

Hebrews, Part 1

Hebrews is like God's commentary on the old covenant and the law; it is His perspective on the Jewish religion that has become a comfortable ritual rather than a challenging reality. The book is written to Jewish Christians, and therein lies the problem – they have added “Jewishness” to Christianity in an attempt to avoid persecution and be accepted. They have added to the gospel and, in doing so, they have diluted its power.

THEN: Jesus-and ... angels, Moses, priesthood, temple, sacrifices ...

NOW: Jesus-and ... education, political correctness, other gods, etc ...

Key words: better (13x), perfect (14x in Greek), eternal

What Jesus gives us is **better** because it is **eternal** and gives us **perfect** standing before Him!

The temple is still standing as this book is being written, and sacrifices are being offered every day – it would have been easy for these Jewish Christians to escape persecution and go back to the old Mosaic system they had known before. They were second-generation believers, having been won by those who had actually walked with Jesus. They had been persecuted for their faith, specifically for leaving Judaism, and were being seduced by false teachers to take the easy road.

They were at a standstill spiritually and in danger of going backwards (because you CAN'T stand still spiritually!). They had even started to forsake the assembling of themselves together as believers. It is ALWAYS a warning sign when people don't desire to be in church!

We don't know who the author of Hebrews was, but many scholars think it was the Apostle Paul:

- The end of the epistle is like others written by Paul (doctrinal, then practical – chapter 10)
- Peter said that Paul had written to these Jewish believers previously (2 Peter 3:15)
- Many of the Jews didn't receive Paul, and that may be the main reason his name is not attached to it

2 Peter 3:15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

Hebrews 1:1-2 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

God used the prophets at different TIMES and in different WAYS, but Jesus is the ultimate MESSAGE and MANIFESTATION of God.

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

John 1:14-17 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

“Brightness of his glory” refers to the Shekinah that dwelt in the temple

“Express image” means “the exact imprint” – our English word “character” come from this root word

John 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

“Upholding” doesn't mean “holding up” but rather “guiding”

“Right hand” doesn't refer to “position” but to “power”

Exodus 15:6 Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

Hebrews 1:4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Thousands of angels assisted in the giving of the Law, so the Jews considered them extremely important and superior. But Jesus is BETTER than angels!

Psalms 68:17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.

The writer of Hebrews gives us several quotations back-to-back from the Old Testament, in order to prove that Jesus is BETTER than angels:

Hebrews 1:5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD!

Hebrews 1:6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

JESUS IS THE FIRSTBORN RECEIVING WORSHIP!

Hebrews 1:7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

JESUS IS SERVED BY THE ANGELS!

Hebrews 1:8-9 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

JESUS IS GOD ENTHRONED AND ANOINTED!

Hebrews 1:10-12 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

JESUS IS THE ETERNAL CREATOR!

Hebrews 1:13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

JESUS IS VICTORIOUS!

Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

WE DO NOT WORSHIP ANGELS – WE WORSHIP GOD, AND HE DISPATCHES THE ANGELS TO MINISTER TO US!

Hebrews 2:1-4 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

REMEMBER WHAT “THEREFORE” IS THERE FOR!

The writer of Hebrews is not disrespecting angels! He is just contrasting the Old Testament with the New Testament – which is far BETTER! He is saying if they honored the commandments and exhortations spoken by angels, they should “give the more earnest heed” to the gospel!

“Let them slip” means to “drift away” – most spiritual problems are caused by NEGLECT (the anchor doesn’t move, but we do!).

In the OT the law was given by angels, but in the NT the Word was:

- revealed by the Son of God
- preached by the Apostles
- confirmed by signs and wonders

We have a far greater responsibility to obey God’s Word!

GRACE IS A HIGHER LAW THAN LAW!

Hebrews 2:5-9 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

WE ARE CREATED LOWER THAN THE ANGELS, BUT LIFTED HIGHER BY REDEMPTION! We were given dominion over the earth at creation, but we lost it through sin. God gives us that spiritual dominion back when we are born again, but the redemption of our bodies has “not yet” happened. Until that final day ... “BUT WE SEE JESUS!”