

**Twelve Lessons**

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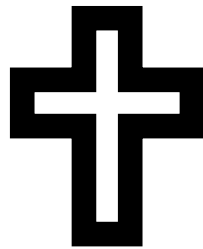
# **Hebrews**

**(Volume I – Chapters 1-8)**

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*by*

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## **CHRIST: A BETTER MESSENGER – LESSON 1**

### **Hebrews 1:1-3**

**Introduction:** The whole purpose of the Epistles to the Hebrews is to reveal the superiority of Christ in relation to all other revelations of God’s Word. Christ is “better”! In the first chapter, Paul establishes the Preeminence of Christ above all other forms of revelation. Our focus in this lesson will be on verses 1 through 3, keeping in mind the fact that Paul is showing the Jewish people how Christ is “better” than the prophets. These first verses are a comparison of the revelation of truth in the Old and New Testament.

### **Lesson Goals:**

1. Examine the manner in which God has revealed His divine will to mankind.
2. Magnify the Lord Jesus Christ by disclosing the characteristics which make Him superior to all others.

### **Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:**

1. Inspiration – The infusion of ideas into the mind by the Holy Spirit; the conveying into the minds of men, ideas, notices or monitions by extraordinary or supernatural influence; or the communication of the divine will to the understanding by suggestions or impressions on the mind, which leave no room to doubt the reality of their supernatural origin.
2. Progressive Mention Principle – “that principle by which God makes the revelation of any given truth increasingly clear as the Word proceeds to its consummation.”
3. Effulgence – A flood of light; great luster or brightness; splendor; as the effulgence of divine glory. It is a word of superlative signification, and applied, with peculiar propriety, to the sun and to the Supreme Being.

## **I. THE PRINCIPLES OF GOD’S REVELATION** – vs. 1 – “*God... spake*”

### **A. God’s Revelation Is Inspired** – “*God*”

1. Revelation is a Gift from God
  - a. Make no mistake in this area. The only source of illumination in this world of darkness is a loving and giving God. Without the gift of God’s inspiration man would still be groping at the wall of spiritual blindness. How did we get the revelation of the Word? It was a gift!
  - b. How can we mention inspiration without quoting II Tim. 3:16 – “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God...*” The Spirit of God breathed into a select group of humanity the gift of God’s revelation.
2. Revelation is by the Grace of God
  - a. In no way was a Holy and Righteous God obligated to reveal Himself to rebellious, sinful humanity. His sovereign choice to establish relations with man was totally an unmerited favor.
  - b. In the darkness of Satan’s night, God spake, and there was light!
  - c. Andrew Murray – “Speaking is the vehicle of fellowship.” The problem facing humanity was the fact that God spoke a language that we could not understand. It was a foreign language. A language of another world. It was heavenly.
  - d. Illustrate – Why do men wish to speak in languages other than their native tongue? The answer: To understand and learn more about persons from foreign lands. Some hire a tutor to explain words they cannot understand. God knew this and when He had spoken His “foreign” language in the prophets and His Son, He provided the greatest tutor the world has ever seen, the Holy Ghost. John 14:26 – “*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*” Comforter = “paraklete” – “Someone called alongside to help”. Help with what? The celestial language!

### **B. God’s Revelation Is Incremental** – “*at sundry times and in divers manners*”

1. Sundry Times = “polumeros (pol-oo-mer'-oce)” – It means “in many portions, by many portions, by many times and in many ways.” In divers manners = “polutropos (pol-oot-rop'-oce)” – It is an adverb from the same compound as “polumeros” and is defined as “many ways, i.e. variously as to method or form”
2. Paul is including the thousands of illustrations, types, metaphors, similes, parables, symbols, and historical stories of the Old Testament that pointed to the full revelation of God which is Christ Jesus.
3. God has chosen to reveal Himself progressively in the Old Testament. In this verse of the Hebrews, the following cliché applies. “The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed.” The Old Testament prophets were given truth in fragments.
4. There is a principle in Hermeneutics called the Progressive Mention Principle. J. Edwin Hartill defines it

as “that principle by which God makes the revelation of any given truth increasingly clear as the Word proceeds to its consummation.” This principle is evident throughout the Word of God.

5. Examples of this progression from Dr. Oliver B. Green.
  - a. Gen. 3:15 – Christ would bruise the head of Satan and provide salvation to all who believe.
  - b. Gen. 12:3 – God reveals to Abraham that Christ will be the head of the nation of Abraham’s seed.
  - c. Gen. 49:10 – God reveals to Jacob which tribe the Messiah will come from - Judah.
  - d. Ps. 132:11 – David was shown that Christ would come through his lineage.
  - e. Micah 5:2 – Christ would be born in Bethlehem.
  - f. Mal. 3:1 – Christ would have forerunner before him to prepare the way.
6. So we see, God spoke in different times and also in different methods. He used visions, dreams, visible structures, and the events of men’s lives, with each adding more revealed truth concerning Christ.

### **C. God’s Revelation Is Introductory** – “*by the prophets*”

1. Progressive Mention leads to Full mention. In the same way that John the Baptist prepared the way for the Lord Jesus Christ, The prophets prepared the way for the First Advent of Christ. John stated “*I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.*” John 1:23. John recognized that he was only one voice among many!
2. God spake by the prophets that He might speak by His son. Both are vitally connected. The purpose of every type, shadow, and prophecy in the OT was for the preparation of the coming Christ.
3. The purpose of the OT prophets was to summon the hearer and Christ was revealed to satisfy the hearer!

