

Hebrews

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Colorado Theological Seminary

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS	3
II.	REVELATION OF THE SON	13
III.	WARNING AGAINST DRIFTING AWAY	20
IV.	MESSIAH GREATER THAN MOSES	25
V.	A SABBATH - REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD	29
VI.	JESUS OUR HIGH PRIEST	35
VII.	WARNING AGAINST FALLING AWAY	39
VIII.	MELCHIZEDEK, THE PRIEST	44
IX.	THE HIGH PRIEST OF A NEW COVENANT	47
X.	THE OLD COVENANT'S SANCTUARY	54
XI.	CHRIST'S SACRIFICE, ONCE AND FOR ALL	59
XII.	HALL OF FAITH	60
XIII.	EXAMPLE OF CHRIST'S ENDURANCE	65
XIV.	MOSES AND GOD CHARGE ISRAEL	70

I. INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS

The Book of Hebrews is one of the most beautiful commentaries on the Old Testament that we possess as Christians. The key figure is Messiah. Therefore, we have a New Testament perspective of Messiah as presented from the Old Testament. Furthermore, we have the exhortation of a people that originated in the Old Testament. Several prefigures and types are explained by the Author. The Book of Hebrews is a connection between the Old and New Testament.

A. Title and Author

While the Letter to the Hebrews does not contain the word “Epistle” in the Biblical text, early sources and manuscripts show evidence that the title was “The Epistle to the Hebrews.” We know that the Book of Hebrews is an Epistle and should be treated as such from the conclusionary remarks of chapter thirteen (13).

Who wrote the Book of Hebrews? Scholars, both ancient and modern, are undecided on who wrote the Book of Hebrews. The following is a compendium of views on the possible author.

1. Barnabas

Some ancient manuscripts suggest that Paul was the author, while others suggest that Timothy wrote or produced the book written by Barnabas. Those who suggest that Barnabas wrote the book believe that the book was written to contend the Marcion heresy and addressed to the Laodicians or possibly the Alexandrians. Tertullian, also a Church father, suggested that the possible author was Barnabas. Barnabas was a Levite according to the Book of Acts (4:36). This would have explained the writer’s in-depth knowledge of the Priestly office. However, such knowledge was readily available to every Jew of the First Century.

2. Paul

Part of the reason that scholarship contends Paul’s authorship is due to the missing prologue that is consistent in Paul’s writings. Other scholars reject Pauline authorship based upon style and technique. There are those who have noted that certain passages within the Book of Hebrews negate Pauline authorship. One such passage is found in chapter two (2) verse three (3). Here the author does not make a specific reference to personally having been one of the Apostles who received the Gospel first hand. In citing this text and argument, we must remember that Paul did receive direct revelation and communication directly from the Lord. However, some aspects of the language, style, and theology of Hebrews are very similar to Paul's epistles and the author refers to Timothy (He 13:23). However, there are significant differences which have led many Biblical scholars to reject Paul's authorship

of this book. Paul was knowledgeable enough of the Old and New Testaments to have written this book, but the actual author of the book is unknown.

Many scholars accept Pauline authorship based upon the testimony of the Church Fathers such as Eusebius and Clement of Alexandria. However, they are not wholly agreed. Some scholars believe that Peter makes a reference to Paul having written a letter to the Hebrews (2Pe 3:15). The point is often strengthened by the fact that the writer was in Italy, in bonds (10:34; 13:24). Further evidence is that Timothy was a companion (13:23). In about the year 200 C.E. (Common Era) a manuscript of Paul's writing existed on papyrus. The Book of Hebrews was included in this manuscript. Late scholarship contends that Paul wrote the Epistle in the terminology of the Mishnah, which was the language of the rabbinic schools of the early Talmudic period.

Other suggested authors are James, the brother of Jesus and author of the book titled after him. Apollos is also suggested. He is suggested by Martin Luther. However, most contemporary scholars believe that Martin Luther's suggestion of Apollos is ill founded and without sufficient evidence. There are several other names that are suggested such as: Luke, Silas, and Philip.

