

Jesus is the Better Revelation - Hebrews 1:1-4
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

I have been teaching Old and New Testament History classes for Missouri Baptist University for over a decade. After class introductions and sharing information on the syllabus, the first passage of Scripture I have the students read is our passage for this week. I realize that the students in these classes represent quite a bit of diversity in religious background and heritage. So I don't start the class assuming that they have read the Bible (most really haven't), or that they have attended church or believe in Jesus. So I have to start with a basic question. If there is a God, how would we know anything about Him. This is a significant question for us. Philosophically it is called the question of epistemology. How can and do we know anything about God, ourselves, and reality. The first step is to understand that if there is a God, all philosophical questions are tied to His existence, character, and purpose. Yet, how do we know?

There are actually only two real answer. The first option is that we know through speculation. In other words, our approach to understanding God, ourselves, and reality comes through our own experiences and reason. All of us have a story, and that story includes events that have shaped our understanding of the world. Some have grown up in religious systems and attended church, synagogues, mosques or other gatherings. Others have not, or did so sporadically. Many have had deep and meaningful religious encounters believing they have encountered God. Other experiences have shaped us, including trauma and loss. These and myriads of other factors have shaped each individual, so we come to the question of knowledge differently. Add to this the reality that if there is a God, He is surrounded by so much mystery because He is outside of our experience. So we are left guessing if speculation is all that we have. In this case, no religious experience is better or more true than others, we are all left to figure things out for ourselves, and no approach is better than the next. The goal to life in this system is to take the journey, to think deeply and examine all, and process our experiences. The goal is to take this journey.

The other option is the option of revelation, the idea that God, while being beyond us, has chosen to condescend Himself, to pull back the veil between heaven and our reality, and make Himself know. In other words, what happens to speculation if God chose to actually speak to us and act in this world? The way to learn anything about any person we would have to hear and understand their words, and then watch their actions. This is true when becoming friends or lovers, or when hiring a new employee. A person speaks (or fills out a resume) which reveals their thoughts in words. Beyond that, we then have to watch their actions, how they live and behave. We have to see and evaluate their words and acts to see if there is consistency. To know a person deeply is to enter in to their words and activity in deep ways. So what if the God of the universe chose to make Himself known to us by speaking to us, revealing Himself, His character and will. And what if this God has made Himself known through acts in the world that fully revealed His character and demonstrated that His speech and actions were consistent and true. What if God revealed Himself? If He did, our purpose in life changes from just taking the journey into a pursuit of knowing God. And if God has spoken then any true knowledge of self or reality is completely tied to His speech.

Now, with that in mind, read our text for this week. The author (or preacher, since Hebrews is probably a sermon) begins by telling us that God has spoken, and even claims that His self-revelation has come in diverse ways. Yet, there are two clear ways that God has made Himself known. The first is "to our fathers by the prophets (v. 1). The prophets were God's spokesmen, the most common phrase on their lips and pens being, "Thus saith the Lord." By the 1st Century (time for the first hearers), the prophets referred not only to the people but also to the record of their words. In other words, "The prophets" was a common

way to refer to the 39 books we call the Old Testament. These books contain the words of God and the record of God's acts within the context of His relationship with a people in history. God's speech and acts found in a collection of works. The author of Hebrews is telling us that God wrote a book by speaking through these people, and that the Bible itself is divine speech. Second, we are told that God has spoken through the sending of Jesus into the world. This man who lived in history, the author proclaims, is the final and full revelation of the One True and Living God. He is the creator, sustainer, and full reflection of God's glory.

We are not left guessing, left to our own fallen reason to figure things out. God has spoken. We have the record of His speech in the Bible. But we also know that every word in the Bible points us to Jesus where God is fully made known and inviting us into relationship. We have a "revealed epistemology" as Christians. We know because God has spoken.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Hosea 5	Hosea 6	Hosea 7	Hosea 8	Hosea 9	Hosea 10	Hosea 11

Reading from this past week: Hebrews 1:1-4

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Hebrews 1:5-14

Family Worship

Song - *Jesus Messiah*

<https://youtu.be/tdxSC1tHJn0?feature=shared>

Gospel Project

Unit: God Rules over Creation

Story: The Great Flood

Big Picture Question: Who is God?

Answer: God is our Creator and the King of everything.

Scripture: Genesis 6-9

New City Catechism

Question 39: With what attitude should we pray?

Answer: With love, perseverance, and gratefulness.

Verse: Philippians 4:6

Scripture

Hebrews 1:1-4

- How does our culture believe that we come to know anything about God, ourselves, and reality? For Christians, how does the reality that God has spoken change this?
- How can and does God speak to people? Should we be looking for God to speak to us in ways other than reading the Bible?
- Why must we realize that the clearest form of speech for God is through the Bible and in the person and work of Jesus? How does this help us interpret any other ways God might speak to us?
- What are the seven descriptors of Jesus in verses 2-4. What does each one tell us about the human who lived in the 1st Century?

Prayer

*Pray for our service to the city at the Eureka Days Parade and other Eureka Days events this weekend.

*Pray that we would learn to hear the voice of God in the Scriptures and in the person and work of Jesus.