

Feb 21, 2021

GOD: ORATOR & AUTHOR Hebrews 4:8-13 (NLT)

Jesus said, *“You search the scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the scriptures point to Me! Yet you refuse to come to Me to receive this life.” (John 5:39)*

Jesus is clear: This bible (*holding up*) testifies about God’s salvation in Jesus the Christ; but the Spirit (*pointing to mist*) IS GOD! Not God; All of God in us! Inerrant, infallible, but only a partial revelation of God. *It cannot save anyone!* But in Spirit’s hands, useful to help us receive Jesus’ life that only Spirit brings!

The objective of this sermon is to clarify the distinct roles, abilities, & purposes between *this* (*holding bible*) & *Him* (*mist*), in order to reset our priorities to go deeper into relationship, life & Rest in Jesus! I am dismayed that the Christian community is confusing their roles, counting them equals, all but ignoring the Spirit in us, His voice/prompts/nudges, trying to find in *this* what only *He* can speak & teach to us! Treating *this* as *Him* is like...

Going to your favorite restaurant and eating the menu!

Going to school for class work with books but no teacher!

Going to the doctor and having to interpret your own x-rays!

SO grab your bible and let’s meet in the Spirit for His unequalled, unmatched, unrivaled fulfillment of salvation & sanctification!

PRAY/READ: Hebrews 4:9-13 (NLT)

Verses 9-11 refer to the event we discussed last week when God delivered Israel *out of their slavery* in order to deliver them *into the Promised Land of rest!* But they listened to 10 men instead of God, and refused to enter with Him into the rest He’d prepared for them – the rest He’d promised 430 years earlier to Abram. Numbers 14 records what *God said* in response to their disbelief:

READ: Numbers 14 (NLT)

Why did most of the Israelites die in the wilderness? They refused to listen to God’s voice or trust His word. In this regard, the author of Hebrews says, 11 *So let us do our best to enter that rest. And how do we enter? But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall. (fall under condemnation, miss out on salvation!)*

12 *For the word of God is alive & powerful.* You & I have understood *the word of God* to mean the bible/scriptures. But neither the author, nor his audience of 1st century Hebrews (*even 1st century Christians, for that matter*) would have made this mistake! *Why?*

- 1) Scripture was not in common, wide-spread use in 1st C
 - Very few portions of OT scriptures in synagogues
 - Epistles/letters like these were not yet scripture!
 - Authors writing them likely didn’t conceive of such
- 2) Doctrine of inspiration not fully developed at this time
 - Hebrew OT had been translated into Gk (Septuagint)

But more significantly, if the author had meant *scripture/bible*, he would have used the Greek word *“graphe”* – used 51 times in the NT, many before this writing, always translated *“scriptures.”* (*the bible is the collection of scriptures 300 yrs later, in 397 AD*)

Examples: John 5:39 & 2Tim 3:16

Instead, the author chose the Greek word logos:

-logos = *word, statement or speech embodying an idea.*

Logos is an expression of a complete thought, message, or reasoning...by words! Regarding divine communication, *logos is preeminently used of Christ as the entire content of the expressed thoughts of the Father thru the Holy Spirit.*

Example: John 1:1-14,18 & Rom 9:6

In 4:12, the author uses the Greek phrase, *logos tou Theou* = the word of God, meaning the spoken message of God, what God said or says. Remember: Context rules interpretation: so, searching the author’s immediate context (chapter 4), we find only references to God speaking His message verbally to His people:

- 1) God’s promise (*spoken to Abram, Israel, David*) *still stands*
- 2) For this good news has been announced to us
- 3) As for the others, God said...
- 5) God said, *“they will never enter My rest”*
- 6) ...but those who first heard this good news (*proclaimed*)
- 7) So God announced another time to enter His rest... Today!
- 8) God would not have spoken @ *another day of rest to come*

13 God’s word – *spoken out loud* – directly to them/us/you, is alive/active to accomplish His purpose, never failing or returning

void. It's sharp enough to separate head from heart, thought from wants/needs (*ask inside ?'s*), & to accomplish the fullest purpose of enjoying a loving friendship with God, trusting Him forever!

God speaks to His people by His Spirit whom He made to dwell in us; the Spirit Who takes from Jesus & instructs us in His right ways. These glorious interactions open us up to God's love, expose us to honest assessment, & pry from us those misgivings that keep us from receiving His love & acceptance, being confident in knowing Him & trusting Him, and acting like His people who follow Him faithfully, trustingly (*tho not perfectly!*)

It's easy for us to confuse the tangible scriptures & the invisible Spirit – after all; we live in a material world! But we must accept that the bible is merely a divine resource pointing us to God, Himself – while the Spirit is God Himself in us, saving us, sanctifying us, & convincing us to trust Him! The bible is a great tool, but only in the hands of God, the Holy Spirit.

The relationship between the Spirit & bible is like the relationship between a Rescuer & rope: *the rope doesn't rescue the fallen climber; the Rescuer does by using the rope as a resource! To the climber, the rope is the tangible evidence of help; it points to & connects with the unseen Rescuer & identifies how the rescue will happen. But after the Rescuer has lifted the climber out of certain death up to the higher ground of safety, they are forever connected thru this shared experience in a relationship of salvation! The rope is rope; the Rescuer is The Hero!*

The bible never saved anyone – nor can it offer a relationship. It points sinners to the Spirit of Christ who alone can save! So, keep reading your bible, but be listening for the Spirit's voice thru out the day, remaining sensitive to His nudges/prompts, & obeying Him as He leads you to Rest in Jesus, Today!

PRAY:

READ: Hebrews 4:9-13 (NLT)

9) So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. 10) For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. 11) So let us do our best to enter that rest. But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall.

12) For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. 13) Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

Numbers 14:1-22 (assorted) (NLT)

1) Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night. 2) Their voices rose in a great chorus of protest against Moses and Aaron. "If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!" they complained. 3) "Why is the LORD taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4) Then they plotted among themselves, "Let's choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!"

Then the glorious presence of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the Tabernacle. 11) And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? Will they never believe me, even after all the miraculous signs I have done among them? 21) But as surely as I live, and as surely as the earth is filled with the LORD's glory, 22) not one of these people will ever enter that land. They have all seen my glorious presence and the miraculous signs I performed both in Egypt and in the wilderness, but again and again they have tested me by refusing to listen to my voice."

Romans 9:6

But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel

