

Hebrews 4:12-13

Is the Bible relevant today? Yes; absolutely.

In the long exhortation that runs through Hebrews chapters 3 and 4, the author implores his readers to hold fast to their faith under hardship. He states that a failure to believe the message of Jesus Christ is to forfeit the great salvation-rest that God has offered. Consistently, he supports such statements with the authority of the Word of God.

The author of Hebrews applies Psalm 95:7-9 to his own generation and in doing so he boldly asserts that the words written by David not only have relevance, but also have authority over those who read them in his own time.

The Bible is the very Word of God, living and active even today, and in them our own destiny is bound up through either belief or unbelief (**Heb 4:12**).

Summary

In Hebrews 4:12-13, the author of Hebrews tells us what the Word of God is, how it does its work and that it is sufficient for all our needs.

1. Living Word vv. 12a

We need to be very careful not to downplay the human authorship of the Bible. Nevertheless, first and foremost, the Bible is the Word of God (**2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21; 3:15-16**). This is what makes the Bible so profitable to us.

Through his Word God himself teaches us, rebukes and corrects us, trains us in righteousness. Luther: “Let the man who would hear God speak read Holy Scripture.” The Word of God is “living and active” (**Heb 4:12a**). Whilst there are differences in our cultural, social, and historical settings, compared to the original readers, nonetheless we should read the Bible as God’s Word to us. It is not merely relevant, but authoritative and binding on us as it was on them (**2 Pet 1:19**).

Another great evidence that the Bible is living and active has to do with its content and purpose. The Bible does not merely relate interesting facts and beliefs from our religious tradition. The Bible has one overarching theme: God’s work in history for the salvation of sinful people (**2 Tim. 3:15**).

The Bible’s message is God’s work of salvation through Jesus Christ, and its purpose is actually to bring that salvation to individuals who receive that message and believe. God’s Word is living and active in the same way that Jesus’ words were living and actives when he stood before the tomb of his dead friend and cried, “Lazarus, come out!” (**John 11:43**).

2. Penetrating Word vs 12b, c, d

The author of Hebrews proceeds to describe how God's Word does its work (4:12 b, c, d). The image of the Word as a sword is often found in Scripture (**Eph. 6:17; Rev. 1:16**). What this picture describes here is the penetrating or piercing power of God's Word (4:12c). The Word penetrates against all opposition so as to grip the whole man and not just any one aspect of his person.

The Word also "discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (4:12d). God's Word comes into us and it discerns, assessing our attitude toward the one who sent it.

3. All Sufficient Word vv. 12b; 13

The final thing we learn here is the sufficiency of God's Word for our every need in the things of faith and godliness. A comparison is made between God's Word and worldly weapons. It is "sharper than any two-edged sword (**Heb 4:12b**)" Another evidence that God's Word is sufficient for our needs is found in **verse 13**: nothing can escape it. God's Word uncovers every heart, every act, every intention, every thought and desire and brings them before the penetrating gaze of the living God. Nothing is able to escape the revealing, energetic Word of God. Therefore, it alone is sufficient for our every need.

Do we need worldly methods and devices to do the work of the church? Paul answers: (**2 Cor. 10:3–5**). Consider what power is made available to us by the Word of God, and what an incentive this is to use it in our witness and in our own lives. It is sufficient for our every need. It alone conveys God's own power to convict and to save, to cut away the heart of stone and bring to life a new heart of flesh.

Re sanctification: what could be more effective than to shine the light of God's Word upon our lives, into our minds and hearts (**John 17:17**)?

What a blessing it is to be taught by the Lord, rebuked and inspired by Him, to be molded in obedience to God during this life, knowing that in the life to come He is the one, as verse 13 concludes, "to whom we must give account."

Re Christian comfort: do you sorrow or suffer? Are you tempted and tried? Do you want assurance of salvation and the peace that comes with it (**Rom. 8:32**)?

Do you want to make a difference in this life? Then commit yourself to the Word of God, bring yourself into its life-changing light, and give it to the world by every means you can.

Any work that relies on God's Word may be sure to have His blessing, to achieve His purpose, and to bring Him glory even as it brings His power for salvation.