוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם כְּמוֹתוֹ

“The agent of a man is as himself.” (**Chagigah 10b, cf. Nedarim 72b, Soncino Press Edition**)

Yeshua elucidates the principle of the Shaliach:

“He that receives you receives me, and he that receives me receives Him that sent me. He that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receives a tzaddik in the name of a tzaddik shall receive a tzaddik’s reward.”
(**Matthew 10:40-41**)

Enter the Ultimate Angel, HaShem’s Prime Representative: Metatron. Rebbe Nachman explains,

“The angel Metatron is God’s shaliach, His agent in charge of this physical world.”
(**R’ Nachman of Breslov, Mayim, Breslov Research Institute, pg. 79**)

See our Article: [Metatron, the Angel of HaShem](#)

It is beyond the scope of this commentary, but Metatron is the Heavenly High Priest and Representative of HaShem in the Angelic World. There are two Metatrons, Metatron Rabbah (The Angelic manifestation of the Light of the Messiah, i.e. Yeshua in angelic form, see Exodus 23) and Metatron HaQatan (also known as Enoch). They may be compared to the sun and the moon. This concept hearkens back to chapter one, where Yeshua emanates from the world of Atzilut (Emanation) into the world of Beriah (Creation) into the world of Yetzirah (Formation) down into this world of Assiyah (Action). When the light of the Messiah refracts through the angelic world, it manifests as Metatron, which the rabbis connect to Mashiach ben Yosef from Above.

Interestingly, he is also the High Priest in heaven.

High Priest

Yeshua is the Kohen Gadol. This double title is crucial. As the sent one, he comes from God to us. As High Priest, he brings us to God. He descends with revelation and ascends with atonement.

“The more noble man in his species is Israel...and the most noble of Israel is Levi, and the most noble of Levi is the priest, and the most noble of the priest is the Messiah, who is the high priest, who is the greatest among his brethren, and knows the [divine] name and blesses the people of Israel by dint of the Explicit Name in the Temple...” (R’ Avraham Abulafia, **Sefer Chayyei Olam Haba 13a, Ms. Oxford 1582, cited in Messianic Mystics, Moshe Idel, Yale University Press, pg. 95)**

Hebrews 3:2

הַנֶּאֱמָן לַעֲשֹׂהוּ כְּמֹשֶׁה בְּכָל-בֵּיתוֹ:

“who was faithful to Him who appointed him, as Moses also was in all His house.”

Faithful to the One who appointed him.

The Messiah is נֶאֱמָן, faithful. HaShem is faithful. Moses is faithful. Yeshua did not seize the priesthood or kingship for himself. He was appointed by HaShem. Hebrews will later say, “No one takes this honor for himself, but he who is called by God, as Aaron was.”

As Moses.

Hebrews compares Yeshua to Moses by first honoring Moses.

“Comparison (synkrisis) was central to much ancient argumentation; comparing one favorably with another who was already honorable would increase one’s honor further.” (Keener, Craig S. **The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (IVP Bible Background Commentary Set) (p. 644). Kindle Edition.**)

Moses was faithful. The author alludes to Numbers 12:7, where HaShem says,

“My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all My house.”

This passage comes in the context of Miriam and Aaron questioning Moses’ unique prophetic authority.

Hebrews is not treating Moses as a failed figure. It is building from the highest possible view of Moses. If Moses is the faithful servant in all the House, then the comparison with Messiah is not between failure and success, but between Servant and Son.

In all His House.

In the Torah, this can evoke the Heavenly Temple. Moses was faithful in establishing the pattern shown on the mountain. He oversaw the building of the Mishkan according to the heavenly pattern. This will later become important for Hebrews' teaching about the earthly sanctuary and the heavenly sanctuary.

“Sifre Numbers 12:7 § 103 (27B): “In my whole house he is approved” (Num 12:7), besides the angels of service (who were found just as approved as Moses). R. Yose (ca. 150) said, “Even more than the angels of service.” (Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud & Midrash*, ed. Jacob N. Cerone, trans. Joseph Longarino, vol. 3 (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), 795.)

