

Hebrews 1

God speaks to us today through His Son

- I. How God spoke to the fathers (1-3).
 - A. “God” is a remarkable and striking introduction to this letter.

Note: No other book of the Bible begins with THEOS or ELOHEEM. Genesis (1:1) and John (1:1) come close.

 1. “[A]t sundry times” (various times, NKJ) refers to God’s plan for mercy and salvation through Jesus Christ, which was gradually revealed in fragments.
 - a. God did not reveal all truth at one time under the old covenants.
 - b. It was revealed (released) part by part, over thousands of years.
 - c. First hinted at in Gen 3:15.
 - d. Later, to Abraham in Gen 12:1-3.
 - e. Perpetuated through many of the prophets.
 2. “[A]nd in divers manners” (various ways, NKJ) of revealing His plan.
 - a. Sometimes by dreams, e.g., Joseph (cf Gen 37:5, 9).
 - b. Sometimes in the Urim and Thummim (cf Ex 28:30; 1 Sam 28:6).
 - c. Sometimes in written words (cf Ex 31:18; 1 Kings 2:3; Ps 40:7).
 - d. Sometimes in voices (cf Deut 5:23).
 - e. Sometimes in visions (cf Job 33:14, 15).
 - f. Sometimes in symbols, e.g., the rod of an almond tree and a seething pot (cf Jer 1:11-14).
 - g. Sometimes in nature (cf Ps 19:1-3; Rom 1:19, 20).

Note: We see Paul using various styles of revelation concerning Jesus in Acts 28:23.

Note: There is wonderful symmetry in the “divers manners” spoken of here. God revealed His divine message in many ways and through an innumerable host of prophets in days gone by.¹

Hundreds or thousands of prophets reduced to one central voice, the risen Christ. Millions of individual sacrifices under the Old law, reduced to the single, supreme sacrifice of the Lamb of God.
 3. “[I]n time past unto the fathers” or, in ancient times.
 - a. This was done from creation to Malachi. Literally, from Gen 3 through the Minor Prophets.

Note: Whatever the writer is speaking of here in verse 1, was ancient (time past) to the readers in the first century.
 - b. The divine information God revealed about the coming Messiah was given very gradually.
 - 1). The seed of woman (cf Gen 3:15).
 - 2). The seed of Abraham (his lineage) (cf Gen 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18), etc.

¹ See under point # 4, page 2.

- c. There had been about 400 years of inspirational silence between Malachi and the beginning of the gospel (cf Mark 1:1, 2).
- 4. “[B]y the prophets,” is a compound Greek word which means *to show or make known one’s thoughts*.²
 - a. The first time the word “prophet” is used in scriptures is in reference to Abraham (cf Gen 20:7).
 - b. God’s people were given instructions and the message of grace by the prophets (cf Dan 9:10).
 - c. The English word ‘prophet’ has become synonymous with foretelling. But, in Greek, the word here means to speak for another.
 - d. It was God who spoke by the prophets (cf 2 Pet 1:20, 21).
 - e. The reporters, or mouthpieces, of God (cf 1 Pet 1:9-12).
- B. Verse 2 makes the transition from the previous 4,000 years (or more³) before the New Testament age, to the present time, or Christian dispensation.
 - 1. “Hath in these last days,” or this last dispensation (the end of these days, NKJ) (cf Eph 1:10; 3:2).

Note: The word “dispensation” often confuses our religious friends because they are not taught the divisions (or different economies) within God’s word (cf Col 1:25).

 - a. The “last days” is a reference to the last law, the last chance we have to get it right, God’s last effort to save us from ourselves.

Note: “Last days” is different than “last day.” “Last days” is the last opportunity to repent and live acceptably (cf Acts 2:17; 2 Pet 3:3). “Last day” refers to judgment (cf Jn 6:39, 40; 12:48).
 - b. It is in these last days that the affairs of this world will be wrapped up, however long that takes (almost 2,000 years and counting).
 - 2. “[S]poken unto us by his Son,” means God is now communicating His will for mankind via Jesus Christ (cf Matt 17:5; Jn 1:17, 18).
 - a. Jesus is that last great prophet which was to come (cf Acts 3:22, 23).
 - b. It was first spoken by Jesus, then by those who were commissioned by Him (cf Heb 2:3, 4).

Note: This does not necessarily mean the people actually heard Jesus speak. Many of them could have, but that is not the point (cf James 5:10).
 - c. Those inspired men both wrote and spoke by the authority of the Lord (cf 2 Pet 3:2; Jude 17).
 - 3. The Hebrews writer records the risen Christ as “his Son” early in this writing.⁴

² Strong’s #5346

³ Ussher (4001 years), Hales (5311 years) and many others.

⁴ Just as any writer tends to move from facts previously mentioned, or assumed to be known, to new information, so the author [sic] of Hebrews begins his epistle with positive statements about the pre-Christian order, and then moves on to show by contrast the superiority of God’s revelation in Christ. Paul Ellington, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, pg 89

- a. This is significant for the Jewish mind. It establishes a divine equality (cf Jn 5:17, 18, 22, 23).
 - b. There are only a few Old Testament utterances about the Messiah being a son, e.g., Isa 7:14; 9:6.
 - c. He was “Immanuel” (cf Matt 1:23).
 - d. The implication for the Hebrew mind is that His position and authority are far superior to any and all that have been before Him. The Son is to be the final spokesman.
 - 1) The final message is perfect (cf Heb 8:6, 7; James 1:25).
 - 2) The final message is complete (cf 2 Tim 3:16, 17).
 - 3) The final message is adequate, providing all we need (cf Heb 13:20, 21).
4. “[W]hom he hath appointed heir of all things” (cf Jn 3:35; 13:3).
- a. The words “heir” and “inheritance” are closely connected. Noun and verb forms of the same word⁵ (cf Rom 8:17; Gal 4:7).
 - b. What a rich blessing for His children to understand they are in line to receive the great inheritance (cf Eph 1:18; Col 1:12).
 - c. As wonderful as that is to contemplate, the context is not speaking of our inheritance. It is speaking of the heirship of “his Son” (cf Isa 9:6; 53:10-12).
 - d. We, as children, are to be blessed with great wealth and goodness of God because of the Son, the Heir (cf 1 Cor 3:21-23).
 - e. The language here denotes Christ’s rank and dignity as “his Son.”
5. “[B]y whom also he made the worlds” refers back to His pre-incarnate existence (cf Jn 1:1-3).
- a. He was God before He became “his Son.”
 Note: In this class we will not speculate on the relationship that existed between the members of the godhead before recorded information. We cannot know what is not written. We best give our time and attention to the things revealed, and learn them to the best of our ability (cf Deut 29:29).
 - b. The Son was the creation instrument (cf Jn 1:10; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16).
 - c. Notice the text says, “the worlds.” Why in the plural?
 - d. There are four different words (or variants) translated “world” in the New Testament, each having a different meaning.⁶
 Note: We can be thankful to God that the New Testament was recorded in Koine Greek, a dead language. The words have not evolved, like so many English word have.

⁵ Inheritance, Strong’s #2817, kleronomia; heir, Strong’s # 2818, kleronomos

⁶ (1) Kosmos, John 21:25; (2) Aion, typically an age, a period of time (Vine’s), 1 Cor 10:11; (3) Oikoumene, the inhabited earth Matt 24:14 ;(4) Kosmikos, worldly, or pertaining to this world, Heb 9:1.

Note: Almost all English translations have “worlds” (plural) here. For some unknown reason the NASV and the ESV incorrectly have “world.” The NIV has “universe,” which is even more puzzling.

- e. This same word is used in Heb 9:26 and 11:3.⁷
- f. It is not a reference to a vast amount of earths like ours, but rather a reference to different ages, or different dispensations of this world (cf Eph 1:10).

Note: We will look at each of the four different words for “world” as we come across them in the text.

- C. Verse 3 is designed to draw attention to the exalted rank and power of the Son.
 - 1. “Who being the brightness of his glory” indicates that the glorious nature of the Father shone brightly through His Son (cf Jn 1:18, “declared,” means *clarified, explained, and exposed*).
 - a. That glory was temporarily veiled (embodied) in flesh (cf Jn 1:14; 14:9, 10; 2 Cor 4:6).
 - b. Imagine the ‘step down’ that was for Him. The Creator becoming like the created.
 - c. To return to the glory He had before His incarnation was His desire while He was in the flesh (cf Jn 17:5).
 - d. We have seen people who have gone from lofty heights in the business world to begging in the streets. That difference in position is the thought, only in the spiritual realm (cf 2 Pet 2:20).
 - 2. “[A]nd the express image of his person” means He is the one with the whole nature of God in Him.
 - a. “[E]xpress image” is from a single Greek word, which means *an exact copy*.⁸
 - b. Like a stamp, or a tool makers mark.⁹
 - c. Although it is used metaphorically here, it is the image of the stamp in hot wax, or the likeness on a coin.
 - d. The Son is not a mere image of the Father, He is the very essence of the Father (cf Col 1:15, 16).
Note: This is the only time the word is used in the New Testament.
 - 3. “[O]f his person” (of his substance, ASV) means the foundation which stands under and supports the superstructure.
 - a. Something that is well-grounded, firm and confident.
 - b. This same word is translated as ‘confidence’ in 2 Cor 9:4; 11:17 and as ‘substance’ in Heb 11:1.
 - c. As God, the Father is represented as being omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, infinitely wise, holy and just; so also is the Son (cf Jn 14:9, 10).

⁷ Strong’s #165, aion; the plural word for an age, a Messianic period, present or future.

⁸ Ibid, #5481

⁹ ESV translates this word as “the exact imprint.”

4. “[A]nd upholding all things by the word of his power” speaks of His sustaining power.
 - a. The word “upholding” means Christ set all things in motion and keeps all things in order (cf Gen 8:22).¹⁰
 - b. Christ, by the power of His word, created all things in the beginning (cf Gen 1:3, 6, 9; Ps 33:6, 9).
 - c. This extends to all things, whether angels, mankind, animal life, suns, moons, stars, comets; as big as galaxies, as small as atoms.
 - d. Right down to the hairs on your head (cf Matt 10:29, 30).
 - e. The word “power” is the same as in Rom 1:16, strength, might, able to do.
 5. “[W]hen he had by himself purged our sins” (cf 1 Jn 1:7).
 - a. Great was the sacrifice that Christ made for the world.
 - b. This letter was written to Hebrew Christians who fully understood the concept of sacrifice to Jehovah (cf Lev 16:15, 16, 29, 30; Jn 1:29).
 - c. Christ purchased the people back, paid the necessary price, by His own blood (cf 1 Cor 6:20; Heb 9:12, 26).
 - d. “Purged” could mean purified or expiated (appeased) (cf Heb 9:14).
 6. “[S]at down on the right hand of the majesty on high,” which is the place of honor and authority.
 - a. “[S]at down” shows the work has been completed. He finished His work on earth (cf Jn 17:4; 19:30).
 - b. The high priest did not sit down when he went into the holy of holies. There was no chair provided. His work always continued.
 - c. Not so with the great high priest (cf Heb 4:14, 15).
 - d. The throne on which He sits is not a specific throne, it is metaphorical for control-central of the universe.
 Note: To sit on David’s throne was to rule, or to be in control. This prophesy was given in 2 Sam 7:12, 13, 16, and then applied to Christ, by the angel, Gabriel, in Luke 1:32, 33. Peter said it was fulfilled in Acts 2:30-32 at the starting point of the church of Christ.
 - e. The symbolism is from the ancient practice of kings elevating their own throne, then granting their favorites a place on their right hand.
 - f. The book of Hebrews is replete with this particular symbolism, e.g., 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.
 - g. “[M]ajesty” is used to denote God the Father. A study of this book will renew our desire to exalt God.
 Note: Never allow us to entertain the idea of bringing God down to our level. He is worthy of our greatest exaltation, reverence and fear.
- D. In verses 2 and 3 we see Christ revealed with seven-fold credentials:
1. Whom he hath appointed heir of all things.
 2. By whom also he made the worlds.

