

HEBREWS—HANDOUT 3

Hebrews 1:1-4

Exordium (Augustine) = “beginning”, “commencement”, “preamble”

Prooemium (Theodoret of Cyrrus, προοιμιον) “proem” or “preface”, “introduction”

Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατράσιν ἐν τοῖς προφήταις ²
ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ, (Greek text)

Multifariam et multis modis olim Deus loquens patribus in prophetis (Latin text)

Alliteration: initial p (Greek text)/ m (Latin text) letter repeated

Assonance: -ῶς -αι -ῶς -αι ... -οῖς -οῖς

Possible Structure:

1:3 – “right hand”

1:4 – “angels”

Anadiplosis (lit., “double again”)¹

1:5 – “angels”

1:13 – “right hand”

Or: *mots crochets* (French, lit., “crocheted words”); hook words

1:1-2a

What is our author describing?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

God is giving his revelation in _____

Is there any other revelation? _____

revelatio generalis

revelatio specialis

revelatio naturalis

revelatio supernaturalis

duplex revelatio Dei/ duplex cognitio Dei

¹ Example of anadiplosis: The love of wicked men converts to fear, that fear to **hate**, and **hate** turns one or both to worthy danger and deserved death (Shakespeare, *Richard II* 5.1.66-68).

All theological orthodoxy on revelation:

All theological liberalism on 'revelation':

How is the author of Hebrews articulating his description of revelation?

What is being expressed in the sequence "spoke"/ "has spoken"?

What is the relation of the OT and the NT?

Why does our author think this way?

He is a _____.

He is not a _____

A _____ says _____

A _____ says _____

A _____ says Christ is _____

A _____ says Christ _____

The prefix "poly-" means:

What are "sundry times and divers manners" (KJV)?

Line out the relational paradigm our author is proposing:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Eschatological days/eschatological era → Finality of redemption

Are there any redemptive/saving events yet to be revealed?

Are there any redemptive/saving events to be performed in the future?

Jewish Eschatology: Present

Future: Appearance of Messiah

Age of Salvation

Restoration of Ethnic Israel

Christian Eschatology: Future: Appearance of Messiah

Present

Age of Salvation

"Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16)

Eschatological revelation also affects miraculous signs and wonders attesting ("bearing witness" to) that revelation. Finality of Revelation (1:2a); Finality of Charismata (2:4)

Once and for all finished, complete and final revelation in the Son (1:2a);

Once and for all finished, complete and final attestation of revelation in miraculous signs and wonders (2:4)

Ergo: no more special revelation (1:2a)

no more charismata in miracles, signs and wonders (2:4)

Cessation of revelation (because complete and final in the Son, 1:2a)

Cessation of charismata (because no longer needed in attestation to the no longer needed revelation, 2:4)

Charismatic movement claims what Hebrews denies, i.e., further special revelation and further miraculous attestation. Charismatic movement, on this point, unbiblical based on Hebrews 1:2a and 2:4.

The revelation of God being not subjective and individual in its nature, but objective and addressed to the human race as a whole, it is but natural that this revelation should be embedded in the channels of the great objective history of redemption and extend no further than this. In point of fact, we see that, when the *finished* salvation worked out among Israel is stripped of its particularistic form to extend to all nations, at the same moment the *completed* oracles of God are given to the human race as a whole to be henceforth subjectively studied and appropriated. It is as unreasonable to expect revelations after the close of the Apostolic age as it would be to think that the great saving facts of that period can be indefinitely increased and repeated.—Geerhardus Vos, “The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline,” in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (1980) 8-9.

... in Hebrews 1:1-2 . . . the new dispensation appears as final. And this applies likewise to the revelation introducing it. It is not one new disclosure to be followed by others, but the consummate disclosure beyond which nothing is expected. After speech in ‘a Son’ (qualitatively so called) no higher speech were possible.—Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (1975) 302

The revelation of the New Covenant is not only better comparatively speaking; it is final and eternal because delivered in a Son, than whom God could send no higher revealer.—Geerhardus Vos, “Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke [Covenant],” in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (1980) 194.

...it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare . . . His will unto His Church (Heb. 1:1); and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth . . . to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God’s revealing His will unto His people being now ceased (Heb. 1:1–2).—Westminster Confession of Faith, I.1.

Roman Catholic Doctrine of Human Traditions

Council of Trent (1545-1564)—some Roman Catholic human traditions given by inspiration of God the Holy Spirit (“the Holy Ghost dictating,” Trent, Session Four).

Infallible human traditions of the Roman Catholic Church:

- 1.
- 2.

Roman Catholicism: infallible Bible **AND** infallible human tradition, miraculously attested (on-going charismata).

Charismatic Movement: infallible Bible **AND** infallible new special revelations, miraculously attested (on-going charismata).

Orthodox Protestantism: infallible Bible **ALONE**. Revelation ceases with the Son of God; miracles cease with the Apostles.

Eschatological character of divine revelation

Historical relation of “former” revelation and “last days” revelation

Philosophy of revelation (revelation *ad extra*)

Vertical

Horizontal

Ontological character of divine revelation

Reflections on Revelation and the Trinity (revelation *ad intra*)

Speaker →

Speaker → →

Revelation as Ontological Inter-Trinitarian self-disclosure

Inception of revelation → Reception of revelation → Procession of revelation

Or: Loves → Beloved → One who encircles lover and beloved in reciprocal love

The narcissistic God of Unitarianism (Judaism, Islam, Socinianism): he speaks to himself only; reveals himself to himself only; discloses himself to himself only. He is eternally solitary and self-centered. When he creates, he creates out of loneliness and the necessity to relate to something not himself, but created to entertain himself.

The communalistic God of Trinitarianism (Christianity): he speaks to his Son and through his Spirit (his breath). The Father discloses himself to the Son and both proceed to reveal themselves to the Spirit who breathes that self-revelation of the inter-Trinitarian intimacy within the circle of the Godhead. These three co-equal and co-eternal persons are not solitary, nor self-centered; they are eternally self-communicative and other oriented. Here the communion is not merely comparative (better: two persons); it is superlative (best: three persons), i.e., the most perfect ontological inter-communion is found in a Triune Godhead, not a Unitarian or Binitarian Godhead. This Trinitarian Godhead creates not out of necessity, but for the sake of their glory, i.e., that the creature may share the glory of God insofar as a creature is capable of sharing it by the grace of heaven.