

HEBREWS: THE INFINITE SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST

XXV. Relating Righteously To Church Leaders

(Hebrews 13:17-25)

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 of Hebrews offers it, and Hebrews 13:17-25 presents our duty to relate righteously to Church leaders, be they human or the Lord Himself. We view the passage for our insight, application and edification:

II. Relating Righteously To Church Leaders, Hebrews 13:17-25.

- A. We believers must relate well to the human leaders who are over us in the local church, Hebrews 13:17, 24:
 1. Since the command in Hebrews 13:17 is for the readers to obey those who literally "lead" them, these leaders were the leaders in the local church. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Hebrews 13:17)
 2. The Greek term rendered "obey" in verse 17 is *peithisthe*, the present **middle** imperative of *peitho*, "obey" (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 777; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 313; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 644-645), that is, "keep obeying for your benefit" the local church leaders.
 3. The Greek term rendered "submit" in verse 17 is *hupеiko*, "yield, give way, submit to" (Ibid., p. 846).
 4. Thus, for their own benefit, those in the pew must keep obeying and submitting to local church leaders who "are keeping watch" (*argrupvousin*, present tense of *agrupneo*, "be watchful" (Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 5) over their "inner spiritual man" (*psuche*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 901-902) as those who will answer to God, that they might do so with joy, not with grief as that would be "unprofitable, harmful" (*alusiteles*, Ibid., p. 40-41) for the hearers. (Heb. 13:17) To explain, insubordination to local church leaders by the man in the pew is fueled by Satan who takes such believers captive to do his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26), so not submitting to the leaders is "unprofitable, harmful" to those who do not submit. Conversely, God uses local church leaders who are accountable to Him for the body's good, so the man in the pew is spiritually edified if he obeys and submits to his leaders.
 5. Obviously, if the man in the pew sees the local church leaders lead in violation of Scripture, he cannot heed their oversight in the issue(s) involved, but the man in the pew must be sure he knows the Scriptures.
 6. Fittingly, we are then obliged to "greet" such local church leaders along with the rest of the saints, v. 24.
- B. We believers must relate well to the leaders God has set over the Church universal, Hebrews 13:18-19, 22-23:
 1. God has set over the Church universal the writers of Scripture who have apostolic authority (John 17:20), so the admonitions in Hebrews 13:18-19, 22-23 to heed the author of Hebrews and his coworkers who had such apostolic authority would apply to the original recipients of the Epistle to the Hebrews.
 2. However, praying for the writers of Scripture is no longer fitting since they are all now in heaven, so we do not apply Hebrews 13:18-19, but we heed Hebrews 13:22-23 and obey the author's **words** as **Scripture!**
- C. We believers must relate well to the divine leaders over the Church universal and local, Hebrews 13:20-21:
 1. God the Father has brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd of the Church universal, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Hebrews 13:20. We should then submit to the Father and worship Him Who sent His Son to the earth to save us!
 2. The verb "make . . . perfect" (KJV) (*katartizo*, "prepare, make ready for use," Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 778; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 418-419; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 812) implies God the Father's intent to cause those believers in whom He has invested the death and resurrection of His Beloved Son to be equipped to perform every good work toward fulfilling His will for them, working in us believers that which is pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever and ever, Hebrews 13:21.
 3. Accordingly, whether we are local church leaders or the man in the pew, we are responsible to submit to and to obey God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, our Great Shepherd of the Church universal, that He might equip us to perform the will of God to His good pleasure.
- D. Fittingly, the author closed the epistle with the hope of God's grace being with all his readers, Hebrews 13:25.

Lesson: *We must submit to and obey our local church leaders, the writings of Scripture and the work of God the Father through His Son, the Great Shepherd of the Church universal, that we might be spiritually protected and edified, and that what God wants to accomplish by our performing the good works He ordained for us might occur.*

Application: *May we submit to and obey both our human and divine leaders for spiritual protection and blessing.*