3. Conclusion

The plain simple truth is that the author remains anonymous and it is impossible to ascertain the true identity of the author at this late date. What we can ascertain at this point is that the readers of the Letter were acquainted with the author and accepted the letter's authenticity. Likewise, the author must have held some position of authority. His letter, thought, and exhortation carried weight with its readers. He is familiar with their circumstances and encourages them on to maturity.

While the authorship of the book is contested, we now have it as a part of Christian canon, thereby making God the author. The message was given by the inspiration of Holy Spirit. Uncertainty plagues, not only the identity of its writer, but also where it was written.

B. Audience

Undoubtedly the Book of Hebrews was written to a group of Jewish Believers. They had come to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. The letter is most assuredly addressed to a specific group or congregation of Jews and not just Jews in general.

Many scholars believe that the audience was Jewish Believers, having accepted Jesus as the Messiah; they wanted to reverse their course in order to escape persecution by some of their own countrymen and Gentile oppression. The writer of Hebrews exhorts them to "press on to maturity" (6:1). This encouragement is based

on the excellence of Messiah and His work. Messiah is better than the angels, for the angels worship Him. Christ is better than Moses, Christ created him. Christ is better than the Aaronic Priesthood, for Christ's sacrifice was once and for all time. He is the goal of the Law and He mediates a preferable covenant (Ro 10:4). In short, there is more to be gained in Messiah than to be lost in Judaic legalism.

This epistle deals specifically with the relationship of the Old Testament and the New Testament revelation and is the unifier of both. Many places have been suggested for the location of the readers, but the destination of this letter cannot be determined with any certainty. The recipients of this letter were Believers (3:1) who had come to faith through the testimony of eyewitnesses of Christ (2:3). They were not novices or mature (5:12), and they had successfully endured hardships because of their stand for the Gospel (10:32-34). Unfortunately, they had become "dull of hearing" (5:11) and were in danger of drifting away (2:1, 3:12). This made them sensitive to the renewed persecutions that was coming upon them (12:4-12), and the author found it necessary to check their downward spiral with "this word of exhortation" (13:22). While there is disagreement over the specific danger involved, the classic position is that the readers were on the verge of lapsing into Judaism to avoid persecution directed at Jewish Christians. The Book of Hebrews repeated emphasis is on the superiority of Messiah.

C. Date

It is difficult to ascertain the date of origin due to the lack of information concerning the authorship. The place of the writing is unknown, but a date can be approximated. Hebrews was quoted in A.D. 95 by Clement of Rome. The author speaks of the sacrificial system in the present tense indicating that they were still being practiced in the Temple. As a result of the present tense of the Temple cult which ended with destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 indicates that it was prior to that date.

Timothy was still alive (13:23), persecution was mounting, and some time had passed since the death and resurrection of Christ. However, some scholars suggest that Timothy died in 94 A.D. Those who are addressed in the Epistle were not new to the Messianic Faith. All of this suggests a date between A.D. 64 and 68. If the author was Paul, the letter could not have been written any later. The reasoning behind the late date of authorship is because of the difficulties that presented themselves to both the Messianic and Jewish Communities in the wake of the Temple's destruction. The great question was what to do in the absence of the sacrificial system. The Rabbinic Community resolved its problems with fasting, almsgiving, study and prayer. However, the Messianic Community turned its faith to Messiah who was the once and for all sacrifice needed to procure Salvation for those who put their faith in Him. Therefore, the questions that presented themselves to both communities are answered in the Letter to The Hebrews. Another highly debated issue that undoubtedly brought division between the Messianic Believers and the Jews of the Synagogues was the destruction of the Temple. Even though

Jesus prophesied its destruction, the Jews looked for a Messianic figure that would overthrow Rome and establish, once and for all, the Kingdom of Israel. Herein was the misconception as to what the Kingdom of God really was. The Jews believed that the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Israel was in fact the same thing. However, the Book of Acts negates this idea. Jesus was not concerned with the Kingdom of Israel at His resurrection. He, throughout His ministry, repeatedly preached the Presence of the Kingdom of God.

Furthermore, all the references to the Temple are not in fact references to the Temple. Rather, all references to the sacrificial cult of Israel are references to the Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting. This would make the Letter readable to the Essene or Qumran Communities, as well as, the other Jewish Communities of the period. However, it could also hold reference to post-Temple time, because the Temple had already been destroyed. Therefore, the date of the writing is placed somewhere between A.D. 60 and 95.

