

## L i v i n g   a n d   A c t i v e H e b r e w s   4 : 1 2 - 1 3

The context is the warning not to harden our hearts against what God says and so drift from Him and His truth, but rather, to enter His rest (**v. 11**)

The idea of **vv. 12-13** is:

- The arguments the author of Hebrews has been using in trying to persuade the audience to not drift from, or disassociate with, the Lord in times of difficulty have all been from Scripture
  - Namely the Old Testament—which was at that time their Scripture
- Not that he was randomly plucking verses out of the Bible to support his own ideas, but that this *is* the warning of Scripture:
  - Cling to the Lord in difficulty, because He is faithful
  - And there is a real danger in hardening our hearts against the Word of God
  - And in drifting and denying
    - As evidenced by Kadesh Barnea (the great miss)
- **Because the argument, concept, exhortation comes directly from Scripture—it cannot be ignored**
  - That is the point of the 2 verses before us

### *Living and active*

- This is one of the claims the Bible makes about itself
- It is important to understand what the Bible claims to be
- To let it shape, form, direct, and dictate our opinions

What the Bible says about the Bible (Chronologically arranged):

- Nothing is to be taken from it or added to it (Dt. 4:2; 12:32; Pv 3:6)
- Eternal (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25)
- Effective (Is 55:11)
- Pure (Ps 12:6; 119:40)
- Perfect (Ps 19:7)
- Precious (Ps 19:10)
- A life guide (Ps 119:105)
- Soul food (Jer 15:16)
- A fire and a hammer (Jer 23:29)
- True (Ps 119:160; Jn 17:17)
- Helpful (Pv 6:23)
- Flawless (Pv 30:5)
- To be obeyed (Lk 8:21; Jms 1:22)
- All we need to know God (Lk 16:29, 31)
- The standard by which all teaching is to be tested (Acts 17:11)
- Faith-Building (Romans 10:17)
- For everyone (Rom 16:26)
- Sin-cleansing (Eph 5:26; Jms 1:21)
- The sword for spiritual battle (Eph 6:17)
- The very words of God (1 Thess 2:13)
- God breathed (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21)
- Saint equipping (2 Tim 3:17)

- Life-changing (Heb 4:12)
- Life-giving (James 1:18)
- Spiritually nourishing (1 Peter 2:2)

### What do you believe about the Bible?

- If your opinion is not formed by the Bible itself, then it is formed by someone else.
- And no person has as good of a track record as the Bible.

Jesus is the focus of Scripture and the greatest religious teacher the world has ever known.

- Therefore, it is wise to see how Jesus viewed Scripture.
- If you claim to be a follower of Jesus and your view of Scripture is different or contrary to His—you're blowing it

Jesus accepted the Old Testament Canon as it exists today, without any modifications, and claimed to fulfill it. (Matthew 5:17-18)

Jesus treated the Old Testament narratives as straightforward facts:

- Genesis 1 & 2 (Matt 19:4-5; Mark 10:6-8)
- Abel (Luke 11:51)
- Noah (Matt 24:37-39; Luke 17:10:12)
- Abraham (John 8:56)
- Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt 10:15; 11:23-24; Luke 10:12)
- Lot (Luke 17:28-32)
- Isaac and Jacob (Matt 8:11; Luke 13:28)
- The manna (John 6:31, 49, 58)
- The wilderness serpent (John 3:14)
- Moses as the lawgiver (Matt 8:4; 19:8; Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:5; 12:26; Luke 5:14; 20:37; John 5:46; 7:19)
- Jonah (Matthew 12:40)

Jesus accepted the expected authors of the Old Testament

- Moses (Mark 7:10)
- Isaiah (Matt 13:14; Mark 7:6)
- David (Mark 12:36)
- Daniel (Matt 24:15)

Jesus used Scripture as His court of appeals in controversial matters (Matt 5:17-20; 22:29; 23:23; Mark 12:24)

Jesus quoted Scriptures in times of crisis (Matt 4:1-11 cf. Deut 8:3, 6:16, 6:13; Matt 27:46 cf. Ps 22:1; Luke 23:46 cf. Ps 31:5)

Jesus believed that Old Testament prophecy to be true and fulfilled and being fulfilled (Matt 11:10; 26:24, 31, 53-56; Mark 9:12-13; 14:21, 49; Luke 4:21; 18:31-33; 21:22; 22:37: 24:25-27, 44-47; John 5:39-47; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12)

Jesus taught that the Scriptures could not be broken (Matt 5:18; Luke 16:17; John 10:35)

In case you think that the concept and title of *Scripture* would only refer to the Old Testament:

- Paul quotes Luke as Scripture (1 Timothy 5:18 cf. Deut 25:4; Luke 10:7)
- Peter says Paul wrote Scripture (2 Peter 3:16)
- New Testament writers claimed their writings were holy (2 Timothy 3:15-16)
- New Testament writers claimed their writings were the very words of God (1 Cor 14:37; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Peter 3:2)
- Paul commanded his letters to be read in churches, and obeyed (Col 4:16; 2 Thess 3:14)
- The early church treated the apostles' writings as authoritative (Acts 2:42; 15; Eph 2:20; 1 John 4:6)

Because Scripture is:

- **Infallible**—*Incapable of making mistakes or being wrong, or misleading or being misled*
- **Inerrant**—*In the original manuscripts it does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact*
  - *The bible always tells the truth and it always tells the truth concerning everything it talks about*
- **Authoritative**—*All the words of Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God<sup>1</sup>*
- **Sufficient**—*Scripture contained the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation. For trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly<sup>2</sup>*

We approach it humbly, and willing to yield, submit, accept, repent, and reorient life toward God's commands.

