

Book of Hebrews Part 8: 4:6-12: Obedience To Righteousness and Entering Rest (10/27 2018)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q32OUt3Z-no> or <https://rumble.com/embed/vbb7u9/?pub=4>.

***Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

Last lesson we ended in chapter 4 where we found the writer of Hebrews conveying to his Jewish brethren the concept of God's eternal rest. We find when the LORD is speaking in the first person He simply identifies it as My rest. We could also call it by other names such as the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven.

You need to understand these are synonyms. For me to say the Kingdom of Heaven is the exact same thing as me saying God's eternal rest. This is the reality. What we realize, especially as we start to comb through the New Testament, is what the authors are consumed with, which is above all else, God's eternal rest or the Kingdom of God. Look at Yeshua's words in Matthew 6:33—**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness....** Nothing else takes precedence over the Kingdom of God, or what we would say, God's rest.

We can see this is a beautiful thing woven throughout the tapestry of not just the New Testament, but we also see it throughout the Torah and the prophets. This is the main concern of the writers. Every time you see the word, rest, or the author starts talking about rest, it is on a prophetic level. They are talking about the Kingdom of God. The Torah and the prophets talk about the Kingdom of God. This is a reality.

I want to quickly reiterate a point, which was so fascinating, about Hebrews chapter 4 one of the most controversial chapters in the book of Hebrews. The writer develops the understanding of the Kingdom of God by introducing something very specific. He introduces the seventh-day Sabbath. Why does he do this? Because he knows the weekly Sabbath is interwoven into God's eternal rest. This is profound. This is deeply spiritual, and this is something we are called to recognize.

If I talk about the Kingdom of God; if I talk about God's eternal rest, do you understand it speaks of the seventh-day Sabbath, and if I start talking about and embracing the seventh-day Sabbath, do you understand that it speaks to God's eternal rest? These things are interwoven into each other; it's all prophecy.

Let me open up today with this statement from the Apostle Paul in Colossians 2:16-17—¹⁶ **So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,** ¹⁷ **which are a shadow**

of things to come, but the substance is of Christ (emphasis added). It's prophetic! The weekly Sabbath is prophetic of something to come.

There is a prophecy in Isaiah 46:10 where we are told the LORD has declared the end from the beginning. Go back to the beginning and read about creation. The crescendo of creation is when God literally enters into His rest. God blesses and sanctifies the Sabbath, and guess what? By doing this, God just declared the end from the beginning. He declared what was going to happen, what He would ultimately do, and the finality of what He would accomplish in this world. All of this is seen in the picture of the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath.

If we identify with God's eternal rest, we as believers in Yeshua will identify with His seventh-day Sabbath. Every time we go to embrace this day we are declaring the end; we are declaring the Kingdom of God. This day is very precious! Amen?

Let's return to our study. We are going to continue where we left off in Hebrews 4:6—**Since therefore it remains that some must enter it** (emphasis added). It says, "some". Notice it doesn't say, "all". There's only a remnant that will enter it. What does Yeshua say in Matthew 7:13-14—¹³ **wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.** ¹⁴ **Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.** There are only few that find it; very few.

Starting at the beginning of Hebrews 4:6 again—**Since therefore it remains that some must enter it** [he is referring to entering into God's rest], **and those to whom it was first preached did not enter** [why?] **because of disobedience** (emphasis added). You'll notice this is not the first time the writer brings this up. He has already covered this. What he is doing is emphasizing the point because he cannot emphasize it enough. This is how important this statement is. He keeps telling his brethren, "Go back to the wilderness and look at what happened to our forefathers. Look at what happened to our ancestors. Why didn't they make it? It was all because of disobedience."

I am telling you right now you need to highlight that passage because it is not being highlighted from the pulpits today. There is certainly a remnant, a few pastors, who are bold enough to speak the truth about that verse. However, in general we are seeing the opposite trend happen. How many times have you walked into a church and heard a sermon where the pastor takes the pulpit and he says, "Listen. Do you know, do you understand, if you walk in disobedience you're going to be destroyed? There will be no hope for you." How many sermons are we hearing today like the fiery sermons we used to hear from Charles Spurgeon, Leonard Raven Hill, John Wesley, or David Wilkerson? These men literally took the pulpit and told the masses, "Repent now or you will be destroyed because the Kingdom of Heaven is coming."

