

CHRIST, BETTER THAN THE PROPHETS

Hebrews 1:1-3

Introduction:

- As you may know, the human author is unknown. Many believe it was written by Paul
 - “The value of no N.T. writing depends on who wrote it”- Graham Scroggie

Against Pauline authorship

-II Thess. 3:17- Paul doesn't identify

-It was written in a different literary style

-There is no mention of the mystery of the church or Gentiles (Paul's great doctrinal themes)

The Case for Paul

- i. He called himself a “Hebrew of the Hebrews”-Philippians 3:5
 - 1. He was well qualified to write it
 - 2. The Jewish hatred of Paul might have caused Paul to write this and stay anonymous
 - ii. Internal Statements
 - 1. Hebrew 10:34- He mentioned being bonds
 - 2. He desired to see them- Heb. 13:18-19
 - 3. A reference to Timothy- Heb. 13:23
 - 4. The Apostolic Benediction- Hebrews 13:20-25
 - iii. Paul did write a letter to the Hebrews- II Peter 3:15, 16
- Regardless of who the human penman was, we know that it was given under the inspiration of God.
 - “Hebrews is called the orphan epistle and God himself adopted it.” The first word of the epistle is God!
 - The epistle was written before the destruction of the temple in AD 70 (cf. Scofield's introduction).
 - Some of the Jewish Christians were tempted to go back into Judaism and to renounce their Christian faith. So the author of this epistle wrote it to encourage them to be steadfast in the faith of Christ (cf. 2:3; 3:12; 6:6; 10:26).
 - Audience- Hebrew Christians
 - The term comes from Abraham (Gen. 14:13)
 - Their problems
 - The Rabbinical Teaching was hard to unlearn
 - The impressive Temple worship rituals were carried out daily
 - They were saying things like the Law of God and Moses was greater than Jesus

- The Jewish public worship was grand and designed by Moses. It was worthy of Jehovah
 - Here comes Christianity with no temples or great rituals
 - Family ties were strong and hard to break
- The author of Hebrews is writing to make his case for the superiority of Christ
- Dr. Walter Martin said: Hebrews was written by a Hebrew to other Hebrews telling them to stop acting like Hebrews!
- That is the great theme- Christ is Superior! Better than...

I. God has spoken

- a. God wants to reveal himself!
- b. Sundry times, divers manners (different times and various methods)
- c. The revelation in the past was fragmented
 - i. In the OT it was in different parts- The former revelation was given in various parts and had not been given all at once. It had been given from time to time as God saw fit to communicate. It was given by history, by judges, by poetry and proverbs, and by prophecy
 - ii. O.T. revelation was bit by bit, piece by piece
 - iii. The symbols and the method of the O.T. in no way measure up to the speaking by the son
 - iv. It was also given in many ways
 1. It was not all given in one mode, or manner.
 2. God has used many different methods in communicating His will. In one instance it would be through direct communication (Gen. 17:1-5), or through visions and dreams (Daniel 7, 8, 9), or by prophecy, and other various means. God spoke to Moses by a burning bush (Exodus 2), to Elijah by a still, small voice (1 Kings 19), to Isaiah by a heavenly vision (Isaiah 6), to Hosea by his family crisis (Hosea 1:2) and to Amos by a basket of fruit (Amos 8:1).

II. God is speaking, still

- a. But **now** in these last days (since Christ came) God has addressed us by His Son

- b. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"
(John 1:17).
 - c. Note: The same God that inspired the Old Testament Scriptures inspired the New Testament Scriptures (I Peter 1:10-12)
- III. Christ is better than the prophets
- a. The contrast here is between the numerous parts of the revelation given by the prophets compared to the oneness given in Christ
 - i. What God hid by shadows and types in the Old Testament is revealed fully and gloriously in the New.
 - ii. No prophet ever brought an absolute and final and complete revelation from God.
 - iii. It's implied that the fact that God is now speaking to us through his son, we have a higher obligation to listen and obey! Christ authority is superior to all those who have been used in time past
 - 1. By the Son
 - a. He is heir of all things- God grants Him the earth and the people for his inheritance
 - b. He made the worlds
 - i. Because He is the Creator of this world, this world belongs to Him.
 - ii. John 1:3 says, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - c. Being the brightness of His glory
 - i. It carries the idea of shining forth, which is different from reflection
 - ii. Inadequate illustr- Sun and sunrays
 - iii. Where Jesus is there is wonderful light! When Jesus is rejected there is terrible darkness!
 - d. He is the express image of His person

- i. John 1:18 says, "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
 - ii. "He hath declared him."
 - iii. Christ reveals the message of God.
 - iv. God is disclosing Himself to men through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - v. The lines of deity have been reproduced in Jesus
 - vi. In Christ there is a display for those who have eyes to see of God's very essence
 - vii. He is the perfect revelation of God- executing His will, and expressing God's heart
- e. Upholding all things
 - i. The word here is not just to maintain the earth, but he is carrying it and bringing it to the final purpose of God in creation
 - ii. Christ functions to sustain the universe in existence and to carry it forward in God's final plan
 - iii. Col 1:16-19- He is the beginning, middle, and end!
- f. By himself purged our sins
 - i. Our greatest need- cleansing!
 - ii. And having made by himself- he accomplished this in and of himself
 - iii. Any system of salvation that inserts works is wrong
 - iv. I Timothy 2:5, 6 says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."
 - v. Christ "gave himself a ransom for all." And Christ "by himself purged our sins" (Heb. 1:3).

- vi. And after He died as our Substitute, He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (1:3), signifying His work was done.
- vii. He said in triumphant from the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30).
- g. He sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high- Eph. 4:10, Philippians. 2:9
 - i. Work on earth
 - ii. Work in heaven- Interceding, providing power for the Christian life

Conclusion:

- It is easy to think of Christ's redemptive work purging our sins on the cross
- We must remember as believers, Christ's continual work in providing us power to live the Christian life! He is superior!
- Key verses: Hebrews 6:11-12, 12:1-2