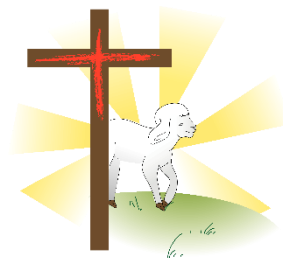


THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

4. An Encouragement to God's House

(Leader's Notes)



Introduction

Someone has said, "Opportunities are greater today than ever before in history." That is not only true in the world, but also for God's people. God has promises for his people that we need to enter into and possess. In our last study we saw how the Children of Israel missed their opportunity to enter into the Promised Land, the 'rest' that God had for them. We are encouraged not to miss that opportunity.

Scripture Reading: **Hebrews 4:1-13**

- ❖ What is the promise that God gives us in verses 1 and 9?
(The promise is that we can enter into his rest – a Sabbath rest.)
- ❖ The rest God had promised the Children of Israel was the Promised Land. Why did they fail to enter that rest? v2, 6
(They did not combine their faith with what they had heard. They were disobedient.)
- ❖ What proof does the author give that the 'rest' God spoke about was not only referring to the Promised Land? v3, 7-8. What do you think it means to enter God's rest? Discuss.
 - (1. *The words in v3 are taken from Psalm 95:11. These words were spoken after the Children of Israel had entered the Land.*
 - (2. *The words quoted in v7 were also spoken after they had entered the Land and this shows that it is speaking about another 'rest'.*
 - (3. *Joshua himself spoke of another day, a time in the future.*)
- ❖ Let's study God's Word to get a clearer picture of the 'rest' that God has promised us. See Hebrews 4:10, Ephesians 2:8-10, Revelation 14:13. What are the different meanings for 'rest' in these verses?
 - (1. *This rest is called God's rest – a resting from our own work.*
 - (2. *This rest is speaking of salvation – which we cannot work for.*
 - (3. *It also speaks of Heaven – and the time when we will rest from our labours here on earth.*)
- ❖ Although we may have put our faith in Christ for our salvation, we often struggle to live it out. How can we learn to 'rest from our work'?
(We need to learn to walk in the Spirit and live in dependence on God's Spirit, not our own strength.)
- ❖ It seems strange that the author now says, 'make every effort to enter that rest!' v11. How can we do that without struggling in the flesh?
(The only way is to commit all we do to the Lord in prayer and depend on him, rather than on our own strength and abilities.)
- ❖ What important truths can we learn about the Word of God from verses 12 and 13?
 - (1. *It is living – it is still effective and true.*
 - (2. *It is active – it will come to pass.*
 - (3. *It penetrates – into our inner being.*
 - (4. *It judges – even the things hidden in our hearts.*)

For Thought

In v13 we are told that everything will be uncovered. Often we pretend or cover our true thoughts and feelings. Why do we do this? (Often we are ashamed and embarrassed by our true thoughts and motives and we don't want others to know! We want to look good in the eyes of others.)

- ❖ How does v13 motivate us to be careful to make every effort to enter into all that God has for us?
(We should be motivated by the truth that God sees what is in our hearts – and he alone knows if we have 'entered in'.)

Conclusion

God has promised us 'rest'. This begins with salvation, when we receive forgiveness, and includes all he has promised us in Christ: peace, victory over sin, joy, freedom within, healing, our needs provided, guidance – and then eternal life in Heaven. He encourages us to 'make every effort' to enter into all that he has for us. Let's do that!