D. Language

While many New Testament scholars struggle with the language of the New Testament, the New Testament itself bears witness to extensive use of the Hebrew tongue. Clement of Alexandria suggested that Paul wrote the letter and that he wrote it in Hebrew. Origen, one of the Church Fathers, testified that the original writing was in Hebrew and that Luke painstakingly translated it into Greek. For us to have translations and manuscripts in Greek is a natural course of events. With the Gentile acceptance of the Gospel, there was a great need for a Greek translation of Scriptures.

Of all the Books of the Bible that focus our attention on the person and work of Jesus Christ revealing Him to be the key to the Scriptures, this epistle is undoubtedly the greatest and most important.

E. Purpose

Why was the Book of Hebrews written? There are two (2) basic schools of thought.

1. For those being persecuted and about to defect.

This view is undoubtedly one of the most commonly held views with Christianity. The general consensus is that the Jewish Community of Believers was being persecuted from without and within. This persecution was so great that there were those who wanted to defect from the Messianic faith. Given the early history of the Church, this is highly possible. In this view, those who were facing persecution were caught between two (2) struggling factions. They faced the possibility of physical death. Again, this was very possible. Many Jewish-Christians lost their lives during the early Church period.

2. The Jewish-Galatians

Paul's letter to the Galatians, a Gentile Church, was written because there were those Jews that insisted that Proselytization was an essential part of Salvation. The writer of Hebrews makes very much the same argument. However, here the audience is strictly Jewish. So, rather than accept this error that Proselytization and acceptance of Messiah's sacrifice guaranteed Salvation, the author rejected it. He argues that the rituals are but a shadow of the real truth, which is Messiah. Therefore, it was necessary to look beyond the mundane. Those who held this world view placed Messiah second to proselytization. This proselytization involved a ritual acceptance of the Torah from a legalistic approach as a means to Salvation. It required ritual circumcision and washing, baptism as a visible sign of the rebirth of the proselyte. This was the reason for the great council in the Book of Acts chapter fifteen (15) and the writing of Paul's letter to the Galatians. As a matter of fact, this is the basis for many of Paul's writings. He did not argue the validity of the system God established through Moses. He argues against legalism as debated by a select few. As a result, the Author argues the superiority of Messiah and the Messianic Way.

3. The Two (2) natural divisions of Hebrews

The Book of Hebrews, like Paul's writings, falls into two (2) different natural categories. The first section of the book is doctrinal. Hebrews chapter 1-10 are primarily doctrinal in content. Chapters 11-13 are practical. They teach those who are exhorted in the primary chapters through doctrine how to apply the doctrines the Author has presented.

Regardless of the potential audience, the Author tells those in Christ how they should act. He goes further to teach them the "relevancy of Faith." Faith must be relevant in order to be of value. Religion without relevance is of no value and just "religion." Faith must be active and vital to be of any consequence. The audience was losing its faith and hope in Jesus, as the Messiah. This was most likely because of the circumstances that were prevalent in their day. These Jews were about to return to their old ways. While there are those who would look upon them with disdain, we must realize that when things get tough regardless of your previous belief, many return to their old practices. It does not have to be a legal system; it could be just sin.

F. The Messiah of Hebrews

Messiah is our eternal High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. He identified with man in His incarnation and offered no less a sacrifice than Himself on our behalf.

Hebrews presents Messiah as the Divine-human Prophet, Priest, and King. His Deity (1:1-3,8) and humanity (2:9, 14, 17, and 18) are asserted with equal force, and over twenty titles are used to describe His attributes and accomplishments. Titles such as, "Heir of all things", Apostle, High Priest, Mediator, Author and Perfecter of faith can be found. He is superior to all who went before and offers the supreme sacrifice, Priesthood, and covenant.

