

Christmas Series 2019
Hebrews 1:1-4 (part 1)

Introduction: On the premise that a superior messenger brings a weightier message, this section indirectly shows Jesus' preeminence over the OT prophets. This comparison points to the superiority of His revelation to theirs. (Moody BC)

These 4 verses, containing 72 words in Greek, are one sentence in the original language. You may also notice that the normal salutation or introduction is missing.

Along with John 1:1-18; Phil. 2:5-11; and Col. 1:15-18, this is one of the 4 key passages in the NT concerning the person and work of Christ.

1) **Describing the revealing work of God the Father**—¹ *The God*,

- The author uses “God” nearly 70x in 13 chapters.
- a) God *who spoke* [aor. act. ptc.] before the coming of the Son—1:1
 - The focus is on the **progressive, incomplete** nature of OT revelation.
 - One interesting note is the alliteration: 5 words begin with the letter p in the first phrase alone.
 - i) **WHEN** did God reveal truth?
 - (1) *long ago* [pa,lai]—the whole OT era, since the beginning of the Jewish nation in 1445 BC until 400 BC
 - ii) **HOW** did God reveal truth?
 - (1) Adverb # 1: *in multiple parts* (portions, piece-by-piece) [polumerwj]
 - (a) In a fragmentary, partial manner over many years.
 - (b) Haggai ministered for one month; Moses ministered for 40 years.
 - (2) Adverb # 2: *and in multiple ways* (manners, methods) [polutro,pwj]
 - (a) In a diverse manner, and in different locations
 - (b) Dreams, visions, angels, voices, genealogy, history, the Urim and Thummim, etc.
 - (c) Threats, promises, prophecies, public teaching, theophanies, etc.
 - (3) Prepositional phrase: *in* [evn] *the prophets*—in the sphere of all the Jewish prophets
 - (a) No one prophet or prophecy delivered **all** of God's revelation.
 - iii) **TO WHOM** did God reveal truth?
 - (1) *to the fathers* [path,r]—all OT Israel, not just the patriarchs
 - b) God has now spoken by the Son—1:2-3
 - The emphasis is on finality.
 - It is marvelous enough that God spoke in the prophets, but now the author gives us an extraordinary truth. (David Allen)
 - i) **WHEN** has God revealed truth? ² *in the end of these days*
 - (1) As compared with “long ago”; God spoke in Jesus at the end of these days in which He spoke to Israel.
 - (2) This phrase is often used in the Greek OT to refer to the last days inaugurated with the coming of Messiah.
 - ii) **WHAT** has God done? *has spoken* [aor. act. ind.]

- (1) The same God has communicated again
 - iii) **TO WHOM** has God revealed truth? *to us*
 - (1) As compared with “to the fathers”
 - iv) **HOW** has God revealed truth? *in* (the sphere of) *a Son*, (one whose character is that of son-ness)
 - (1) **One way** as compared to “in many ways”. **One son** as compared “by the prophets”. Jesus is not merely a human prophet, but the divine Spokesman. He is intimately acquainted with the Revealer.
 - (2) However highly the readership regarded that former revelation, the writer implied they must now listen most closely to the Son. Consider Jesus’ parable in Luke 20:9-18.
 - (3) God spoke through Jesus during the incarnation (John 8:28; 12:49; 14:10)
 - (a) To reject this incarnate revelation through the Son is to reject the Father who reveals.
 - (b) God has demonstrated mercy and love by revealing these things directly to us through the Son.
 - (c) The very thing they desired (God speak to us) is the very thing they rejected.
 - (d) To have a false doctrine of the **person** of Christ must inevitably result in a false doctrine of the **words and work** of Christ and consequently undermine the entire **gospel** of Christ.
 - (4) God the Father could not have revealed Himself more fully than He did in His Son. (McCune)
- 2) **Things to remember (believe, feel, do)**
- a) God has spoken and is not silent.
 - i) Read, listen to, study, and learn the Word.
 - b) God has spoken progressively.
 - i) Job is different than Zechariah, Psalm different from Leviticus, Genesis from Ecclesiastes, etc.
 - ii) From approximately 4,000 BC until 400 BC God kept communicating.
 - iii) The story of divine revelation is a story of progression **up to** Christ, but there is no progression **beyond** Him.
 - (1) The rest of the NT writers focus on Christ.

