

A. Introduction

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<sup>A</sup> Psalm 19:1-4, Romans 1:20

<sup>B</sup> Romans 3:1-2, Psalm 105:9-15, 1 Peter 1:10-11

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<sup>C</sup> Genesis 49:1, 10; Isaiah 2:2

<sup>D</sup> John 1:14, 17-18

<sup>E</sup> Isaiah 9:16

<sup>F</sup> Luke 3:22, Matthew 17:5, John 12:28-29, Acts 4:10-12

A. Introduction

1. Last week

- a. I made some introductory comments about this book of Hebrews
- b. I noted that its simplest and oldest title is simply, 'to Hebrews'
- c. that it was written primarily to the Jewish Christians who formed the nucleus and backbone of the early church, especially that church outside of Judaea, dispersed throughout the Roman empire
- d. the principal conclusion which I wanted us to draw together is that this book has as its Subject the person of Jesus Christ, Son of God
- e. Hebrews is an exhortation, and from start to finish of its message, its central Character is the Lord Jesus
- f. we also noted a number of sub-themes in this book, simply by taking a verse out of each chapter to illustrate
- g. but today, we are going to go on to introduce its overall thrust
  - (A) which is the direct outcome of its central Character and Subject
    - (1) the Person of God the Son, Jesus Christ, and,
    - (2) His finished and completed work
  - (B) which is to show the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant
  - (C) and particularly, that the self-revelation of God which began to be recorded in the Old Testament is brought to completion and fulfilment in the New Testament: thus we read in ...

2. Today's Text: "1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." (Hebrews 1:1-2)

- a. the words of these verses are so exalted they sound like poetry
- b. they are sweeping in their grandeur
  - (A) revelation: traversing from the ancient past – He spoke long ago
  - (B) to this very present day – in these last days has spoke to us
  - (C) the Son: now – whom He appointed heir of all things

- (D) but also ancient – [through whom also He made the world](#)
- c. we shall not look further at the second part of verse 2 today, but rather leave it until we shall speak, Lord willing, on the subject of the seven supremacies of Jesus Christ
- d. but as a point of interest in relation to our stopping mid-verse
  - (A) there are no verse numbers in the older manuscripts
  - (B) rather, those copying the Bible – it was all done by hand – to make it easier to find a particular passage, marked the beginning of sections was shown as you can see in this illustration of a fifth century manuscript from Alexandria
  - (C) it is less than 500 years ago, and after the use of printing presses, that verse numbers were inserted into the text of the Greek and later the English translations
  - (D) these were done by different people and they didn't always agree
- e. so that some Greek texts of Hebrews continue verse 1 down to the word, "Son" – which, if you think of it, forms a natural division
- f. and is what we shall consider this morning

## B. The Former Revelation

### 1. Its Cause

- a. [God, after He spoke long ago](#)
- b. like the books of Genesis and John
  - (A) this book begins by taking us back to the very beginning
  - (B) to the primary Cause of all things
  - (C) to God Himself,
  - (D) and, as can readily be seen by taking the verse in its fullness
  - (E) it takes us specifically to God the Father
  - (F) God as a Person, the First Person of the Trinity
  - (G) whose will, we discover in the Scriptures,
  - (H) is Sovereign and brings all things to pass
- c. now, we cannot ignore the fact that God has revealed Himself in our conscience, in His providence, and especially in creation

- (A) "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. ..." (Psalms 19:1-4)
  - (B) "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, ..." (Romans 1:20)
  - (C) yes, that testimony is a clear revelation of God
  - (D) the creation must inevitably point to its Creator
  - (E) but for a person to see this, he or she must be seeking, and sin has put mankind in a state where such seeking is foreign to our nature
- d. **God, after He spoke long ago**, or literally, **God long ago speaking**
- (A) the tense of the word **speaking** tells us that the writer is talking about God's ancient revelation in entirety
  - (B) as encompassing the Old Testament from start to finish
  - (C) carried out a single purpose in the plan of God
  - (D) that in His eternal will and wisdom, He would provide a clearer revelation of Himself, to make Himself known
  - (E) that as a Personal God, He enjoys relationships with His creatures

