

Hebrews 1B 2016

God has blessed us with Five Senses through which we are able to experience and to enjoy the world around us. (Touch, Taste, Smell, Sight, Sound)

- Because God gave us eyes, we are able to see the beauty of His creation and appreciate our environment through the power of observation.
- We are able to hear the sounds of nature, participate in worship together and hear the Good News as it is proclaimed from God's Word.
- We are able to touch God's material creation with our hands and appreciate the warmth of the sun in the foretaste of spring that we experienced yesterday.
- (One of my all-time favorites) We are able to taste the rich bounty that God has provided for our enjoyment.

Taking this thought a bit deeper: When you consider these 5 senses in light of man's fall in the Garden:

God has ordained that human beings should live in a material realm where we are restricted by these five senses and therefore incapable of reaching beyond this material creation.

- Outside of this cosmos, beyond this material creation there lies a supernatural realm and somewhere deep inside the heart of man there is an acknowledgment of its existence.
- BUT because of his sinful condition man's acknowledgment of the supernatural realm leads him to express strange, even bazaar imaginations.
- We imagine a man of steel who is able to leap tall buildings in a single bound.
- The film industry brings out the most bazaar realms of man's imagination. (Alien Verses Predator" The 6th Sense – "*I see dead people*")
- We know there is something out there but our minds can't comprehend it.

The religions of men such as Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism are all man's attempts to chisel a hole in his natural box and peer into the realm of the divine.

- All false religions are built around the feeble efforts of fallen man to touch the supernatural and to relink with their distorted version of Deity.
- While sinful man possesses a vivid imagination he is incapable of comprehending spiritual truth. Listen to Paul's words as he writes to the Believers at Corinth.

1Corinthians 2:14 **The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.**

- Paul says that the Natural Man (fleshly) is UNABLE (incapable - He does not have the ability) to understand the things of the Spirit. We cannot in ourselves, by these Five senses, transcend our natural existence.

In light of man’s inability to comprehend spiritual truth, if he is to know God at all, God MUST condescend to communicate with man. Apart from divine revelation, apart from God’s gracious intervention Man could never come to know the one true and living God. That brings us back to the Book of Hebrews:

From the very first verse of the book the Author helps us to understand how God has chosen to make himself known:

Hebrews 1:1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

God is a speaking God, he is not the disinterested, uninvolved god of the deists who set the world into motion like a top and then stepped away from it, allowing things to simply run their own course.

- No, from the very beginning God took the initiative to communicate with man.
- From the time that He walked with Adam in the cool of the day to the time when he stood with his disciples on the Mount of Olives, God is a speaking God.

Remember last week I told you that the book of Hebrews is a book of comparisons through which God clearly shows the superior nature of the New Covenant and the surpassing greatness of the revelation of Christ, his person and work.

- Here in the very first verse the Author begins his comparison.

I have chosen to highlight three comparisons this morning, they will serve as our outline:

- Two Eras – “Long ago - The Past” compared to “These Last Days”
- Two Audiences – A limited audience, to the Father’s (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) a Greater audience the whole church
- Two Messengers – “The Prophets – His Son” The second messenger is greater than the first

Long Ago - (The Past)	IN these last days
God spoke to the Fathers	He has spoken to us
By the prophets	By His Son
At different times and in different ways	

Two Eras: God’s Word is broken down into two parts, two epochs, two unique eras of communication. (Long ago, in the past / in these last days)

1. God spoke in the past

In describing God's communication in the Past the author says, "at many times and in many ways." This is a Greek play on words: (Plumeros / Polutropos)

- Literally – in many portions and many different manners.
- When you stop to think about it you see that God communicated to the Fathers in the Old Testament in a variety of ways: through an audible voice, through angelic visitation, visions, dreams, symbols, circumstances and even handwriting on the wall.
- And the manner of God's speech includes simple factual communication, historic narrative, poetry, prophecy, rebuke and encouragement.
 - So you see, in the past, there were many ways.
 - And there were the "Many Portions?"

