

The writer of Hebrews responds to the desire to have God speak with the affirmation that God has indeed spoken. In Jesus Christ, God has spoken in a superlative fashion, far exceeding any previous revelation and thereby demanding that we pay attention and listen. The very contrast between His former communication, though still true and relevant, and His revelation in Jesus argues that we should heed what He says.

I. First contrast: A change of audience

1. *The former audience (“in the past to our forefathers”)*

This refers to all those through whom God has spoken from Genesis onward to the time when the Word became flesh (cf. Hebrews 11). Although there is a contrast, that former revelation is still true and relevant, as seen in the O.T. citations in Hebrews including the warnings, promises, and figures explaining the work of Christ.

2. *The current audience (“in these last days to us”)*

The phrase “these last days” corresponds to the O.T. phrase “in the end of days”. It means that Messianic times have come, the final age in which God accomplishes His purposes for mankind. Cf. Acts 2:16–17; 2 Timothy 3:1; James 5:3; 2 Peter 3:3. It is the age in which we live and the message of Hebrews is for us.

In these days in which the Messiah has appeared, God’s speaking through the Messiah will not get any clearer or any more important. It requires us to hear and heed it.

II. Second contrast: an advance in speech [how God communicated]

1. *God’s former ‘speech’ (“in the prophets at many times and in many ways”)*

- a. God spoke in bits and pieces, scattered across the centuries, never giving the complete picture.
- b. God spoke in various ways, for example, in dreams and visions, by Urim & Thumin, casting lots, and to Moses face to face (cf. Numbers 12:6–8; Joshua 7; 1 Samuel 28:6).
- c. God spoke through men and women, not just the writing prophets or “classic prophets”, but also others such as Abel (Hebrews 11:4; 12:24), using even their lives to teach about endurance (e.g., Job, cf. James 5:11), or effective prayer (e.g., Elijah, cf. James 5:16–18), or faith (e.g., Abraham and others, cf. Hebrews 11).

What God spoke is still true and relevant, as Paul affirms in 2 Timothy 3:16–17. It is all profitable for us, but there has been an advance in the way God has spoken.

2. *God’s present ‘speech’ (“in Son”)*

- a. The literal phrase, without any article or pronoun (“in Son”), stresses the Father-Son relationship which Jesus has with God the Father. God has spoken by Jesus, who is in very nature God rather than in bits and pieces by the prophets.
- b. The Gospel of John explains the significance in that Jesus as the Word expresses and reveals God (John 1:1–18). Jesus explained that to see Him was to see the Father and that He is the only way to God, i.e., to be accepted into His presence (John 14:3–9).
- c. Hebrews shows Jesus as better than angels (ch. 1), than Moses (ch. 3), than Joshua (ch. 4), and than the Aaronic priesthood (chs. 5–10).
- d. Since God has spoken so much greater now than in olden times, than what He has spoken is so important to heed. Look to Jesus and listen. Even professing believers need always to heed (Hebrews 2:1–3a).

God has spoken in a superlative fashion in Jesus Christ, revealing the very character of God and showing the way to be right with God. God has spoken. Are you listening? Do not ignore the revelation of God and salvation in Jesus Christ. Encourage one another. Indeed, God has spoken. Be always listening.

For further reflection & discussion:

- Why would God not answer King Saul when he inquired of Him (1 Samuel 28)? When aren’t we listening to what God has spoken and how can we correct that? What are the dangers of seeking to hear God speak outside of what He has already spoken?
- What shows that the men and women of faith in Hebrews 11 truly believed what God had spoken? What demonstrates that a person is convinced that God has spoken by the prophets and ultimately “by Son”, i.e., by Jesus?
- What has the person of Jesus taught you or reminded you about God this week?
- How can you apply God’s revelation of Himself in Jesus to daily activities and decision making?