G. Keys to Hebrews

1. Key words: The excellence of Messiah

The basic theme of Hebrews is found in the word "better", describing the excellence of Messiah in His person and work (1:7; 6:9; 7:19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24). "Better" here does not imply a moral idea but rather a place of rank. The words perfect (perfection, perfected), eternal (everlasting, forever, evermore), heavenly (heaven, heavens), and partakers are also used extensively. He offers a better revelation, position, priesthood, covenant, sacrifice, and power. This epistle is also written to exhort its audience to become mature in Christ and to put away spiritual dullness. The Book of Hebrews places a heavy stress on Messiah and maturity.

2. Key verses: Hebrews 4:14-16 and 12:1-2

3. Key chapter: Hebrews 11

The "Hall of Faith" of the Scriptures is located in Hebrews 11 and records those who willingly took God at His word even when there was nothing to cling to but His promise. Common to all those listed is the recognition that they pleased God, (Hebrews 11:6).

H. Short Survey of Hebrews

Hebrews stands alone among the New Testament Epistles in its style and approach. It is the only New Testament Book whose authorship is in question. The book builds a case for the excellence of Messiah, in which Messiah is presented as "better" in every respect. Again, "better" here does not imply a moral idea but rather a place of rank. God is truly superior to His Word being its Author. In His person, He is higher in position than the angels, Moses, and Joshua; and in His performance, He provides a superior Priesthood, covenant, sanctuary and sacrifice.

Evidently, the readers are in danger of defection because of the suffering they are beginning to experience for their faith in Messiah, or they are being persuaded that simple faith in Messiah is not sufficient as a means of Salvation. Not only is the Preeminence of Christ presented, but the writer of Hebrews gives five solemn

warnings (2:1-4; 3:7 - 4:13; 5:11- 6:20; 10:19-39; 12:25-29). These warnings include cautions against neglect (2:1-4) and refusal (12:25-29). After using Scripture to demonstrate the excellence of Messiah's person (1:1 - 4:13) and the excellence of Messiah's work (4:14 - 10:18), the writer applies these truths in a practical way to show the superiority of the Messianic walk of faith (10:19 - 13:25).

1. Loftiness of Messiah's person: 1:1- 4:13

Instead of the usual prologue, Hebrews launches directly into its subject. That subject is the Preeminence of Messiah over even the Prophets (1:1-3). Christianity is built upon the highest form of Divine revelation. This revelation is the revelation of Messiah, which was previously held in mystery. Christ is therefore, the senior of the prophets, sovereign over the angels, and He is the mediator of the Mosaic Law (1:4 - 2:18; Acts 7:5). This is seen in His name, His position, His worship by angels, and His incarnation. The Son of God partook of flesh and blood and was "made like His brethren in all things" (2:17) in order to bring "many sons to glory" (2:10). Messiah is also greater than Moses (3:1-6), for Moses was a servant in the House of God, but Christ is the Son over God's household. Because of these truths, the readers are exhorted to avoid the Divine judgments that are visited upon unbelief (3:7 - 4:13). Ancient Israel's disbelief had prevented the unbelieving generation of the Exodus from becoming the generation of conquest. What Christ offers is greater than what was provided by Joshua, who was a Messianic pre-figure. The readers are therefore urged to enter the eternal rest that is possessed by faith in Christ.

2. The excellence of Christ's work: (4:14 - 10:18)

The High Priesthood of Messiah is superior to the Aaronic Priesthood (4:14-7:28). The Aaronic Priesthood was often subject to corruption. This was seen from the very beginning with the sons of Aaron, who offered strange fire. However, in the Last Adam, we have the Divine Messiah who retrieved what Adam forfeited. Messiah's mission was to bring all things to their appointed purpose. Because of His incarnation, Messiah can identify with our weaknesses, having been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin, (4:15). Messiah was not a Levite, but He qualified for a higher Priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek. The superiority of Melchizedek to Levi is seen in the fact that Levi, in effect, paid tithes through Abraham to Melchizedek (7:9-10). Abraham was blessed by the greater. Herein the lesser is blessed by the greater (7:7). The warning in verses 5:11 - 6:20 exhorts the readers to press on to maturity by moving beyond the basics of Messianic Gospel.

Messiah's place is secured by Divine oath (7:21), Christ has become a permanent, perfect High Priest and the Mediator of a New Covenant (8:6). The New Covenant is fulfilling and renewing of the Mosaic Covenant (8:6-

13). Our great High Priest similarly ministers through the Heavenly "Tabernacle," which is not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation (9:11). Unlike the former Priests, He offers Himself as a sinless and voluntary Sacrifice once and for all (9:1-10:18).