This, however, is not a message that is pleasing to the ears of this generation. It's not what they want to hear. I mean this is frightening when you look at this. I'm going to tell you right now the message that needs to be preached is what we find in Hebrews 4:6—**Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience.** This message screams, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Do you understand if you do not obey God you will die in your sins?

This is where we start talking about how obedience matters. It is salvational. This is the difference between heaven and hell; being eternally lost or being eternally saved. We cannot emphasize this enough. May the LORD raise up bold men of God who are willing to die for the faith. Men who are not going to cater to the itching ears of the people who want to be told that no matter how they live it is going to be okay. These people simply want to hear about the grace of God and the love of the LORD. They want to hear they can live like hell and still inherit heaven.

Paul says in Roman 6:16—**Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey** [he is talking about obedience!], **you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death** (emphasis added). The devil will come in and say, “There is no payment for disobedience. Actually, you're going to reap the dividends of eternal life. It is going to be fine.” However, Scripture tells us in Romans 6:23—**the wages of sin is death**. The wages of disobedience is death. What is sin? 1 John 3:4—**Whoever commits sin also commits Lawlessness, and sin is Lawlessness**. Lawlessness is disobedience to the Torah. These are people who walk away from the Torah; they refuse to listen to the Torah. They cover their ears and refuse to listen, “I am not going to listen to the Torah.”

I remember I had a friend who was a really good believer. We were preaching the Sabbath to him, and he literally tells us, “I'm not going to listen to this anymore.” He then literally put his fingers in his ears and said, “I'm not going to listen.” We, my friend and I who were preaching to this man about the Sabbath, wanted to laugh but we didn't. I mean, you actually want to cry because he literally did that. He didn't want to hear this. This is not what the people want to hear today—sin leads to death and what? Obedience leads to righteousness (Romans 6:16). Obedience, obeying God's Law and obeying His commands will lead to righteousness!

Here is another one to highlight from Hosea 10:12—**Whoever sows righteousness will reap mercy**. Isn't that the goal? Isn't that what every believer wants? We want the grace and mercy to cover us, and what we are told is—**Whoever sows righteousness will reap mercy**.

People don't like that. They don't want to be told they're going to reap what they sow. They want to hear that everybody is a sinner and everybody falls; therefore, we could just take solace in that.

There's no fear of God in that message. There is grace; there is mercy. If not, none of us would be saved because every single one of us have fallen short of the glory of God. That is not the debate here. The debate is—what is my responsibility as a believer in Yeshua, how am I supposed to walk faithfully in Him, and what is going to keep me out of the Kingdom of God even though I conceptually believe He is King? The answer: disobedience.

Listen to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:6—**and being ready to punish all disobedience**. What does Paul say in Ephesians 5:6? **The wrath of God will come against the sons of disobedience**. You can find Paul telling the Colossians the same thing in Colossians 3:6. Paul keeps hammering home the point in regard to disobedience.

Now look at how Paul contrasts this in 2 Corinthians like he does in Romans 6. He contrasts obedience against disobedience—when your obedience is fulfilled 2 Corinthians 10:6. This is what we're supposed to do, and what is interesting is the word “fulfill”. That is what we're called to do. He uses this term, fulfill in Galatians 5:14—**For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”** Love is the fulfillment of the Torah. This is what we're called to do.

I'm going to take you back to the Torah because we find this contrasting disobedience to obedience. It is also a pattern throughout the New Testament, but it's not conceived there; it comes directly from the Torah. You see, these righteous men of God who penned the letters of the New Testament were drawing from the Torah, and this is what the Torah says Deuteronomy 30:19—I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you [what?] life and death, blessing and cursing [he is contrasting obedience and disobedience]; therefore [what do we choose?] choose life, that both you and your descendants [what?] may live (emphasis added).

The word "live" is not talking in the temporal. This is talking about everlasting life. Do you want everlasting life? When you stand in judgment before the LORD, which is the most terrifying moment in every single person's life, what are you going to say? Are you going to tell the LORD, "I didn't know"? Are these thoughts playing through your head? What is that dialogue going to look like? Is He going to say, "Well done My good and faithful servant"? Did you commit yourself here on Earth?

