

Heb. 1:1-2 The Climax of Divine Revelation

The topic of today's sermon is divine revelation, particularly the climax of divine revelation in the Son. These two verses are very important for us as we study the Book of Hebrews because they set the stage for the authors entire argument. In these verses we see three main comparisons between the revelation of God as given in the OT compared to the revelation of God that finds its climax in the NT in the Son. Let me show them to you. 1) Long ago God spoke. But in these last days He has spoken. 2) He spoke to our fathers. Today, He has spoken to us. 3) He spoke by the prophets. Today, He has spoken by his Son. Therefore, I would like to organize the sermon in 2 parts: 1) God spoke; and 2) God has spoken. In this way, we will learn some things about the doctrine of divine revelation as it finds its fulfillment in the Son. So let's begin.

1. God Spoke. The author begins his exhortation with the truth that God is a God who speaks. He is not like the idols who cannot speak, nor reveal themselves, nor give us any instruction. A god you have to fashion yourself, or pick up off the floor, or attach to a wall is not God. And by saying "Long ago" the author is not putting a real timetable on God's speaking. We know God spoke at creation. God said, "Let there be light," etc. And from there, God has spoken to his angels, to Adam and Eve, and so forth. This is the doctrine of divine revelation. We usually associate God's grace with salvation. But, we do not have salvation if we do not have revelation. This means the grace of God begins in the fact that He reveals Himself. He reveals his ways. He reveals his desires for us. He reveals what is right. In the revelation of God we find true history and true knowledge. So what are some truths we learn from this passage about divine revelation in the OT?

i. In the OT God spoke as Father. When we consider the triune God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, as revealed in the Bible, the emphasis here is on God the Father. In Eph. 1:3 we read: "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places** This is a great mystery, as there is some order of acting within the Trinity. Jesus says, "**My Father is working until now, and I am working**" (John 5:17). "**For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself**" (John 5:26). Throughout the Bible, we see the emphasis of the eternal purpose of God, also called his eternal will. ." In Eph. 3:8-9 Paul says: "**To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God . . .**"

ii. In the OT God spoke the message of salvation. Let me ask, what is the eternal purpose of God the Father? Well, we know it is to bring glory to himself. But, how does he does this? He does this by saving a people for himself. Among other things, divine revelation serves this purpose. We are SAVED because God speaks. Eph. 1:7-9: "**In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ . . .**" THIS IS THE MESSAGE OF DIVINE REVELATION! In John 17:6 Jesus says: "**I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.**" This means that God's revelation has EVERYTHING to do with

salvation. Look over at 2:1-3: **“Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?”**

iii. In the OT God spoke many times. Now, there is a difference of opinion on the meaning of this word. Some say this word has to do with how many times God spoke in the OT. In other words, God didn't speak just once or twice. But instead he spoke “many times” as the KJV translates it at “sundry times” or various times. This is certainly true. God spoke to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, the prophets, and to Ezra (as well as to others). But, there is another meaning to this word which is also true by implication.

God spoke by many parts. In other words, God's revelation in the OT was fragmented. Really, this means that God did not reveal his plans all at once. But instead, he spoke at various times throughout the OT. Have you ever heard of morse code? It is a system of communication that can use sound or light to send a message. It is made of dots and dashes. It uses the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet and 10 numerals. Each letter or numeral is either a dot or a dash using all kinds of combinations. So the sender of the message sends out a series of dots and dashes that spell words and make sentences until finally, the entire message comes out. Well, the revelation of God is like this in that He doesn't give the entire message at once. In this way, it is fragmented.

Think about it. God revealed Himself to Adam. And he gave his promise that a “seed” would come from the woman as One who would be “bruised,” but this same “seed” would “crush” Satan's head. To Noah He gave his promise that He would preserve his family, which in turn would ensure that God would preserve his people. We will see in Hebrews that God spoke to Melchizedek, revealing Himself as God and savior, calling as some kind of priest. To Abraham God promised to bless his “seed,” to bless his offspring and preserve them. This revelation was added to with Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. To Moses, we see much more given by way of revelation than at any other time in the OT, as God gave his laws to govern Israel. Later, God spoke to David and to Solomon with more instructions. After this, God spoke to various persons, primarily the prophets, and then later to Ezra on their return from Babylon.

In this way we see that God spoke at many times by “parts and degrees” (Owen); and this continued all the way to the prophet John the Baptist. And in all these times, God was revealing how to worship Him, how to obey Him, his desires for his people; the message of salvation. In this way God's revelation was gradual and expanding. From the beginning God gave his people EXACTLY what they need to know him and worship him. We might say that in every subsequent revelation God revealed more and more light, more knowledge, truth. In this way revelation has always been continuous. I think of Deut. 29:29 which says, **“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”** Also, Isaiah 28:10: **“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little . . .”**

iv. In the OT God spoke in many ways. Think about the ways God spoke. He spoke to the prophets by dreams, by visions, by inspirations, by voices, by angels, and even face to face as a friend speaks to a friend. God's people learned his will through his promises, through threats of punishment, through public sermons, etc. It is amazing to me to see HOW God revealed himself in the OT, how creative and wise were his communications to his people. This is why the Apostle Paul could say to the Jews: **"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God"** (Rom. 3:1-2). Or in another place, **"They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises"** (Rom. 9:4). Now, there is more I could say, but let's continue to the point of the sermon which is the Climax of Divine Revelation in the Son.