Hebrews 3:3

כִּי־תִפְאֶרֶת גְּדוֹלָה מִמֹּשֶׁה נָחַל־הוּא כְּאֶשֶׁר בָּנָה הַבַּיִת רַב
כְּבוֹדוֹ מִכְּבוֹד הַבַּיִת:

“For he has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the builder of the house has more honor than the house.”

More glory than Moses.

His face shone after speaking with HaShem. He received Torah. He mediated the covenant. He interceded for Israel after the sin of the golden calf. He was buried by HaShem Himself. Yet Messiah receives a greater glory because he is not merely within the House as a servant. He is the Son over the House and the one through whom the House reaches its intended destiny.

Metatron possesses a special ‘key,’ and is said to be “*elder of his house*”,

“Also, the servant is identical with Metatron, who is the servant and messenger of his Master, and who was, as we read further, the elder of his house, the same who is alluded to in the text: “I have been young, and now am old” (Psalm 37:25). “That ruled

over all that he had”; this applies to the same Metatron...”(Zohar, Vayeshev 5:44, cited at Sefaria.org)

The builder of the house.

The image of the builder is important. Moses built according to what he was shown. Exodus repeatedly says that the Mishkan was made according to the pattern revealed on the mountain. But the ultimate builder of the House is God.

Hebrews is preparing the reader for a larger concept of the House: Israel, the sanctuary, the community of the faithful, and ultimately the renewed creation. Moses is connected to the building of the earthly Mishkan. Messiah is connected to the building and completion of the eschatological House, the living Temple of the Messianic Era and the Heavenly Worlds, the actual Reality.

The Zohar treats the structure of the Tabernacle as a reflection of the cosmic order and the Divine presence (*Zohar 2:156b*). The "House" is not merely a tent in the desert, but a microcosm of the entire creation that Messiah—the Son—is bringing to its intended perfection.

Honor of the house and honor of the builder.

The house is honored because the builder is wise. The Mishkan is glorious because HaShem designed it. Moses is glorious because he faithfully served the God who sent him. Messiah is glorious because he is the Son and faithful Agent through whom the divine purpose is completed.

Hebrews 3:4

כִּי כָל-בַּיִת יֵשׁ-לוֹ בִּנָּה וּבֹנֶה הַכֹּל הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים:

“For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.”

Every house has a builder.

A house does not appear by accident. It has design, order, foundation, structure, and purpose. The same is true of the House of God. Israel’s sacred order is not arbitrary. The Mishkan, priesthood, korbanot, festivals, purity laws, and sacred calendar form a divinely ordered pattern.

The builder of all things is God.

Hebrews immediately clarifies that the ultimate builder is HaShem. God is the source, architect, and goal of all things. The Messiah's role never competes with HaShem. Rather, Messiah is the faithful Son through whom the will of HaShem is enacted.

The Zohar continues,

“And the Lord God built, i.e. the Father and the Mother built the son, as it is written, God builds Jerusalem, i.e. Vau, which is the son, is built by Yod He, which are the Father and Mother.” (**Zohar I:28a, Soncino Press Edition**)

The House as creation.

In Jewish thought, the Mishkan can be seen as a microcosm of creation. The language of the Mishkan's construction echoes creation language. Just as HaShem ordered the cosmos, He ordered the sanctuary. The Temple is Edenic space, the place where heaven and earth meet.

“The Sages taught: Seven phenomena were created before the world was created, and these are they: Torah, and repentance, the Garden of Eden, and Gehenna, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, and the name of the Messiah.” (**Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 54a**)

If the builder of all things is God, then the final House is not merely a building in the present age. The final House is the renewed creation itself, the New Jerusalem, the world filled with the knowledge of HaShem as the waters cover the sea.

Hebrews 3:5

וְהוּא מֹשֶׁה נֶאֱמָן בְּכָל בֵּיתוֹ כְּעֹבֵד
לְעֵדוֹת הַדְּבָרִים הָעֲתִידִים:

“Now Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of the things that would be spoken later.”

Moses was faithful.

Hebrews repeats the honor given to Moses. He was נֶאֱמָן, faithful, in all God's house.

As a servant.

