



An ANCHOR for the soul

STUDIES FROM THE BOOK OF **HEBREWS**

STUDY 5

HEBREWS 4:1-13

Aim of Study: Be aware of the challenge of pressing on in the journey towards heaven heeding the warnings of Scripture not to turn away because of sin.

Main Teaching Point: The risk of turning aside is very real. God's word helps us to take seriously the call to persevere

So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.... (verse 9)

.... Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no-one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. (Verse 11)

STUDY

A. Knowing where you are and where you are going

1. Where does this passage situate us in God's plans?
2. What warnings does the writer sound?
3. What are his encouragements?
4. In what way is our situation similar to those mentioned in verse 2?
5. Why did they fail to enter? (See verses 2b & 11)
6. What point is the writer making when he introduces the idea of God resting on the 7th day of creation? How does it contribute to his argument?
7. Is God's resting past, present or future? What about for us? (See verses 9-10)

"God's rest is open to all believers in every age, including ourselves." Peter Adam

B. The warnings of Scripture

The reformers taught about the perseverance of the saints, i.e. God will keep his own till the end. (See John 6:37-40). This truth however should never lead us to be complacent. One of the ways that God keeps his own is through the warnings of Scripture. Jesus says in John 10:16 that his sheep "will listen to my voice." The onus is therefore on us to heed the warnings of Scripture not in such a way that we become paralysed with fear but recognising that God is gracious in warning us through his word of the dangers of falling away. We would be foolish to criticise those who place signs warning of danger at the edge of a dangerous precipice saying that they were instilling unnecessary fear in those who, oblivious of their danger, are likely to go close to the edge. The warning signs play a vital role in keeping people safe.

C. The unmasking effect of God's word (verses 12-13)

Think together about how good God is in giving us his word. According to these verses what does God's word do for us?

8. We often use these verses along with other key verses such as 2 Timothy 3:16-17 to inform the doctrine of Scripture. But from the immediate context of Hebrews 4:12-13, this is not the writer's primary aim. He is telling us about God's word for a particular reason. What is this?

We can summarise these verses in terms of :

- What God says and
- What God sees

God doesn't give us a word that we can dodge or weave away from. Think about how gracious God is in doing just this. He himself knows the thoughts of our hearts. But he is gracious to us in giving us a word that hold an accurate mirror up for us so that we also can see what our hearts are truly like. We are no more able to hide from the word than we are from God himself. In what way is this supremely good for us in the light of verse 11? Just imagine if we were able to conceal things from the searching light of God's word. What a tragedy that would be!

For reflection:

- How pathetic the veneer!
- How ridiculous the pretence!
- How nauseating the hypocrisy!

We might be able to fool even the best of men and women. We cannot fool God!

9. What steps can we take to ensure that God's word keeps on "having its way" with us?