The revelation of God in the Old Testament covers a period of about 4,000 years.

- There were seasons when there were many communications and seasons of virtual silence where the people of God were called upon to remember the enscripturated (written) Word that was previously given.

What we have over that extended period of time is the progressive revelation of God.

- Genesis provides some truth, Exodus builds on Genesis and Leviticus builds on Exodus and so on.
- The revelation of God did not originate in men it was given to them by the Holy Spirit. The amazing thing is this:
- Men were used, their minds and their personalities were used of God but the Holy Spirit inspired these men so that every Word, every letter of every word was exactly what God wanted to communicate.

2 Peter 1: 20 **knowing this first of all that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.** 21 **For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

- The origin and meaning of the Scripture comes from God and not man.
- As a matter of fact Peter tells us that these early prophets didn't fully understand the things that they were writing.

1 Peter 1: 10 **Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,** 11 **inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.**

Long ago, in a variety of ways God communicated his desire to redeem man from the curse of sin through the seed of a woman, the offspring of Abraham, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Son of David who would be born of a virgin in the town of Bethlehem.

- 4000 years of speaking to the Fathers prepared the people of God for God's final Word.

Moving ahead we see that God's revelation in the past, is held in comparison to his revelation "in these Last Days."

- The periodic, progressive and partial revelation of God belonged to a previous era, BUT a new day has dawned a new covenant has arrived that is far superior to the Old Covenant.
- God's communication in the past involved types and shadows, prophetic images of what was yet to come but in these last days God has spoken clearly, his person and his plan of redemption have been made perfectly clear through Jesus Christ.

You might say that the old communication was like watching the first black and white television broadcast with a set of rabbit ears.

- The images were shadowy sometimes snowy and hard to make out.
- BUT God's communication in these last days has come in super HDTV through the best fiber optic network you can find.

The advent of Jesus Christ has ushered in what we know as the Last Days.

- This is a time of clarity for God's people the old shadows have given way to a bright new day.
- The sporadic, incomplete revelation of God that came through a few select individuals has now exploded to include all who believe.

Acts 2:17 "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

- In light of the revelation that has come through the Gospel and the gift of the Holy Spirit ALL who believe have been lifted above the material box.
- By the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ men and women have been given a new heart, they have received a new Spirit.
- God has opened their blind eyes to see the wonders of his person clearly displayed in Jesus Christ.
- Power – commanding the elements of nature, Mercy for the sick and afflicted, Kindness – woman at the well, Forgiveness – woman caught in adultery.
- By the appearing of Jesus Christ we know we are living in the last days.

2. Two Audiences Addressed by Two Messengers

Heb. 1:1, Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

- Long ago, at many times God spoke to our Fathers: (first audience – Fathers)
- He came to Adam in the garden saying "Where are You?"
- He warned Cain of the sin that was crouching at his door desiring to overtake him.

- He warned Noah of his plans to destroy all of mankind in a flood.
- He called Abram:

Genesis 12:1 **Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.**

- God wrestled with Jacob. He gave dreams to Joseph. He spoke clearly to Moses

Exodus 33:11 **Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.**

- In the book of Leviticus the words **"God spoke to Moses"** are recorded more than 35 times.
- It is easy to see the many times and various methods that God employed to speak to man.
- As the revelation of God progressed his most frequently employed method of communication was through the mouth of the Prophets. (Moses – Malachi)

EXAMPLE: After God spoke to Moses, Moses turned around and communicated the Words of God to a greater audience.

Exodus 9:1 **Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me.**

- Here we see that God employed Moses as a prophet, to make his will known.
- A Prophet is someone who hears the Word of God and communicates His Word to others.
 - We have the mistaken understanding that prophecy is always futuristic, the word simply means to **"Speak Forth."**
 - Moses heard the Word of God and He spoke forth what God said.

IN the book of Deuteronomy as Moses is preparing to pass off of the scene he points the people to a greater day when God would raise up another prophet.