Moses is called עֶבֶד, servant. This is not a low title. “Servant of HaShem” is one of the highest titles in the Tanakh. Moses, David, the prophets, and the Servant of Isaiah are all described with servant language. To be the servant of HaShem is greater than to be the king of men. Yet servant is not the same as Son. The servant is faithful within the House. The Son is heir over the House.

“Yeshua answered them, “Amein I tell you, everyone who commits sin is the servant of sin. A servant doesn’t live in the house forever. A son remains forever. If therefore the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. . . I say the things which I have seen with my Father. . .” **(John 8:34-38)**

The Zohar says,

“This is the secret of this matter. There are two grades above in which man should be adorned; they are the secret of Faith, and they are one. The first is the secret of the servant, and the other is the secret of the son. THE GRADE OF the servant ABOVE is called ‘the master of the whole earth,’ WHICH IS THE SECRET OF MALCHUT, AND THE GRADE OF the son ABOVE is as we stated, “Yisrael is My son, My firstborn” (Shemot 4:22), WHICH IS THE SECRET OF ZEIR ANPIN. Everything pertains to the one secret of Faith, and it behooves man to be adorned with these grades OF THE SON AND SERVANT ABOVE to be included within the secret of Faith... Happy is the portion of the son, who deserves to strive to know his Father’s secrets and all the mysteries of His house, like an only child whose father gave him authority over all his secrets. It is to the glory OF THE SON to have power over everything. He who strives in the Torah to know the Holy One, blessed be He, and His mysteries is ‘the son of the Holy One blessed be He,’ and in all the heavenly hosts, there is none that will stop him from entering his Father’s presence at any time he needs to. Happy is his portion throughout the worlds. Therefore, he who strives to know his Father in a particular way, within the secret of Chochmah, is called ‘a son’.” **(Zohar, Behar, The Secret of the Servant and the Secret of the Son, Zohar.com)**

For a testimony.

Moses’ service was לְעֵדוּת, for testimony. This means the Torah given through Moses bears witness. It testifies to HaShem, to covenant, to holiness, to sin, to atonement, to the sanctuary, and to the redemption that is coming.

Yeshua says in John 5:46, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me.” The Torah as a whole—its narratives, sacrifices, priesthood, festivals, commandments, and patterns—testifies to Messiah.

The things that would be spoken later.

Delitzsch renders this as הַדְּבָרִים הָעָתִידִים, “the future things,” or “the things about to come.” Moses points forward. The Exodus points to a greater Exodus. The manna points to heavenly bread. The rock points to living water. The Mishkan points to the heavenly sanctuary. The korbanot point to the atoning work of Messiah. The Land points to the final Rest. Eden points to the New Jerusalem.

Hebrews 3:6

אֲבֵל הַמָּשִׁיחַ הוּא כֶּבֶן עַל-בֵּיתוֹ וְאֶנְחָנוּ בֵּיתוֹ וּבִלְבָד
שְׂנֵחִזִּיק בַּבְּטָחָה וּבִתְהִלָּת הַתִּקְוָה וְלֹא-נִרְפָּנָה עַד-הַקֵּץ :

“But Messiah is as a Son over His house; and we are His house, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.”

Messiah as Son.

The contrast reaches its point. Moses is faithful as servant; Messiah is faithful as Son. This returns us to Hebrews 1, where the Son inherits a name greater than angels and receives the promises of Psalm 2 and 2 Samuel 7. The Son is the heir. The Son has authority over the House. The Son brings the House into its destiny.

Over His house.

The Messiah is עַל-בֵּיתוֹ, over His house.

We are His house.

The community of Messiah is described as the House. This does not erase the Temple. Rather, it draws from Temple imagery. Israel was called to be a kingdom of priests. The dwelling of God among His people is the goal. The living community becomes a foretaste of the renewed Temple reality of the Olam HaBa. This does not negate a physical Temple. Hand in glove.

If we hold fast.

Hebrews often speaks with conditional exhortation. This is not meant to create despair, but endurance. The path to the Olam HaBa requires perseverance.

Confidence and hope.

The words **בְּטָחָה** and **תִּקְוָה** are trust and hope. It is confidence in the promises of HaShem. The community must hold fast “until the end,” **עַד־הַקֵּץ**, because the final redemption has not yet been fully revealed. This again connects to the Olam HaBa.