¹⁰ Strong’s definition is to ‘bear’ or ‘to carry,’ #5342.

3. Who being in the brightness of his glory.
4. The express image of his person.
5. Upholding all things by the word of his power.
6. When he had by himself purified our souls.
7. Sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.

II. Christ's superiority over angels (4-14).

Note: The rest of this chapter will be devoted to establishing the fact that Christ is better than angels, which will be ratified by seven points:

1. He has a more excellent name (4, 5).
2. The angels of God adore Him (6).
3. The angels were created by Him (7).
4. Even as man, He was endowed with greater gifts than angels (8, 9).
5. He is eternal, they are not (10-12).
6. He is more highly exalted (13).
7. Angels are the servants of God, Christ is the Son of God (14).

A. "Being made (having become, NKJ) so much better than the angels."

1. He was in a position of being far above the angels when He made Himself purification for our sins.
 - a. How could the creator of all, the upholder of all, have to be "made" better than the angels? The answer is in Heb 2:9.
 - b. The word "better" does not mean morally better, it means exalted in rank.
2. After the church of Christ was established in Acts 2, we see a greatly diminished role played by angels.
 - a. We do see an angel that appeared to Cornelius (cf Acts 10:3, 7).
 - b. We also see an angel involved in Peter's release from prison (cf Acts 12:7-11).
 - c. The strongly diminished phenomenon of angels in the early church emphasizes the direct movement toward Christ (cf Rev 5:11, 12).

Note: After the book of Acts the word "angel" only appears three times prior to the book of Revelation (cf 2 Cor 11:14; Gal 1:8; 4:14). Those three passages do not refer to an angel actually doing something.

Note: Peter, James, John and Jude do not mention angels in their letters.

3. As a son has rank over servants in a family, so "he hath by inheritance" (cf Ps 2:7, 8; Phil 2:9).
4. When God gives a name to someone, it means something.
 - a. It is given in harmony with rank, character or destiny.
 - b. Abram's name was changed to Abraham, from high father to father of many nations (Gen 17:5) and Sarai's name changed to Sarah, changed from meaning princess to mother of nations (Gen 17:15, 16). There was meaning in these changes.
 - c. Jacob, which means supplanter or tricker, was changed to Israel, which means power with God, after he wrestled with the man/angel/God in Peniel (Gen 32:28).

- d. Simon was named Cephas and Peter. Both meaning a rock (Matt 16:17, 18; Jn 1:42). He would become the great, stabilizing force in the early church.
 - e. Before His incarnation Jesus was called Logos, “the Word” (used three times in Jn 1:1).
 - f. His earthly name, Jesus, was just that, an earthly name. Of no greater significance than any other name. Many are named Jesus (cf Acts 13:6).
 - g. After His resurrection His rank was “first born from the dead” (Col 1:18). Jesus became the Christ.
 - h. Understanding this point explains the “beginning of the creation of God” (Rev 3:14).
5. The Hebrews writer declares He is greater than angels, and then proceeds to prove it by referencing seven passages from the Old Testament. Those seven “proofs” are what the rest of the chapter teaches.
 Note: Christ’s superiority over angels means His law is superior to the law they delivered. He is the Son, they are servants.
- B. “For unto which of the angels said he at any time” (v 5) is from Ps 2:7.
- 1. This letter was written to those trained in the Hebrew scriptures. They would readily admit the authority of the Old Testament.
 - 2. The Old Testament never uses this type of language toward angels.
 - a. We are all the “sons of God” (cf Rom 8:14; Gal 4:5, 6; Phil 2:15).
 - b. But, we are not THE Son of God. The “only begotten.” Special and significant as no other (cf Heb 11:17).
 - c. It is not outside the scope of scriptures to refer to angels as His sons, also (cf Job 1:6; 38:7).
 - 3. “Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?”
 - a. We must understand “this day” if we are to grasp the meaning.
 - b. Paul quotes this verse in Acts 13. It was during his first evangelistic trip, while teaching in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia (cf Acts 13:28-34).
 - c. “[T]his day” refers to His resurrection from the dead (cf Rom 1:4).
 - d. Being resurrected from the dead confirmed all events associated with Jesus, i.e., His virgin birth, miracles, prophesies; all of it.
 - 4. Then the writer adds a second question, “And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a Son?” This is taken from 2 Sam 7:14.
 - a. Originally, this was spoken of Solomon, so it should be obvious that David’s words have double meaning.
 - b. The Messiah is included in the descendants of David (cf Matt 9:27; 15:22; 20:30; 22:42-45).
 - c. Jesus, as Christ, was greater than Solomon (cf Matt 12:42).
 - d. In this case, Solomon would be a type, Christ would be the anti-type. David’s relationship with Solomon corresponding to God’s relationship with Christ. The connection would be easily seen by the Hebrew mind.

- C. Verse 6 reads, “And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world.” This is a difficult word arrangement. It would be better ordered as “But when He again brings the firstborn into the world,” (NKJ).
1. This is possibly Ps 97:7, with the word “gods” standing for angels.
Note: The LXX has “...worship him, all ye his angels” in Ps 97:7.¹¹
 2. The “firstbegotten,” or first born is the same as in Col 1:18; Rev 1:5.
 - a. This is another reference to the resurrection.
 - b. Once dead, but never to die again. Lazarus died and was raised (Jn 11) only to die again.
 - c. All those who were raised to show the power of God, were still under the dominion of death.
 - d. Not so with the risen Christ. He conquered death (cf Heb 2:14).
 - e. This is the meaning of Col 1:15, “the firstborn of every creature.”
 - f. The significance of “firstbegotten,” or first born, can only be understood if the weight of the doctrine of ‘the first-born’ is observed via the Hebrew mind (cf Ex 11:4, 5; 12:29, 30; 13:1, 2; exemplified in the tribe of Levi, Num 3:12, 13).
 3. “[I]nto the world” needs additional attention because this is a completely different word for “worlds” used in verse 2.
 - a. Here, it means the inhabited earth (cf Lk 2:1; Acts 11:28).
 - b. This may be another reference to His incarnation, or possibly referring to His exalted position after His ascension (cf Lk 2:10-13; Rev 5:11, 12).
 - c. This passage in Hebrews is sufficient to prove Christ is worshipped and revered by angels. He is above them.
 - d. Only God is worthy of worship (cf Rev 22:8, 9). Christ is God (cf Jn 20:28; 1 Tim 3:16).
- D. The angels were created by Him (v 7). This refers to Ps 104:4.
1. If the beginning of this verse (7) was rewritten in modern English it might read, “And, speaking of angels...”
 2. “Who maketh his angels spirits” is not a question, but rather a statement.
 - a. The object is to show the reader that the angels serve God in a ministerial capacity.
 - b. The angels are great, Christ is greater.
 3. Throughout the Bible the word ‘spirit’ is often used in antithesis of the word ‘flesh.’
 - a. The latter would be what is symbolic of what is weak, frail and depraved.
 - b. The former for what is strong, pure and incorruptible (cf Jn 3:6; 4:24; 6:63).
 - c. This would not be degrading, or disparaging, to the angels in any way.
 - d. There is no way for the writer to exalt angels any loftier in the Hebrew mind than to call them spirits.

¹¹ Brenton Septuagint Translation

4. “[A]nd his ministers a flame of fire,” refers to the discharge of duties assigned to His angels.
 - a. The word “minister” denotes one who discharges a public office, especially at his own expense, like a public servant.
 - b. In the New Testament this word is used for:
 - 1) Earthly rulers (Rom 13:6).
 - 2) Paul (Rom 15:16).
 - 3) Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25).
 - 4) Christ (Heb 8:2).
 - c. Angels have always served as ministers before God and even before the enemies of God.
 - 1) The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:1-26).
 - 2) The punishment of the Israelites under David (2 Sam 24:15-17).
 - 3) The overthrow of the army of Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:35).
- E. Verse 8 is the converse of verse 7.
 1. “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God is for ever and ever,” which is taken from Ps 45:6.
 - a. The word “unto” shows the connection in the last two verses. The contrast, or proof, continues.
 - b. This is the fifth quotation used from the Old Testament to prove to the Hebrew mind that Christ is superior to angels.
 - c. The writer, by inspiration, makes application of Ps 45 to the Messiah.
 - d. The throne is the seat of dominion, or authority, of a monarch, which is applied to Christ (cf Acts 2:30).
Note: One of the most awe inspiring scenes in the New Testament is the throne-room scene of Rev 4:2-6.
 - e. Thus, the throne itself becomes the image of power.
Note: The words “O God” have a definite article in front of them in the original. It reads, ‘The God,’ and could apply to no one but the Christ (cf Lk 1:33).
 - f. Abundant proof that Christ is God and therefore, far above angels (cf Jn 1:1; Acts 20:28 and many others).
 2. “[I]s for ever and ever” teaches the perpetual nature of the kingdom.
 - a. From the moment it was established on earth (Acts 2) until the great day of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:2), the church will exist on earth worshipping and serving (1 Cor 15:24).
 - b. Many have a misconception of the words “for ever and ever.” Some may want to apply a literal definition, or even a fairy tale concept.
 - c. These words, both in the Hebrew and the Greek, have the idea of an age, or a specific period of time (cf Ex 14:13; 19:9; 28:43; 31:16, 17).
 - d. We live in the last age, the last dispensation, the last period of time.
Note: The words “for ever and ever” and “everlasting” are often used interchangeably.

3. “[A] scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.”
 - a. The scepter of old was a symbol of dominion and power (cf Gen 49:10; Num 24:17).
 - b. A scepter in the hand of the king was used a great deal in the book of Esther, e.g., 4:11; 5:2; 8:4.
 Note: An interesting side study is the word for scepter. It is most often translated as “tribe,” like a branch of a family (cf Gen 49:16, 28; The Greek equivalent is seen in Heb 11:21).
- F. The continuation of the quote from Psalm 45:6, 7 is contained in verse 9.
 1. The writer of Psalm 45 (whomever it was) calls Christ God. Additional proof for the Hebrew mind.
 - a. The love of righteousness is a desired characteristic of a just governor (cf Isa 32:1; Jer 23:5).
 - b. The righteousness of God requires that He hate iniquity (cf Ps 119:104, 128).
 2. He was anointed with oil, a special privilege, or, what the New Testament refers to as an unction (an anointing, NKJ) (cf 1 Jn 2:20).
 - a. He was anointed “with the oil of gladness,” which may refer to His victory over death, His pleasing the Father with total obedience, or the joy His followers obtained in His resurrection.
 Note: “Gladness” comes from a word that means *to jump for joy*.¹²
 - b. It is possible this anointing is the baptism of Jesus (cf Matt 3:16; Lk 4:18, which is a quote from Isa 61:1).
- G. Verses 10-12 contrast His eternal nature to the angels, who were created beings and therefore, not eternal.
 1. These three verses are a quotation from Ps 102:25-27.
 - a. These inspired word were first used in reference to Jehovah and are now used to address Christ.¹³
 - b. The writer is connecting Ps 102:25, God creating the world with Heb 1:10, Christ creating the world. Inspiration equates them.
 2. “[L]aid the foundation of the earth” is common language for creation.
 - a. Both Psalm 102 and Heb 1:10 have “heavens” in the plural. A reference to the whole created order, e.g., earthly and heavenly (cf 2 Cor 12:2).
 - b. “Heavens” is used many times in the plural, e.g., Gen 2:1, 4; Ps 68:4, 8, 33, etc.
 - c. It is used in the plural five times in Hebrews alone, i.e., 4:14; 7:26; 8:1; 9:23.