## 2. Its Communication

- a. **God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets ...**
- b. God's self-revelation to man was to a specific audience
  - (A) to the fathers
    - (1) in the most general sense, to the forefathers of all mankind – to Adam, Enoch, Noah
    - (2) but more specifically as it is used here
    - (3) to God's chosen nation, the descendants of Jacob, or, Israel
  - (B) this was the privileged group that heard God speaking to them
  - (C) "Then what advantage has the Jew? ... Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God." (Romans 3:1-2)

- c. indeed, in the first instance: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the forbears of this nation were not only the audience, but according to Psalm 105:9-15, also themselves prophets
- d. so was to this nation in ancient days God spoke **'in the prophets'**
  - (A) not simply 'through' them as channels, though they were
  - (B) not simply 'by' them as God's messengers, though they were
  - (C) but God was in them, so His truth could flow out of them
  - (D) **"As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow."** (1 Peter 1:10-11)
  - (E) the inspiration of the Scriptures means is that as well as being God-breathed they were spoken by prophets moved by the indwelling Holy Spirit of God

### 3. Its Character

- a. **God, after He spoke long ago ... in many portions and in many ways,**
- b. when you teach a subject to a child – or to an adult for that matter – you do not unload the entire subject from beginning to end
  - (A) it is taught precept on precept, line on line
  - (B) if you have studied Euclidean geometry you know that to be the case: each proposition forms a basis for those that follow
- c. so God's self-revelation did not come en masse, but progressively
  - (A) **in many portions**
  - (B) the revelations were fragmentary in substance
  - (C) a part to Adam and Eve
  - (D) a promise to Noah
  - (E) a covenant with Abraham and so on
- d. each word came as those addressed were prepared to hear it
  - (A) there was silence for a period while Israel was enslaved in Egypt
  - (B) when they were ready, God brought Moses to reveal God as their Deliverer and Redeemer, as well as their King

- (C) and so on through Israel's history, as the occasion demanded it, at sundry times these portions were added to the Scriptures
- e. and in many ways
  - (A) our God is a God of infinite variety
    - (1) you can discover that as you examine God's creation
    - (2) also as you hear the testimonies of God's people
    - (3) in all the varied ways that God has worked in these
  - (B) how many different ways there were that God spoke
    - (1) in the law; in prophecy; in poetry; in intervention in history
    - (2) by fire and smoke and thunder from Mount Sinai
    - (3) by the Urim and Thummim on the priest's breastplate
    - (4) by the sopping wet fleece – and dry – to Gideon
    - (5) by the still, small voice to Elijah
    - (6) by visions as to Isaiah in the temple
    - (7) by transport as Ezekiel whisked from place to place
    - (8) I shall leave it to you to add to that list for yourselves
- f. the former revelation was therefore clearer – expressed in truths that man could understand – than the general revelation in creation

## C. The Latter Revelation

### 1. Its Content

- a. the former revelation – the OT – is no less divine than the latter, in moving from the first to the last,
  - (A) we do not move from less true to more true
  - (B) we do not move from less worthy to more worthy
  - (C) we do not move from less mature to more mature
  - (D) because there is but one, holy God revealed throughout
  - (E) but rather we move from the clearer to the clearest
- b. it has been suggested that the subject of the Scriptures, from start to finish, is the coming of Jesus Christ
  - (A) To Noah the quarter of the world to which Messiah should belong is revealed; to Abraham, the

nation; to Jacob, the tribe; to David and Isaiah, the family; to Micah, the town of nativity; to Daniel, the exact time; to Malachi, the coming of His forerunner, and His second advent; through Jonah, His burial and resurrection; through Isaiah and Hosea, His resurrection. —{2}.

- (B) the very number of the prophets shows that their message was but a fragment of the whole
- (C) so when God the Son entered the world
  - (1) the fragments were all gathered together
  - (2) promise and prophecy became fulfilment
- c. so that the New Testament,
  - (A) the latter revelation
  - (B) God's final word; God's ultimate word
  - (C) is marked by ...