This is about eternal life. Obedience and disobedience is all about eternal life, and again it's a pattern throughout the Torah. You can go to Deuteronomy 11 where you will find the blessings and curses. If you keep the commandments of God, you will be blessed. You will be cursed if you do not keep the commandments of God. You need to understand this is dealing with eternity.

Over and over again Yeshua says things like this found in Matthew 5:29—If your right eye causes you to sin [sin, commit Lawlessness], pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Do you understand what Yeshua just said? He is telling us, "Whatever it takes to hold fast to His Torah, to keeping His commandments, you do it even if it means plucking out eyes and chopping off hands." It is always fascinating to me to hear the different perspectives on this passage. Some will say, "Well, Yeshua didn't really mean pluck out your eye." You need to understand something; He's literally talking about the idea that if your hand is causing you to sin you chop that thing up. You literally mutilate your flesh for the sake of the Spirit and for the sake of entering into the kingdom of God. He could not have used another analogy to hammer the point home harder than what He does here by showing you there are no limitations, including your own limbs, to ensure you enter into the Kingdom of God.

The Apostle Paul in Romans 13:14—make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Do not make any provision. In other words, we are supposed to be trembling in the fear of God, especially in this wicked and evil age, doing everything we can to surround ourselves in holiness, purity, love, faithfulness, and Godliness. We should be clothing ourselves with His word so it pours out of us.

So when we look at this passage in Hebrews 4:6—did not enter because of disobedience—he is bringing this back to the table. The writer had just mentioned this in an earlier verse; now he brings it back to the table for emphasis because he doesn't want to see his Jewish brethren fail. He has love in his heart and is willing to preach the hard things. He does not say things that are pleasing to the ears.

He then goes on in Hebrews 4:7—again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," [from Psalm 95] after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." He is telling us to turn from our rebellion and stop refusing to hear the voice of God. Turn to His commandments.

Whether we want to admit it or not, we are living in a generation that is refusing to hear the Law of God. We're living in a generation that refuses to hear His voice. Do you understand that His voice is the Torah? We look at this in Psalm 78:1—**Give ear, O my people, to my Law; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.** The words of His mouth is His Torah!

What is frightening to me, as you look at a church today they have completely rejected the Torah. Torah is no longer—**profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness** (2 Timothy 3:16). We are told, “That stuff is for the Jew. That Old Testament stuff is not for us today.” Those comments terrify me! It gets worse. When I have talked to pastors and other Christians about obedience to the Torah, they're offended! We are living in a generation where you have Christians who are actually offended when you start talking about the Torah. This is terrifying! This is as bad as it gets. We're not talking about the world here. We are talking about the church. We are talking about believers who confess Jesus is Messiah; that He is the King!

Going back to Hebrews 4:7-8—⁷ **again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time** [What does he mean by “a long time”? It was 400 years from Joshua to David.], **as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."** ⁸ **For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.**

So you can go to the book of Joshua where you will find God gave them rest according to His promise. However, remember how I told you that was not the fulfillment of what God alternately promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? This statement confirms that. The writer of Hebrews is telling us we could not have entered that rest yet because 400 years after that marker, David comes on the scene and tells us we still need to enter that rest, but we haven't done it yet. He also tells us if we are not careful, we will not enter that rest. That is an amazing statement to consider.

Going on to Hebrews 4:9—**There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.** That rest is not going to happen till when? When Yeshua returns. None of you are going to ask the other person, “Have we entered into that time yet; have we entered into that rest.” Why not? Matthew 24:27—**For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.** And again in Revelation 1:7—**Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him.** Nobody's going to question whether or not the LORD has returned. That's when we enter the rest.

Continuing on in Hebrews 4:10-11. ¹⁰ **For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.** ¹¹ **Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.**

The first thing I want to make clear here is this is a compound statement. In other words, it's multifaceted; there's a dual application that's been presented before us. It refers to the practical realm, that is tangible, as well as the supernatural or spiritual realm.