¹² Strong’s #20 and #242

¹³ Robert Milligan, in his commentary said, “Vss 10, 11, 12, as well as vss 8 and 9 are to be taken and construed as the testimony of God the Father, speaking by the mouth of one of his holy prophets concerning his son, Jesus Christ,” page 78.

- d. “[T]he word of thy hands” is an example of anthropomorphism of God, so we can have the possibility to grasp God.¹⁴
- 3. Verse 11 is a simple statement of the everlastingness of God.
 - a. The things created will pass, the eternal will not (cf Isa 34:4; 51:6).
 - b. The temporary nature of the terrestrial was taught by Jesus (Matt 24:35) and Peter (2 Peter 3:7, 10).
 - c. The picturesque language in verse 11 is resplendent, “[A]nd they shall wax old as doth a garment.”
 - 1) When, by long use, we wear our clothing out, we lay them aside and replace them with new. That image is what God has in store for us.
 - 2) Cloths wear out, fashions change with the tracing of time, not so with heaven.
 - 3) The word used here means to declare obsolete. At Christ’s return this old world will no longer have a use. It will be obsolete.
 - d. There was a time when heaven and earth did not exist. They were created at the beginning of Genesis 1.¹⁵
 - 1). There was a time when angels did not exist. They are created beings.
 - 2). There has never been a time when the godhead did not exist.
- 4. Verse 12 illustrates that when a garment worn out and obsolete is then rolled up by the owner and replaced.
 - a. The NKJ uses the word ‘cloak’ in place of “vesture,” that is the right picture, a garment which wraps around.
 - b. “[S]hall be changed” or exchanged for something new.
 - c. “[T]hy years shall not fail” or ‘thy years shall not end.’
 - d. Christ is changeless. In an ever changing universe He offers stability (cf Heb 13:8).
 - e. How foolish to pay homage to anyone or anything less than the creator!
Note: It seems verse 13 is a summation to the arguments (proofs) posed in verses 5-12.
- H. “But to which of the angels said he at any time,” which is obviously rhetorical.
 - 1. The writer now quotes Ps 110:1.
 - a. The right hand is a place of honor (see comments on verse 3).
 - b. That high honor was never given to an angel, it had been reserved for the Christ (cf Acts 2:34-36).
 - c. When pressed by the Pharisees, Jesus used Matt 22:43, 44 in His own defense (both Mark 12:36 and Luke 20:42 include this quote).
 - 2. “[U]ntil I make thine enemies thy footstool” is the same as what Paul quoted in 1 Cor 15:25.
 - a. With our modern-day recliners we might miss the significance. A footstool was/is placed at the front of a chair to rest the feet.

¹⁴ He is often spoken of as having human, physical characteristics for our benefit.

¹⁵ “They had a beginning, they will have a terminus.” R. R. Taylor, Jr. Page 26.

- b. The writer is not alluding to the resting of feet. The word “footstool” comes from three Greek words which mean to be under one’s feet, subjection.
- c. There was a custom in ancient days where the conqueror would put his foot on the neck of the vanquished, symbolizing dominance.
- d. The Jews did this very thing when conquering the Promised Land (cf Josh 10:24, 25).
Note: We see this in pack animals, the subordinate ones will lay on their backs, exposing their necks, or throats, to the dominate one.
- e. Since the word is plural (enemies) it cannot mean Satan alone, or even death, alone (cf 1 Cor 15:26).
- f. Most likely it refers to all enemies of Christ and His church.
- g. The last verses of Rev 19 are ripe with this imagery.

Note: Before we look at the last verse of this chapter we need to see what the writer of Hebrews has done in presenting proof of Christ being “better:”

In verse 5 he quoted Ps 2:7.

In verse 6 he quoted Ps 97:7.

In verse 7 he quoted Ps 104:4.

In verse 8 he quoted Ps 45:6.

In verse 9 he quoted Ps 45:7.

In verse 10-12 he quoted Ps 102:25-27.

In verse 13 he quoted Ps 110:1.

Inspiration using scripture to prove scripture. Nothing could be better.

- I. Before this thought is concluded the writer reminds the reader that angels are servants, ministering spirits, dispatched at the bidding of another.
 - 1. Since the very nature of angels is that of servants then they are not equal to the Christ, and are in fact, inferior to Him (cf Ps 103:20, 21; 104:4).
Note: It appears that some of the Jews were superstitious, maybe even idolatrous, about angels. That is also true today.
 - 2. If “sent” then they had no power of their own.
 - 3. We see angels used by God in both Old and New Testaments: Sodom, Gen 19:1; Jacob’s ladder, Gen 28:12; caring for Jesus, Matt 4:11.
 - 4. We can only know what God has revealed in the scriptures about angels. That is where we need to leave the matter.
 - 5. Christ’s superiority over angels is now firmly established.

Hebrews 2

There is great danger in neglecting the salvation offered by Christ

- I. The first four verses of chapter 2 hinge on the ‘proofs’ established in chapter 1 (1-4).
- A. “Therefore we ought” (we must, NKJ) implies urgent danger,¹⁶ the necessity of heeding the superiority of Christ. The writer of Hebrews is insistent.
Note: The word “ought” is translated in this fashion (ought) 31 times, the same word is translated “must” 58 times.
1. Since Christ is superior to angels and prophets “we ought (must) to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard.”
Note: With the inclusion of the pronoun “we” the writer included himself in this grave warning.
 - a. What had the readers of this book (letter) heard? The gospel, the good news that they could be freed from the burden of sin by faith and obedience (cf Mk 16:15, 16).
 - 1) Maybe they had heard it from the lips of Jesus. He did all of His earthly teaching within a relatively small geographical area. Some of them probably heard Him teach.
Note: Jesus taught all through the country north and east of Jerusalem, for a period of more than three years¹⁷ (cf Jn 18:20).
 - 2) Maybe they heard the apostles teach. The gospel was preached in the city of Jerusalem at its inception. Some of them may have been there for that first Pentecost after His resurrection (cf Acts 2:4-6).
 - 3) The church grew rapidly in those early years (cf Acts 2:41; 4:4).
Maybe they heard the members of the church of Christ sharing the good news the way members are supposed to do (cf 2 Tim 2:2).
 - 4) Maybe they got the truth from written documents, like this letter.
 - b. The fact is they had been converted by the truth, now they had to stay with that singular truth (cf Prov 23:23).
 - c. To give “more earnest heed” means we can lose what we have gained in Christ (cf Heb 3:12; 12:15). The thought of ‘heeding’ is to set our minds towards, to pay attention, to be cautious.¹⁸
Note: If we rearrange the words of this passage it reveals that we ought to earnestly give heed to the things spoken.
 - d. Luke uses this word towards the people of Samaria in Acts 8:5, 6 (also see Acts 16:14, same word as “she attended), and Paul uses this word in reference to the elders in Acts 20:28.

¹⁶ Bengel’s Gnomes, “it behoves.”

¹⁷ In Jerusalem, Jn 3; in Samaria, Jn 4; In Galilee, Jn 4-8; In Peraea, Jn 9-10 (a name given by Josephus to the region east of the Jordan, Jn 10:40). An approximate distance of 100 miles north from Jerusalem. The only time it appears that Jesus was ever more than a few miles south of Jerusalem was when He was wondering in the wilderness at His temptation.

¹⁸ Strong’s #4337

2. “[T]hings which we have heard” is ripe with meaning. The facts, promises and warnings of the inspired writers and teachers.
 - a. God created man in His own image; happy, pure and holy (cf Gen 1:26, 27; Ecc 7:29; Eph 4:24).
 - b. Adam, through disobedience, fell, and by so doing ushered sin into this world (cf Gen 3:9-19; Rom 5:12).
 - c. In this hopeless condition, God provided the perfect remedy for man’s needs and God’s requirements (cf John 3:16; Rom 3:21-26).
 - d. To that end, God became incarnate and lived among mankind in order to become the sin-sacrifice that was needed (cf 2 Cor 5:14, 15; 1 Tim 2:6).
 - e. He became the high priest and offered His blood in the Holy of holies not made with hands (cf Heb 9:11, 12, 24).
 - f. He became that sacrifice which was killed and buried, but rose again on the third day (cf 1 Cor 15:1-4).
 - g. He made Himself known among men (for forty days after His resurrection, Acts 1:3) and then re-ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9).
 - h. He sent the Holy Ghost to the apostles to qualify them for the mission of spreading the good news on His behalf (cf John 16:13; Acts 1:8).
 - i. That ‘good news’ is salvation from all past sins, which is now promised to all who truly believe in Christ; confess His name, repent of their sins and submit to the authority of Christ by being baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for the remission of sins (cf Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom 10:10).
 - j. Those who continue to walk soberly, righteously and godly will ultimately be admitted into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord (cf Mark 13:13; 2 Pet 1:5-11).
 - k. These are the “things” heard and which must be followed. If not, then they may slip from our grasp. We will be as lost as a boat loosed from its mooring, adrift, without rudder or compass.¹⁹
 - l. This drifting could be the result of several factors:
 - 1) Possibly not being properly anchored (cf Heb 6:19).
 - 2) Powerful currents, i.e., peer-pressure, wanting to be popular, either with denominations or worldly friends, weak commitment, etc. (cf Matt 7:13, 14).
 - 3) Not putting on the whole armor of God (cf Eph 6:11).
 - 4) Cares of this world, i.e., money, career or entertainment becoming more important (cf Mk 4:19).
 - 5) Lack of true Bible study (cf Hosea 4:6).
3. “[W]e should let them slip” is from a single Greek word which reveals two very important points:

¹⁹ Ibid, #3901, figuratively, to carelessly pass.

- a. God does not want us to miss out on our heavenly reward (cf Col 1:23; Rev 3:3).
 - b. If we do not “give heed,” we can miss out on our heavenly reward (cf 1 Tim 4:16; Heb 3:12).
 - c. “[L]et them slip,” (lest we drift away, NKJ) means *to flow past, glide by*.²⁰ A warning to not drift from the truth of God’s word.
Note: The idea of “slip” or to drift, is in contrast with giving “earnest heed.” There are relatively few people who make a deliberate break with the Lord. Instead, they fall away gradually (drift), with little thought of the consequences. It is natural for a boat to drift in the current, often to its own destruction. Simple neglect will cause that destruction. However, if one wants to be saved it takes effort and determination. It takes earnest heed.
4. Since the Greek word “slip” has to do with drifting, let us expand on that concept. We will not “slip” or “drift” into heaven (cf Heb 11:16).
- a. Drifting will not accomplish our desires. We must set our sails and plot the course in order to land safely on that heavenly shore (cf Rev 3:3).
 - b. Solomon is a good example of what slipping will do to our souls (cf 1 Kings 3:3, then 1 Kings 11:4).
Note: Slow apostasy is just as deadly as any other kind! There was somewhere around forty years between those two verses in 1 Kings. People change, people’s ideas change, God does not change (cf Mal 3:6)!
 - c. God has filled His holy book with warnings to keep us from drifting. Paul did his best to warn Timothy (cf 1 Tim 4:1, 2; 2 Tim 4:2-4).
 - d. The danger of slipping was/is real.
Note: Verse 1 of chapter 2 is the first time the theme of this book is stated. Basically, you are now in Christ and therefore saved, do not allow this blessing to slip through your fingers by accepting false teaching.²¹
- B. “For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast,” refers to those teachings set forth through angels in the Old Testament (God’s words relayed by angels) (cf Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19).
Note: There is an interesting order of information established; God gave information to the angels, who, in turn, gave the information to Moses, who gave the message to the people (second or third hand). By contrast, our message was spoken by His Son, directly to the people, thus showing superiority.
- 1. If the law, or the words spoken by angels, was stedfast, which means unchangeable or unalterable (cf Heb 10:28), how much greater must be the law given by His Son? We will discuss that point more in verse 3.
 - a. The law made no allowances for transgressions what-so-ever (cf Num 15:32-36).
 - b. Death to those disobedient to parents (cf Deut 21:18-21).

