

The Obedience of Faith

Hebrews 5:1-6

In the first four chapters of this epistle, the Holy Spirit has shown us the superiority of our Lord Jesus Christ over the *angels*, over *Moses*, and over *Joshua*. The only thing more highly venerated by the Jews was their *Sabbath*. In the fourth chapter, the writer of Hebrews shows Christ's superiority over this as well, explaining that the only true and real rest is found by faith in Christ. Hebrews 5 shows us that Christ is the only hope a sinner has for direct, personal access to God.

I. For fallen people (sinners) there is no immediate access to God.

"For every high priest ... is ordained for men ... in things pertaining to God" (v. 1).

There are those who hold to what is called "the Universal Fatherhood of God," as if any fallen, sinful human being can approach God as if He were their personal, heavenly Father. However, Jesus said to the religious, *"You belong to your Father the devil"* (John 8:44). The entire tenor of sacred Scripture is that sinful, fallen man is barred from access to God. We find this in the story of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and the history of the Hebrews. Man (Adam) fell; Cain and Abel illustrate the inability of sinful man to have access to God. God began the process of redemption (recovery) by choosing the people called Hebrews.

II. For fallen people (sinners) there is no personal access to God.

When God gave the law to Moses at Mt. Sinai, he instituted an earthly, human priesthood by which sinners could approach Him. The priests were from Levi's tribe and Aaron's family, called the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood, but there was only *one* High Priest for the people. No priest could personally enter into God's revealed presence except for the High Priest.

- A. The High Priest had to be a *sympathetic* man (v.2) so that *"He can deal gently."*
- B. The High Priest had to be a *substitute* man (v.3) so he could stand in *"for the people."*
- C. The High Priest had to be a *selected* man (v.4) so it was said he was *"called of God."*

This selection of priests is confirmed by God with Aaron's "rod that budded" (Num. 17).

III. For fallen people (sinners) personal, direct access is opened only through Christ.

In the New Covenant, Jesus is your High Priest, but there is a difference in His priesthood. He is not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of priest Melchizedek (see Gen. 14).

- A. He is *the* Son of God, not the son of a man ... God has chosen His Son for the duties.
- B. He is *the* sinless man, not a man with sin ... *"in Him is no guile"* so His sacrifice was solely on behalf of God's people, not Himself. His work was solely for our benefit.
- C. He is *the* Savior of sinners, not a Savior for sinners.

"He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9)

What does it mean "to obey Him?" Throughout Hebrews this obedience is described as "believing God" (see Hebrews 3:12; 3:18-19; Hebrews 4:2; 4:9), or having faith.

The obedience of faith (also used in Romans 1:5; 16:26) does not refer to obeying all of God's commands for no one but Jesus has done that. Rather, it refers specifically to the obedience of *believing the good news*. Deliverance comes to all those who *believe*.

- D. He is *the* Source of direct, personal access to God.

When Christ died, the Tabernacle curtain was ripped from top to bottom (Mark 15:38). We have direct access to God through Christ (believers are called "saints" by God).