

HEBREWS
CHAPTER ONE

God speaks to His people. What!? The fact that the Creator of the universe reveals Himself and His ways to lowly mankind should fill us with awe and amazement! But how often do we stop and reflect on this incredible truth? God speaks to you. God speaks to me. God speaks...

The author of *Hebrews* began his sermon with this topic. And he didn't waste any time building up steam or going over preliminaries. He jumped right in with both feet and didn't come up for air for four full verses. It must have been because he was completely overwhelmed with the thought that God revealed Himself to us.

God's final revelation

Read Hebrews 1:1-4

The first four verses of *Hebrews* is one long phrase in the original Greek, built around the main clause, "God...has spoken." The opening statement of the Hebrew preacher's sermon really packs a punch. He manages to present his main topic and catch the readers' attention. The author's point: God has a message for the church and it is focused on the work and person of Jesus Christ.

How did God formerly speak to mankind?

Check any of the following that are examples of ways God spoke in the Old Testament.

___ ***To Moses through a burning bush***

___ ***To Israel and pagan nations through God's prophets***

___ ***To Balaam through a donkey***

___ ***To King Belshazzar through handwriting on a wall***

How does God speak to us in "these last days"?

In what ways is God's new revelation superior to the old?

List all the descriptions of Jesus that you can find in these four verses.

Read 1 Corinthians 8:6 and compare with Hebrews 1:2.

Both the Father and the Son are included in the work of creation. What is the distinction between the two?

Read John 1:1-2, Philippians 2:6, and Colossians 1:15. Compare them with Heb 1:3a

The Greek word *doxa*, translated as “glory” in Hebrews 1:3, refers to the luminous manifestation of God’s person - the visible revelation of the nature and acts of God. God exhibits His character and ways to mankind by revealing His “glory.” Moses saw God’s glory each time he climbed the mountain to speak with God face to face.

The word “representation,” also in verse 3, is translated from the Greek word *charakter*. It originally denoted an instrument used for engraving and then later for the impression made by such an instrument, like the impression made on coins. The word speaks of the features of an object or person by which we are able to recognize it for what it is.

Based on the above scriptures and definitions what do we learn about who Jesus is?

Read Philippians 2:5-11 and compare with Heb. 1:3b

Based on Philippians 2:8, how did Jesus provide purification for sins?

Based on Philippians 2:8-9, why did the Father exalt Jesus?

What do you think is significant about the “right hand” of the majesty (Heb 1:3)?

Christ’s exaltation included the inheritance of “the name.” Initially, “the name” was used as a pious reference to God, but early Christians began to use it as a designation for Jesus. In Hebrews 1:4 the author makes the point that what was formerly reserved for the Father has now been bestowed on the exalted Christ.

Jesus is superior to the angels

Read Hebrews 1:5-14

In the remainder of chapter one, the author quotes a number of Old Testament passages to illustrate the result of Christ's exaltation and to further stress His superiority. During the first century, teachers of Scriptures would build support for their theological position by stringing together various Old Testament texts. These arguments, called "chain quotations," were designed to overwhelm their audience with evidence. The author of *Hebrews* uses seven Old Testament quotations which would have been very familiar and respected by his Jewish readers.

List the things you learn about the superiority and position of Christ from these seven OT passages.

In his commentary on *Hebrews*, George Guthrie shows how the author of *Hebrews* utilized the Old Testament passages to make his point:

*He presents three pairs of Old Testament passages, followed by the final quotation of Psalm 110:1, in support of the Son's superiority to the angels. The first pair (Ps 2:7; 2 Sam 7:14) proclaims the Son's superiority by virtue of his unique relationship to the Father (Heb 1:5). The second (Ps 97:7; 104:4) focuses attention on the angels' positive, but inferior, position and ministry (Heb 1:6-7). The Son's eternity constitutes the topic of the third pair of texts (Ps 45:6-7; 102:25-27). **The NIV Application Commentary, pg 67.***

Read Psalm 110:1 and compare with Heb 1:13

Psalms 110:1 is pivotal passage for the author of *Hebrews*. It is one of the most highly Christological Scriptures in all of the Old Testament.

What will be the duration of Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Majesty?

What does it mean that Jesus will make His enemies a footstool? What significance does this have for us today?

Why would the author compare Jesus to the angels? The original audience of *Hebrews* believed in and respected the angels. The author's method of argumentation, which was "from lesser to greater," was often used by Jewish rabbis of the day. It started with the assumption that if

something is true in a lesser situation (the angels), then it is certainly true in a greater, or more important, situation. With this audience, this argument would have definitely made the author's point.

The angels may be great, but Jesus is far superior. He holds the preeminent position in all of creation – the right hand of the Majesty – and possesses the unlimited power needed to subdue all His enemies.

Personal Application

Summarize what you have learned about the supreme position, authority and nature of the Son.

Why is it important to recognize the deity of Christ?

What implications does Christ's exaltation have for you today?

Why is it important for you to develop a proper theology (set of beliefs about God)?

Jesus Christ is the full and final revelation of God to mankind. In fact, Jesus *is* God. His earthly purpose was to provide forgiveness of sins through His shed blood. Only Jesus is able to offer this eternal salvation because He is God. No other person, no religion, no set of beliefs, no good work is sufficient. The person of Jesus and His death on the cross is far superior to all other claims of access to God. Without Jesus Christ there is no forgiveness of sins. *What are you depending on for eternal life? What are your neighbors, friends, and co-workers counting on? Will you tell them about the superiority of your Savior?*