²⁰ Vine’s page 339, Vol 1.

²¹ That false teaching, in this case, would be going back to Judaism.

- c. If we can see this truth under the old law we should understand our responsibilities and blessings under our superior law.
 - d. Our punishment for disobeying the better law could not be less than for those who disobeyed under the old, inferior law.
2. “[A]nd every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward,” refers to the law the angels gave to mankind. Notice the past tense.
- a. The “transgression and disobedience” would be whether one disobeyed the law or if one did not perform the law. The sins of omission and commission. Equally grievous in God’s sight.
 - b. “Transgression” would be going aside, deviation or digression (cf 1 Tim 2:14).²² The same word is translated “breaking” in Rom 2:23.
 - c. “Disobedience” would be the half-hearted attention or carelessly ignored omission of requirements (cf James 1:27, ‘visit’ means *to care for, exercise oversight, to visit with help*).²³
 - d. “[J]ust recompense of reward” is the wage, or the payment for sin, or in other words, you get what you deserve. It is used for punishment, or for reward, depending on the context (cf Heb 10:35; 11:26).
- C. Then a question is asked, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.”
- 1. The contrast in these words is between the commands and threats uttered by angels and that which was spoken by the Lord (cf Heb 1:1, 2).
 - a. The answer is, of course, we shall not escape (cf 1 Pet 4:17, 18; Rev 6:16).
 - b. If those who had fewer privileges than we have could not escape, but fell under the displeasure of the Creator, how do we think we can escape if we neglect the greater salvation and greater privileges²⁴ (cf Heb 12:25)?
 - c. The word “neglect” denotes *to be careless*, or *not to care*²⁵ and some translate it as ‘having disregarded,’ making it a doctrine that had already happened.²⁶
 - d. Many of the great calamities of life are rooted in the concept of neglect. By the very nature of the word our neglect is most often leaving out what God desires from us. Not rebellion, not fighting against Him, simply ‘not doing’ proper things.
 Note: A modern application of these words would apply to every false teacher who “neglects” the pure standard of the Bible. There is not a false teacher in the brotherhood (or outside) who gives proper respect to the Bible. If they did give proper respect to the scriptures they would stop their digressions (cf 1 Pet 2:1, 2).

²² Bengel’s Gnomen, transgression is “doing evil;” disobedience is “neglecting to do good.”

²³ Vine’s, page 191, Vol 4

²⁴ Adam Clarke’s Commentary, “Their offence was high, ours, indescribably higher.”

²⁵ Vine’s page 107, Vol 3.

²⁶ WVBS, Hebrews class notes, page 32.

- e. Jesus had condemned the generation of Jews in His time with words like, “Ye serpents, ye generations of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell” (Matt 23:33)?
Note: The “if” in this verse (Heb 2:3) is not in the original, it is supplied by the translators.
2. The salvation through Jesus, the Christ was first spoken (“at the first,” v 3) by His own lips (cf Matt 4:17). Then it was confirmed by those who heard Him (cf Lk 1:1, 2).
 - a. The writer declares that this salvation is “great.” What makes it so great?
A number of things:
 - 1) The terrible destruction it saves us from.
 - 2) The greatness of heaven, our reward.
 - 3) The strength of our enemy, that is overcome.
 - 4) The greatness of the people it covers.
 - 5) Maybe the most important reason, it cost the blood of the Christ.
Note: The greatest cost, by the greatest teacher, for the greatest number, for the greatest reward. Yes, a great salvation. Let us not neglect it.
 - b. This salvation was “confirmed unto us” is not definitive enough to know exactly who the “us” is. Possibly the church of Christ in Jerusalem, who was receiving this letter (cf Mk 16:15-19; Acts 10:40-42).
- D. “God also bearing them witness” continues the thought from verse 3.
1. The context requires the witnessing not to be just for the message, but for the salvation revealed by the message.
 - a. God is the true and greatest of witnesses, but He is not alone in bearing witness (cf Jn 15:26, 27; Acts 1:21, 22; 4:33).
 - b. The ‘witnessing’ inspiration records here is four-fold. These four forms of evidence are often lumped together, but not here. Separated for emphasis and significance.
 - 1) “[S]igns” or miracles, done for a particular purpose, like proving or confirming the message (cf Mk 16:17-20).
Note: This is what the Pharisees asked of Him in Matt 12:38, it is the same word.
 - 2) “[W]onders” are that which leans more toward the result of the miracles, the ‘awe’ effect (cf Acts 3:10).²⁷
 - 3) “[D]ivers miracles” means miracles that are not of one class, e.g., healing the sick (Lk 5:24), Luke uses it towards the people of Samaria in Acts 8:5, 6 (also see Acts 16:14, same word as “she attended”).
 - a) “[G]ifts of the Holy Ghost” which was given to Jesus without measure (cf Jn 3:34), then distributed among the Christians “according to his own will” (cf 1 Cor 12:4-11).

²⁷ Vine’s “to cause the beholder to marvel, always used in the plural, page 228, Vol 4.

- b) Probably connected to the transfer of the gifts of the Holy Ghost to others (cf Acts 8:17, 18; 19:6).
 - 2. Drifting away by any Christian is caused by the failure to face clear and recorded evidence. Apostasy stems from an attitude of indifference in spite of the witnesses of God's holy book.
 - a. The signs, wonders, miracles and gifts of this verse were designed by God to be used within their purpose and within their time-frame and then to vanish away (cf 1 Cor 13:8-10).
 - b. The truths of the "great salvation" have been established, therefore they do not need to be re-witnessed or re-confirmed (cf 2 Tim 3:16, 17).
 - c. There should be no desire to go back to an old, defunct law, or to a time when things were dimmer (cf 1 Cor 13:12).
- II. Christ's work in the flesh was for our salvation. He was born as a man so He could die as a sacrifice for this world (5-9).

Note: The rest of chapter 2 returns to the subject of Christ's superiority over angels. For this study we will break these verses into three sections.

- A. "[T]he world to come" does not mean some future world, but the world (inhabited earth) under the jurisdiction of the New Testament law (cf Rev 3:10; 16:14).

Note: The word "world" here is the same as used in 1:6.

- 1. The superiority in verse 5 was never given to angels.
 - a. This is the writer's transitional statement. It means the angels were not, and will not be the ones in charge of the world "to come" (cf Ps 8:5, 6).
 - b. Verse 5 ends with "whereof we speak," which means 'that is what I am writing about.' A reference to Christianity (which was the next age or next dispensation) being superior to Judaism.
 - c. This world has been under His subjection since the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, therefore superseding the old law (cf Col 2:14).
- 2. "But one testified in a certain place," (v 6) refers to Ps 8:4-6.
 - a. The "one" is David, that notable person whom the readers of this letter would highly respect.

Note: It was common for the writer to use expression like "in a certain place," e.g., 4:4; 5:6.²⁸
 - b. Job posed this same question, "what is man," to Eliphaz, the Temanite in Job 7:17 and then again in 15:14.
 - c. The implication is the insignificance of man. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" "[M]an" stands for mankind, in general.
 - d. To ask the question in different words, what is it in man that gets this much attention from God?
 - e. Why, in our weak and sinful condition, would God honor us (cf Job 25:6)?

²⁸ Adam Clarke wrote in his commentary, "It is such a mode of quotation as we sometimes use when we speak of a very eminent person who is well known; as that very eminent person, that great philosopher, that celebrated divine, that inspired teacher of the Gentiles...The mode of quotation therefore implies, not ignorance, but reverence."

- f. When we ponder His awesomeness and then our own insignificance, it is no wonder we ask why He thinks of us, even periodically.
 - g. Yet, He does. Not only does He think of us, He cares for us, protects us and provides for us.
3. “[O]r the son of man, that thou visitest him?”
 - a. The vast majority of times the phrase “son of man” is used it is in reference to Jesus (cf Matt 12:8, 32, 40).
Note: It was His favorite way of referring to Himself (the expression is used 32 times in Matthew alone, e.g., Matt 8:20, 9:6, 10:23, etc.).
 - b. Other times it is used to refer to man in general, without meaning the Messiah (for example, the expression “son of man” is used approximately 93 times in Ezekiel referring to the prophet, and again, here in our text).
 - c. “[V]isitest” (take care of him, NKJ), means to look after or to relieve²⁹ and is used in this fashion in Acts 15:14, 36 (cf James 1:27).
 4. “Thou madest him a little lower than the angels,” (v 7) or a little less than the divine nature.
 - a. The word “little” means smaller or less in degree, but here is applied to time; for a little while³⁰ (as used in Luke 22:58).
 - b. “[T]hou crownedst him with glory and honour,” refers to God’s purpose (or at least one of His purposes) in creating man, who was destined to have mastery over nature (cf Gen 1:26)
 - 1) This was true of Adam in every sense while he was in his innocent state (cf Gen 2:15, 16).
 - 2) The last few words of verse 7 and the first few of verse 8 are taken from Ps 8:6.
 - 3) Man was God’s crowning achievement, His pinnacle. The word for “crownedst” is used only three times in the New Testament; v 9, and 2 Tim 2:5.
 - c. We do not like to be ‘second best’ in anything, especially us Americans. Because we are now in a fleshly state we are a little lower than angels, but higher (greater) than any and all other life forms on earth. We are the crown-jewels of God’s creative power. In the next world we will get a spiritual ‘up-grade.’
 5. “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet,” was true (in the Garden), but has not been true for many thousands of years.
 - a. We are the pinnacle of God’s creation, but sin caused mankind to fall.
 - b. We control so very little of our world since our digression; weather, disease, aging.
 - c. The Garden of Eden was so much more than a beautiful, picturesque, utopia. It was God’s perfect gift to His greatest creation.

²⁹ Strong’s #1980

³⁰ Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, commentary.