## 2. Its Completeness

- a. ... **in these last days has spoken ...**
- b. the literal rendering of these words is '**He spoke in the time of the last of these days.**'
  - (A) this is still God speaking
  - (B) but as the revelation of the Old Testament was considered in its entirety as part of a single purpose in God's plan
  - (C) so does the tense of "**He spoke**" convey a single action whereby God has made known His self-revelation, yet in such a fashion to indicate not a difference in substance from what has preceded it, but rather a finalisation of what has preceded
- c. many have seen in these words, '**in the time of the last of these days**'
  - (A) a reference to those prophecies of the coming of Messiah
  - (B) and I came across one of them in my reading yesterday: Genesis 49:1, "**in the days to come**" where Jacob on his death-bed calls his sons and prophesies their future, including these words about Judah: "**The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.**" (Genesis 49:10)
  - (C) another example is "**Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all**

the nations will stream to it.” (Isaiah 2:2) – ‘in the last days’

- (D) the same phrase in Hebrew – “in the afterwards of days” and is translated into Greek as we find it in our text – is found in both of those and other OT prophecies – prophecies foretelling the end of the Mosaic dispensation, the start of the Messianic, Christian, dispensation which will come to a close when Christ returns

### 3. Its Conveyance

- a. ... in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, ...
- b. so the latter revelation: God’s final, His ultimate word
  - (A) is conveyed to us living in this the Messianic or Christian age
  - (B) in the Person of God the Son Himself entering humanity
- c. grant me a moment to discuss that phrase ‘in His Son’
  - (A) the Greek text includes neither “his” nor “the”
  - (B) in is simply “in Son” and that is a way in Greek of emphasizing that the One in Whom God is speaking is the One Who is to be identified as possessing Son-qualities, who is Son-like
    - (1) whenever I tease our Andrew about some frailty in him, he is likely to reply, ‘the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree!’
    - (2) in human father-son relationships you will see a likeness of the father in the son, but it is usually an imperfect likeness
    - (3) but Jesus, Son of God, as hopefully we shall see next week, is a perfect representation of God the Father: fully Son-like
- d. Jesus, God the Son born in the flesh is God’s ultimate self-revelation
  - (A) “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)
  - (B) “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.” (John 1:17-18)
  - (C) This revelation was final because made by one who in all He is reveals the Father. By uttering Himself He expresses God. A Son who can be characteristically designated a son, carries in Himself



the Father's nature and does not need to be instructed in purposes which are also and already His own, nor to be officially commissioned and empowered to do what He cannot help doing. —{3}.

## D. Conclusion

### 1. This World's Babel

a. religion has many voices shouting at us

(A) voices clamouring for our attention

(B) each advertising its own interests,

(C) seeking to draw people to its dogma

b. as their messages conflict,

(A) and logically, if statements A, B, C ... Z

(1) all disagree with every other

(2) at most only one of them can be true

(3) that is a logical, mathematical and scientific certainty

(B) to treat them all as truth can only result in confusion

(C) yet people blindly say, 'it does not matter what you believe as long as your are sincere'

c. small wonder we read in Isaiah 9:16, "For those who guide this people are leading them astray; And those who are guided by them are brought to confusion."

d. but the Scriptures assure us that there is indeed

### 2. The Sure Word of God

a. on a number of occasions during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ

(A) there came a voice from heaven

(B) at Jesus' baptism by John, it is recorded, "and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, 'You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.'" (Luke 3:22)

(C) later Jesus took Peter, James and John up a high mountain where He was transfigured before them. Peter suggested building three tabernacles for Jesus, Moses and Elijah, and "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, 'This is My

beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” (Matthew 17:5)

- (D) in the last week of Christ’s ministry, Jesus said, “‘Father, glorify Your name.’ Then a voice came out of heaven: ‘I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.’ So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, ‘An angel has spoken to Him.’” (John 12:28-29)
- b. Jesus is God’s ultimate word; the final voice from heaven
  - (A) the complete revelation of His Father
  - (B) that voice continues to echo the gospel truth around the world
  - (C) Peter said, “...by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead – by this name this man stands here before you in good health. ... And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:10-12)
- c. “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, ...” (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- d. “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”

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ASV American Standard Version of 1901  
AV Authorized (King James) Version of 1769  
NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)  
NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society  
NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers  
WEY The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

Barnes – *Notes on the New Testament, et alia*, by Rev Albert Barnes, Gall & Inglis, Edinburgh

BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870

EBC – *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan  
*Hebrews*, by Leon Morris

EGT – *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Hodder & Stoughton  
*Hebrews*, by Marcus Dods

Gill – *Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament*, by John Gill, D.D.

JFB – Jamieson, Fausset and Brown commentary on the Old and New Testaments

Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site,  
[www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com).

NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*  
*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, by F. F. Bruce

RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson

TYN – *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*  
*Hebrews*, by Donald Guthrie

2. JFB, *in loc*

3. Marcus Dods, DD, EGT, *in loc*