The first one I want to look at here is the practical. In understanding what he's conveying in that verse, let me highlight this in Hebrews 4:10—**he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.** Now I ask you, the writer of Hebrews sends you back to creation, how did God cease from His works? You can read it in Genesis 2 and see God worked for 6 days, and then He rested on the seventh day. That's how He ceased. What are we, as the children of God, supposed to do? We're supposed to follow His example. If God rested on the seventh day, we should be resting on

the seventh day. If God sanctified and blessed it, we should be confirming that sanctification and blessing today. We are called to emulate God by ceasing from our works as God did from His. So on this first level of application; we see this statement directly relates to the seventh-day Sabbath and our diligence to enter into that rest.

Now in regard to Hebrews chapter 4, there's a lot of controversy and commentaries that have been created by pastors and scholars in regard to what's really being conveyed in these verses. The one thing I want to assure you, without a doubt, after reading all these commentaries on this verse, is this verse, without a doubt, has a dual presentation and refers not just to God's eternal rest but God's seventh-day Sabbath.

I want to dig into this because there are Christian scholars and pastors who have read these verses and have said that these verses are a dual presentation. Therefore, I want to give you a taste of this so you can see this.

The man I want to introduce you to is Arthur Walkington Pink. He was one of the most influential authors of the 1900's. Look at what he has to say in a commentary regarding the Hebrew verses we just covered. Pay close attention because this is pretty amazing stuff.

As was the case with the contents of vv. 9 and 10, **so we are assured there is a double reference to the words of v. 11: a general and a specific.** The general, refers to the future and perfect rest of the Christian in heaven; the specific, being to that which is the emblem and type of it, namely, the weekly Sabbath. This, we believe, is why the Holy Spirit here says, "Let us give diligence therefore to enter into that rest," rather than "into His rest," as in v. 1. **"That rest" designedly includes both the eternal rest of God, and the Sabbath rest, spoken of in v. 10** (emphasis added).

That is an amazing statement because how are we to rest? There is a command incumbent upon us to rest as God rested. This is the Sabbath and it is a big deal!

He goes and says—This we are to "give diligence" to enter, not only because the [S]abbath-desecration of worldlings is apt to discourage us, but also because there are professing Christians who loudly insist that there is no such thing as a "Christian [S]abbath." Do you understand what he just said? He is telling us we need to be diligent to enter this rest first, because the world is desecrating it, but second, because we have Christian brothers running around saying there is no Christian Sabbath. Or maybe they are saying, "Every day is the Sabbath; every day is holy." There are countless avenues we could go down regarding this amazing statement. Here he is recognizing this stand telling us to stay true and hold fast to God's word.

He goes on—Beware lest we fail to heed this word of God, and "fall through the same example of unbelief" as Israel in the wilderness, who failed to listen to God. This is absolutely an amazing conclusion. The conclusion comes right from Hebrews 4:11 where it says—**Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.** What Arthur Walkington Pink was saying is "Do not fall according to the same example of disobedience. Listen to the writer of Hebrews." This is critical!

To help you really feel the gravity of this, let's go back to the Torah and see what Israel did. I want to take you back to the book of Exodus 16:4 where we find one of the very first tests God gave to Israel; the Sabbath. **Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My Law or not"** (emphasis added). That is the test. Here is what is even more fascinating. If you look at the various tests Israel went through, and there were various tests such as immorality, hunger, and thirst, none of these tests will have this statement affixed to it— **that I may test them, whether they will walk in My Law or not**. This statement is explicitly affixed to the observance of the Sabbath.

That is fascinating to me. The test is whether or not they're going to walk in His Law. God is basically saying, "This test this is going to tell Me a lot about who you are. Do you have faith that I will provide for you. I am not going to allow you to go to work on the Sabbath." People today go to work on the Sabbath to do what? They do so to get money so they have food; so that they have provision. This is what they do. God is testing them to see if they have faith.

Jumping ahead to Exodus 16:26-28—²⁶ **Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, there will be none.** ²⁷ **Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none.** ²⁸ **And the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My Laws?"** (Emphasis added).

That is an amazing statement—**how do you refuse to do these things**. They broke the Sabbath; they did not have faith in God. They did not hear His voice; they did not hold fast to His command, yet the devil wants to come and tell you it's not a big deal. He will tell you, "This isn't a big deal; you will surely not die." He just keeps playing the same game over and over. It worked in the garden, and he doesn't change the play because the play keeps working.

Going back to Hebrews 4:11—¹¹ **Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.** Now obviously as we look at this on a secondary level, this is not just talking about the seventh-day Sabbath, which is something that's tangible and practical in this age, obviously this is alternately referring to the Kingdom of Heaven. We need to be diligent to enter into that rest.