- d. Adam took off that glorious crown God placed on his head and tossed it aside, as if it was without value, and followed the lie of Satan.
 - e. Thankfully, that is not the end of the story.
6. The last phrase in verse 8 reads, “But now we see not yet all things put under him.” If we rearrange the words it makes the meaning clear. ‘It is not now true that all things are subject to the control of man.’
- a. We certainly have general control over the earth, but not total control.
 - b. We have control over most creatures, but not total control.
 - c. Truthfully, mankind finds himself in the horrific position of not even being able to control himself!
 - d. Ps 8 was not viewed as Messianic for centuries. The Hebrews writer opens our eyes to what David saw in the long ago (cf 1 Cor 15:24, 25).
- B. “But we see Jesus” (v 9) is the contrast between man and savior. The word “But” could have been rendered “Now.”
1. All the world needs to see Jesus and what He has done for mankind.
Note: Much of the rest of this chapter deals with why God came in the flesh:
 - a. God cannot die. He needed a human body in order to be the perfect sacrifice. He owed us nothing, it was His plan devoted to our needs.
 - b. So that He could overcome the power the devil had in death (v 14).
 - c. To deliver us from the fear of bondage and death (v 15).
 - d. To be the perfect High Priest who can relate to human suffering and temptation (vv 17, 18).
 - e. To make for us the reconciliation for our sins (v 17).
Note: Mankind had a problem, Jesus was the solution to that problem.
 2. For a temporary period of time God incarnate³¹ “was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death” (cf Heb 10:5).
 - a. During His time incarnate He did not cease to be divine. No more than a king who removes his kingly robes and walks among his subjects stops being the king.
 - b. He came from lofty heights to take the form of common man in order to die on the cross as our propitiation (cf Phil 2:5-9).³²
 - c. His suffering and death was the path He took to be “crowned with glory and honour” (cf Heb 5:7-10; 9:12).
 - d. This is the complete fulfillment of David’s Messianic statement in Ps 8 (cf Ps 21:3-5).
 - e. Billions of people are now fully aware that Jesus, as the Christ, lived and died to make salvation possible. Yet, so very few obey (cf Matt 7:13, 14).
 3. “[T]hat he by the grace of God should taste death for every man,” reveals the benevolent purpose and actions of Jesus for mankind through God’s grace (cf Jn 1:29; 12:32).

³¹ Deity embodied in human form.

³² For a fuller discussion of His altruistic death see class notes from *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, pages 11-13, this author.

- a. The primary meaning of “taste” has to do with food. It is translated as a form of “eat” in three places, e.g., Acts 10:10; 20:11; 23:14.
- b. Here, in a figurative sense, it means to experience. He experienced death, so we can avoid that experience, spiritually speaking (cf Jn 8:52).
- c. This is one of those truly wonderful passages which should cause the readers of all ages to renew their loyalty to Him of whom we owe so much (cf Rev 5:9).

III. Christ was perfected through suffering (10-13).

Note: The writer may possibly be answering an objection (either real or pre-emptive) about the Messiah and suffering. Certainly a difficult subject for the Hebrew people who would view the Messiah as regal.

A. “For it became him” (was fitting for Him, NKJ), means it was fit for God’s purpose (cf Lk 24:26, 46).

1. The voluntary incarnation and humiliation of the second member of the godhead is epitomized in John 3:16.
2. “[F]or whom,” and “by whom” are in respect to the universe. Just as every creation has to have, by necessity, a creator, the same is true of our salvation.
 - a. Mankind has the hope of reconciliation to God because of the plan for our redemption, which was placed in motion from the foundation of the world (cf 1 Pet 1:19, 20; Rev 13:8).
 - b. It was not a work of fate or chance. It was divine planning, made perfect in the infamous and disgraceful rejection of the Messiah (cf Jn 19:15).
 - c. To bring “many sons to glory” is done by belief which causes us to obey (cf Rom 8:14).
 - d. He died to save “many,” but sadly, many will not obey the plan for obtaining salvation (cf Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16).
3. “[T]o make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.”
 - a. The word “captain” is also translated as “Prince” (Acts 3:15; 5:31) and “author” (Heb 12:2) and here is necessarily tied to His suffering.³³
 - b. In a general sense it is true that all humans are the ‘sons of God’ (cf Acts 17:28).
 - c. “[B]ringing” means *to lead*³⁴ to glory (cf 1 Thess 4:14).
 - d. Obedience saves us. It was a plan with a scope big enough to save everyone, but our collaboration is required. (cf Jn 8:14; Gal 3:26).
 - e. The captain, leader, commander of His army leads an all voluntary force. We are not conscripted against our will. Willing participants desire to follow their perfect captain (cf Heb 12:2).
 - f. “[P]erfect” points to His work and being complete. It is used as a verb (action) instead of an adjective. His completeness came through His suffering.

³³ Which fundamentally refutes premillennialism. Jesus came to earth to die, not to set up a kingdom. It was/is the plan to save many, not a specific, select few.

³⁴ Strong’s #71

Note: We must keep in mind He was already perfect, He was God. But, He was not the perfect Saviour until He endured the suffering, trials, temptations and death of the cross.

- B. Verse 11 shows Christ as the one sanctifying and the sons (v 10) bring sanctified.
1. This verse begins a section devoted to unity. He was not ashamed to have them all as brothers (cf Acts 17:26).
 - a. Unity is paramount in the followers of Christ (cf Jn 10:16; 17:11, 21, 22).
 - b. Any deviation from what the Bible teaches voids the unity in Christ and separates us from the fellowship of the Father.
 - 1) Our goal is to make sure, after all He has done for us, that we live our religious lives so that He is not ashamed of us.
 - 2) His death brought those who were once vile sinners into the church of Christ, also known as His bride (cf Rev 21:9; 22:17).
 - 3) Every husband has pride in his chaste bride (cf 2 Cor 11:2).
 - c. The writer was establishing the bond of brotherhood, or the closeness of family. He will now, once again, go back to draw information from the Old Testament to collaborate his point.
 2. "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren," (v 12) is a quote from Ps 22:22, 25.
 - a. The writer of this Psalm (probably David) is in deep distress and promises to praise Jehovah for deliverance. The inspired Hebrews writer applies the Psalm as Messianic and prophetic, making Christ the speaker.
 - b. He has declared God's name to the brethren (cf Jn 17:6, 26).
 3. "[I]n the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee"³⁵ (v 12).

Note: We know that Jesus sang praise to God even before the church was started (cf Mk 14:26). The implication here might be to show He is with us when we worship, when we gather around the Lord's table He is there, as He has promised (cf Matt 26:29).

 - a. The word "church" is from *ekklesia*, which means *the called out*.³⁶ Called out of the world (cf James 2:7).
 - b. The word, by itself, carries no spiritual significance. It means any gathering, e.g., Acts 19:32, 39 and 41 are the same word.
 - c. For the word to mean the church of the Bible (the church of Christ) it has to be a gathering of baptized, obedient believers (cf Acts 5:11; 8:1).
 - d. Any gathering of people who do not follow what the New Testament requires as worship cannot be the *ekklesia* of the scriptures.³⁷

³⁵ For a more detailed understanding of why the scriptures use "sing" and not play, see *Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, pages 38, 39, and *Paul's Letter to the Colossians*, appendix A, same author.

³⁶ Strong's #1577

³⁷ J.B. Coffman, Commentary on Hebrews, "Our author uses the word *ekklesia* for congregation. The employment of this word in a synonymous parallelism with "brethren" in a Christian context indicates that those whom the Son of God is pleased to call his brethren are members of his church." Page 52.

C. “And again,” (v 13, used twice) is the repetition of quotes drawn from the Hebrew scriptures.

Note: It appears this verse is a conglomeration of several passages (Ps 18:2; Isa 8:17, 18; 12:2) that inspiration tied together to show even the Messiah put His trust in God.

1. The Hebrew brethren were being encouraged to trust God. Christ did, so should they.

Note: We like to claim we trust Him. We even sing the song “Trust and Obey,” but do we live our lives like we really trust Him?

2. The second “And again” in this verse is from Isa 8:18. It is a partial quote from a powerful paragraph on fearing the Lord and heeding His word.

3. The point of using these passages is to get the Hebrew Christian to recognize that these truths and promises had been given in the long ago. The force of these ancient quotes would be enough to keep them from turning back to the old law and therefore, falling from grace (cf Gal 5:1-4).

IV. It was necessary for the captain, the author of our salvation, to become flesh (14-18).

Note: We often see the words “partakers of flesh and blood” and automatically relate it to the Lord’s supper in our minds. This section of scripture has nothing, whatsoever, to do with the Lord’s supper. The palpable elements of flesh and blood are the subjects.

A. The partaking of flesh and blood is simply connecting the earthly life Jesus lived as typical of all humans (cf 1 Cor 15:50; Eph 6:12).

Note: Animals are “flesh and blood,” but animals are not the same as humans.

God created us differently. We are the apex of His creation. All the animals sacrificed over the approximate 4,000 years of the Old Testament could not appease God. The perfect sacrifice of Jesus’ human body, His “flesh and blood” did (cf Jn 1:29, 36).

1. Jesus shared in humanity in order to save humanity (cf Rom 8:3; Phil 2:7, 8).

2. “[T]hat through death he might destroy” was God’s plan. God was to die so man could live (cf 1 Tim 3:16).

a. The words “he might destroy,” come from a single Greek word³⁸ which means *to render useless*, or *rendered powerless*.

b. Although physical death still exists, the sting of that death has been taken away in the victorious sacrifice of Jesus as our Christ (cf 1 Cor 15:55; 2 Tim 1:10).

Note: Death always causes a ‘sting.’ The death of one who dies in Christ will still sting, but it opens the door to a better place, which causes the sting to hurt a little less.³⁹

³⁸ Strong’s #2673S

³⁹ When we get past the hurt of losing a loved one who was ‘in Christ’ we can find both comfort and hope.

- c. The devil was not destroyed at Jesus' first coming. That would have eliminated our choice and our required faithfulness. The devil will be destroyed at His second coming (cf Rev 20:10).
 - d. The devil still has power to tempt us and test our faith, but Jesus' sacrifice has given us the chance to be on the winning side. Jesus' victory over death gave us the possibility of victory over Satan.
 - e. For those who die in the Lord is the promise of comfort (described as Abraham's bosom, Lk 16, 22, 23) or (what Jesus called paradise, Lk 23:43). Victory.
 - f. There is a very different place reserved for those who will not obey, or for those who have once obeyed and then returned to the beggarly elements of the world (cf Gal 4:9; 2 Pet 2:20, 21).
Note: According to 2 Thess 1:8 those who do not know God, (the spiritually ignorant) and those who do know about Him, but choose to disregard the salvation offered, will be equally punished.
3. "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (v 15). We can see the former distress and despair and the present liberty.
- a. Christians do not have to fear being enslaved to the powers of Satan, or of sin and death.
 - b. "[D]elivered them" does not mean all will be delivered. It means all have the opportunity to be delivered, if they respond to the gospel call through obedience (cf Acts 22:16).
 - c. What is the only way to avoid the horror and terror of death and hell? How does a person overcome death? By being part of the Lord's church (cf Acts 2:47).
 - d. "[W]ere all their lifetime subject to bondage," are those who are in bondage to the master of this world (cf Jn 14:30; 16:11).
 - 1) Slaves of fear, slaves in miserable condition, in bondage to the evil master (cf Lk 1:74; Rom 8:15, 21).
 - 2) Before Christ's sacrifice there was no freedom, no comfort, no peace of mind from this miserable state.
 - e. Hallelujah, the sacrifice of Christ made God's plan for our salvation possible. He died our death. Reconciliation through propitiation.
 - 1) An academic belief in Christ will not save souls. Belief without willingness to obey is worse than useless. It gives false hope (cf 1 Jn 2:3; 5:2, 3).
 - 2) When one sincerely believes and faithfully obeys the Son they have the promise of eternal life (cf Jn 17:2; Acts 2:37-39; Rom 6:23).
 - 3) This confidence gives the saved no fear of death. Why? Because His victory over death swallowed up death's sting (cf 1 Cor 15:20).
Note: "Firstfruits" guarantees more fruit. The faithful will be additional fruit. We need to be thankful.