3. The vantage of the Christian's walk of faith: (10:19 - 13:25).

The author applies what he has been saying about the superiority of Messiah by warning his readers of the danger of discarding their faith in Messiah (10:19-39). The faith that the readers must maintain is defined in 11:1-3 and is illustrated in 11:4-40. The triumphs and accomplishments of faith in the lives of Old Testament Believers should encourage the recipients of New Covenant (11:40). They were to fix their eyes on Messiah, the Author and Perfecter of faith, (12:2). Just as Christ endured great hostility, those who believe in Him will sometimes have to endure Divine discipline for the sake of holiness (12:1-29). The readers are warned not to turn away from Messiah during such hardships, but to place their hope in Him. The character of our lives must be shaped by our dedication to Christ (13:1-19), and this will be manifested in our love for God, our hospitality, concern, purity, contentment, and obedience. The author concludes this epistle with one of the finest benedictions in Scriptures (13:20,21) and some personal words (13:22-25).

I. Hebrews Glossary of Words

1. Boldly: Confidence in attitude, speech, and without shame.
2. Compassion: To be merciful toward others.
3. Covenant: A mutual agreement between two or more person. In the New Covenant, man is placed in right relationship to God through faith in Messiah's atoning work. (Hebrews 7:22, 8:6-13)
4. Fellowship: That which is common:
5. Heir: The concept of inheritance is very prominent in the New Testament and is connected with the person and work of Christ, who is the Heir by virtue of His being the Son of God. (Hebrews 1:2) Through Christ's redemptive work, Believers are son's of God by adoption and fellow-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17, Gal. 4:7).
6. High Priest: Old Testament - supervised Priests, offered a sin offering (Lev. 4) and sacrificed on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) and ascertained the Will of God through his understanding of the Scriptures and the Urim and Thummin (Num. 27:21 and Neh. 7:65).

New Testament - Jesus is described as the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:10). The New Testament also teaches that all Believers are Priests, they share in Christ's Priestly activities, bringing the Word to men and bringing men to Christ. (Eph. 2:18; Heb. 10:19-25; 13:15; I Pet. 2:5,9; and Rev. 1:5-6)

7. Ministering spirits: Angels sent to serve (Heb. 1:14).
8. Order: Rank or position
9. Propitiation: To cover, to appease the wrath of God so that His justice and holiness will be satisfied and He can forgive sin. The death of Christ was the atonement for man's sin.
10. Rest: This rest is spiritual and eternal. The rest God calls us to enter is not our rest but His rest, which He invites us to share. God rested from His work on the seventh day of creation. (Hebrews 4:1 and 4:3 - Salvation is still available).
11. Unbelief: Attitude of the heart, doubt or that which is contrary to faith.
12. Weaknesses: Infirmities

J. Unique Book

When we study the Book of Hebrews we must realize how unique it is. It is like no other book in the New Testament. The Book of Hebrews is best understood when the Bible student is familiar with the five (5) Books of Moses and realizes that the book is addressed to Messianic -Jews of the First Century.

1. The Book of Hebrews addresses several areas of danger:
 - a. Neglect of the Scriptures (2:1)
 - b. Unbelief (3:12)
 - c. Departing from the living God (3:12)
 - d. Neglect of public worship (10:25)
 - e. Not hearing the voice of God (12:25)
 - f. Instability of doctrine (13:9)
2. Hebrews deals with the Priesthood of Christ.

As Priest, Christ was divinely appointed, and met the needs of the people (2:17-18). He opened the way into the Presence of God (10:19-20), and made the way available to the Sanctuary and the Throne of Grace (4:14-16). Messiah made all of this possible through His accomplished work. There will never be another person or thing needed. Because of the priestly ministry of Christ, the Believer has the strength of faith and the privilege of worship.

3. Christ's sacrifice

Christ's sacrifice, once and for all paid the way for us to go, where we ourselves could not go.

4. Ethical standards

In Chapter 13, Hebrews teaches high ethical standards in the way we should treat others.