Hebrews 3:7

לָכֵן כְּאֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ הַיּוֹם אִם-בְּקִלּוֹ תִשְׁמָעוּ:

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, ‘Today, if you will hear His voice,’”

As the Holy Spirit says.

Hebrews introduces Psalm 95 as the speech of **רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ**, the Holy Spirit. Notice the tense: “says,” not merely “said.” Scripture continues to speak. The voice that addressed Israel in the wilderness addresses the community now.

Today.

The word **הַיּוֹם**, “today,” is central. The Torah often speaks in the language of today: “Today you have become the people of HaShem your God” (Deuteronomy 27:9). “I set before you today life and good, death and evil” (Deuteronomy 30:15).

Today is the moment of decision. One cannot live on yesterday’s manna. One cannot obey tomorrow. The voice of HaShem must be answered today.

הַיּוֹם יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי: מֵאִי דְכָתִיב “אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצִיד הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם,” הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם – וְלֹא לְמָחָר לַעֲשׂוֹתָם, “הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם” – לְמָחָר לְקַבֵּל שְׂכָרָם.

“And this is what Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: What is the meaning of the verse, **‘that I command you today to do them’? ‘Today to do them’** — and not tomorrow to do them. **‘Today to do them’** — but tomorrow, to receive their reward.” (**Eruvin 22a**)

In the Talmud, the phrase *“Ha Yom La’asotam”* (Today, to do them) from Deuteronomy 7:11 is interpreted to mean: “Today is the day to do them (the Mitzvot), and tomorrow (in the World to Come) is the time to receive their reward”.

If you hear His voice.

The voice is speaking. The issue is whether the heart hears. In Hebrew thought, hearing means obedience. Shema Yisrael is not merely “listen” but “hear and respond.”

“R’ Yehoshua ben Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Shimon bar Yochai’s tomb...and he asked him, “When will the Messiah come?”

“Go and ask him himself,” Elijah replied.

“Where is he sitting?”

“At the entrance.” (Vilna Gaon: at the gate of Rome)

“And by what sign may I recognize him?”

“He is sitting among the poor lepers...”

R’ Joshua ben Levi found the Mashiach, and asked him, “When will you come Master?”

“Today,” answered the Mashiach.

On his return, to Elijah, he asked, “What did he say to you?”

“He lied to me,” R’ Yehoshua said. He said that he would come today, but he has not.”

Elijah answered him, “This is what he said to you, ‘Today if you will hear his voice.’”

(Sanhedrin 98a, Soncino Press Edition)

Hebrews 3:8

אַל-תִּקְשׁוּ לְבַבְכֶּם כְּמִרְיָבָה כִּיּוֹם מַסָּה בַּמִּדְבָּר:

“Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness.”

Do not harden your hearts.

The heart in Hebrew thought is the center of will, thought, desire, and decision. A hard heart is not merely emotional coldness. It is resistance to HaShem’s word.

Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to release Israel. Israel must not repeat Pharaoh's pattern in the wilderness. This is one of the tragedies of Exodus: a people can leave Egypt physically while Egypt still lives in the heart.

“When the Messiah hears of the great suffering of Israel in their dispersion, and of the wicked amongst them who seek not to know their Master, he weeps aloud on account of those wicked ones amongst them, as it is written: But he was wounded because of our transgression, he was crushed because of our iniquities (Isaiah 53:5). The souls then return to their place. The Messiah, on his part, enters a certain Hall in the Garden of Eden, called the Hall of the Afflicted. There he calls for all the diseases and pains and sufferings of Israel, bidding them settle on himself, which they do. And were it not that he thus eases the burden from Israel, taking it on himself, no one could endure the sufferings meted out to Israel in expiation on account of their neglect of the Torah. So Scripture says, “Surely our diseases he did bear, etc. (Isaiah 53:4). A similar function was performed by R. Eleazar here on earth. For, indeed, beyond number are the chastisements awaiting every man daily for the neglect of the Torah, all of which descended into the world at the time when the Torah was given. As long as Israel was in the Holy Land, by means of the Temple service and sacrifices, they averted all evil diseases and afflictions from the world. Now it is the Messiah who is the means of averting them from mankind until the time when a man quits this world and receives his punishment, as already said.” (**Zohar, Shemoth, Section 2, Page 212a, Soncino Press Edition**)

Meribah and Massah.

