

Hebrews Chapter One (vv.1-3)

HEBREWS

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|-------------------|--|---|--|---------------------|
| Prologue (1:1-4) | Jesus Christ: Superior in His Person Superior to: Prophets Angels Moses The Sabbath Other priests CHAPTERS 1:1-4:13 | Jesus Christ: Superior as Our Priest Better than: Earthly priesthood Old covenant (Mosaic system) Animal sacrifices Daily offerings CHAPTERS 4:14-10:18 | Jesus Christ: Superior for Life Let us have: Faith to believe God Hope to endure trials Love to encourage others CHAPTERS 10:19-13:25 | Epilogue (13:20-25) |
| | Instruction | | Exhortation | |
| | Emphasis | | | |
| Key Words | "Much better than" 1:4 | "Better" 7:19 | "Let us" 12:1 | |
| Warnings | 2:1-4 | 3:7-4:13 | 5:11-6:20 | 10:19-39 |
| Theme | The absolute superiority of Jesus Christ | | | |
| Key Verse | 4:14 | | | |
| Christ in Hebrews | Jesus is the absolutely superior revelation of God and our eternal High Priest (1:1-14; 3:1). | | | |

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The Structure of the Epistle

It was noted last week that the people to whom Paul writes suffered from two problems: **antagonism** from unbelievers and the **attraction** of the old religion, Judaism. Therefore, the simple purpose and thrust of the whole epistle is to show that what Christians had was far **better** than the **attraction** of the old religion. **They had CHRIST!** Whatever they had lost, they had gained far more in Him. In the light of this there are three definite exhortations to **go on** 'unto perfection' (Hebrews 6.1), **go in** 'to the holiest' (Hebrews 10.19-22) and **go out** 'unto Him without the camp' (Hebrews 13.13).

With regard to the epistle's structure it is important to note that: Firstly, the epistle divides into two major parts. The first part is **doctrinal** (Hebrews 1.1-10.18) and the second part is **practical** (Hebrews 10.19-13.25). There is definite movement from **doctrine** to **duty**. This is the case with many of the epistles, e.g. Romans 1-8 (doctrinal), 9-11 (prophetic), 12-16 (practical), Ephesians 1-3 (doctrinal), 4-6 (practical). Our **practice** as Christians must first be based on sound **doctrine**. Secondly, there are five (at least) 'warning' sections in the epistle (see chart above). These are the apostle's appeals to his readers not to fall back from Christianity to Judaism. There is the warning not to **drift** (Hebrews 2.1-4), **disbelieve** (3.7-4.13), **degenerate** (Hebrews 5.11-6.20), **despise** (Hebrews 10.19-39) and **depart** (Hebrews 12.25-29).

The structure of the epistle can be divided in many ways:

What was formerly *partial* is now **complete** (Hebrews 1-6), e.g. revelation (Hebrews 1.1-2).

What was formerly *temporal* is now **eternal** (Hebrews 7-10), e.g. inheritance (Hebrews 9.15).

What was formerly *earthly* is now **heavenly** (Hebrews 11-13), e.g. Jerusalem (Hebrews 12.22).

Hebrews 1-7: *What have we?*

Hebrews 8.1-10.18: *We have such a High Priest*

Hebrews 10.19-13: *Having therefore, let us...*

Hebrews 1-8.5: *The Superior Person of Christ*

Hebrews 8.6-10.39: *The Superior Provisions of Calvary*

Hebrews 11-13: *The Superior Principles of Conduct*

Key Themes/Words of the Epistle

There are many themes running throughout the epistle. For example, the **Old Testament** is a key theme as there are no less than 86 quotations from it throughout. There are many **contrasts** including the Son and angels (Hebrews 1.4-2.4), Canaan rest and God's rest (Hebrews 3.12-4.13), spiritual infancy and maturity (Hebrews 5.11-14), Sinai and Zion (Hebrews 12.18-29) etc. Key words and phrases include: **better** (Hebrews 1.4, 6.9, 7.7, 7.19, 7.22, 8.6, 9.23, 10.34, 11.16,

11.35, 11.40, 12.24), **let us** (Hebrews 4.1, 4.11, 4.14, 4.16, 6.1, 10.22-24, 12.1, 12.28, 13.13, 13.15), **we have, perfect, eternal/everlasting/evermore/forever, heaven or heavenly, speaking, Son, high priest, faith, covenant, love, blood, once for all** (Hebrews 9.12, 9.26, 10.10) etc. There are many more to be found!