- 4) Dear friend, please do not stand on the outside and hope against hope for redemption. Become a Christian through obedience and enjoy assurance of victory through faithful obedience.
- B. In verse 16 the writer returns to focusing his thoughts on angels. The redemption of angels was not the purpose of Christ coming to earth (cf 2 Pet 2:4, 5; Jude 6).
1. He was the savior of “the seed of Abraham” (cf Matt 1:1; Gal 3:16).
 Note: This verse starts with “[f]or verily,” (For indeed, NKJ) which means truly, or for assuredly. He did not come as an angel or for angels, (He does not give aid to angels, NKJ).
 - a. Specifying the seed of Abraham would have special meaning to the Hebrew reader.
 - b. God’s people were the chosen, the seed of Abraham (cf Rom 4:16-18).
 - c. God’s people today are the chosen, the seed of Abraham (cf Gal 3:29).
 2. The fact that He came for humans and not angels is concluded by “[W]herefore” in verse 17. “[I]t behoved,” means He was under an obligation, or duty, to His brethren, the seed of Abraham (cf Heb 5:1, 2).
 - a. The same word is translated by ‘owe’ (7x), by ‘debtor’ (1x) and by ‘indebted’ (1x).
 Note: It is the same word used in Matt 18:28 (2x), 30 and 34.
 - b. This is preceded by “in all things,” which refers to His humanity. Being born, growing as a child and then as a man, without sin, faultless.
 3. “[T]o be made like unto his brethren,” refers to how He resembled us and how we will resemble Him in the end (cf Phil 2:7; 1 Jn 3:2).
 - a. Which allowed Him to become our “merciful and faithful high priest.”
 Note: The only other time this same Greek word for merciful is used is in what we call the beatitudes. “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy” (Matt 5:7).
 - b. Christ can be merciful because He knows what it is like to be human. He understands trials and temptations (cf Matt 4:1; Lk 22:28).
 - c. This God/man aspect of His life gives Him the unique position to be our “high priest” extraordinaire.⁴⁰
 - d. He became transcendent in mercy, pity and compassion because of His temporary, human manifestation.
 - e. The high priesthood came to a climax in Christ, who was not a descendant of Aaron. This fact will be a major point of the writer’s information and admonition (cf Heb 7:12).
 - f. Our High Priest is faithful to the Father and to us.
 4. “[T]o make reconciliation for the sins of the people” is how He was “merciful and faithful.”

⁴⁰ Aaron was the 1st High Priest. Only his sons were candidates to serve as High Priests (Ex 28). They had special clothing and offered special duties (Ex 29). They, alone, could enter into the Holy of holies on the Day of Atonement. They could have no physical handicaps. Could only marry a virgin from Israel.

- a. The words “make reconciliation for” come from a single Greek word that means *to atone for*.⁴¹
 Note: This same word is translated as “be merciful” in Luke 18:13.⁴² We obtain mercy for our sins, as God’s people, because of His reconciliation.
 - b. All of the high priests under the old law, with all of their animal sacrifices, could not do what our High Priest can do.
5. Verse 18 means because He has suffered He is able to sympathize with sufferers (cf Matt 26:37-39).
- a. He was “tempted,” which, according to Albert Barnes, means He was *put to the proof*.
 - b. The word “succour” (to aid, NKJ) is translated by the word “help” in most passages, e.g., Mk 9:22, 24 and Acts 16:9.
 - c. He would have had the ability (“he is able”) to sympathize with the sinner before His temptation, but now He can empathize as well (cf Heb 4:15).
 - d. This would apply to every aspect of our lives, but specifically, here it probably refers to the temptation of returning to the familiar, but defunct religion of Moses.
 - e. Angels could not help them, the law given by Moses could not help them, but Christ, who understands the temptations, can help them.
 Note: Chapter 2 sets up the understanding of chapter 3. Since Jesus had taken on humanity, since He has been sacrificed, since He knows how to help humanity, “WHEREFORE” (first word of chapter 3) He needs to be deeply considered.

⁴¹ Strong’s #2433

⁴² Luke 18:13 “And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner” (emphasis added, jb).

Hebrews 3

Christ is superior to, and therefore, more worthy than Moses

- I. The relationship in this chapter (vv 1-6) is based on, and closely connected to, the truths recorded in the previous chapter, i.e., since Christ had taken on the form of humanity, since He had suffered and had been sanctified, He knows how to help. Hence, the first word of this chapter, “Wherefore.”⁴³
 - A. These “holy brethren” (the Christians who were receiving this inspired letter) were in danger of falling away (cf 1 Thess 5:27; 2 Tim 1:9).
 1. This is a reference to those who were “in Christ” (cf Gal 3:26-28 Eph 1:1-3).
 - a. Those outside of Christ, no matter how religious, are not brethren.
Note: Sincerity is not the measure religious righteousness, e.g., Saul of Tarsus was very sincere, but wrong.
 - b. All of the thousands of Christians which were converted in the early chapters of the book of Acts were all very religious people. Yet, they were religiously wrong and needed to get “in Christ” (cf Acts 2:41; 4:4).
 - c. For us to call someone brother or sister who has not properly entered into the family of God is going beyond what the scriptures teach.⁴⁴
Note: There is no verse of scripture anywhere in the NT that tells Christians to be tolerant of someone else’s false doctrine. Jesus, and all inspired writers, condemned EVERY false teaching they confronted.
 2. The words “holy brethren” refer to anyone who is a saint. (cf Phil 4:21; Heb 3:1).
 - a. These words indicate the readers of this letter were IN Christ (cf Gal 1:22; Phil 1:1; Col 1:2, 4).⁴⁵
 - b. The word “holy” is translated as “holy” 16 times and is also translated as “saint” 16 times. So, we know of whom we are reading.
Note: It is a special and divine privilege to be called brethren. Let us never negate its beauty or value by calling someone outside of Christ brethren.
 3. “[P]artakers of the heavenly calling,” refers to those who have shared in the upward calling (cf Phil 3:14).
 - a. This call was to leave the bondage of sin and enter the kingdom of Christ.
 - b. That call is the gospel call, and is done by obeying the gospel (cf 2 Thess 2:14).
 - c. This calling originated in heaven and is designed to lead mankind to that heavenly home.
 4. “[C]onsider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.”

⁴³ Greek, “*whence*,” seeing we have such a sympathizing helper you ought to consider attentively, contemplate.

⁴⁴ Yet, we have liberals and change agents among us who are urging Christians to do this very thing.

⁴⁵ About 1,200 years after these words were written the Catholic Church falsely made up some new rules in order to become a saint. At times their rules change and sometimes their own rules are ignored for ‘sainthood.’

- a. The word “consider” carries a much deeper meaning than we normally attach to this word. It means *to attentively ponder* or *mediate carefully*. (cf 2 Tim 2:7).
 - b. The writer is calling for an intense re-examination of Jesus Christ as a preventive to their present apostasy.
 - c. “Apostle and High Priest” is important and interesting. An apostle is one who had been sent. The Father sent Him to be a little lower than the angels (cf Heb 2:7, 9).
 - d. “[T]he High Priest.” This is one of the main themes of the book of Hebrews. He was to be shown superior to the Old Testament High Priest.
 - 1) Why was this so important? If Jesus could be shown to be above the high Priest then the new law would automatically be superior to the old law.
 - 2) The Latin word for ‘priest’ is ‘pontifex,’ which means “a bridge builder.” Christ is the one who has built a bridge between man and God. Only He has the ability to speak to God for man, as He once spoke to man for God.
 - 3) The writer will bring the subject of the priesthood up again in chapter 4 and the high priest in chapter 5.
 - e. “[P]rofession, (confession, NKJ) is the one we all, as Christians, have confessed (cf Matt 10:32; Rom 10:9, 10).
 - 1) This same word is used two more times in this wonderful book (cf Heb 4:14; 10:23).
 - 2) Everyone who is a Christian has done this. It is one of those simple, yet mandatory prerequisites (cf Phil 2:11).
 - 3) As used in this context it probably is not a reference to our confessing sin, but a profession of our fidelity in Christ (cf Heb 4:14; 10:23).
 - f. “Christ Jesus” is inserted for emphasis.⁴⁶ Inspiration will compare Jesus Christ with Moses over the next few verses. As great as Moses was, Christ is superior.
- B. Having established Christ’s superiority over angels, the writer now focuses on Christ’s superiority over Moses. This great Old Testament character was profoundly revered by every Hebrew.
- 1. “Who was faithful” (v 2) is the same meaning as today. Someone who is faithful is a trustworthy person (cf Matt 24:21-23).
 - a. As a boy, Jesus was about His Father’s business (cf Lk 2:49).
 - b. He said, “I must work the works of Him that sent me...” (Jn 9:4).
 - c. At the end of His life His prayer was, “...nevertheless, not as I wilt, but as thou wilt” (Matt 26:39).

⁴⁶ A vast majority of the modern translations eliminate ‘Christ Jesus’ from the text. Some original manuscripts have the words and some do not. The KJV, NKJV and ASV (1901) have both words in the text.

- d. While on earth Jesus never sought His own glory, only that of the Father (cf Jn 6:38-40).⁴⁷
- 2. “[T]o him that appointed him” indicates God, the Father, appointed Christ and His earthly work.
 - a. Jesus demonstrated His absolute trust in the Father by going to the cross in humble obedience (cf Jn 6:38; 8:29).
 - b. We, in our desire for eternal life, have submitted ourselves in the likeness of our Saviour. That submission needs to be apparent, obvious, as was Jesus’ submission (cf Heb 5:9).
 - c. Moses was faithful, a great man of God, but he was not sinless. In anger and frustration he struck the rock rather than obeying God’s will (cf Num 20:8-11).
 - d. That sin caused him to be barred from the land promised (cf Num 20:12).
 - e. The emotions that filled Moses must have often filled Jesus as He dealt with the perverse and untoward generation of His day, yet without giving into the sin (cf Acts 2:40).
- 3. The word “house” is significant and appears seven times in the next five verses.⁴⁸
 - a. In the New Testament we see this same word used metaphorically for an entire nation (cf Acts 2:36) and a literally dwelling places (cf Acts 2:46 and even for the temple Solomon built (cf Acts 7:7).
 - b. The important point is that Moses was faithful **IN** his house, while Christ is faithful **OVER** His house (emphasis added, jb).
 - c. When Christ is compared to Moses, His superiority is always evident.
 - d. **Moses and Jesus: Similarities:**
 Note: All bold type is in original from Coffman’s Commentary.
 - 1) In their birth, both became sons of virgin princesses, Moses through adoption by Pharaoh's daughter, Christ by means of the incarnation, and his birth by miracle, of the virgin Mary.
 - 2) Both were Israelites, it being specifically prophesied that the Messiah would be raised up from amidst "the brethren" ([Deut 18:15](#)).
 - 3) Both were sent to the children of Israel, Moses from Midian, and Christ from heaven.
 - 4) Both forsook the high status of their lives to perform a mission of rescue, Moses leaving the court of Pharaoh, and Christ leaving heaven.
 - 5) Both were rejected. The Jews said to Moses, "Who made thee a ruler and judge over us" ([Exodus 2:14](#)). Christ was rejected and crucified.
 - 6) Both accomplished their missions. Moses delivered Israel from Egypt; Christ delivers from sin all who follow him.
 - 7) Both wrought many miracles, signs and wonders.