Meribah means quarreling or contention. Massah means testing. These names recall Exodus 17, where Israel quarreled with Moses and tested HaShem, saying, “Is HaShem among us or not?” Later, Numbers 20 also speaks of the waters of Meribah. Hunger, thirst, delay, and fear expose whether Israel trusts HaShem.

In the wilderness.

The wilderness (Olam HaZeh) is the place between redemption and inheritance. Israel has left Egypt but has not yet entered the Land. This is exactly where the audience of Hebrews stands spiritually. They have begun the journey toward the Olam HaBa, but they have not yet entered the fullness of rest.

The warning is clear: do not turn the wilderness into a graveyard through unbelief.

“Later Jewish teachers debated whether the wilderness generation might have inherited the life of the world to come, even though they did not enter the Promised Land (Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:10-11).” (Keener, Craig S.. **The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (IVP Bible Background Commentary Set)** (p. 644). (Function). Kindle Edition.)

Hebrews 3:9

אֲשֶׁר נִסּוּנִי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּחֲנוּנֵי גַם־רָאוּ פַעֲלֵי אֲרִבְעִים שָׁנָה:

“where your fathers tested Me and tried Me, and saw My works for forty years.”

Your fathers tested Me.

The wilderness generation tested HaShem. The problem at Massah and Meribah was not sincere pain; it was distrust that accused HaShem of bringing Israel out to die.

“Commandment 424 forbids us to put G-d to the test; the Torah (6,16) writes: לֹא תִנְסוּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. What is meant is that one must not make exorbitant demands on G-d to prove Himself, such as demanding miracles from prophets who have rebuked us for our sins and who have previously legitimized themselves as prophets. The Torah quotes an example from the incident at מַסָּה, where the people had demanded proof from Moses that G-d was in their midst (Exodus 17,7). We must not put the onus of proof on a prophet to show that G-d punishes the sinners and rewards the righteous.” (Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Vaetchanan, Ner Mitzvah 12, cited at Sefaria.org)

They saw My works.

They saw the plagues, the sea split, the pillar of cloud and fire, manna from heaven, water from the rock, Sinai, and the glory of HaShem. This is a sobering point. The generation that saw the greatest miracles also fell in the wilderness. Therefore, Hebrews warns believers not to presume that spiritual experiences alone guarantee endurance.

Forty years.

Forty is a number of testing, formation, and transition. Moses was forty days on Sinai. Israel wandered forty years. Yeshua was tested forty days in the wilderness. The wilderness reveals what is in the heart.

The community of Hebrews was also in a wilderness period. The Messiah has been revealed, the Olam HaBa has been promised, but the final inheritance has not yet been fully entered.

Hebrews 3:10

לָכֵן אָקוּט בַּדּוֹר וְאִמַּר עִם תַּעֲיִ
לִבָּבָהֶם וְהֵם לֹא-יָדְעוּ דַּרְכֵי:

“Therefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, ‘They are a people who err in their heart, and they have not known My ways.’”

I was grieved with that generation.

The language is relational. HaShem is not an impersonal force. Israel’s rebellion grieves Him. Covenant unfaithfulness wounds the relationship.

A people who err in their heart.

This has been the point. The Yetzer Hara is the source of sin, which is the source of death, which is the source of impurity. The problem is internal.

They have not known My ways.

One may see religious activity, miracles, community, and ritual, yet still not know the ways of God.

Hebrews 3:11

אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּאַפִּי אֶם-יָבֹאוּן אֶל-מְנוּחָתִי:

“As I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter into My rest.’”

I swore in My wrath.

Divine wrath in Scripture is not irrational rage. It is the holy response of HaShem to covenant rebellion, injustice, idolatry, and unbelief. The wilderness generation refused trust repeatedly, and eventually, the consequence was sealed.

They shall not enter.

This becomes the central warning of Hebrews. Do not begin the journey and fail to enter the rest (Geulah/Olam Haba). There is a significant debate in the Talmud regarding the "Generation of the Wilderness" (*Dor HaMidbar*). Rabbi Akiva argues that they have no portion in the World to Come (*Sanhedrin 110b*), while Rabbi Eliezer argues they do.

