

## **Bible Study – Hebrews chapter 4:1-13**

### **A Rest for the people of God**

In our last study, we looked at the consequences of unbelief, focusing on the followers of Jesus Christ. We saw how the nation of Israel, in their unbelief that God could deliver them safely into the Promised Land, were not allowed to enter the 'rest' that was promised them. The writer gives a heartfelt plea to believers that they do not face the same consequences as Israel.

In today's study, we will examine the concept of rest in more detail and understand why the goal of rest should be the impetus for us to persevere in our faith.

#### **Read Hebrews 3:7-19; 4:1-13**

The writer expounds on what it means to have rest and his plea to the readers/audience to pursue it with haste. In his letter, he assumes that the audience understands what rest means, the concept coming from the Old Testament. The word of God, as it concludes, will be used to judge and test believers, to show our thoughts and actions in the light of judgement.

**Q.** (v.1) The writer talks about the rest that is still available for us to enter. What is the definition of rest (in its broadest sense)? What do you think this rest looks like, in the context of this passage (cf. Deuteronomy 3:18-20)? What is the Sabbath rest (v. 9)? Is the Sabbath rest different from the rest spoken of in verse 1? How do we attain this rest (cf. Romans 4:13-16; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27)?

**Q.** What was the good news in the Old Testament (cf. Exodus 34:6-7)? What is the good news of the New Testament (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3-6)? What is the warning to those hear the good news (cf. John 8:24)?

**Q.** The writer gives three (3) warnings to the reader regarding the potential forfeiture of rest:

1. v.1b – “...*let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it*” – What does it mean “to fear”? How does one live in light of this warning (cf. Philippians 3:13-14; Hebrews 10:23)?
2. v. 6c – “*Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.*” What is the consequence to those who do harden their hearts (cf. Romans 1:18-24; 1 Timothy 4:1-2)?
3. v. 11 – “*Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.*” What does striving look like (cf. James 1:12)? Why are we to do this (cf. Revelation 2:10)?

All three warnings are meant for our good and to prevent us from living like the Israelites in the Old Testament. Why can it hard for us to follow these warnings? What are some practical ways to pay heed to these warnings in our lives?

**Q.** In verses 12-13, the writer talks about the Word of God being powerful enough to dissect our entire being and to lay bare before God who we really are. In reading this passage, does it give you comfort or worry? Does the Word of God play a powerful role in your day-to-day life? What are some practical ways that the Word of God can help you in your perseverance of the faith and to combat unbelief?

The writer expounds on the concept of rest, which is to be given to the Christian who perseveres in their faith. Though the nation of Israel had not be able to enjoy the full rest that was promised to them, it pointed to a rest in the future that would be accessible by all who believe in Jesus. The writer also warns about the danger of unbelief and to be on guard as he doesn't want them to fall short of achieving it. And should a Christian fall into faithless disobedience, the word of God would expose the thoughts and actions of the Christian at the day of judgement.

It is hard to be obedient and faithful all the time. However, Jesus calls us to trust in him, especially when we are weak, and it is then that we see God's power in action (2 Corinthians 12:10). He calls on us to depend on him daily for all our needs. It is only through him that we can strive and live the faithful life so we can enter the promised rest.