

Hebrews: The Divine Appointment (Hebrews 1:1–4)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (9/18/16)

Introduction

“That which distinguishes the Hebrews’ Epistle from all other books is that it has for its subject the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. Its theme is the super-abounding excellency of the new covenant. The method followed by the Holy Spirit in developing His theme is to take Him who is the centre and circumference, the life and light of Christianity, even Christ, and hold before Him one object after another. As he does so, elevated, important, venerated, as some of those objects are, yet, in the presence of the ‘Son’ their glories fade into utter insignificance.” —A. W. Pink

1. The holding up of Christ and comparing Him to these various objects (prophets, angels, Moses, etc.) is illustrated in Luke 9:28–36.

Peter, on seeing the glorified Jesus with Moses and Elijah (the law and the prophets), wanted to honor all three equally. Suddenly, a bright cloud overshadowed them and the Voice declared: “*This is my Beloved Son, hear Him*” (v. 35). When the cloud lifted, they saw Jesus only.

2. The aim of Hebrews is to direct us to see Jesus only. As each object is compared to Jesus, as important as each object was in itself, it suddenly and drastically pales in the light of Christ’s glory.
3. The first 3 verses develop two very important themes:
 - a. The glory of the Son in His incarnation
 - b. The glory of the Son in His work
4. The first 2 verses begin the comparison with the OT prophets.
 - a. These prophets were regarded in the highest esteem, for they penned the Scriptures of the Old Covenant.
 - b. The greater glory of Jesus builds on their grand revelation, but in fulfilling the types and shadows contained there and in establishing a New Covenant, Jesus outshines these revered men as the noonday sun surpasses the flickering candle.
5. This comparison is further heightened by the degree of what is said of the Son and Heir: the Heir of all is nothing less than the Creator of all.

I. The Heir of All Things

1. Verse 2 expounds the reasons for His exceeding glory.
 - a. The prophets were mere instruments of God’s speaking and revealing His Person and will. Jesus is much more than an instrument of revelation. Another and better prophet, Jesus is God incarnate.
 - b. As we showed in the last message, the emphasis here is not His divinity but His humanity.
 - c. It is as a *man* that Jesus excels—in His character, in His appointment, and in His pursuit of God’s will.

2. His position, being an heir, stresses His dignity and dominion.
 - a. He is the Father's *successor* in the way God intended for Adam (John 5:19); yet, in becoming man, the Son did not diminish the sovereignty of either the Father or the Son. But, as shown by Gal. 4:1, the son as a child does not differ from the servant even though he is technically owner of all things. It is not until he fulfills the appointment that he assumes his role as son.
 - b. So, in His obedience (childhood, as it were), He fulfilled the Father's purpose and was rewarded with honor and exaltation (Phil. 2:5–11).
3. The appointment served a mediatorial function between the Father and His covenant people.
 - a. This mediatorial function serves God's eternal purpose (Isa. 14:27; 46:10). It is not a reaction.
 - b. This eternal purpose gives to Christ absolute dignity in His humiliation (v. 5, comp. 5:5).
 - c. There are two goals pursued in the mediatorial sense: suffering and glory. While these goals seem contradictory, both serve the greater benefit of those for whom Christ serves as Mediator.
 - d. The end result of the appointment is Christ's securing of "all things" related to His eternal purpose that Jesus should be Lord of all (Psa. 2:7, 8).

II. The Creator of All Things

1. In this declaration we see revealed the incredible design of God's plan.
 - a. John's Gospel opens with a similar explanation of purpose of the enfleshed Word, which supports our understanding of Hebrews 1:2.
 - b. Christ, whose mission is to secure all that is His by inheritance, lays first claim to it as Creator.
 - c. The Creator became a creature in order to redeem and restore His stolen universe.
2. This truth advances the importance of His final revelation in these last days because it shows that the glory of the exaltation comes in the path of humiliation.
 - a. Here is a great lesson for the usurper. His hijacked exaltation came through deception to fulfill his prideful ambition (Isa. 14:13–15). The Son's accomplishment comes by self-emptying and apparent defeat.
 - b. His act of humiliation is both unexpected and brilliant.

Who would have conceived a plan where the way up is down, where winning is realized by losing?

The proud and arrogant are overthrown, not by deceit or trickery, but by the surprise of the unexpected.

Violence and cruelty are destroyed by love and selfless service.
3. The great lesson for us to learn through the Spirit is that true greatness is achieved only as we yield to the Master and learn from His lead. By this way we will share in His victory.