Christmas Series 2019
Hebrews 1:1-4 (part 2)

Introduction: God has chosen to reveal himself to us most fully by becoming incarnate (Heb 1:2) in his Son Jesus Christ. (Feinberg, NOLH) Many times the doubts and the fears that permeate (our hearts) stem from the fact that (we) have forgotten all that the Bible teaches about God and Christ. (Adams) This section answers the question: How is this Son superior to the prophets?

- There are 8 reasons (we will look at 4 this time, and 4 next time) why He is worth listening to. Is He eligible to be the authenticator of the Father's revelation?
 - This list begins and ends with the exaltation of Christ.
- 1) **Jesus is the delegated HEIR of the Father**—*Whom* (the Son) *He* (the Father) *appointed* [aor. act. ind. of *ti,qhmi*] *heir of all things*,
 - a) Referring to Ps. 2:6, 8.
 - b) The Son's messianic office is thus fully assured. (Kent)
 - c) The prophets were merely heirs of **some** things. There is only one Son, so there is only one rightful heir of the Father.
 - 2) **Jesus is the delegated CREATOR by the Father**—*through Whom* (the Son) *also He* (the Father) *made* [aor. act. ind. of *poie,w*] *the ages* [*aivw,n*], (cf. Col. 1:16)
 - a) The prophets were part of His creation, not the creators.
 - b) "The ages" refers to the various time stages of the created universe.
 - c) McCune: By Christ, God made the world (lit. ages, *aionas*—all time-space-mass relationships and exchanges of energy).
 - d) The Father created through his Son, which gives priority to the Father in the act of creation and sees the Son as subordinate in function to the Father's design and will. (Ware)
 - 3) **Jesus continuously displays the Father's glory**—*while being* [pres. act. ptc. of *eivmi*,] (continually existing as) (cf. John 14:9; Col. 1:15; 2:9)
 - a) *the radiance* (effulgence, outshining) [*avpau,gasma*] *of His* (the Father's) *glory*
 - i) Jesus is the permanent incarnation of His majestic glory
 - 4) **Jesus exists in the exact same nature as the Father**—*and the exact representation* (exact expression) [*carakth,r*] *of His* (the Father's) *essence*,
 - a) Jesus is not God Jr. or God-lite. He is everything the Father is in essence (an exact correspondence), but He is a different person and has different roles and responsibilities.
 - b) Perhaps one of the reasons why Israel was not to make any image of God was because Christ alone is that image?
 - c) Jesus alone fully and exactly exhibits the very nature and glory of God. (Bruce Ware)

- d) Unlike human sons who may bear an uncanny resemblance to their father, Jesus is the perfect expression of His Father.

5) **Things to remember (believe, feel, do)**

- a) **Listen:** God has spoken with finality through the Son
 - i) The prophets were incomplete in person, action, and word. Yet we listen to them. But did you notice how the prophets, as helpful as they were, sort of faded back into shadows as the light focused on Christ?
 - ii) The Son is complete in person, action and word. Listen to Him!
- b) **Worship:** God the Son is worthy of your worship
 - i) Because the very character and glory of the Son is the character of glory of the Father, all worship of the Son must redound to the glory of the Father. Hence, Christian worship must be worship of the Son, by the power of the Spirit, to the ultimate glory of the Father. Worship is deeply satisfying and correctly expressed to the glory of this triune God only as it is exercised within this trinitarian framework. (Ware, *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*)

Christmas Series 2019
Hebrews 1:1-4 (part 3)

Introduction: God has chosen to reveal himself to us most fully by becoming incarnate (Heb 1:2) in his Son Jesus Christ. (Feinberg, NOLH) Many times the doubts and the fears that permeate (our hearts) stem from the fact that (we) have forgotten all that the Bible teaches about God and Christ. (Adams).

