

GOD'S POWERFUL SWORD

(Hebrews 4:12-13)

INTRODUCTION:

A. Hebrews 4:11

1. Here is a succinct summary of all that has been said in Hebrews 3:7 - Hebrews 4:10
2. We need to be diligent to enter our heavenly rest
3. Or we may fall short of our rest, just as many Israelites fell short of their Canaan rest.

B. To stress the need for diligence, we are reminded regarding the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12-13

1. That Word provided the example of the Israelites' disobedience
2. That Word is now warning us not to emulate the Israelites' example

C. In this passage, the Word of God is described in amazing terms...

1. It is "living"
2. It is "powerful"
3. It is "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit"
4. It is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"

D. At a time in which God's Word is so often neglected, even by some Christians, it never hurts to contemplate the wonder of God's Word

1. And so we take this opportunity to reflect upon what is said in this passage
2. With a desire to renew and increase our appreciation of the power of God's Word!

DISCUSSION:

A. THE WORD OF GOD IS "LIVING" AND "POWERFUL"

1. God's word is not some "dead letter"

a. Not only in this passage, but elsewhere we read of the abiding nature of God's Word

1) Notice Peter's description of it _ 1 Peter 1:23-25

2) Isaiah 40:8

3) Matthew 24:35

b. The "life" of God's Word is due to the nature of God Himself!

1) God is eternal, He is "the living God"

a) Hebrews 3:12

b) Jeremiah 10:10

2) He cannot lie, so what He says will come to pass

a) Hebrews 6:18

b) Thus His Word will never perish!

c. As Jesus said _ John 6:63

2. That God's Word is alive is seen in its power

a. It has the power to accomplish its intended purpose _ Isaiah 55:10-11

b. The gospel in particular has the power to save

1) Romans 1:16-17

2) James 1:21

c. Through God's word we can be born again

1) 1 Peter 1:22-23

2) James 1:18

d. It works effectively in those who believe

1) 1 Thessalonians 2:13

2) Notice the opposite effect _ Hebrews 4:2

e. It can build us up, and give us the inheritance that is ours _ Acts 20:32

f. It can make the man of God complete for all good works _ 2 Timothy 3:16-17

3. How could anything with such power be a "dead letter"?

4. With such a "living" and "powerful" word at our disposal, we would be foolish to neglect the blessings it offers, or the warnings it gives!

B. THE WORD OF GOD IS "SHARP" AND "A DISCERNER"

1. Sharper than any two-edged sword

a. The Word of God is often likened to powerful objects

1) Ephesians 6:17

2) Jeremiah 23:29

b. To illustrate its sharpness as a "sword", the Word of God is said to pierce...

1) "...even to the dividing of soul and spirit"

2) "...and of both joints and marrow"

3) That is, the divine word is able to cut through everything that is in man

2. A discerner of the "thoughts and intents of the heart"

a. With its sharpness, it is capable of sifting through and revealing the heart of man

b. It's effect on man reveals his true heart...

- 1) In some cases, that one's heart is sincere and open to change _ Acts 2:36-37
- 2) Other times, that one's heart has no desire to change
 - a) Acts 5:33
 - b) Acts 7:54
3. One cannot hear or read the Word of God without being affected!
4. As stated earlier, the "life" of God's Word is due to the nature of God Himself. Thus ...
- C. THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD IS DUE TO HIS OMNISCIENCE
 1. God is Omniscient
 - a. The word "omniscient" means "all-knowing"
 - b. David extolled the omniscience of God in Psalm 139:1-12
 - c. Solomon also wrote of God's omniscience
 - 1) Proverbs 15:3
 - 2) That is why "there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open" to His eyes
 2. Therefore no one can hide from the Judge
 - a. As David counseled his son Solomon _ 1 Chronicles 28:9
 - b. It is before this Omniscient Judge that we must one day give an account
 - 1) There is a judgment day coming, in which God will judge the world through His Son, Jesus Christ!
 - a) Acts 17:30-31
 - b) Romans 2:16
 - c) 2 Corinthians 5:10
 - 2) We read of that Judgment Day in the last book of Bible _ Revelation 20:11-15
 - c. The standard by which we will be judged are the words spoken through His Son
 - 1) As stated by Jesus _ John 12:48
 - 2) This should give special force to the warning found _Hebrews 2:1-3

CONCLUSION:

- A. Yes, the power of God's Word is derived from God Himself
 1. God is omniscient, able to see into the hearts of men; therefore His Word is able to cut to the hearts of men and reveal their true nature
 2. God is living, eternal, who will one day judge the world; therefore His Word that abides forever will be the standard by which we will be judged
- B. In view of the power of God Himself and His powerful Word...
 1. How dare we neglect the warnings given in it, such as those found in Hebrews 4:1, 11?
 2. How dare we neglect to even read about the warnings (as many do by not reading the Bible)?
- C. And remember, how we react to the Word of reveals our true character...
 1. Some are so "dull of heart", that they react with indifference and say "so what?"
 2. Some are "cut to the heart", angrily resist the Word, and blame the messenger (Acts 7:54)
 3. Some are "cut to the heart", and cry out "what shall I do?" (Acts 2:37)
- D. What kind of heart do you have?