⁴⁷ The present tense participle indicates the Jesus was faithful while on earth and continues to be faithful.

⁴⁸ The word “house” can mean a dwelling, a family or even a household.

- 8) The first miracle of each had a startling resemblance. Moses changed the water into blood; Christ changed the water into wine.
- 9) The inauguration of the Law of Moses and that of Christ had this in common: that three thousand souls were involved in each case, three thousand being lost at Sinai, three thousand being saved at Pentecost ([Exodus 32:28](#) [sic 28]; [Acts 2:38](#)ff).
- 10) Both were transfigured, Moses on Sinai ([Exodus 34:29, 30](#)), Jesus on Mount Hermon ([Matthew 17:2](#)).
- 11) Both delivered God's law to people.
- 12) Both offered themselves to die for Israel ([Exodus 32:32](#); [John 10:17](#)).
- 13) Both made a marriage with the Gentiles, Moses literally, Christ in a figure, the Gentiles becoming a part of his bride ([Numbers 12:1](#); [Ephesians 5:25](#)ff).
- 14) Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness; Christ lifted himself upon the cross ([John 3:14](#)).
- 15) Israel was baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea ([1 Corinthians 10:2](#)); spiritual Israel are baptized into Christ ([Galatians 3:27](#)).
- 16) Moses gave to the people bread from heaven ([Exodus 16:15](#)); Christ gave the people loaves and fishes in the wilderness, a figure of him who is the Bread of Life ([John 6:31,49](#)ff). (Continued next page).
- 17) Both were the subjects of a special interposition on the part of God when they died, Moses being buried by God ([Deut 34:6](#)), and Christ being raised from the dead ([Mark 16:6](#)).
- 18) There are also many similarities between the lives of Moses the great Lawgiver of Israel and Jesus Christ the great Lawgiver of all mankind; but the above are far more than enough to establish the truth that Christ was indeed "the Prophet" like unto Moses ([Deut 18:15](#)).

e. Moses and Jesus: Contrasts:

- 1) Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ as a Son, over God's house.
- 2) Moses labored in a house he did not build, Christ in the house he built, his own house.
- 3) Moses did not lead the people into the promised land; Christ does lead the people into glory.
- 4) Moses was sinful, Christ is sinless ([Deut 32:51,52](#); [Hebrews 4:15](#)).
- 5) Moses brought only the patterns of things to come, Christ the realities.
- 6) Moses' miracles were inferior to those of Christ, as in the changing of the water already noted, and because Christ raised the dead.
- 7) Moses delivered from physical bondage, Christ from the spiritual bondage of sin.
- 8) Moses gave bread from heaven to sustain physical life, Christ bread from heaven that gives and sustains eternal life.

- 9) Moses appeared with Christ on the mount of transfiguration but was caught away, so that people saw "Jesus only" ([Matthew 17:8](#)).
 - 10) Moses' mission pertained only to Israel, Christ's, ultimately, to the "whole creation" ([Mark 16:15](#)).
 - 11) Moses was only a man; Christ was and is both God and man.
 - 12) Moses' body was buried and saw corruption; Christ's was spared that by means of the resurrection.
 - 13) Moses was not a high priest; Christ is the eternal High Priest.
 - 14) It would be nearly impossible to note all of the contrasts which proved the absolute supremacy and superiority of Christ over Moses, but enough are listed to give some indication of it.
(Taken from Coffman's commentary on Hebrews, pages 63-65).
4. "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses" (v 3) refers to Christ's being "deemed entitled or fit"⁴⁹ (which is what the word *worthy* means) because He built the house (cf Matt 16:18; Eph 2:20).
 - a. Being the builder of the house was never said about Moses.
Note: Old Testament language uses this expression about Rachel and Leah in Ruth 4:11, where it says "...which two did build the house of Israel..."
 - b. Moses was the leader of the family of God, as well as a member of that family. But, he was not the builder of the family.
 5. Not only was Christ the builder of that house, He was the builder of "all things" (v 4) (cf Jn 1:3, 10).
 - a. The superiority of Christ is established because He was the architect of all things built, both spiritual and physical (cf Jn 1:3, 10).
 - b. Evidence for creation by design abounds and can only be ignored through the rejection of facts and logic.⁵⁰ It is as simple as a watch requiring a watch-maker or a house requiring a house-builder.⁵¹
 - c. As the builder (architect) is greater than the building, Jesus is superior to Moses.
 - 1) A powerful syllogism to all honest minds can be stated as:
 - a) Something cannot come from nothing.
 - b) Something exists.
 - c) Therefore, something has always existed.
 - 2) We can easily see this and so could the Hebrew Christians.

⁴⁹ Strong's # 515

⁵⁰ J.B. Coffman wrote, "The thought expressed is a teleological thunderbolt; it is the ancient and indestructible argument from design, bluntly and unequivocally [sic] stated, first in the truism that every house has a builder, and secondly in the deduction that the far greater house of the whole universe likewise has its builder who can be none other than God." Pg. 71 (Ps 14:1; 53:1).

Note: "Teleological" is a word that means if something is made it takes a maker. Natural evolution (Darwinism) claims that life came from non-living matter. Evolution is not, nor has it ever been a theory. At best it is a guess or an assumption.

⁵¹ It takes significant more faith to believe in organic evolution than it does creation by an intelligent designer. The organic evolutionist must believe that everything came from nothing.

- C. This second comparison is given to show the superiority of a son over a servant. Jesus is the Son over the house; Moses was but a servant in the house (vv 5, 6).
1. A servant? Moses was a law-giver, a great leader, yet classified by scripture as a servant (cf Num 12:7).
 - a. Moses was not the head of the dispensation, God was.
 - b. We could say that Moses was ‘employed’ to get the message of God to the people (cf Josh 1:1-3; 9:24).
 - c. The particular word used here for “servant” is used nowhere else in the NT.⁵²
 Note: No doubt Moses was an honored servant, a special servant (possibly this is why a special, unique Greek word is used for him) but, still only a servant.
 2. “[F]or a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after” probably refers to the teachings of Moses about the coming Messiah (cf Deut 18:15; Lk 24:27, 44; Jn 1:45).
 - a. This testimony was the point of Peter’s (along with John) teaching after the lame man was healed at the temple’s gate (cf Acts 3:21, 22).
 - b. Moses was in the position of a communicator. God gave him information and he, in turn, gave that information to the people.
 - c. God selected the perfect individual to be His servant. Moses was meek (cf Num 12:3).
 - d. It would be a short step for most humans to become arrogant, egotistical and egocentric in his position.
 - e. The words “spoken after” might refer to both the prophetic words that will be spoken and the new, or next, covenant the Son would usher in.
 3. Christ (Messiah), as Son, was over His own house (v 6).
 - a. This phrase makes it clear that obedient believers are members of the household of God (cf Acts 2:41, 47; Eph 2:19).
 - b. God has always required obedience (cf Heb 5:9; 1 Pet 1:22).
 - c. “[W]hose house we are” includes the writer and all who will read the epistle (cf 1 Pet 2:5).
 - d. “[I]f we hold fast” is a conditional phrase intended for the Hebrew Christian and not for the Hebrew religion.
 Note: The “if” of this verse destroys the false doctrine of once saved always saved. They would be saved “if” they held fast until the end (cf Matt 10:22).
 - e. This testing ground, this proving ground for us is our everyday lives (cf 1 Pet 1:7; 4:12).
 - f. If a person falls from God’s grace, does that prove the person was never saved (cf 2 Pet 2:20)?
 Note: You cannot do something “again” if you have never done it before.

⁵² Vine’s says, “to serve, to heal, an attendant, servant, is a term of dignity and freedom,” pg 348, Vol 3.

- II. The Holy Ghost gives an example of the danger of falling away from the faith (7-11).
 Note: This entire section is a parenthetical insert (in KJV) to help explain the first six verses of the chapter. The sentence is broken between the “Wherefore” of verse 7 and the “Take heed” of verse 12.
- A. “Wherefore” (v 7) is a grave warning for the Hebrew Christians not to conduct themselves as their forefathers did and as a result of their actions were denied access to the land promised.
1. It appears the writer is indicating that the Holy Ghost is still speaking (by the written word) through Psalm 95.^{53 54}
 2. Having proven, beyond a doubt, that Jesus is superior to Moses the writer will now warn the readers about similar unfaithfulness shown to Moses during the wanderings from Egypt to the land promised.
 Note: We learn more from our failures than we do our successes. If we are wise enough to learn from someone else’s failure we are that much further ahead, i.e., Ananias and Sapphira, Peter, Demas, etc.
 3. “[A]s the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,” is divine proof of the inspiration of the Old Testament. Heb 4:7 will divulge David wrote this psalm, guided by the Holy Ghost to reveal God’s will.
 - a. “Today” when David wrote this Psalm was in reference to his generation. The writer of Hebrews takes the quote and applies it to the then present generation. A preacher/teacher/student using the same passage today can make the same application of both writers.
 - b. “Today” carries the weight of tomorrow not being guaranteed. The brevity and uncertainty of life makes procrastination dangerous (cf Prov 27:1; James 4:13, 14).
 - c. In the New Testament we never see a person delay their baptism. When convinced and convicted by the truth of God’s word they immediately seek out remission of sins (cf Acts 2:41; 1 Pet 3:21).
- B. “Harden not your hearts⁵⁵,” refers to the rebellious attitude that permeated the Hebrew people.
1. After all the mighty works God showed in Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea and safety from further pursuit of the Egyptians it took only three days for the people to begin to murmur and rebel (cf Ex 15:22-24; 16:2).

⁵³ Milligan summarizes Psalm 95; “The quotation is made from the 95th Psalm, in which David earnestly invites his brethren to worship Jehovah (v 1, 2): (1) on the ground that He is above all gods, the Creator of all things, and the good Shepherd of Israel (v 3-7); and (2) on the ground that the neglect of God’s word and His ordinances had cost a whole generation of their fathers the loss of Canaan (v 8-11).”

⁵⁴ Bruce writes “The two parts of the Psalm [i.e., Psalm 95, added jb] should not be dissociated from each other; it is a good thing to worship God, but acts and words of worship are acceptable only if they proceed from sincere and obedient hearts.” Pg 63

⁵⁵ The Bible “heart” is the mind. A “hardened” heart is one who rejects the inspired information of scriptures after having heard or read God’s word.

- a. A “hard” heart is used metaphorically to indicate a harsh or severe mentality⁵⁶ (cf Matt 13:15; Acts 19:9).
 - b. Please keep in mind this was written to Christians to remind them of the failure many of the Hebrews had. The devil can harden us. Angels fell. Adam fell. Solomon fell. Israel fell. We can too!
 - c. The Egyptian Pharaoh is the most famous case of heart hardening. Ex 7:3, 13 state God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Ex 8:15 states he hardened his own heart. It is possible the magicians of the court helped hardened Pharaoh’s heart by their actions (cf Ex 7:22).
2. “[A]s in the provocation” of verse 8 is not specific (literally, “days of embittering”). The Hebrews constantly provoked Jehovah, but the phrase “in the wilderness” helps eliminate many such provocations.
 - a. Possibly a reference to murmuring about water, Ex 17:1-7.
 - b. Maybe a reference to the unseemly report of the spies, Num 13:27ff.
 - c. The fact is that the Hebrews continually provoked Jehovah the entire time of wandering (cf Deut 9:7).
 - d. From that we can understand the “day” in this verse was not a single day, but a figurative reference to an attitude during a period of time.
Note: This definition will be properly supported in the next verse.
 3. “When your fathers tempted me” (tested, NKJ) (vs 9). We have to but read the books of Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy to know what they put God though during these years.
 - a. We know the facts, but the application is that these Hebrew Christians were also putting God to the test, much like their fathers.
 - b. The “works”⁵⁷ they witnessed should have caused them to draw closer to God, not test Him (cf Deut 11:7; 29:2).
 - c. They saw with their eyes all the magnanimous acts done for them.
 - d. In our day we do not see these acts, but we are infinitely more blessed. We have all the written records, which is a great advantage to us (cf Lk 7:22).
 4. “Wherefore I was grieved with that generation” (v 10) which means God was sad, filled with sorrow (displeased, ASV; angry, NKJ).
 - a. Christians should use this knowledge of what happened to the forefathers to our advantage (cf 1 Cor 10:1-11).
 - b. There can be little doubt many today are grieving our great God (cf Mk 3:5; Eph 4:30).
 - c. We need to learn the lessons presented here so we are never guilty of the equivalent.
 - d. As Christians we typically do not think of God as angry. We should! (cf Rev 6:16, 17; 19:15).