- a. Brotherly love (13:1)
- b. Kindness to strangers (13:2)
- c. Kindness to the less fortunate (13:3)
- d. Honorable marriage relationships (13:4)
- e. A right attitude towards material wealth (13:5)
- f. Honor toward overseers (13:7-17)
- g. Doing good (13:16)

5. The Christian does not have a choice in these areas.

Christian conduct is what sets us apart and how we conduct ourselves in these areas show the world what standard we live by. Morals are changing rapidly, today, but we must hold fast in our conduct as Christians, as a source of stability in our changing times.

K. The Warnings of Hebrews

There are five warnings listed in Hebrews.

1. First warning: Hebrews 2:1-4 - Danger of Neglect

It is vital that we do not drift away from that which was spoken by God. Human reasoning is so subtle in its attempt to dilute the Word of God. It is so crucial that we keep a firm grip on what we have heard so that we do not drift off. The Lord has confirmed His Word over and over.

The writer of Hebrews is issuing a warning that there is danger when we neglect the Word of God, which has stood throughout history.

2. Second warning: Hebrews 3:7 - 4:13 - Danger of Hardening the Heart
 - a. Do not allow rebellion or false doctrine to harden your heart (3:8) and cause disobedience or sin.
 - b. Work to enter into His rest (4:1-13). There is a rest for those who are in Christ. To those who unite hearing and faith, the Word is profitable to them.
3. Third warning: Hebrews 5:11 - 6:20 - Danger of not maturing
 - a. Dullness of hearing (5:11-14)
 - b. Need for maturity (6:1-8)
4. Fourth warning: Hebrews 10:26-39 - Danger of shrinking back
 - a. His soul will find no pleasure in him
 - b. Do not shrink back to unbelief, works, law, etc.
5. Fifth warning: Danger of refusing God (12:25-29)
 - a. There is punishment for turning away from Christ (12:25)
 - b. Danger for those who do not receive the revelation, vs. 25. If those who ignored earthly warnings did not get away with it; what will happen to us if we ignore heavenly warnings?
 - c. Our God is a consuming fire, vs. 29. God is not an indifferent bystander. He is actively cleaning house, touching all that needs to be burned. All the hard, wood, and stubble that man stores up does not and will not impress God.

II. REVELATION OF THE SON

It is essential that we have a sound theological basis upon which to place our faith in Jesus as Messiah, the Son of God. No other book in the New Testament presents Christ in such

an excellent manner. Here, the Author of Hebrews presents his splendid case on the personage of Messiah. Remember, that this epistle is to a group of Jews. They were undoubtedly Believers. However, the arguments of the Letter are aimed at Jews within the infrastructure of First Century Messianic Judaism. These arguments must take place within their real and scope of understanding. Therefore, the Author makes his appeal to the Hebrew text and theologies that we may find unfamiliar in our present day. Throughout this Commentary there will be several references to Old Testament passages. When an Old Testament passages is referred to, it would be most beneficial to the student to read the Biblical reference before reading the Commentary.

A. Hebrews 1:1-3: Christ is greater than the Prophets

1. The Prologue

Here in verses one (1) through three (3) we have what is commonly called the prologue of Hebrews. This prologue is a summary of the entire Epistle and will be the basis for the development of his polemic concerning the dignity of Christ.

2. Divers Manners of God's Speech

God spoke in many diverse manners: sometimes by the Spirit through His servants, through angels, or even theophanies (appearances of God, Himself as the Angel of The Lord, or to Abraham in Genesis 18. He spoke sometimes by putting His words in the mouths of His prophets and sometimes through visions, dreams, poems, and aphorisms. Here, in the Book of Hebrews, the use of terminology is very Jewish. In the Old Testament, through the Prophets, God often spoke through types, shadows, and figures. In the Book of Hebrews, we have a revelation of many of those figures and types. Just as the book of Genesis redundantly repeats the phrase, "God said" and Exodus records, "God spoke to Moses saying," the Jews followed the same technique of discourse in giving commentary on the message of God.

