

Hebrews

Hebrews 1:1-4

September 21, 2008

- I. God has spoken – and He still speaks
 - A. **Hebrews 1:1-4** . . . God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, [2] in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He (*God*) appointed heir of all things, through whom also He (*God*) made the world. [3] And He (*Jesus*) is the radiance of His (*God's*) glory and the exact representation of His (*God's*) nature, and upholds all things by the word of His (*Jesus*) power. When He (*Jesus*) had made purification of sins, He (*Jesus*) sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (*God*), [4] having become as much better than the angels, as He (*Jesus*) has inherited a more excellent name than they.
 - B. A Look At The Theological Highlights Of **Hebrews 1:1-4**
 - 1. **God** – for us humans, everything starts and ends with God. He is our creator, our provider, and our protector. He holds our world together and sustains our lives for as many years as we live on His earth. He made us in His image – and He made us for His glory and enjoyment. He redeems us from the powerful clutches of His arch enemy, frees us from the penalty and practice of sin (*that is, rebellion against Him*), reconciles us to Himself, makes it possible for us to live with Him for eternity, becomes our loving Father, and is our final Judge. He is greater than any power known to man, of such a nature as to be larger than all His creation, and yet dwells within those who have repented of their rebellion against Him and been born anew.
 - a. We either submit to Him or rebel against Him. We either love Him above all other loves or we love ourselves or self-rule or the things of this world above Him. We are either reconciled to Him or are out of fellowship with Him.
 - b. Indeed, every thought, word, and deed that we engage in is first and foremost either for God or against Him. We cannot do good without doing good to Him first. We cannot sin without sinning against Him first.
 - c. **Ephesians 4:6** . . . one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

2. **God spoke** – “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, [2] in these last days has spoken to us in His Son. . .”
- a. Long ago, that is, in times past, or what we would call Old Testament times. Long ago, God spoke to all who would listen by means of His prophets. Now He speaks to all who will listen by means of His son, Jesus Christ.
 - b. Notice, it says God spoke **in** the prophets and in His son – not to them or through them. This is significant because it tells us God’s location when He spoke. He was dwelling within those He spoke through – just as He dwells within us today!
 - c. **Who was God speaking to?** God has been speaking and continues to speak to whomever will listen to Him. The word “**US**” is used in verse 2 because it is assumed we are Christians and as such we have and continue to listen to what God is saying.
 - d. **What has God been saying?**
 - (1) God has been telling us about Himself – His existence, His nature, His power, His worthiness to be submitted to, obeyed, and worshiped, His hatred of rebellion, self-centeredness, pride and sin, His love and goodness, His justice and judgement, and His sovereignty.
 - (2) God has been telling us about ourselves – how we have been made in His image, our rebellion against Him, and our alienation from Him.
 - (3) And God has been telling us about the way back to a reconciled relationship with Him, His expectations for us, His requirements of us, and His longing for relationship with us.
 - e. **How has God spoken?** The scripture says He spoke “in many portions and in many ways.” Taking this statement beyond His speaking by means of the Prophets, we see that God speaks through nature (*what He has created*), as a voice from heaven, from a burning bush, in dreams and visions, via angels, face-to-face as with Moses in the tent of meeting, with a still small voice, by means of the Holy Spirit, through His written word, through a donkey, writing on a wall – etc.
 - f. **One last thought about God speaking:** Presence opens the door for relationship. Speaking takes us through the open door so that we are able to establish, build, strengthen, and

preserve relationship. Speaking also enables damaged or broken relationships to be repaired. The point here is that speaking takes us to a level of love and intimacy in a relationship that far surpasses what could be achieved by presence alone. This is what God has done toward us!

3. **Jesus' credentials** establish that He is God in human flesh:
 - a. Whom He (*God*) appointed heir of all things – to be heir of all things in relation to what belongs to God is to possess all things that belong to God. Therefore, all that belongs to God belongs to Jesus – thus establishing that Jesus superior to all other beings.
 - b. through whom (*Jesus*) also He (*God*) made the world – this means God and Jesus acted as one in the making of the world.
 - c. And He (*Jesus*) is the radiance of His (*God's*) glory and the exact representation of His (*God's*) nature – all that God is, Jesus is – right down to the minutest detail.
 - d. and upholds all things by the word of His (*Jesus*) power. Just as God's words created all that is and holds all things together, so it is with Jesus' words.
 4. **Jesus' location** establishes His ongoing relationship with God and the importance God places on His relationship with Jesus. “When He (*Jesus*) had made purification of sins, He (*Jesus*) sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (*God*). . .”
 5. **Jesus name** further proves his position of importance to us – an importance that is equal to the importance of God to us. “. . .having become as much better than the angels, as He (*Jesus*) has inherited a more excellent name than they.” The more excellent name is “Son” or “Son of God.”
- C. This brings us to the end of verse four of Hebrews chapter one. In these first four verses, God is proclaiming that His son, Jesus Christ, is superior to all that has come before and that will come after. And, God proclaims that He now speaks to us through His son.
1. This raises a question for us, the readers: Will we treat Jesus Christ as superior to all else?

2. I am not asking if we will hold the theological view that Christ is superior – though that is an important view for us to hold. And I am not asking if we will agree with God that Christ is superior.
3. I am asking if we will think and desire and love and live as those who hold Christ to be superior to all else that might claim that position of superiority in their lives?
4. So I ask once more – will we treat Jesus Christ as superior to all else? Will we give proper attention to what He says to us about how we are to relate to God and how we are to live? Do His words in the four gospels ring loud in our ears and do they weigh heavy on our choices and behavior?

II. Practical Application

- A. God has spoken – yet God still speaks. By this I don't mean that God is giving new revelation to His children. But we know from scripture and church history that God speaks to His children at various times and in various ways. And we are wise to conclude that this speaking continues on today just as it happened in times past.
- B. However, it seems to me that there are several problems we humans run smack into when it comes to experiencing God's speaking to us individually.
 1. First, a look at those God spoke to in the OT and NT reveals that God rarely speaks directly to those who do not take faith in Him and holiness – like unto His – seriously.
 - a. Today, many of us long to hear from God about some important issue or another, but we are not as eager about living a faith dominated, holy life. In other words, we want direction or comfort from God about certain things yet disregard or ignore other things He has already said in His Word or has been saying to us all along.
 - b. Why should God keep speaking or even begin speaking to us if this is our heart condition?
 2. Second, we are prone to treat strong urges and momentary whims as God speaking to us. Such experiences may be God speaking to us – but then again it may not be.
 - a. How do we know? Sometimes it seem almost impossible to know.
 - b. Therefore, it is vital to keep an anchor in the scriptures such that we are able to evaluate what we believe God has said or is saying against what God has revealed in His Word.

3. Third, it appears from the scripture record and from church history that God does not speak directly and personally to every one of His children. This should not offend us.
 - a. Just as children with a parent, our first responsibility is not to ask more questions or get more information but to do what we have already been asked to do.
 - b. Our first priority is to be that of living up to what we already know – of setting our hearts to do what we already know God’s will to be.
4. Finally:
 - a. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.
 - b. Love God supremely and put away any love for the world that stands between you and God or keeps you from being able to love God as you ought.
 - c. Speak often with God and it is likely you will sense or hear Him speaking to you.
 - d. Pursue holiness like unto His holiness and you will greatly increase the probability of God speaking to you.
 - e. Become a vessel for honor and you will become a vessel God uses for speaking to others as He used the prophets and has now used Jesus.

III. Conclusion