With every single decision we make in this life, we have to have that in mind. We have to be willing to not compromise the commandments of God, and that's not just the Sabbath; that's all of His commandments begin with the 10 big ones. You know what James says in 2:10— **For whoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.** Right?

You know, we as the children of God are supposed to be persuaded by truth rather than led away by a lie. We're supposed to be led with this confidence that we have the Messiah Yeshua who gives the strength rather than cowering in fear to the devil.

There's one more thing I want to point out in this passage, which is the Greek word for diligent. You need to see this because it is brilliant how the writer uses this word in the context that he's laid it out. The word is Σπουδάζω—to make haste, act swiftly, to give diligence.

Remember how Psalm 95 is the context, “Today if you will hear His voice”? Well the commission to the writer of Hebrews’ brethren, and to us today, is—**Let us therefore be diligent**. It is—Σπουδάζω, which tells us to make haste; move because there is an urgency turning your back on the devil and turning instead to the LORD God. There has to be this urgency.

I mean, today you need the Gospel; you need the Messiah Yeshua. You need forgiveness of sins, you need His righteousness, and you need His commandments. There's no time to delay. How long are we going to go on filling our bellies and our mind full of the garbage of the world? How long are you going to fill your mind with all this “intellectualism”? How long are you going to spend your time doing this? It is all for nothing. It is basically garbage in and garbage out.

There is one last thought I want to leave you with in regard to this. This is the most a lofty of all of it. These are the words that come from our LORD Yeshua. Matthew 11:28—**Come to Me, all you who labor**. This is important because Labor was the repercussion of sin. The reason we were forced to work by the sweat of our brow to earn bread is because of our sin. Those who have been affected by sin are laboring in this world.

Again from the beginning of Matthew 11:28—**Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**. Those who are heavy laden are experiencing trials, tribulations, and persecution. I would suggest everyone in the room today can raise their hand to these things. Yet Yeshua is calling out to every single one of us, come to Me; and what does He say? **I will give you rest**. He is the one; He is the linchpin; He is the key to all of this that He is going to bring us in and give us all of this rest.

It is interesting because if you go back to Psalm 95:11 where God says—**They shall not enter My rest**, and Yeshua tells us He will give us rest, who is talking in Psalm 95? It is Yeshua. He is the rest of God. We are to enter into Him, a man who says I will give you rest.

Continuing in Hebrews 4:12—**For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart**.

That's fascinating! You have to compile this sometimes because I compartmentalize so much with each verse as we dissect this that it's important we keep the statements together. We just got done reading verses 9, 10, and 11 where the writer of Hebrews warns his brothers— **Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience**. Do not fall according to the same example of disobedience. Then the very next thing he said is—**For the Word of God is living and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword**. That is amazing because what he's doing, to ensure they are not going to fall according to the same example of disobedience as Israel did in the wilderness, is he sends them into the word of God. The way he portrays the word is so lofty.

Let's go through this. I am going to be dissecting this passage, and I may be coming at it from multiple angles. We are not going to finish it today, but I want to kind of take a brushstroke across this thing and get a bird's eye view in order to see how he describes the Word of God.

The first thing he says is it—**is living**. Scripture, the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation is alive as opposed to what? Dead. It makes a big difference that it's alive because I'm going to tell you right now only that which is living could possibly give life.

As we see in Psalm 119:50—**Your word has given me life**. You can also fast forward to Psalm 119:93 where it says—I **will never forget Your precepts, For by them You have given me life**. In other words, there's life in the commandments of God. Think about Proverbs 3:18—**She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her**. He is talking about the Torah. What is written in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are—**a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who retain her**. This is the very thing the devil has come to steal from the church. He's coming to steal, kill, and destroy.

In Psalm 119:9, we are told—**How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word**. He is talking about the word of God. Again in Psalm 19:10-11—¹⁰ **With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!** ¹¹ **Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You**.

The word gives life. **How can a young man cleanse his way?** It is with the washing of the body with the word.

Back to our verse in Hebrews 4:12—**For the word of God is living and powerful** (emphasis added). The word for powerful in the Greek is ἐνεργής (*energēs*). This is where we get our word, energy. Some Bible translations like to use the word, active, and that's OK, but it's not better than powerful because this term ἐνεργής (*energēs*) is full of power; full of energy.