### **D. God’s Revelation Is Infinite** – “*Hath... spoken unto us by his son*”

1. Here we have the Full Mention. The Revelation of Christ who is “*the fullness of the Godhead bodily*” according to Colossians 2:9.
2. There are only 2 events in the New Testament where God spake. (Excluding the prophecies of Revelation)
  - a. Baptism of Jesus – Matt. 17:5 – “*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him*”
  - b. Transfiguration – “*This is my beloved Son: hear him*”The only command of God the Father found in the New Testament is “HEAR HIM”! This is because Christ is the perfect revelation of God.
3. It is significant that God spake the command “hear him” at Jesus’ Baptism and Transfiguration. These two events represent the areas in which infinite revelation of God is realized.
  - a. The Baptism – The revelation of God is infinite concerning the Redemption of Christ.
  - b. The Transfiguration – The revelation of God is infinite concerning the Reign of Christ.
4. Ephesians 3:10-11 – “*...might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:*” The word manifold is “*polupoikilos* (pol-oo-poy'-kil-os)” and means the “*much variegated, i.e. multifarious.*” It simply means “*the many-colored*” wisdom of God. The wisdom of God is like adding one drop of tinting to 20,000 colors. One drop makes 40,000 and the colors double with every drop of tint. That is the revelation of Christ. When you think you know everything, God drops one drop of tinting and there is that much more to enjoy!
5. Though Christ also holds the office of a prophet He is not mentioned as such in this passage. Paul is emphasizing the contrast between Christ and the Prophets. The reason Christ is the fullness of the Godhead bodily is because He and the Father are one. Christ is not only an expression of holiness, His essence is holiness. He Is God!

## **II. THE PERFECTION OF GOD’S REVELATION** – vs. 2-3 – “*spoken... by his son*”

### **A. The Elect of God’s Possessions** – “*appointed heir of all things*”

1. The word “appointed” reveals the will of God in “placing” Christ to an exalted position. The use of this word is almost surprising since we know that Christ is in fact the heir to all God has. Why would God need to “appoint” Him to a position He already had. The use of the word denotes the importance God places on the declaration of His Son as being heir. The Word of God records the declaration.
2. The second important word we find in this verse is “heir”. It may be defined as “one who shares in possession; an inheritor.” Jesus Christ is the focal point of God’s plans and purposes in the world. The purpose of God for creation is that His Son might have an inheritance. This inheritance is for the magnification of Jesus Christ, as He will be praised and blessed by creation throughout eternity.

### **B. The Engineer of God’s Purpose** – “*he made the worlds*”

1. Christ as the “Elect of God’s Possessions” manifests the end of all God has planned in creation, but in the same verse we find that Christ is also the beginning.

2. The verb “made” is “poieo” and means Christ “constructed, formed, and produce” all that is in the created world.
3. The Apostle Paul wrote that “all things were created by him, and for him,” Colossians 1:16. This means Christ was the instrument God used to create the worlds, and also the worlds now operate by the authority of Christ. Christ created the world, and He also controls the world.
4. The term world is a key word in showing the magnitude of Christ’s power. The word is “aion” and basically means “an age.” The significance of the word is that it carries the idea of perpetuity. This means that everything in the world that carries over into eternity will also be controlled by Christ. He is the “appointed heir” forever.

**C. The Effulgence of God’s Presence** – *“the brightness of his glory”*

1. Jesus is better than the prophets because he is the “brightness” of God’s Glory. The word “brightness” is “apaugasma” and may be defined as “effulgence; shining forth; out-raying.”
2. The glory spoken of here is the Shekinah glory of God seen throughout the Old Testament. Here we see the substance of the shadow given to Israel. The shining forth represents the holiness of God and the many attributes that surround this essence of God. Jesus Christ is the Light of the World.

**D. The Expression of God’s Person** – *“the express image of his person”*

1. Here we are given a look at the “character” of God. Jesus was not merely a “likeness” of God, but he was the “express image” of God’s “person.” The phrase “expressed image” means that Christ was “an exact representation of God and all that God is.” Jesus Himself made the declaration that He was God Himself.
2. Some may question the divinity of Christ, but this verse clearly teaches otherwise. Jesus is the “substance” of God. I Tim. 3:16 states, *“God was manifest in the flesh...”*
3. The use “express image” reveals the “distinguishing” mark of Christ as a man. The distinguishing mark is that He was both God and man.

**E. The Embodiment of God’s Power** – *“upholding all things by the word of his power”*

1. In this statement, we are given great comfort concerning our future. Jesus “upholds all things.” This verb “upholding” is “phero” and means all things are resting upon the shoulders of Christ as He “bears” them.
2. Christ bears all things by the “word of his power.” The word power here is “dunamis (doo'-nam-is)”. It refers to “force; inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature”. It includes all the power of heaven.
3. The fact that Christ upholds all things tells us that He not only was at the beginning of creation and will be at the end, but He is also in the middle.

**F. The Executer of God’s Plan** – *“he had by himself purged our sins”*

1. Christ personally executed the plan of God. He by Himself has “purged our sins.” Christ is superior because He did by Himself what no other could.
2. The word “purged” simply means Christ “cleansed, washed off, expiated” our sins. The Levitical priesthood had attempted to take away sins but failed because of the weakness of the priests. Christ offered Himself once and totally washed us from sin and the guilt associated with it.

**G. The Exception of God’s Priesthood** – *“sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”*

1. Christ is the only priest of God that rested after He made His sacrifice. This act symbolized two very important things.
  - a. The work of Christ was finished. There is nothing to be added to salvation.
  - b. The words “sat down” mean that Christ “was appointed a seat.” Christ sat down because God the Father was pleased with the sacrifice He had made.
2. Christ has been seated at the right hand of God. The position is one of authority and majesty. Christ is the only High Priest that could attain such lofty heights. He was ordained by God. Acts 4:12 – *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*