

READ: Hebrews 1:1-4 (NLT)

Goal of Hebrews epistle: to prove that Christ succeeds as God's cumulating, comprehensive Self-revelation: *He is better, clearer, greater than any & all previous revelations of God gathered together & combined. Jesus is greater than the total sum of all former revelations, & He succeeds as the perfect, final, complete & comprehensive revelation of God to mankind!*

ILLUS Like Cumulus clouds = heaped up in great masses

Both: identify varieties of God's OT revelations!

Jesus Christ succeeds as THE cumulated culmination of all God's Self-revelations to mankind throughout history!

Who would benefit most from understanding Christ as the cumulating culmination of all God's former Self-revelations?

- "Pros Hebraious" – not "to" but "for" Hebrews believers
- Jewish, Hellenistic, immature, persecuted, near apostasy

Authorship: *Well read Hellenistic Jew who was passionate about his faith. His Greek extends beyond the style of Luke, yet he has a firm grasp of non-traditional Hebrew texts.*

Dating: *The author gives us clues:*

- Timothy has been released from prison (13:23)
- Paul doesn't mention this: dated after Paul's death in 65AD but before AD 95 - Clement of Rome discussed its importance
- Significant discussion of Jewish sacrifice & priestly activities so Temple must have still been in use. Best to date: AD65-70

Reason for writing: *to exhort persecuted Jewish Christians. It's a plea to ignore local Jewish teaching & remain faithful to Christ*

- "teachings" conflicting/confusing truth; human logic & traditions create constant uncertainty in faith, as legalism today:

"You can have too much grace!" or "We need the 10 C's to guide us!"

The beauty of this letter is not in its argument, but in its passion for two things: 1) Christ, & 2) the people to whom it is written.

Heb. 13:22 describes reason for writing; verb "exhort!" There are 30+ exhortations in the book - defined by the phrase "let us"

- Heb. 4:14 "Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess"

- Heb. 4:16 "Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence"

Other Greek rhetorical devices include:

-Synkrisis: compare 2 things "Jesus to Melchizedek" (8 points)

Example: lists of illustrations to prove a point (Heb. 11)

-Salvation's efficacy for the sinful human nature/heart

-Not overcome by human effort, Law, or ceremonial clean

-No former revelations provide salvation: forgive + right

-The series find their meaning & end in Christ!

I) Christ succeeds as God's Cumulated Revelation

1:1) God spoke previously "at different times & in divers ways"

-palai = pal'-ahee: in times past, long ago, former times

...at different times...

-polumerós = pol-oo-mer'-oce: in numerous parts (one at a time, each added at a different time in progression)

-All former revelations of God were necessary "portions"

-Each revelation (Passover, tabernacle, exile) imparted a different aspect of God's character/plan

-Each one incomplete; thus, of lesser value than Christ

-Christ is the final in series; greater than sum total

Are we in danger today of missing the significance of Christ as God's cumulated revelation of Greatest, Surpassing Value?

While persecution doesn't exist in our country today as it did then, we are just as much in danger of turning away from principal elements of Christ's revelation to syncretize our beliefs with that of the culture around us in the name of not being "prudish, bigoted, or close-minded, prejudicial, intolerant, unctemporary, or out-of-touch." The subtle shift is just as dangerous because there is applause from the world to syncretize and much worldly gain in teaching and preaching a false gospel. The deep-seeded human need is to gain value significance, & adoration from personal traits, achievements, & effort!

II) Christ succeeds as God's Comprehensive Revelation

-polutropós = pol-oot-rop'-oc; variety of ways & manners

-Christ is the fullness of God as a man; radiance of glory

-Christ is the full meaning of every former revelation

-Christ is clearest way of presenting God to man (as man)

Jesus as a man invites us to come clean with our own inability to attain righteousness, come out of hiding as broken, sinful people, & look to Him as our way to rightness & friendship with God!

*The plea of the writer of Hebrews is simple: “Stop hoping to look like everyone else around you.” You can’t, you’re different! Your hope in Christ and confident expectation of His fulfilled purpose in your life far outweighs any earthly gain from abandoning your faith, or letting the world erode it. You cannot please people and God!” **Heb 13:8** - yesterday, today & forever. Truth is not relative to a time or culture. Christ is Truth - the truth of eternity, Genesis, Hebrews, and 2021(?).*

III) Christ succeeds in God’s plan to reconcile mankind (3)

- Christ is the fullness of God’s message to mankind
- (3) Jesus radiates God’s glory, expresses His nature & sustains all things by His mighty power
- (3) Jesus cleansed us of all sins; sat down (finished)
- He is seated at place of honor – right-hand of God
- His name – “Son” – reflects His identify & role in plan**
- Son is greater than all! Messiah/Christ/Savior*

Hebrew believers bombarded with the reminder of their true heritage as God’s people (though misunderstood its basis) and their peaceful & protected existence among/within the Roman empire. Jews had gained a “protected status” within the Roman Empire; however, that quickly changed under Nero in @ _____, as well.

Christ succeeds as God’s man!

Succeed = succedere (Latin): to come close after, to reach a goal or accomplish a purpose.

Success = accomplishes God’s purpose & goals

Succession = at end of, resulting from all preceding efforts

Jesus = cumulated culmination of God’s perfect Self-revelation

- He is the last, final, perfect, complete in a long series
- He is the single most comprehensive of all revelations
- He resolves man’s problems & achieves God’s plans

If, therefore, Christ is the comprehensive successor to all God’s revelations that came before Him, then His NT gospel is also the comprehensive successor of God’s salvation to ALL people! There is no going back to the former & incomplete OT; it has been utterly absorbed into Christ’s New & Better Covenant!

PRAY

Hebrews 1:1-4 (NLT)

1) Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. 2) And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance and through the Son he created the universe. 3) The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. 4) This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names.

1) In the past, God spoke to the fathers “in” the prophets...

en = the condition (state) in which something operates from the inside (within).

-“in” the prophets, God operated from within them

-“in” Christ, God operating from within Him

(ISV) “God, having spoken in former times in fragmentary and varied fashion to our forefathers by the prophets...”

2) In these last days, He has spoken to us “in” His Son...

Col 1:15) The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16) For in Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him & for Him.

-John 1:1-3 & Gen 1:1-3

3) The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His nature...He sat down at God’s right-hand

-speaks to culmination (quality)

-Jesus is best, clearest, exact revelation of God to man

-speaks to cumulation (quantity)

-Jesus + final revelation of God; series complete, He is finished

4) Jesus is far superior to all...as His name (Son) indicates...

-Jesus' humiliation/obedience thru suffering proved Sonship

-Heb 5:8