Last time we looked at the first 4 of 8 descriptions of Jesus Christ. This morning, I would like to complete that list.

- Remember that these are 8 reasons why He is worth listening to. Is He eligible to be the authenticator of the Father's revelation?
- This list begins and ends with the exaltation of Christ.

- 1) **Jesus is the omnipotent responsible preserver of the universe**—*while bearing along* [pres. act. ptc. of *fe, rw*] *all things by the word* [*r`hma*] *of His power* [*du, namij*],
 - a) The Son, being distinct from creation, constantly carries all things forward on the Father's appointed course and for the Father's purpose. (cf. Is. 46:9-10; Col. 1:15-17) This is what theologians refer to as *providence as governance*, as compared with *providence as preservation*.
 - b) The prophets couldn't even uphold themselves, much less "all things."
 - c) Nothing is excluded from the scope of the Son's sustaining activity. (Morris)
 - d) As John Owen said: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, has the weight of the whole creation upon His hand." Our many responsibilities (which threaten to overwhelm us) begin to look less in comparison, don't they?
- 2) **Jesus is the means of purification by the Father**—*when He* (the Father) *had through Himself* (the Son) *made* [*aor. mid. ptc. of poie, w*] *purification* [*kaqarismo, j*] *of our sins*,
 - a) The prophets needed purification from their sins, just like us. Sin stains us. Christ alone (no prophet, no philosopher, no politician) can effectively cleanse us from that stain.
 - b) This purification was obtained objectively by Christ at Calvary, and is entered into subjectively by believers individually on the basis of faith. (Kent)
 - c) Christ alone accomplished the completed purifying, and He did it as the Great High Priest. This is something neither the Father nor the Spirit did or could do.
 - d) He is now seated, because His work of purification is done! (Ps. 110)
- 3) **Jesus is the omnipresent honored one next to the Father**—*who... sat down* [*aor. act. ind. of kaqi, zw*] *at the right hand of the Majesty on high*,
 - a) The prophets could not come into God's presence and live.

- b) There were no chairs in the tabernacle or temple for the priests. Their work was never done.
 - c) Christ has gone back to the height from which He descended. The humbled One is enthroned and exalted! There is no higher place to which He could ascend.
- 4) **Jesus is the superior One**—⁴ *having become* [aor. dep. ptc. of gi,nomai] *as much superior* [krei,ttwn] *to the angels as the name He* (the Son) *has inherited* [perf. act. ind. of klhronome,w] (the name “Son”) *is more excellent* [different in nature and degree, dia,foroj] *than theirs*,
- a) This happened after He was seated at the right hand of the Father (1:3), which never happened to any OT prophet. The use of the perfect aspect of “inherit” emphasizes ongoing possession. The emphasis is on possession without regard to the means of acquiring something.
 - b) But there are angels in heaven where the Son now is. Is He superior to these angels? Yes! And that is what the author addresses in the next section.
- 5) **Things to remember (believer, feel, do):**
- a) **Listen:** God has spoken with finality through the Son
 - i) The prophets were incomplete in person, action, and word. Yet we listen to them. But did you notice how the prophets, as helpful as they were, sort of faded back into shadows as the light focused on Christ?
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 - i) Because the very character and glory of the Son is the character of glory of the Father, all worship of the Son must redound to the glory of the Father. Hence, Christian worship must be worship of the Son, by the power of the Spirit, to the ultimate glory of the Father. Worship is deeply satisfying and correctly expressed to the glory of this triune God only as it is exercised within this trinitarian framework. (Ware, *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*)
 - c) **Love:** God the Son is worthy of our love
 - i) During this Christmas season, let us remember, as we serve those around us, to be motivated by love for the One whose incarnation we are celebrating.