2. God Has Spoken. Now, we move to the NT. We leave the Old Covenant and we make our way to the New Covenant. The author moves from "long ago" now to the "last days," from speaking to the "Fathers," now to us, and instead of using the "prophets," He now has spoken by the "Son." We immediately see a climax, a finality to the revelation of God. In the OT God spoke. But, in the NT, God has spoken by his Son. **THIS IS THE MESSAGE OF HEBREWS!** This truth sets us up to understand the entire Bible. I have 3 truths.

i. God has always spoken through the Son. From creation, Christ is the "word of God." Col. 1:15-17: **"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."** And throughout the OT, how many did times did Jesus appear as God's messenger, the "Angel of the Lord." And, Peter tells us the same. He says in 1 Pet. 1:10-12 **"Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look."** But the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant is the incarnation. This is the meaning of Gal. 4:4 **"in the fullness of time, God sent forth his Son."**

ii. In the Son God speaks immediately. In other words, He does not speak now "at many time" or "in many ways." He reveals himself immediately through the Son. The Law and the Prophets have served their purpose. They now give way to the Son. Do you remember the transfiguration of Jesus? Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a mountain. And there appeared Moses and Elijah talking with him. Moses represents the law; Elijah represents the prophets. And before their eyes, Jesus' face became like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And Peter says, "Lord, it is good that we're here. We can be of some use. Let us make some tents for Moses and Elijah. For in Peter's mind, they were superior to Jesus. But, then a voice from says, **"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; Listen to Him."** And the disciples fall on their faces in fear. And then, ONLY Jesus is left. This event pictures the end of the prophets and the law as they served God's purpose in divine revelation. These are the "in many times" and "in many

ways.” But, NOW, in the Son, who is God in the flesh, EVERY WORD Jesus speaks is divine prophecy.

In the OT, the prophets received the Spirit in measure, here and there. But, **“It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell”** (Col. 1:19). Jesus, as the fullness of God, has been endowed with the Spirit without measure. As God speaks, so does Jesus! There is no mediation between God and Jesus concerning divine revelation. The prophets received their revelation “at many times” and “in many ways.” But, the Lord Jesus has ALL the treasures of wisdom, knowledge and truth of God in his person. From the beginning of Jesus ministry, the people were amazed because “he spoke as one with authority.” When He taught, his teaching was perfect. When He said to the demons, depart, they obeyed. When he wanted a storm to cease, he said a word.

In the OT, the prophets were only instruments. But Jesus was the ONE who designed the instruments. The prophets were servants in the house. They did not know understand ALL of what they spoke. But, the Lord Jesus is the builder of the house and He has absolute comprehension of all the mysteries of God. John 15:15: Jesus says: **“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”** We will see this truth played out in the entire Book of Hebrews. In v. 2 Jesus is the heir of all things. He is not merely a servant, but the heir. Also in v. 2 He is the creator of the world. V. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature. He upholds the universe by his power. He made purification for sins. After which, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. And we will see that he is superior to the angels, the prophets, the sacrificial system, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and more.

iii. In the Son we have the finality of divine revelation. What if you spent your life looking for gold? What would you do? You would travel all over the world all the days of your life, working and digging and spending your resources to find gold. But, what if you could go and find gold in abundance, no, in infinite abundance in one place. So it is with the Son: All God’s wisdom, ALL God’s treasures; All God’s promises. Another example: Consider the climbing of Mt. Everest. The goal of the climb is the peak. But think what is involved in the ascent to the top. There is training, there is the proper gear, the right guide. On the way there are stop points, places to rest and camp. There are many toils and difficulties. But, all these things make up the climb to the top. And what is the goal? It is the peak. Well, in the same kind of way, Jesus is the peak, the climax, the finality of all divine revelation. In Christ, we have arrived. In the OT there is “here a little, there a little, precept upon precept. There is light here and there. There is nothing wrong with the light and it still had the same authority as it came from the same God. But in the Son we have the fulness, and the finality of divine revelation. Gal. 4:4 says: **“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son .**

There is so much more I could say (and will say in the coming days) about divine revelation in both the OT and the NT. But for today, I want to end with an application something I read from A.W. Pink in his commentary. He likens OT revelation with light. God’s first words in creation were: “Let there be light.” The OT is full of light as God reveals himself “at many times” and “in many ways” as a light. But, in NT God reveals himself as love. It is not that God does not love in

the OT. Nor does it mean that Jesus is not the light. For He calls himself the light of the world. But, in the person and work of the Son, God makes himself known most clearly as love. **“For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life”** (John 3:16). Only in Christ is the love of God FULLY revealed! Christ alone reveals the Father's full heart of love to a sinful world! It was not that Christ delivered God's message; He Himself was and is God's message! All that God has to say to us is in His Son: all his thoughts, his instructions, his promises, his gifts, are found in Jesus. In all his life, we see the love of God. As He speaks God speaks. As He dies God speaks, “This is love.” As He rises from the dead, God speaks this power. As He now sits at the right hand of God, He says I am making intercession for you; And, you are seated with me now!