“The generation of the wilderness has no share in the World to Come and will not stand in judgment, as it is stated: “In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die” (Numbers 14:35). “They shall be consumed” — in this world; “and there they shall die” — in the World to Come. This is the statement of Rabbi Akiva.” (**Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 110b, The William Davidson Edition, cited at Sefaria.org**)

Rabbi Eliezer says: About them [the verse] says: “Gather My pious together to Me, those that have entered into My covenant by offering” (Psalms 50:5).

My rest.

The phrase מְנוּחָתִי, “My rest,” is the bridge into Chapter 4. On one level, the rest refers to the Land of Israel. Israel’s entry into the Land under Joshua was a form of rest from enemies and wandering. On another level, Shabbat is rest, rooted in creation. On a deeper eschatological level, the rest is the Olam HaBa, the completed creation, the restored Eden.

This is why Hebrews can speak of rest as still remaining. The Land was entered, Shabbat was given, and yet the fullness of rest still lies ahead.

Hebrews 3:12

רְאוּ עֵתָה אֶחָי פְּנֵי-יֵשׁ בְּאַחַד מִכֶּם
לְבָרֶע וְחֶסֶר אֱמוּנָה לָסוּר מֵאֱלֹהִים חַיִּים:

“Take heed, brothers, lest there be in any one of you an evil heart lacking faith, in departing from the living God.”

An evil heart lacking faith.

Delitzsch’s phrase לְבָרֶע וְחֶסֶר אֱמוּנָה is powerful: an evil heart and deficient faith.

The opposite of faith is not merely intellectual doubt. It is a heart that refuses trust and turns away. Add *Pirkei Avot* 2:9

He [Rabban Yohanan] said unto them: go forth and observe which is the evil way which a man should shun? Rabbi Eliezer said, an evil eye; Rabbi Joshua said, an evil companion; Rabbi Yose said, an evil neighbor; Rabbi Shimon said, one who borrows and does not repay for he that borrows from man is as one who borrows from God, blessed be He, as it is said, “the wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous deal graciously and give” (Psalms 37:21). Rabbi Elazar said, an evil heart. He [Rabban Yohanan] said to them: I prefer the words of Elazar ben Arach, for in his words your words are included. (**Pirkei Avot 2:9**)

This warning of an “evil heart” finds a striking parallel in Pirkei Avot 2:9. When Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai asked his students to identify the best quality a person should acquire, Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus responded, “a good heart” (Lev Tov). Referencing this classic rabbinic ideal reinforces that the “evil heart” warned of in Hebrews is not merely emotional coldness, but the specific lack of the foundational emunah (faith/trust) that the Sages identified as the core of a righteous life.

Emunah.

The Hebrew word אֱמוּנָה means faith, faithfulness, steadfastness, trustworthiness. Root of Amein. Belief in action.

Hebrews will later praise the heroes of faith in Chapter 11. They did not merely believe ideas; they lived in faithfulness toward promises not yet fully seen.

Departing from the living God.

The danger is לָסוּר, to turn aside or depart, from אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים, the living God. Idols are dead. HaShem is living. To turn from Him is to turn from life itself. The Olam HaZeh is not real “Life”.

Hebrews 3:13

רַק-הוֹכַחַתּוֹכִיחוּ אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ יוֹם יוֹם
כָּל-עוֹד שֵׁיֵאָמֵר הַיּוֹם לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִקְשֶׁה אִישׁ
מִכֶּם אֶת-לְבוֹ בְּמַרְמֶת הַחֶטָּא:

“But exhort one another day by day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Exhort one another.

Delitzsch uses **הוֹכַחְתָּ תוֹכִיחוּ**, echoing Leviticus 19:17, “You shall surely rebuke your neighbor.” In Torah, rebuke is not hatred; it is love. To let a brother drift toward destruction without warning him is not compassion. This must be done with humility and tenderness. The goal is not control or public humiliation, but restoration.

Day by day.

The wilderness had daily manna. Hebrews calls for daily exhortation. Just as Israel needed bread from heaven each day, the community needs encouragement each day so the heart does not harden. Give us this day...like the Manna.