Hebrews 1.1-4: The Doctrine of the Son's Glory

Hebrews 1.1-4: **Doctrine** of the Son's Glory (**7 truths**).

Hebrews 1.5-14: **Demonstration** of the Son's Glory (**7 Old Testament texts**).

Hebrews 2.1-4: **Duty** in Relation to the Son's Glory.

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath ~~in these~~ ~~last~~ (at the end of these) days spoken unto us ~~by (his)~~ (in) Son.

The epistle begins with God speaking. This is the way in which divine persons demonstrate their power. In this chapter God speaks **in** His Son (Hebrews 1.2), **to** His Son (Hebrews 1.5, 8-10, 12-13) and **about** His Son (Hebrews 1.5-6). In the past God spoke to 'the fathers' (the Jewish nation, cf. 1 Corinthians 10.1) in 'many parts' (sundry times) and 'many ways' (divers manners). He spoke in 'many parts' or bit by bit as no one revelation was complete. *EW Rogers – 'Here a little, there a little; line upon line; precept upon precept.'* God also spoke in 'many ways' or methods through such mediums as visions, dreams, voices, angels, theophanies, writing on the wall, prophets etc. All Old Testament revelation was therefore progressive and incomplete. The phrase 'in time past' does not refer to 'old in point of time' but 'old in point of use'. Old Testament revelation was worn out, **not** that it is to be cast aside, but the time was now right for **new revelation**, for God's final word (His Son) which would complete and build on the first.

When would the new revelation come? 'At the end of these days', i.e. after God had finished speaking through the prophets in the book of Malachi. What or whom is this new revelation? It is a **full** and **final** revelation 'in Son'. *Matthew 21.37: But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. God has nothing more to say. All New Testament revelation will concern the glory and majesty of the Son. Jim Flanigan: It is God Himself, as Son, who is now speaking. Having for so long used the prophets as His instruments, He now, Himself, as God the Son, speaks to men.* To summarise, in v.1, God speaks to the **fathers** through the **prophets** in *many parts* and *many ways*. In v.2, God speaks to **us** through **Son** in *full* and *complete* revelation.

2 Whom he hath appointed heir of all things (1), by whom also he made the worlds.(2) 3 Who being the brightness of his glory (3), and the express image of his person (4), and upholding all things by the word of his power (5), when he had by himself purged our sins (6), sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (7).

The writer now proceeds to describe the greatness of God's Son and therefore the supreme revelation and salvation found in Him. These **seven** truths (as also the quotations) speak of Him in the **past, present** and **future**.

(1) As to the **future**, He shall be manifested as 'heir of all things', i.e. He is the legitimate owner and administrator of the entire universe. As the Son of Abraham, He is heir to the **land**. As the Son of David, He is heir to the **throne**. As the Son of Man, He is heir to the **world**, and as the Son of God, He is '**heir of all things**'. *Psalm 2.8: Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* It is worthy of note that the Lord Jesus was appointed heir even before creation as 'all things were created *by* Him and **for** Him' (Colossians 1.16, cf. Revelation 4.11). The manifestation of His glory as 'heir of all things' awaits the Second Advent and the Millennium when all things shall be 'headed up in Him' (Ephesians 1.10).

(2) As to the **past**, the Son is the One 'by whom *also* he(God) made the worlds'. God the Father is the **source** of creation and the Lord Jesus is the **agent** of creation. *1 Corinthians 8.6: But to us there is but one God, the Father, (out) of whom are all things (source), and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things (agency), and we by him.* Not only did the Lord Jesus make the physical universe but also the 'ages' ('worlds'). This encompasses the whole universe of space and time. '*Christ is the One by whom God arranges and orders His purposes and plans which gradually unfold in time.*'

(3) As to the **present**, Christ is 'the brightness of His glory'. By nature the Lord Jesus **is** the 'outshining' and 'radiance' of God's glory (the sum total of His attributes). This is unlike Moses who merely absorbed and reflected God's glory (2 Corinthians 3.7). As the Son, the Lord Jesus radiates **intrinsic** glory, the glory of deity. *2 Corinthians 4.6: The glory of God in the face (Person) of Jesus Christ. WE Vine: The glory of God is the manifestation of His being, His nature, character, power and acts. Of all this, Christ is the perfect impress.*

Matthew 6.28-29: And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Solomon's glory was merely **extrinsic**, but the glory of the common lily was all its own (**intrinsic**).