Deut 18:15 **"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers — it is to him you shall listen —**

- Jesus is that prophet, He is God's Final Word. That brings us to Hebrews 1:2.

"In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,"

God's full and perfect revelation awaited the coming of his Son.

Whereas in the past God spoke in many different ways through many different people, in these last days He has spoken in one way through one person. His Son Jesus Christ.

- Jesus Christ is the full and final revelation of God given to man. He is the APEX, the PEAK, the SUMMIT, the CLIMAX of all divine revelation.

John 1:18 **No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, (Jesus Christ) he has made him known.**

- Everything that God has to say to man in this present time, in these last days he has spoken through His Son.

The Gospel writers recorded the words and the miraculous works of the Lord Jesus for us.

The Apostles BY the H.S. clarified and applied the teachings of Christ when they penned the Epistles.

The book of Revelation discloses the full glory of Christ and foretells God's final act in the drama of redemption. **PLEASE DON'T MISS THIS POINT!**

- In light of the fact that Jesus Christ is God's Final Word in these last days, we should not seek additional revelation outside of Christ. *The cults do that*
- Contrary to what the Mormons say when they knock on your door, the Book of Mormon IS NOT the Word of God given to the Later Day Saints.
- The revelation of God was completed in the person of Jesus Christ.

I believe that is why the cannon of Scripture closes with a stern warning:

Revelation 22:18 **I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.**

Remember, when we began this morning I said:

God has ordained that fallen human beings should live in a material realm, restricted by their five senses. Remember I said that the natural man is incapable of reaching beyond this material creation.

- The Good News this morning is this: All of that changes with Jesus!
- When God regenerates a man, when a person is Born of God the indwelling Holy Spirit enables that man to break out of the box and see the glorious Kingdom of God.
- Like Lazarus, WE were dead in transgressions and sin, but through the New Birth God has resurrected us to new life in Christ.

Ephesians 2:4 **But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:**

- Positionally that same man who was bound to the earth, limited by his five senses has become a new creation. NOW he is lifted out of the box and is seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.
- His ears have been opened to understand the truth of God's Word. He has become the sweet aroma of Christ to God among those who are saved.

- The eyes of his heart have been opened to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
- That man, now by the H.S. has received God's final revelation which is Jesus Christ and the writer of Hebrews describes this glorious revelation for us.

Hebrews 1:3 **He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,**

- All of the glory of God's majestic perfections, his mercy, patience, goodness, justice and truth are fully manifested for us in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus is not a reflection of God's glory, like the moon is a reflection of the sun. Jesus, himself possesses and exhibits all of the same glories with the Father.
- Hebrews tells us he is the "**Exact Imprint**" of God's nature. Like the die that casts the coin Jesus displays all of the same attributes as the Father.
 - Two persons sharing one essence.

John 14: 8 **Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."**

9 **Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"**

- Jesus is the creator and sustainer of the whole material creation.
- Even today He is the one who actively preserves the universe, keeping it from destruction until that final day when by his word he removes everything except his unshakable kingdom.

Colossians 1: 15 **He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.**

16 **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. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

- Jesus Christ, God incarnate the same one who holds all things together has restored sinful men by making purification for sins through his own blood.

After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

- Rising from the dead, Ascended to the right hand of the Father, Jesus is now seated, His work is completed and He has been glorified.
- He is the object of worship, in heaven and on the earth.
- IS he the object of your worship?

OR, ARE you still bound by your sins, separated from God, living in the earthly restrictions of those five senses?

- Is your life consumed with the cares of this world?
- Is your life driven by earthly pleasures that will fade away or eternal rewards that will never end?

- Has God sovereignly and wonderfully opened your eyes to see His Kingdom?
- Has He uncovered the filth of your sin and graciously revealed the power of Christ to cleanse you?
- Do the things of this earth grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace?

YOU can know HIM because He makes himself known. You can walk with him, worship him and receive eternal life.

Repent of your sin and Believe on the Lord Jesus.