As long as it is called today.

There is a window of response. The voice is speaking now. The heart must respond now. Repentance delayed can become hardness. Today equals This World, the Olam HaZeh. Tomorrow is the World to Come, the Olam Haba.

The deceitfulness of sin.

Sin rarely presents itself as death. It presents itself as relief, wisdom, necessity, self-protection, or freedom. Sin hardens by convincing the heart that distrust is justified.

Hebrews 3:14

כִּי חֲבֵרִים הָיִינוּ לַמָּשִׁיחַ וּבִלְבָּד שְׁנַחֲזִיק
בְּבִטָּחָה הָרְאֵשׁוֹנָה וְלֹא נִרְפָּנָה עַד־הַקֶּץ :

“For we have become companions of Messiah, if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm to the end.”

Companions of Messiah.

The word **חֲבֵרִים** means companions, partners, sharers. To belong to Messiah is to share in his destiny. If he suffered before glory, his companions must endure. If he entered the heavenly sanctuary, his companions are called to follow. If he inherits the Olam HaBa, his companions inherit with him.

Hold the beginning.

The community must hold fast הַבְּטָחָה הָרִאשׁוֹנָה, the first confidence. There is a purity, excitement, and strength in first trust that must not be abandoned.

Firm to the end.

Again, Hebrews says עַד־הַקֵּץ, until the end. The journey has an end. The wilderness is not forever. The present age is not forever. The Olam HaBa is coming. But the promise must be held until the end.

Hebrews 3:15

כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר הַיּוֹם אִם-בְּקִלּוֹ תִשְׁמָעוּ
אֶל-תַּקְשׁוּ לִבְבְּכֶם כְּמִרְיָבָה:

“while it is said, ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.’”

Today.

Hebrews repeats Psalm 95 because the warning must be heard repeatedly.

“Today all of you are standing...whoever is here...whoever is not here “Whoever is not here”—even future generations (Rashi on Deuteronomy 29:14) . “Today” is the most important day of your life, because it can and will have an effect on you and on all your future descendants. Our Sages teach: “When a person performs a mitzvah, he brings credit to himself, his family, and all his future generations, forever” (Makkot 23b) . The converse is also true: an evil deed sends repercussions into one’s present and future. Therefore “today” is the most important day of your life (Likutey Halakhot VIII, p. 146a)” **(REBBE NACHMAN’S TORAH: NUMBERS - DEUTERONOMY - Breslov Insights into the Weekly Torah Reading (p. 367). Breslov Research Institute. Kindle Edition.)**

Do not harden.

Hardness is rarely instant. It develops through repeated refusal. Each time the heart resists the voice, it becomes less sensitive. Each act of repentance softens the heart again.

This is why daily exhortation matters. The community helps keep the heart soft.

Hebrews 3:16

וּמִי הֵם הַשְּׁמָעִים וְיָרִיבוּ הֵלָא
כָּל-יֹצְאֵי מִצְרַיִם בְּיַד-מֹשֶׁה:

“For who were they who heard and rebelled? Was it not all those who came out of Egypt by Moses?”

Who heard and rebelled?

The generation that rebelled was not ignorant of HaShem’s power. They had witnessed it.

Those who came out of Egypt.

These were redeemed people. They had passed through the sea. They had been delivered from Pharaoh. They had eaten manna. Yet they rebelled. Hebrews’ warning is extremely sobering. One may begin the journey and still fail to enter the rest through unbelief. The author is not trying to weaken assurance, but to awaken endurance.

By the hand of Moses.

The failure of the wilderness generation was not a failure of Moses’ faithfulness. It was the people’s refusal to trust HaShem.

Hebrews 3:17

וּבְמִי הִתְקוּטָט אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה הֵלָא
בַּחַטָּאִים אֲשֶׁר נָפְלוּ פִּגְרֵיהֶם בַּמִּדְבָּר:

“With whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?”

Grieved forty years.

The patience of HaShem is extraordinary. Forty years He bore with them. Yet patience

should not be confused with permission. Delay in judgment is mercy, but mercy should lead to repentance.

