

The background is a stained glass window with a central blue oval containing text. The oval is surrounded by four colored sections: green (top-left), light green (top-right), yellow-green (bottom-left), and greyish-green (bottom-right). The sections are separated by black lead lines. There are two red triangular shapes at the top and bottom center of the oval.

The Holiest of All

A Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews
with Andrew Murray's Commentary

PROVIDENCE REFORMED
BAPTIST CHURCH

Lesson 1 – God’s Final Word

Sunday School Series: The Holiest of All - Hebrews

References:

The Holiest of All – Andrew Murray ([available in pdf here](#))

Commentary on Hebrews – Charles Spurgeon

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Lesson 1 – God's Final Word

Andrew Murray (May 9, 1828 – January 18, 1917) was the son of a Dutch Reformed missionary from Scotland who had been sent to South Africa. He was born in South Africa. He attended the University of Aberdeen and was influenced by the Scottish revival meetings of Robert Murray McCheyne, Horatius Bonar, and William Burns. Ordained in the Dutch Reformed Church and involved in an international revival ministry, he returned to South Africa in 1848. He pastored several churches and was influential in the South African Revival of 1860. He and his wife Emma had 8 children.

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In his preface to his commentary on Hebrews, he wrote, “The great complaint of all who have the care of souls is the lack of whole-heartedness, of steadfastness, of perseverance and progress in the Christian life. Many, of whom one cannot but hope that they are true Christians, come to a standstill, and do not advance beyond the rudiments of Christian life and practice. And many more do not even remain stationary, but turn back to a life of worldliness, of formality, of indifference. And the question is continually being asked, What is the want in our religion that, in so many cases, it gives no power to stand, to advance, to press on unto perfection ? And what is the teaching that is needed to give that health and vigour to the Christian life that, through all adverse circumstances, it may be able to hold fast the beginning firm to the end.”

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“The teaching of the Epistle is the divine answer to these questions. In every possible way it sets before us the truth that it is only the full and perfect knowledge of what Christ is and does for us that can bring us to a full and perfect Christian life. The knowledge of Christ Jesus that we need for conversion does not suffice for growth, for progress, for sanctification, for maturity. And the great object of the Epistle is to show us that if we will but follow the Lord fully, and yield ourselves wholly to what God in Christ is ready to do, we shall find in the gospel and in Christ everything that we need for a life of joy and strength and final victory.”

1. The Son of God: The Mediator of a Better Covenant

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This letter is not formatted as a letter, but is a sermon transcribed and preserved (13:22), with the addition of concluding thoughts in the last paragraph. We do not know who the author of Hebrews is, or when exactly it was written, but we know that it was during Timothy’s lifetime (13:23). Possible candidates for authorship include Luke or Apollos. John Calvin demonstrates by the language and structure that it was not Paul, and the text itself indicates that it was written by someone who had been taught by the Apostles.

The theme is the absolute superiority of Jesus Christ in all things. A key word that appears throughout is the word “better.” The recipients are warned about the danger of falling away, or rejecting Christ and going back into the shadows of Old Testament Judaism. Christ is the substance and greater than the shadows that pointed to His coming and His work.

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Hebrews 1:1 God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds, Murray begins with a simple statement of explanation from the introduction to the text. GOD HAS SPOKEN!

“Speaking is the vehicle of fellowship. It is a proof that the speaker considers him he addresses as capable of fellowship with himself; a token that he longs for that fellowship. Man was created for fellowship with God. Sin interrupted it Nature speaks of God and His work, but of Himself, His heart, and His thoughts of love towards us as sinners, nature cannot tell. God calls man back to fellowship with Himself. God hath spoken !” – Murray, pg. 31

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God has spoken in times past by the prophets, and even angels, through visions, dreams, prophecy, and proclamations, including the written records of the prophets starting with Moses and ending with Malachi.

Now, in these last days (beginning with the Incarnation of Christ), He has spoken to us by His Son.

Spurgeon notes, “Saving the best for last is always God’s rule. Prophets are a very blessed means of communication, but how much more sure is it for God to speak to us by His Son?” – Spurgeon, pg. 6

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Murray continues, “God hath spoken in His Son ! God, the infinite, incomprehensible, unseen One, hath spoken ! And that in His Son ! Oh the joy and the glory! who can measure it? ‘Hear! O heavens, and give ear! O earth, for the Lord hath spoken.’ When man speaks it is the revelation of himself, to make known the otherwise hidden thoughts and dispositions of his heart. When God, who dwells in light that is inaccessible, speaks out of the heights of His glory, it is that He may reveal Himself. He would have us know how He loves us and longs for us, how He wants to save and to bless, how He would have us draw nigh and live in fellowship with Himself.” – pg. 32

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Spurgeon tried explaining the deep truths about Jesus being the Son of God:

“If I were to try to explain it, and to talk about the eternal filiation, I would only conduct you where I would soon be entirely out of my depth, and very likely I would drown all that I could tell you in floods of words. Deity is not to be explained, but to be adored. The Sonship of Christ is to be accepted as a truth of revelation, to be apprehended by faith, though it cannot be comprehended by the understanding.” – pgs. 6-7

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Ephesians 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, is growing into a holy sanctuary in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Murray notes, “The living Jesus, come forth from the fiery furnace of God’s holiness, from the burning glow of everlasting love, He Himself is the living Word.” – pg. 34

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John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

As the eternal, living Word, Jesus is greater than the prophets and a more certain Word than visions and dreams. The words of the prophets are the words of God, mediated through men by the Holy Spirit, and are therefore inspired and infallible. These words pointed to and prepared the way for the coming of Christ, God’s final Word.

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The Law and the Prophets make us “more deeply conscious of [our] own impotence, and the strong desire to be found in the full revelation of Christ as to be able to save completely. When these two lessons are learned – the lesson of despair of self and hope in God alone – the soul is prepared, if it will yield itself in faith to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to enter truly into the New Testament life within the veil, in the very Holiest of All, as is set forth in this epistle. Where Christians, through defective instruction, or through neglect and sloth, do not understand God’s way for leading them on unto perfection [maturity], the Christian life will always remain full of feebleness and failure.” – Murray, pg. 37

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In our text, verse 2 tells us, “in these last days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things.”

“Now what does this mean but that Christ possesses all things as an heir possesses his inheritance, that Christ is Lord of all things. Christ is Lord of all the angels, and the fallen angels, too, are obliged to bow before His omnipotence. As for all things below, people regenerate or unregenerate, God has given Him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as His Father has given Him. He has put all things under His feet. All must willingly, or else unwillingly, submit to His sway, for His Father has appointed Him heir of all things.” – Spurgeon, pgs. 7-8

Murray writes, “The Son is the Final Cause, the End of all things. He is the Beginning too.” – pg. 39

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Verse 2 continues, “through whom also He made the worlds.”

“He is the origin and Efficient Cause of all that exists. ‘Without Him nothing was made that was made.’ The place the Son had in the divine Being was such that God’s relation to all that was outside of Himself was only through the Son. Of all that exists the end and the beginning meet in Him.” – Murray, pg. 40

Colossians 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, And in Him all things hold together. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church; Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19 For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross—through Him—whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Lesson 1 – God's Final Word

As Creator and Controller, Jesus reigns over His creation.

The Word of God came to the prophets, now He, the living Word has come to us.

Romans 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.
To Him be the glory forever. Amen.