



Daily Verse and Comment

Hebrews 1:1-3

(1) God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son, (2) Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the ages; (3) Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high;

A Faithful Version

The author of Hebrews begins by extolling the given and achieved qualities of [Jesus Christ](#). He did this partly because some Jews were dissatisfied with His being the High Priest; they considered Him unqualified. First on their list of reasons might have been that He was not a Levite (an argument the author engages in Hebrews 7).

The epistle's first verses, however, proceed to prove to the Jews that Jesus is qualified in every way to be High Priest despite His human descent. Israel, not Christ, is the one with the problems. The opening paragraphs demonstrate in a series of biblical quotations why Jesus should be accepted:

1. He is the Son of [God](#);
2. He is the heir of all things;
3. He is the actual Creator God;
4. He is the brightness of God's glory;
5. He upholds all things by the word of His power;

6. He purged us of our sins; and
7. He sits at the right hand of God on high.

That is a tremendous, unrivaled pedigree.

Why did God halt His sending of prophets? He had a better Prophet to send. Consider these seven shortcomings of all prophets in comparison with Jesus' strengths:

1. All were human beings with earthly origins.
2. All were sinful.
3. All were beset by spiritual weaknesses.
4. Their messages “came” to them from God; that is, their prophecies did not originate within themselves. What they said might not be the absolute Word of God. Thus, their messages lacked full divine authority.
5. They did not grasp the fullness of the messages given to them.
6. They did not understand the fullness of God's overall revelation and purposes.
7. They only bore witness to the light or message God sent.

Jesus had none of these shortcomings because He was already God and one with the Father. The Jews greatly underestimated His qualifications, but in short order, the author rejects any prophet or angel from having better ones. He also does not stop displaying Christ's qualifications, continuing to add to and expound on them throughout most of the epistle. It becomes overwhelming proof of His fitness to be our High Priest.

Perhaps the Jews underestimated the impact of Jesus' birth, His ministry, His many miracles and healings, His controversies with the Pharisees and the Levitical priesthood, His tragic and “cursed” death, and His resurrection because they were done openly and had been much discussed. In addition,

they distrusted His institution of the preaching of [the gospel](#), which included opening salvation to the Gentiles.

We must consider these things because the Father engineered this entire package from heaven. He knows when and how to advertise and promote His program, and He can do so vividly and with startling impact. Besides the prophets, the [Old Testament](#) figures the author selects to compare to Jesus are apparently listed in the order the Jews generally held as being of the highest regard. Abraham and [Moses](#) both ranked high on the list.

At the foundation of Jewish resistance to Christ, however, was their insistence that there was no need to change from the historical, traditional, Old Covenant truth that the high priest was appointed from the tribe of Levi, specifically from the family of Aaron. But there was more to their resistance than just this one point. The [Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers](#) in [Matthew 21:33-45](#) shows that God has continuously attempted to communicate faithfully and honestly with the Israelites—and with Gentiles too. However, the Israelites—most of whom do not know they are Israelites and think they are Gentiles—have always resisted Him and the truth He gave them. Conversely, actual Gentiles seem to grasp the intent of God's message more quickly than Israelites, probably because they do not have Israelite history and their traditional beliefs blinding their theological vision to the superiority of Jesus and the truths of the New Covenant.

Thus, God's setting aside the Old Covenant and putting the New Covenant into effect paved the way for the Jews to resist. Theologically, it was too much change for many Jews to digest and accept, as it effectively destroyed any reason for Judaism to continue because the New Covenant is far superior to Judaism in terms of salvation. Individual Jews might find a “reasonable” justification for its continued existence, but it was an emotional, uphill fight for them to overcome.

The New Covenant did away with the need for the Temple, the priesthood, and the sacrifices made at the Temple. None of those religious activities could even begin to compete with what the New Covenant offered: the forgiveness of sins, the gift of God's Holy Spirit, and a one-on-one

relationship with the Creator God, Savior, and High Priest! Even the apostles, who spent three and a half years with Christ, had many questions despite being with their Creator almost constantly during that time.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Why Hebrews Was Written \(Part Nine\)](#)

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