

## A STUDY OF HEBREWS

### *Introduction - Chapter 1:1-3*

“There is indeed, no book in Holy Scripture which speaks so clearly of the priesthood of Christ, which so highly exalts the virtue and dignity of that only true sacrifice which He offered by His death, which so abundantly deals with the use of ceremonies as well as their abrogation, and, in a word, so fully explains that Christ is the end of the Law.”

- John Calvin, Preface to Commentary on Hebrews, on the necessity of Hebrews.

“...the world may as well want the sun in the firmament as the church this Epistle.” - John Owen, *Hebrews*, vol. 1, 45.

“[Hebrews] is the most extensively developed and logically sustained piece of theological argumentation in the whole of the New Testament.” Philip Edgecumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 35.

### I. Introduction: Diving In

#### A. Who is the Author?

“The truth God alone knows.” - Origin of Alexandria (d. 255)

1. No opening identification
2. Suggested Candidates: Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, Luke, Clement
2. What we DO know about the author:
  - (a) Knew recipients; longed to be with them (“...that I may be restored to you the sooner”, 13:19)
  - (b) Had mutual friend Timothy (“our brother Timothy”, 13:23)
  - (c) Not a witness of Christ’s resurrection (“it was attested to us by those who heard”, 2:3)
  - (d) Connected to Italy (“Those who come from Italy send you greetings”, 13:24)
  - (e) Male (masculine participle in 11:32)

#### B. What is the Occasion?

“A particular community of Christians is contemplating a compromise of disastrous consequences since it would mean in effect the abandonment of the gospel. On the one hand, faced with daily indignities and the prospect of persecution of a more severe nature, they are sorely tempted to withdraw from the good fight of faith; on the other, enticed by teaching which threaten the uniqueness of Christ, they are in danger of squandering their birthright in order to purchase temporary relief.”

- Philip Edgecumbe Hughes, *Hebrews*, 10-11.

#### C. Is it a Letter? Or is it a Sermon?

1. Answer: It’s BOTH! (a “word of exhortation”, 13:22)

#### D. The Purpose

1. Doctrinal - To Show the Supremacy of Christ Over All Things (especially the Old Testament)!
2. Practical - “Therefore, DON’T GIVE UP!”

**II. Text: Hebrews 1:1-3 – Christ is Better Than the Old Testament Prophets**

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup> having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. (Heb 1:1-4)

	<u>OT Era</u>	<u>NT Era</u>
<b>When?</b>	"in the past"	"in these last days"
<b>To Whom?</b>	"forefathers"	"us"
<b>By Whom?</b>	"through the prophets"	"by his Son" (lit. 'by a Son')
<b>How?</b>	"at many times and in various ways"	once and for all (implied)

1. What are the differences in (a) time period, (b) number of ways, (c) agent(s), (d) medium, and (e) extent in which God revealed Himself up to the present time, according to 1:1-2?

- (a) Time Period Formerly = \_\_\_\_\_ Time Period Now = \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Number of Ways Formerly = \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Ways Now = \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Agent(s) Formerly = \_\_\_\_\_ Agent(s) Now = \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) Medium Formerly = \_\_\_\_\_ Medium Now = \_\_\_\_\_
- (e) Extent Formerly = \_\_\_\_\_ Extent Now = \_\_\_\_\_

2. What are the implications of Heb 1:1-2 for looking for God’s speech/will/revelation today? Has God finished speaking fresh revelation during these “last days”?

*“Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.” (Jude 3)*

*“...it pleased the Lord, at various times and in diverse ways, to reveal himself and to declare his will to his church; and afterward—for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and of the world—to commit this revelation wholly to writing. Therefore the Holy Scripture is most necessary, God's former ways of revealing his will to his people having ceased.” - WCF 1.1*

3. What are the similarities between the ways God revealed Himself in the Old Testament and now in the New? Implications?

4. What additional truths are taught about this Christ, who is God’s final, personal Revelation?