

Stay Strong

Hebrews 1:1-4

Dr. Paul Cannings, D. Phil

A. The Word – Firmly Established (vs. 1-3b):

1. God spoke – God is, by His very nature, is comprehensively God all by Himself. Just like Genesis begins, so does the writer of Hebrews begin: God, with no explanation of who He is. There is no way to describe all that God is; just what God does comprehensively.
 - a) He does not prove that God speaks; he asserts it. Significantly, the subject of the first verb is "God," for God is constantly before the author; he uses the word sixty-eight times, averaging about once every seventy-three words throughout his epistle.
2. God spoke – The Old Testament was derived from verbal communication God made with the patriarchs and the prophets. They did not come up with it; it came from their relationship with God. He did not speak to anyone else, so we cannot add to His Word or take anything from it (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:5-6; 2 Peter 1:19-20).
 - a) The persuasion that God's work is living and active in human experience (4:12) undergirds the appeal to the authority of the Scriptures throughout Hebrews and prepares the hearers for the solemn exhortation not to refuse the God who is speaking (12:25) at the conclusion of the sermon.
3. The father in the prophets – God willfully and carefully chose the messengers He used to record what He said to His people and now to us. He did not speak to just any. God spoke to Moses in the 'tent of meeting' and made sure everyone knew by having a cloud descend over it (Ex. 33:9-10). *"The LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend."* (Exodus 33:11; God made sure all the people saw it. Also, his appearance clearly displayed that God spoke with him; Ex. 34:29-30). When God wanted to reveal to the disciples who the Christ is, He chose Peter (Matthew 16:17-19). When Christ wanted to write half the New Testament, He spoke to Paul directly.
4. At many times and in various ways – God's revelation was progressive, coming from different geographic locations, through different methods, and different individuals over thousands of years. Once God completed all He had to say, there was silence for 400 years (God did not speak after Malachi until John the Baptist).
 - a) Formerly, of old time - The word describes something completed in the past. Here the thought is of the ancient teachings now long since sealed - He is not referring

here to what God does continually but to what He did in days of old, in the time of "our forefathers."

- b) The earlier revelation is not irrelevant to the later one but is continuous with it. The same God has spoken in both. The old prepares the way for the new, a truth the author brings out again and again in this epistle as he backs up his arguments with quotations from Scripture. The discontinuity becomes clearer when we reach the reference to the Son. Notably, the Greek has no article or possessive; nothing corresponds to the NIV's "his."
5. In these last days has spoken to us in His Son – God spoke once and for all (no new messages other than what comes through His Son), through His Son to us. This guarantees the message's authenticity: there is technically one messenger but two sources, and anyone who communicates, like the messengers in the Old Testament, will only be appointed by Christ.
- a) The expression "in Him" enlarges and makes complete the expression "through Him." "Through Him" speaks of the Son as the mediate instrument. "In Him" indicates that "all the laws and purposes which guide the creation and government of the universe reside in Him, the Eternal Word, as their meeting-point" (Lightfoot).¹
6. In these last days has spoken to us in His Son – Christ's death and resurrection placed us in the last days. The Old Testament pointed to Christ; in His teachings, He reflects on the Old Testament so that, as in Genesis, God remains the Creator and the Director of everything, even though He chose His Son to carry it out (Col. 1:15-20). So, from one nation that God chose (Deut. 9:4-5), and another that Christ died to provide (1 Peter 2:9-10), came His new nation, which is in the final preparations for a new heaven and the new earth. God spoke to the old nation (Israel), and Christ now speaks to the new nation, His Church, but the message has one source, God.
7. In these last days has spoken to us in His Son – 'In His Son' emphasizes that there is no message that we need to pay attention to that is not from His Son. "*For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*" (Heb 2:1-2; NASB) It is our salvation (Hebrews 2:3). This is why it is "*impossible for God to lie.*" (Hebrews 6:18).
8. Appointed heir – God constituted, and it is therefore unchangeable (Hebrews 6:17), that Christ is the person who upon Whom all that God has made and establish now owns everything (Hebrews 2:8). Paul states it is "*for Him and by Him*" (Col. 1:15-18). As a result, all things are below His feet, through the church, since we are in the last days (Eph. 1:20-22). This includes, but is not limited to, His enemies (1 Cor. 15:25-27).
9. Whom also made the world – Because Christ has the very nature that God, He can create all that God conceived to do out of nothing (this includes, but is not limited to time, space, energy, and matter). This is why God can use Christ to execute His creative

¹ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 10, p. 35). Eerdmans.

plan and order. God did not need to help Him or explain anything to Him because, once God thought it, Christ knew it and had the same ability as God to get it done. This is why John uses the word Logos when writing about the authoritative nature of the Word as it relates to Christ. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”* (John 1:1-4; NASB)

