

HEBREWS: THE INFINITE SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST

VI. Humanly Overwhelming Reasons To Heed Scripture

(Hebrews 4:11-16)

I. Introduction

- A. We live in an era of great need for an encouraging word amid man's discouraging spiritual failure, so a word from God on the infinite supremacy and sufficiency of His Son Jesus Christ is both desirable and fitting.
- B. The Epistle to the Hebrews offers it, and Hebrews 4:11-16 provides humanly overwhelming reasons to heed Scripture to look to Christ's High Priestly ministry for godliness. We view the passage for our insight:

II. Humanly Overwhelming Reasons To Heed Scripture, Hebrews 4:11-16.

- A. Hebrews 4:11-13 in its context reveals the humanly overwhelming danger of not heeding Scripture regarding our need to look to Christ's High Priestly ministry versus slipping into a false spirituality (as follows):
 1. The author's admonition in Hebrews 4:1 that we believers must fear failing to heed the good news of God's rest for us Christians today follows his description of God's causing a whole generation of Hebrews to die in the wilderness for failing to obey Him on entering His rest in the Promised Land, Hebrews 3:17-19.
 2. Accordingly, Hebrews 4:11 builds on this tragic past history and warning to urge the readers to strive to enter the rest God had for them, that of obeying Scripture in looking to Christ's High Priestly ministry for fulfillment versus slipping back into the false spirituality of a desert Judaistic cult, Hebrews 3:1-6.
 3. Lest his readers take disobeying Scripture's command on this matter lightly, the author explained that Scripture, being divinely inspired, made taking it lightly so as to disobey it result in disaster, Heb. 4:12-13:
 - a. The Word of God is living and active in its penetrating power, being sharper than any two-edged sword, reaching to the innermost recesses of a person so that it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the inner man, Hebrews 4:12; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 789.
 - b. "In doing this, it is able to discriminate successfully between what is spiritual in man and what is merely 'soulish' or natural (it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit), and does so even when these often-contradictory inner elements are interwoven as closely as joints and marrow . . . The readers might think that they were contemplating certain steps out of purely spiritual motivations when, as God's Word could show them, they were acting unfaithfully as did Israel of old," Ibid., p. 789-790.
 - c. The Christian readers were thus not to think that their unbiblical motives could go undetected, for nothing was hidden from God's sight: everything is laid bare before the eyes of the Lord, Heb. 4:13; Ibid., p. 790.
 - d. Accordingly, Christians who fail to look to Christ's High Priestly ministry for spiritual godliness versus slipping back into a false spirituality will by that disobedience to Scripture suffer severe divine discipline as surely as did the generation of Israel that physically perished in the wilderness!
- B. In sharp contrast to this danger, Hebrews 4:14-16 reveals the overwhelming comfort that results from heeding Scripture in looking to Christ for spiritual fulfillment instead of slipping into a false spirituality (as follows):
 1. Since the author's readers had a Great High Priest Who has passed through the heavens into the presence of God (in the "third" heaven [2 Cor. 12:2], having passed through the first heaven, the atmosphere and through the second heaven, the stellar universe), that Person being Jesus, the Son of God, the readers were to hold fast to their confession of faith in Him versus slipping back into dead Judaism, Hebrews 4:14 ESV.
 2. That High Priest in heaven was not unable to sympathize with our weaknesses here on earth, but He was in every respect tempted as we are, yet without a sin nature or without committing any sin, Heb. 4:15 ESV.
 3. Accordingly, the Christian readers were to draw near to the throne of grace in prayer in confidence that they might receive mercy and find the grace of God abundantly able and willing to help them in time of need, be it in the realm of weakness, temptation or sin, Hebrews 4:16 ESV. The Greek text refers to a "help" (*boetheia*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 144) that is "well-timed, at the right time" (*eukairos*, Ibid., p. 321), what also implies help at the very instant that a critical need arises.

Lesson: We have humanly overwhelming reasons to obey Scripture relative to true versus false spirituality: failure to obey Scripture to rely on Christ's High Priestly ministry by slipping back into a false spirituality will lead to severe divine discipline. However, relying on Christ's High Priestly ministry for victory over temptation and sin provides access to One in God's presence Who is willing and able to sympathize with our temptations as our Overcomer and Who is willing and able to help us overcome sin and temptation the instant that the need arises.

Application: Due to the overwhelming stakes involved, may we rely on Christ's High Priestly work for godliness.