- But this (the above statement) is not the view of all the church, and of some popular writings:

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 73.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

In disregard of the *sufficiency* of Scripture, and the *value* of Scripture Rob Bell in *Velvet Elvis* says:

- “Is the Bible the best God can do? With God being so massive and awe-inspiring and full of truth why is his book capable of so much confusion”<sup>3</sup>

Yes there is much confusion.

- But doesn’t the culpability for that lie with people—and not God
- That is exactly like saying: “Is the Cross the best God can do since so many people reject it?”
- **We are no longer saying “Your ways are higher than our ways” (Is. 55), but rather “Your ways are subject to my understanding and approval.”**

With regards to the *authority* of Scripture Rob Bell has the audacity to reject the idea and says:

- “... Insisting that one of the absolutes of the Christian faith must be that “Scripture alone” is our guide... sounds nice, but it is not true.”<sup>4</sup>

It was for this truth that thousands were burned at the stake, beheaded, and gutted during the Reformation

Contrast Rob Bell’s view with *The Chicago Statement On Biblical Inerrancy*, which says:

- “Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God’s written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master.”<sup>5</sup>

Scripture is the infallible, inerrant, authoritative, sufficient, God-breathed Truth

- It dictates what we believe and what we are to do
- As the Church, and a church, and as individuals

Doug Pagitt (Founder of *Solomon’s Porch* Church in Minneapolis, and a co-founder of *Emergent Village*) calls the Bible a:

- “member with great sway in our community and participation in all our conversations”<sup>6</sup>

**It never claims to have “sway” or be a “participant” in our conversations**

- It is infallible, inerrant, authoritative, sufficient
- It defines, directs, and decides our conversations!

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<sup>3</sup> Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 44-5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 67-8.

<sup>5</sup> As quoted in Norman Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 493.

<sup>6</sup> Kevin Deyoug and Ted Kluck, *Why We’re Not Emergent: By Two Guys Who Should Be* (Chicago: Moody, 2008), 69.

Compare what Doug Pagitt says to the fact that those who actually *heard* Jesus said “**You alone have the words of eternal life. And we believed...**” (John 6:68-69)

### *Living and active* (In what way and in what sense?)

- John 6:63  
*the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.*
- In Matthew 13:19 the Word is compared to a seed and in verse 23 we are told it can bear fruit  
*And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.*
- It is active because it is God who speaks. Isaiah 55:9-11  
*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.  
For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;  
So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*
  - It is active, effective. It accomplishes.

### **Because God’s Word is active...**

- **When God speaks, what is uttered is also created.**
- In Genesis God said, “Let there be... and there was.” He commands, and the elements obey!

### **So, God’s Word, besides telling us something, does something in us and in all creation.**

- In God’s Word we are not only given information, but we are acted upon.
- “**For the word of God is living and active...**” (Hebrews 4:12)
  - *You do not just read the Bible... it reads you!*
  - *You do not just mark your Bible... it marks you!*
  - *You do not just turn the Bible’s pages... it turns you!*

### **Have you been read, marked, and turned lately?**

#### **If not, why not?**

- Why is God able to say, “Let there be light” and there is light?
- But He says to us, “Love you neighbor as yourself” and we don’t?

Because “light” was not created with freewill... we were.

### **Does that mean the Word is returning void?**

No. It is still active and accomplishing:

- John 12:48  
*He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.*

This is what is meant in Hebrews 4:12

The Word of God is meant to be obeyed.

- When we do not obey it, **we are judged by it.**
- That is why our view of Scripture is so important
- It is the standard, and revelation, and truth, by which we and everything else is judged
  - Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

It is able to pierce the depths of who we are and reveal what lies beneath

Jeremiah 17:9-10

The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

Hebrews 4:13

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

- The ultimate accountability

*Sharper than a two edged sword*

Numbers 14:41-43

But Moses said, "Why then are you transgressing the commandment of the LORD, when it will not succeed? Do not go up, or you will be struck down before your enemies, for the LORD is not among you.

For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there in front of you, and you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned back from following the LORD. And the LORD will not be with you."

- ...and you will fall by the sword...
  - able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb 4:12)
    - Crying fair or foul concerning our ideas and plans.
    - Moving them forward or striking them down.

*The Word exposes our hearts; and then if we trust God, the word enables our hearts to obey God and claim his promises. This is why each believer should be diligent to apply himself to hear and heed God's Word. In the Word of God we see God, and we also see how God sees us. We see ourselves as we really are. This experience enables us to be honest with God, to trust His will, and to obey Him.*

*-Warren Wiersbe*

And it all points toward one thing: **Jesus Christ and His Glory!!**