10. Whom also made the world – Even though the world is evil (Gal. 1:4), led by the evil one (1 John 5:19), and those who live in it are blind to Satan’s plans and schemes (2 Cor. 4:4), no one can rule over Christ, restructure anything Christ designed, or constitute a new order that God does not ordain.
11. Whom also made the world – The believers in this book were going through a lot (10:32-39) and were tempted to give up their faith or follow Christ in a lukewarm manner (Hebrews 5:11-15), even turn away from Christ (Hebrews 6:1-7). The writer begins by reassuring them that they have a sure Word they must not drift away from (Hebrews 2:1-4; it is their deliverance and their power to overcome anything; Hebrews 4:12); there is no lie in it (Hebrews 6:18); God is unchangeable (Hebrews 6:17; no circumstances can prevent Him from accomplishing His goals); therefore, He only rewards faith as demonstrated by all those who trusted in God, who He was the first to speak in ‘many portions and many ways.’
12. He is the radiance of His glory – The Son of God manifested the same nature as God, as depicted in all the supernatural miracles that He did when He spoke to the wind, got taxes out of a fish’s mouth, walked on water, forgave the paralytic of his sins, raised Lazarus from the grave after four days, or created parts that were missing in a man who was born blind. These supernatural acts fully radiate God’s excellent nature without ever sinning.
 - a) He is not merely the outshining of God’s glory, but the outshining of that glory which in itself becomes a center from which the glory of God out-rays itself.²
13. Exact Representation - The nature of God and Christ is the same. This word represents a stamp or seal, whose entire purpose is to represent one by the other. This is why, whatever God did, Christ manifested the same supernatural power without consulting God; example: God opened the Red Sea, Christ walked on water, God gave birth to a nation, Christ died to provide a new nation, Christ can call down Elijah and Moses (Matt. 17:1-8), and He can be in heaven and on earth at the same time (Luke 22:31-32). There is no difference in His creative power, sinlessness, holiness, omnipresence or omnipotence. Christ and God are one (John 10:30); this is why *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”* (John 1:1)

B. Protected (vs. 3c-4):

² Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 10, p. 42). Eerdmans.

1. Upholds all things by His Word – Every individual scripture in the Bible directs and executes God’s will by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is “*powerful and shaper than a double-edge sword.*” (Hebrews 4:12) Each verse, by itself, sustains all that the Lord states He will do and ‘causing everything to continue to be as it is by His powerful word.’ No matter how chaotic life may seem (as it was for the people he is writing to; Hebrews 10:32-29) or how chaotic the world may seem, each verse continually sustains, projects, and empowers God’s agenda.
 - a) He is the Logos, the total concept of Deity, Deity told out, the Word of God, not in the sense of a spoken or a written word, but in the sense of a Person who in Himself expresses all that God the Father is. He said on one occasion, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9)..³
2. By His power – The mighty capability of each verse to overcome any obstacles we may encounter or dangers that maybe before us rests in the powerful nature of Christ, who is the very nature of God. So, since these people were mostly Jews, they know of how powerful God’s Word was for the nation of Israel to be born and established. The words, supernaturally revealed through the New Testament writers (2:3-4), have the same power to execute all that the writers are communicating.
3. He has made purification of sins – There is no need for these believers to go back to the Old Testament way of making sacrifices because Christ died for all our sins, past, present and future. Because He is of the same nature as God, His death and resurrection are so complete that we are at peace before God (Eph. 2:12-19).
 - a) His blood delivers the believer from the power of sin in this present life, and from the presence of sin in the future life. His blood removes the guilt and penalty of sin and cleanses the believer from its defilement. That is what is included in the act of our Lord making purification for sins.⁴
4. He sat down at the right hand of the Father – Christ is now our High Priest (2:17; 3:1; 4:14-16; 5:5-6; 7:24-25; 8:1-2; 9:11-12; 10:19-22) who can sympathize with all our weaknesses as He represents us before God.
 - a) When His work on the Cross was finished, the Son “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” The seated posture indicates that His work was finished, in contrast to the Levitical priests who never sat down so far as their tabernacle work was concerned, and for the reason that their work was never finished, and this because the blood of bulls and goats could not pay for sin. The verb “sat down” denotes a

³ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 10, p. 34). Eerdmans.

⁴ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 10, p. 40). Eerdmans.

solemn, formal act. It speaks of the assumption of a position of dignity and authority. The reference is to the Son's glorification and ascension. In His exalted state He is still bearing on all things toward their destined consummation, and is still dealing with sin as the Great High Priest, saving believing sinners in His precious blood and cleansing saints from the defilement of sin that at times enters their lives.⁵

5. Majestic – His time on earth, His resurrection did not disturb any of the qualities of nature. He still has 'the radiance of God's glory' or 'the exact representation of God and His nature.' At the right hand of God, Christ is still as great, just as important, and majestic as He always was.
 - a) Jesus sitting on the Father's right hand signified four things:
 - He sat down as a sign of honor (Phil. 2:11).
 - He sat down as a sign of authority (1 Pet. 3:22)
 - He sat down to rest. His work was done (Heb. 10:12)
 - He sat down to intercede for us (Rom. 8:34).
 - b) The right hand was traditionally the place of honor. This idea comes from the practice of Asian kings, who associated the heir with them in the exercise of government.
6. Having become – Because Christ is God's begotten Son (uniquely man from a virgin through the ministry of the Holy Spirit), who faced death and His resurrection, and now sits at the right hand of God, He originated His own existence.
 - a) The informal and abrupt introduction of angels, shows that the writer was addressing Jews, who were familiar with the important part the angels played in the Old Testament, particularly in the giving of the law.⁶
7. Inherit a more excellent name above every name (Phil. 2:9-11) – Because Christ took on Calvary's Cross and rose from the dead His permanent possession and disposition at the right hand of the Father is expressed in Philippians 2:9-11; *"Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* NASB This is beyond what God has ever said about angels (Hebrews 1:5, 13; 2:5-8). This will remain forever and is never subject to change.
8. Inherit a more excellent name above every name (Phil. 2:9-11) – Christ's name is more excellent, meaning different or diverse, because He is now our risen King; this is why

⁵ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 10, p. 41). Eerdmans.

⁶ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 10, p. 42). Eerdmans.

demons tremble (James 2:19). We are not even allowed to call His name in vain, just like in the Old Testament we are told not to call God's name in vain (Ex. 20:7; Mt. 7:21-23).