

Hebrews Chapter 4:1-13

Study by Jason Labonte

I. Background

A. Chapter 1

1. In these the last days, God has spoken to us through His son (1:1).
2. This Son is superior to everything and everyone in the old system (1:4).

B. Chapter 2

1. Therefore, we must be careful, because if the old system was important, certainly the new system — Jesus — is important (2:1).
2. Because this new system is for us, Jesus became like us to better help us (2:14-15, 18).

C. Chapter 3

1. Jesus, the initiator of the new system is greater than Moses, a servant of the old system (3:5-6).
2. We should be careful and encourage one another, so that we do not end up like the people Moses led (3:12-13).

II. Chapter 4

A. The Sabbath-rest

1. The Hebrew people were promised a rest.
2. They did not receive it.
3. Since God cannot lie, the promise to enter this rest must still remain — especially since, in one sense, it is still the 7th day of creation.
4. So what is this rest?
 - i. The Greek word for “rest” derived from the words for “down” and “to cease”.
 - ii. What are we ceasing?
5. Who gives the rest?
 - i. Jesus and Joshua are exactly the same word.
 - ii. Joshua is, in one sense, a foreshadowing of Jesus.
 - iii. Jesus, our High Priest, will take us to our rest — before the throne of Grace (Heb 4:16).
6. Who is resting?
 - i. God
 - ii. Jesus
 - iii. us

B. The Gospel message

1. The Hebrew people were also given the gospel.
2. What is the gospel?
 - i. The Greek word for “Gospel” is derived from the prefix for “good” and the word for “message”. It usually originated from a king.
 - ii. Was the Gospel any different for the Hebrews?
3. Why did they not enter the rest?
 - i. The Greek for “disobedience” specifically indicates the type of disobedience in which one does not believe the command.
 - ii. Lack of faith is disobedience and sin.
 - iii. The Greek word for “harden” refers specifically to hardening due to dryness. (See Heb 6:7-8.)
4. Did anyone?
 - a. 2 spies
 - b. Heb 11
5. We are the 2nd ones to receive the Gospel; we have an advantage seeing their response as an example.

C. The reliability of God’s Word

1. How much can we trust this promise?
2. God’s Word is a living message, not a dead one — it still applies to us.
3. Why bring this up now?
 - i. We are judged by the same word, promise, and command to enter the rest that the Hebrews were.
 - ii. It knows our considerations and intentions — whether we truly have faith or not.
 - iii. We are fully at God’s mercy.
 - a. naked — nothing to hide.
 - b. having necks bent back

D. The warning and exhortation

1. “Let us be careful (literally “fear”).”
2. “Let us make haste” so as not to be “late”.

III. Application

A. Are we resting in Christ? Or are we still “working”.

B. Do we believe — have faith in — the promises God has given us?

C. Are we drinking in the water of God’s Word so that our hearts do not harden?

D. Are we helping each other enter this rest?

1. Do we have a fear for each other’s salvation?
2. Do we keep putting things off that we should be doing now?