



## 2: Jesus Is The Last Word

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.”

Hebrews 1:1 – 2

God has spoken. In the past He spoke by the prophets; now he has spoken by His Son.

### In Time Past

In time past God spoke "at various times," He didn't disclose everything all at once: He told people about Himself and His ways bit by bit; what could be known about Him was built up progressively. That's what we mean when we talk about revelation being progressive. We mean that as history moved forward what could be known about God was added to, became more and more complete and reached more and more people: first individuals, then a family, then a nation, and finally the world.

◆ *Why might God have done it that way? Why not reveal all at once?*

In time past God spoke "In various ways." He spoke to Moses in a burning bush (Exodus 3:12ff). He spoke to Isaiah in a vision in the Temple (Isaiah 6:1ff). He spoke in a still small voice to Elijah (I Kings 19:12ff). He spoke by making appearances, through angels, by way of dreams and by ordering events and then sending messengers to explain what those events meant.

In time past God spoke "to the fathers by the prophets." He spoke indirectly. Actually it says He spoke "in the prophets." In other words, as they spoke, God was in them, controlling their thoughts and words. God left no room for speculation or doubt: when He spoke by the prophets their words were His words. And prophets here, by the way, would have been understood to include all the men God spoke by, not only the likes of Isaiah and Jeremiah but also men like Abraham, Moses and David.

## But Now...

But now, in these last days, God has spoken "by His Son": He has spoken by Jesus. The writer's intention here is to highlight the contrast between how God spoke in Old Testament times and how He has spoken in Jesus, but it's not all about contrast. He's also showing us that there is continuity. The God who spoke through the prophets is the same God who has spoken by Jesus, and it's important to note that too.

"The last days" is an expression you'll come across in lots of other places in the Bible. It refers to the days of the Messiah: that time that the Old Testament saints so looked forward to. The last days began with the birth of Jesus and will continue right to the end of time. We are living in the last days now but that doesn't necessarily mean that the end will come soon, anymore that it meant the end would come soon in the days when the Book of Hebrews first appeared.

### ◆ *What do these verses tell you about the last days?*

*2 Timothy 3:1*  
*2 Peter 3:3 – 4*  
*Acts 2:17*  
*Micah 4:1*

It's not obvious in our English Bibles but when he wrote the word "spoken" the writer used what's known as the aorist tense. That means that when God spoke by Jesus He spoke once and for all. In Jesus God has spoken fully and finally: there's no more to come, Jesus' words and actions say everything that's to be said.

### ◆ *In what ways does the revelation that has come through Jesus contrast with previous revelation?*

So we have God's last word in Jesus. Now, in order to emphasise the weight that word must carry, the writer will go on to talk about who Jesus is. But that's for next week.

## Revelation

Other religions teach that man can find and understand God by looking around and puzzling it out, but that, of course, is not true. God would remain hidden to our understanding if He hadn't revealed Himself to us.

"Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? ... an idiot will become intelligent when the foal of a wild donkey is born a man."

Job 11:7-12

The Bible tells us that God reveals Himself in two ways.

## General Revelation

Just like looking at a picture tells you something about the artist who painted it, we can learn things about God from the things He has made.

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made."

Romans 1:20

We call this general revelation because it's available to anybody who'll open his eyes and see it.

## Special Revelation

But what we can learn from nature isn't enough to tell us everything we need to know about God. How can we please God? Does God even care if we do please Him? What does God require of us? If questions like those are going to be answered God must take the initiative and speak to us and He has to use terms that people like us can understand. So God reveals Himself in supernatural ways so that we can know Him. We call that special revelation and special revelation it's an act of grace on God's part. He doesn't have to speak at all and we really don't deserve to know Him.

It's God's special revelation that was given progressively "to the fathers" and completed by Jesus, and it has all been infallibly recorded for us in the Bible with nothing left to be added.

### ◆ *How should knowing this affect the way you read, study and understand the Bible?*