Their bodies fell in the wilderness.

The wilderness became a graveyard for those who refused the promise. They left Egypt, but Egypt's unbelief remained in them.

Hebrews 3:18

וְלִמִּי נִשְׁבַּע שְׁלֹא יָבֹאוּ אֶל-מְנוּחָתוֹ כִּי אִם-לְסוֹרְרִים:

“To whom did He swear that they would not enter into His rest, but to those who were disobedient?”

He swore.

HaShem's oath can establish promise, as with Abraham, or seal judgment, as here. The same God who swears to bless also swears that rebellion will not inherit rest.

They would not enter His rest.

Rest is the goal of redemption. Egypt was not the final issue; entering the rest was. This pattern will dominate Chapter 4. The Gospel of the Hebrews says,

"He that seeks will not rest until he finds; and he that has found shall marvel; and he that has marveled shall reign; and he that has reigned shall rest."

Gospel of the Hebrews

Cited at Clement, *Stromateis* 2.9.45.5 5.14.96.3

EarlyChristianWritings.com

Hebrews 3:19

וְאַנְחֵנוּ רֹאִים שְׁלֹא יָכֻלוּ לָבוֹא עַל-אֲשֶׁר לֹא הֶאֱמִינוּ:

“We see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.”

We see.

The chapter ends by drawing the conclusion from Israel’s wilderness history. This is not merely ancient history. It is instruction for the present community.

“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ⁷ Don’t be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” ⁸ Let’s not commit sexual immorality, as some of them committed, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell. ⁹ Let’s not test Mashiach, as some of them tested, and perished by the serpents. ¹⁰ Don’t grumble, as some of them also grumbled, and perished by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them by way of example, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands be careful that he doesn’t fall.” **(1 Corinthians 10:6-12)**

Because of unbelief.

They did not enter because they did not trust. This is the final warning of Chapter 3. The Son is faithful. The promise of the Olam HaBa is sure. The heavenly calling is real. The High Priest has been appointed. The rest remains. But the community must hear “today” and not harden the heart.

“The only way a person can have compassion on himself and attain his eternal goal is by renewing himself daily. Just as yesterday will never return, so too, today will not return. Each day is a separate, new creation by G-d, and each individual who is alive on that day is able to benefit from it. Even if one’s deeds until now were questionable, today is when everything starts and begins anew (Likutey Halakhot I, p. 223a)” **(REBBE NACHMAN’S TORAH: NUMBERS - DEUTERONOMY - Breslov Insights into the Weekly Torah Reading (Kindle Locations 5866-5870). Breslov Research Institute. Kindle Edition.)**

“Every day, every hour, and every moment, man has the strength to renew and revive himself and to become a totally new creation. G-d makes new creations Every day. No one moment is like any other. Strengthen yourself and make a completely new beginning. Even on the very same day, you may have to start again

several times. Whatever happened in the past, forget it completely. Keep your thoughts directed to G-d. Begin anew as from now. . . Whatever happens to you, with all your might make G-d your strength. For G-d is filled with love at every moment. The fountain of his kindness is never exhausted.” **(Reb Noson of Breslov, Restore My Soul, Breslov Research Institute, pgs. 40-41)**

“The sound of the shofar (שוֹפָר) represents “today.” It arouses us to “improve your deeds” (שִׁפְרוּ מַעֲשֵׂיכֶם); right now. The past is gone, and the future has yet to come, now we need to hear the call of the present moment. Every Rosh Hashanah, the shofar of Mashiach is sounded, but until now, it has been “An inner voice that is not heard.” We pray that this year it will be heard loudly and clearly. “And it shall be that on that day a great shofar shall be sounded.” “Mashiach—Now!” in the present. ...we want Mashiach today, without further delay.” **(Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh. The Inner Dimension: Insight into the Weekly Torah Portion (p. 300). Gal Einai. Kindle Edition.)**

The bridge to Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 ends with unbelief preventing entrance into rest. Chapter 4 will ask what this rest truly is. It will show that the rest is deeper than Canaan alone and rooted in the seventh day of creation. Ultimately, it points to the Messianic Era, the final Shabbat of creation, and beyond to the restored Eden, the New Jerusalem and the Olam Haba.