When I read this passage—**For the word of God is living and powerful**, I think about Ecclesiastes 8:4, which is one of my favorite passages—**Where the word of a king is, there is power**. Think about that! Everywhere you walk with this book, the Bible, even when you walk down the street, wherever this word is there is power. If it is spoken in truth, there is power.

Think about that when you're up in spiritual warfare and the devil is coming to you sowing all these filthy lies that he sows. You will not be victorious over him if you're not coming at him with the word of God; with the sword of Spirit.

The sword of the Spirit is how we enter into war; this is how we fight back. When Yeshua was attacked by the devil in the wilderness after fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, the devil told Yeshua—**If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread** (Matthew 4:3). How did Yeshua respond? He fought the devil with the Torah—**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God** (Matthew 4:4). God's word is power against the adversary. We need that power!

So what we see the writer doing here when he says—**the word of God is living and powerful**—is engaging his audience seeking to create this immense value. He is telling them, "If you don't know how valuable the word is, now you need to know. You need to know its capabilities and abilities. It has abilities that we, in ourselves, don't have."

Let me give you an example of what the writer of Hebrews is doing. Many people these days are on a big health kick because of GMO's and other things they are doing to poison the food and water. If I present you with a beet, which God created, and tell you it is good for you, you will probably respond with, "Ok. That is great. So what?" However, if I present you with a beet, and I start educating you on the benefits such as it lowers cholesterol, it has these properties for recuperating the liver, it is packed with all these incredible vitamins and nutrients, and it helps with high blood pressure, now you are interested. If you need to lower your cholesterol and have been taking pills to do it, now you are interested in what the beet does.

I'm making a point. When you present the benefits, you create a value for it. When people value it, they will invest in it. When they invest in it, they reap the dividends of health.

By comparison, this is the word of God. It will bring the dividends. This is what the writer of Hebrews is crying out to his brethren—**the word of God is living and powerful** (Hebrews 4:12). He is telling his brethren, "You need this; don't turn from it."

Continuing in Hebrews 4:12—**piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, [Now listen to what he says here. You want to feel this power. You want to see it in action] and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (emphasis added)**. That is true power! The word of God is so powerful that it can discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Let me share with you why this is so impressive and important. Jeremiah 17:9—**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?** You cannot plumb the depths of its deception. The most deceiving thing on this earth is you. It's your heart, and I always make the joke, "That's great because we all have one."

You need to listen to what the writer of Hebrews is telling us. He tells us it can—**discern the thoughts and intents of the heart**, and now I know—**The heart is deceitful above all things**. Oh my goodness! I need the word of God. I need to filter everything that comes from my heart.

We read this in Proverbs 21:2—**Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts**. I have never seen a generation more corrupt than today. I have read the Torah, and I go back to the generation that was in the wilderness who did what was right in their own eyes. We are now living in a day where everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes. This includes the church. They think their path is right, "What I'm doing is the right way. I'm following God the right way."

To that I might ask, "How do you know?" Their response will likely be, "Because I feel that I am. Because I am a good person." However, the Bible is the only way to distinguish whether or not you are following God the way He wants you to. You open up the Bible, and you see through the eyes of God. The eyes of God will peer down upon you.

Proverbs 14:12—**There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death**. You're going along believing you're on the path of righteousness. That should remind you of Matthew 7:21-23 where all these people are before the LORD, and He tells them—²³ **I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice Lawlessness!** They practice Lawlessness which is the same as practicing Torahlessness. Every single one of these people believed they were getting into the Kingdom. They all thought they were on

the right path; they never doubted themselves for a second because their heart would never lie to them. Yet God tells them to depart from Him.

Proverbs 28:26—**He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.** Now that hurts. That's the dagger. That's the double edged sword piercing your heart. Again—**He who trusts in his own heart is a fool.** I don't want to be that guy.

When you get these feelings and emotions the LORD is speaking to you, "I feel, I know the LORD is speaking to me. The LORD told me this or that." To that I would say, "Really?"