⁵⁶ Strong’s words #4642 and 4645.

⁵⁷ The word “works” is actually singular. It represents all the mighty things God did for them over the forty years were to be considered as one work. Tom Wacaster, Studies in Hebrews, pg 118.

- e. “They do alway err in their heart” is the precise consequence of “they have not known my ways” (cf Hosea 4:6; 2 Cor 4:3-6).
 - f. The proper remedy for an erring heart is an acceptance of God’s will. Note: The appropriateness of this verse is unavoidable: Did those people know the power of God? Yes, of course. There is no possible way they could not have known His power. So, the point is a knowledge of His power is useless without proper application. Knowing God is not enough, it never has been, doing His will is mandatory (cf 2 Thess 1:8; Heb 5:9; 1 Pet 1:22).
5. “So I swear in my wrath” (v 11) gives us some profound insight into the mind of God.
- a. To “sware” means (or at least used to mean) to take a solemn oath about the truth or seriousness of an object or article (cf Mk 6:23; Heb 6:13).
 - b. He was angry at their rebellion. In that anger He swore they would not enter into His promised reward. He keeps His promises (cf Heb 3:17).
 - c. His anger was only directed to those who sinned. They had every opportunity to escape sin, but chose not to.
 - d. We find a few inspired writers referring to God swearing; Luke 1:73; Peter, Acts 2:30; Stephen, Acts 7:21.
 - e. No book or inspired writer comes close to the volume of God’s swearing as we have in the book of Hebrews; 3:18; 4:3; 6:13, 16; 7:21.⁵⁸
6. What did God “sware?” “They shall not enter into me rest.” This phrase ends the parenthetical insert started in verse 7 (KJV) which is designed to help explain the first six verses of the chapter.
- a. The only way to properly understand “rest” (used as a noun in this verse and not a verb) in these passage is to refer to Numbers 14. God offered the promised land to the Hebrews, but through disobedience He would not allow them to enter. Unplug the words “promised land” and “Hebrews” and insert “heaven” and “Christians” and you will see the point of the writer (cf Heb 4:3).⁵⁹
 - b. Did God want all those people to enter the land of promise? Yes, of course. Does He want all people to enter into a saved relationship with Him today so they may enter heaven? Yes, of course.
 - c. The same two incentives that existed for the ancient Hebrews still exist for us today:
 - 1. Knowing the severity of God.
 - (a) God will punish those who are disobedient (cf Heb 10:26-31).
 - (b) Those things that were written were recorded for our knowledge!
 - 2. Knowing the goodness of God.

⁵⁸ The reason for this great number of references to swearing is to emphasize the strength and power of God’s words.

⁵⁹ The word “rest” will appear eleven times in chapters 3 and 4 of Hebrews. Inspiration is obviously trying to make a point based on the ancient Hebrews failures.

- (a) Blessings and rewards are plentiful for the obedient.
- (b) Our knowledge should be two-fold greater than the Hebrews. We have faith based on God's written word and their multiplied examples of faith and failures (cf Lk 9:41; Rom 11:20; 1 Cor 10:6).

- III. These Christians (and us) needed to learn from Israel's mistakes (12-19).
- A. "Take heed, brethren," (beware, NKJ) is the warning garnered from Psalm 95 (see page 32, point A and following, this outline).
1. The warning is that allowing our faith to fail will lead to ruin.
 - a. Christians are always in danger of apostasy.
 - b. Apostasy occurs when Christians are either ignorant of biblical facts or blatantly ignore biblical facts (cf Rom 1:13; 1 Cor 14:38).
 - c. Every Christian needs to constantly and continuously monitor their own spiritual condition with the greatest candor. Why?
 2. "[L]est there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief." Again, the biblical heart is the mind, our ability to think and process information (cf Rom 10:10).
 - a. The "unbelief" in this verse applies to all humans in all places (cf Jn 3:18, 19; Heb 10:38).
 Note: An evil heart is created by unbelief and not by what some refer to as a "sinful nature."
 - b. Jesus uses the word "departing" which is the same word used in Luke 8:13 ("fall away") and Luke used it in Acts 5:37 ("drew away").
 - c. The 'bigger picture' of the book of Hebrews is to keep Jewish Christians from falling back into the defunct Hebrew religion. The point just under the surface here is turning their backs on Christ is tantamount to turning their backs on Jehovah.
 - d. The term "living God" is used fifteen times in the OT and another fifteen times in the NT, all of which seem to reference the Father and not Christ (cf Deut 5:26; Matt 16:16).
 3. Verse 13 is how we circumvent "departing from the living God." We exhort, or encourage each other daily (cf Acts 11:23; 1 Thess 5:11).
 - a. Every reader of this letter were to be exhorters. Not just the preacher or teachers, but every member.
 - b. Christianity is not a private matter between the believer and God. It is a corporate endeavor with far reaching implications (cf 2 Tim 4:2; Heb 10:24, 25).
 - c. A Christian that keeps their Christianity to themselves is not doing the will of Christ.

Note: Many have developed, in our post-modern society, the mind-set of being lone-Christians. “It’s Ok, I can stay at home and connect, via internet, to church services and Bible studies” instead of making every effort to attend and be with fellow Christians, effectively ignoring the commanded exhortation of this verse.⁶⁰

- d. “[W]hile it is call Today” (taken from Ps 95:7) shows the urgency and importance of our exhortation (see notes on verse 7, page 32, this outline).
 - e. Sin is deceitful because it attacks us under the guise of pleasure (cf 1 Tim 5:6). Sin always promises more than it can deliver. Someone has written, “Sin cuts the optic nerve of the soul” (unknown) (cf 2 Pet 2:17, 18).
 - f. If we will exhort today, we may keep the blind from falling into the ditch (cf Matt 15:14).
4. The reason for daily exhortation is revealed in verse 14. We are “partakers” (literally, partners) with Christ in snatching souls from the fires of hell.
- a. Self-encouragement and brotherhood encouragement are vital for spiritual confidence in our daily journey (cf Heb 6:11).
 - b. The word “confidence” in verse 14 means ‘assurance’⁶¹ and is a different word than was used in verse 6, where the word means ‘bluntness’ or ‘frankness.’⁶²
 - c. “[S]tedfast unto the end” means we are to hold fast through whatever we face until the end (cf 1 Cor 15:1, 2, 58).
 - d. Friends, are you a partner with Jesus Christ for the salvation of your eternal soul? If yes, maintain that partnership. If no, why not become a partner by obedience to His will before it is too late (cf Mk 16:16).
Note: The urgency of becoming and maintaining partnership with Christ is emphasized in the “Today” as quoted from Psalms. There is danger and death in delay.
5. Once again the inspired writer quotes Plasm 95:7, 8 “While it is said.”
- a. It was not enough for these Hebrew Christians to have once accepted and obeyed Christ, they must continue in that connection in order to obtain salvation (cf 1 Jn 2:27, 28).
 - b. We have previously dealt with the “provocation” in this class when studying verses 7-11. For additional information see pages 31-34, this outline.
Note: The final section of chapter 3 will deal with three questions posed by the writer.

⁶⁰ Pace wrote, “The word for “encourage” conveys a strong encouragement. It is descriptive of the charge that was given by a Greek military commander when stirring up courage in the ranks. After being uplifted in this way, the soldiers fought more valiantly.” Pages 135, 136.

⁶¹ Strong’s #5287. This word is translated (KJV) as ‘substance’ in Heb 11:1. “Now faith is the substance...”

⁶² Strong’s #3954. This word is translated (KJV) as ‘openly,’ Jn 7:4; ‘boldly,’ Jn 7:26 and by ‘great plainness of speech,’” 2 Cor 3:12.

- B. When the text records, “For some” (v 16) it shows, once again, the superiority of the KJV. Not ALL provoked Jehovah as they came out of Egypt and journeyed toward the land of promise. We know Joshua and Caleb remained faithful (cf Num 32:12). We also can safely assume that the entire tribe of Levi did not rebel against God because Aaron’s son, Eleazar, help divide the land among the people (cf Josh 14:1).⁶³

Note: There may be an underlying teaching in this passage concerning starting well, but failing to continue in faithfulness. Starting to follow Moses and then rebelling against him (as did the Israelites) would be equal to starting to follow Jesus and then rebelling against Him.

1. Verse 17 contains the first two questioned posed: (1) “But with whom was he grieved forty years” (2) “[W]as it not not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness.”
 - a. “Forty years” specifies the time associated with the wilderness wanderings (cf Deut 8:2).
 - b. An unknown number of carcasses fell in the wilderness because of disobedience (cf Num 14:29, 32, 33).⁶⁴

Note: This goes far beyond the fact of carcasses falling in the wilderness. The point is disobedience brings death. It is not a history lesson for these Christians Jews, it is an admonition to wake up or perish.
2. The third question is located in verse 18; “And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?”
 - a. When God swares something, it will come to pass (cf Deut 1:34, 35).
 - b. The words “believe not” are from a single Greek word that means to be disobedient. Their forefathers were stiff-necked, stubborn people (cf Num 20:12; Ps 106:24-26).
 - c. Stephen accused the Jews of his day of having the same personality flaw (cf Acts 7:51).
 - d. Christians cannot be stiff-necked, stubborn people. The implication is if we act stiff-necked we will have no “rest.” The same word was used in verse 11. It will be used nine times in the next chapter. The Holy Ghost is making a point. No “rest” for those who do not continue in Christ.
 - e. Verse 19 ends with the word “unbelief.” The original language has a connection with the “believe not” of verse 18 and the “unbelief” of verse 19. “Believe not” means ‘disobedience.’

⁶³ When the spies were recruited from each tribe to spy out the land no representative was selected from the tribe of Levi. Maybe the reason for the exemption.

⁶⁴ If there were 1.5 million Hebrews over the age of twenty (Num 14:29) that escaped Egypt, the average number of people who fell in the wilderness must have been approximately 108 dead bodies per day. If we raise that number to 2 million it corresponds to 144 dead per day.

- f. Belief is not an academic acknowledgement of God or His Son, it is obedience to the teachings of the NT. Millions, maybe billions, will be shocked and disappointed on the last day because they have been taught that belief will be enough (cf Rom 2:8; 15:18; 1 Pet 1:22).
- 3. Obedience is the essence of the book of Hebrews. We need to emphasize the fact that faith and obedience are synonymous. There is no rest if one becomes disobedient.