

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS



15. A Call to be Holy

(Leader's Notes)

Introduction

What subjects did you study at school? Some subjects are mostly theory, but others more practical. Some children prefer the practical subjects, while others are better at the theory. The Book of Hebrews contains both theory and practical. The first nine chapters speak about the theory, or the truths about the Christian life, while the last four contain practical advice on how to live as a Christian. Let's be strong in both areas.

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 12:14-29

1. We must live a holy life v14-17

- ❖ Why is it so important to live a holy life? V14. See 1 Peter 1:15-16.
(The Bible says that without holiness no one will see the Lord. Also we are to be holy because our God is a holy God.)
- ❖ What three sins do we particularly need to guard ourselves against according to these verses? V15-16
 - (1. Bitterness
 - (2. Sexual immorality
 - (3. Godlessness)
- ❖ What does it mean when it speaks about a 'bitter root causing trouble and defiling many'? v15
(Bitterness in our lives will cause trouble for us:-
 - *We won't receive God's forgiveness and it will hinder our relationship with him.*
 - *We will be bound by the hurt in our lives and it will spoil our relationship with that person.*
 - *It will affect us emotionally and can even cause harm to our bodies.*
 - *It may also affect the lives of other people around us, especially if we continually speak about it.)*
- ❖ Why are Esau's actions in v15-16 described as godless? See Genesis 25:29-34. What kind of person then, is a godly person?
(Esau did not value God's blessings through his birth-right. His carnal fleshly desires were more important to him. A godly person is one who values the things of God above all others and seeks to live a godly life. He is not controlled by his fleshly, carnal desires, but by the Holy Spirit.)
- ❖ Esau regretted his actions, but why do you think his tears made no difference? 2 Corinthians 7:10, Genesis 27:34
(He regretted what he had done and felt sorry for himself, but there was no true repentance. True repentance is admitting that what we have done is sinful and wrong, and being willing to change our behaviour.)

2. Our God is a holy God v18-29

- ❖ What incident is v18-21 referring to? See Exodus 19:12-13

(This is referring to the time when the law was given to Moses and the people of Israel at Mount Sinai. This was the inauguration of the Old Covenant.)

- ❖ We are now under the New Covenant. What warning is given to us in v25?
(We are warned not to refuse the one who is speaking to us.)

Often we take things lightly, as if God seems very different now. Perhaps you think that during the Old Testament times God was fierce, and you had to be careful lest he judge you, but now we are living in a time of grace. It is true that we are living in the time of grace, but God has not changed.

- ❖ What two reasons are given to show that the warning we are given is very serious?
 - (1. When God spoke on Mount Sinai those who refused did not escape his judgment. This time God has spoken to us from Heaven, through his Son. Since this is greater, the consequences of disobeying are greater.*
 - (2. There will come an even greater shaking in the end, more terrible than what Moses saw, and so we need to listen to what God is saying.)*
- ❖ As we understand the holiness of God, how will it affect our attitudes, life and worship? V28-29
(We should be truly thankful to the Lord and worship him in a way that is acceptable to him, which is with reverence and awe.)

Consider

What changes do you need to make, so that your worship will be 'acceptable' to God?

Conclusion

'Holiness' doesn't seem to be a popular word today! The God we read about in the Old Testament was a holy God, and so is the God of the New Testament. Even though that was 2000 years ago, he is still a holy God. He still requires that his people are holy. It is not easy in an unholy, godless, secular world, but we have a High Priest who understands what we go through, and promises to help us in our time of need. Let's draw near to him daily, many times a day, to seek his power to live a holy life, for 'without holiness we will not see the Lord.'