Let me take you to Jeremiah to really add to the fear or all of this. In Jeremiah 14:13—**Then I said, "Ah, LORD GOD! Behold, the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.'**" The context of this verse is God has declared destruction against Jerusalem. He has declared Babylon is coming, and the Prophets are rising up and speaking. I want to be clear on this; you will absolutely not understand this passage in a correct context unless you understand this; the Prophets who were rising up are not false Prophets. These are Prophets God rose up, and they are not identified as false prophets. These Prophets are actual prophets of God whom the people revered, and I can prove this from Jeremiah. I can show you how Hananiah was an actual Prophet.

Now we have the Prophet of God who has been speaking truth. He presents truths God has given him, and they happen. It is amazing and empowering to the point that now, whenever the Prophet feels something in his heart, he believes it is from God and believes it will come to pass. This is the context of the Jeremiah verse.

So now the Prophets are saying— **you assured peace in this place** (Jeremiah 14:13). Are they wrong? Go to the Torah and read Joshua forward. What do you find? You find God promising peace and rest to Israel in Jerusalem. He built the Temple there. God put His name in Jerusalem; therefore, do you think it is a far stretch the prophets would go out and say, "We're going to have peace because God promised to bring us into this land and to give us rest. This is what He promised to do."

This is where the Prophets are coming and telling the people, "You guys don't have faith." Can you imagine the Prophets coming out telling their people, "You need to increase your faith. Don't you understand God will fight for us? We will not see the sword; we will not see any of this. We are going to have Shalom." This gets so frightening when you put this into the actual day and context of what was actually happening.

Then it goes on and says this in Jeremiah 14:14— And the LORD said to me, "**The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart** (emphasis added).

You need to understand the Prophets were not out telling the people they were assured of having peace when they knew they wouldn't. The Prophets truly believed they were going to have peace. They believe the words and believed God had spoken to them. They believed what was in their heart. This correlates to 2 Timothy 3:13—**But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.** These people really believe what they're saying, but it was a deception of their own heart. You see, they forgot the word, and what I am referring to are several passages in the Torah that

says, “If you turn from me and you do not keep my commandments, I will take you out of this land and I will scatter you abroad.” That's what the Torah says. These Prophets forgot the word. They did not check the heart with the word of God. They did not check it with the commandments of God. All they needed to do is check the Torah. If the people were obeying the Torah, then yes, they could be assured they would have peace because the Torah says it. God is faithful to His promise. However, He also says, “If you break my commandments, I will scatter you.” This is an amazing thing.

So when we read this passage in Hebrews 4:12—**the word of God...is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart**—it is clear the word of God is the most powerful force you can have. We need the word. This is why I cannot harp on you enough. You need to get off the internet and start spending more time in the word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you because He will speak directly to you as you're going through the word. He will convict you with unbelievable convictions through stories. When you see the righteousness of David in all the situations he's put in and yet never fails, you will be convicted.

You can read the stories about Elijah, and you read about the Apostle Peter's faith that prompted him to get out of the boat. You need the word of God. What does it tell us in Scripture? Romans 10:17—**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.** Again, in Matthew 17:20 we are told if we have faith as small as a mustard seed, we will move mountains. If you want to have faith— **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness** (Matthew 6:33).

I want to share with you one of my favorite commentaries ever made by Charles Spurgeon in regard to the word “discerner” found in the Hebrew 4:12 verse—**is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart** (emphasis added). **Discernment is not a matter of simply telling the difference between right and wrong; rather, it is telling the difference between right and almost right.** That's discernment! Discernment is not telling the difference between right and wrong; discernment is being able to say, “That is deception; you have come as a minister of righteousness, as an angel of light, but I see you, devil. I see what you're trying to do in my life. What you are saying seems so believable; it seems so true, but I've checked it; I have checked my heart with the word of God, and what I am being told is a lie.” That is the power of the word.

Look at Acts 17:11—**These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word [word of God] with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so** (emphasis added). They were combing the Scriptures daily so when these Jewish men came and told them, “We are proclaiming what is in the Torah and the prophets.” The Thessalonica's response was, “Really? I'll go to the word of God and check it out.”

Going to Proverbs 14:15—**The simple believes every word, But the prudent considers well his steps.** We are not to be the simple. We are to be in the know. And that's where you get into the Word of God being living and powerful; the word is for us. Remember what it says in Deuteronomy 29? That which is written has been given to us.