Why did God speak? What was it that God said? God spoke His words in the past through the Prophets and presently through His Son as a means of revelation whereby we could understand His Will for humanity. God gave a revelation of His nature so that we would not act contrary to our own nature, being created in the likeness and image of God himself. The revelation of creation, as recorded in the Book of Genesis and the rest of scripture, demonstrates that God created the entire universe as man's home.

The revelation of the Bible is progressive. However, this does not mean that Judeo-Christianity is a progressive religion. The revelation given to the Prophets was "line upon line." Their language was often enigmatic and symbolic. Even with the contemporary revelation of Messiah, many of the

prophetic passages are problematic. According to Paul, Messiah's identity and complete occupation remained a mystery for ages. This was because passages concerning Messiah's occupation often seemed conflicting and contradictory. Some commentators have noted that the Greek term here can also mean, in many parts, or portions. Therefore, the revelation of God was progressive, piece by piece and divided into many parts. Here in the end of days, finally God has finalized His revelation through His Son. The communication of the Son was direct and complete. The diverse modes of speech that God gave through the Prophets only prepared us to receive the revelation of and through His Son. The shadows of the Old Testament have come to life in the person of Jesus, the Messiah (He 10:1).

Several of the New Testament Books and letters open much like the Book of Genesis. John's Gospel begins very much like the Book of Genesis by talking about "the beginning." Here the author of Hebrews also begins with God. The author offers no apologetic and no polemic. He simply declares that God spoke, accepting the authority of the previous covenants and words God gave to the forefathers.

3. The Last Days

In these "last days" God has spoken to us through or by his Son. Luke uses this phrase in the Book of Acts quoting Peter's sermon on Pentecost (Ac 2:16). The Rabbinic concept behind this phrase was that the "Days of Messiah" would initiate the final period of the earth's history. The Days of Messiah would be the beginning of the end times or the "last days." The "present times" were referred to as the "present days" and the phrase "world to come" intended the renewal of the heavens and earth, as prophesied by Jesus and the Prophets. The "world to come" would be the perfected reign of Messiah after this era of earth's history.

4. By His Son

The Old Testament must be understood as the "Word of God." However, as a part of God's Word, it must also be considered incomplete. The Old Testament looked forward to the coming of Messiah and His message, which would provide finalized truth and redemption. Messiah is made the heir of all things. Here, Messiah is made not only heir, but is also given His coronation rites. These rites are carried out in the Book of Revelation. Messiah is the heir of the nations and the whole earth with its ages or administration. Being an "appointed" heir brings legal action to the election of Messiah.

5. The Glory of the Son

By His Son, God created the world. The author of the Book of Hebrews is not the first writer to note that Messiah was the agent of creation. Not only is

Messiah the Glory of God, He is the express image of God, as well as His essence. The word “glory” used here has a double meaning. It means that there is an inward glory or luminance and it means that there is a reflective quality. From the Gospels, we can see that Christ possessed both of these qualities. He revealed his innermost being to the three disciples, Peter, James and John on the mountain top (Mk 9:2). He is also the mirror of the Father’s Glory. The Son perfectly mirrors God and is stamped with God’s nature. Christ was the exact image of His Father. The word “image” used here is only used here in the Book of Hebrews. However, it is found in secular Greek writings. It is used with the idea of making an image on a coin.

Just as the Book of Genesis demonstrates the creative force released through the spoken word, we see that Christ holds everything together by His word. The word of God here is *rhema*. *Rhema* implies a providential decree set forth from the mouth of God. It is ratified and sustained by Christ, who is bringing all things to their appointed purpose. Christ is not just “upholding all things with the word of His Power;” He is causing them to fulfill their designed role in the earth. Christ, through His Spirit within people is actively working within this world.

It was the sinless Christ who made atonement for our sins. After making atonement for our sins He sat down at the right hand of God. Here the contrast is made between the Levitical Priesthood and the Priesthood of Christ. There was no place for the Priest to sit in the Tabernacle or Temple for the High Priest when he had completed making a sacrifice. This was because the work of the Levitical Priesthood was never complete. Furthermore, the only Priest who could approach God face to face was the High Priest. This could only be done once a year on the Day of Atonement. Therefore, Christ as the Great High Priest not only made atonement for our sins, He sat down in the very Presence of God. Not only was He seated in the Presence of God, He was enthroned next to Him.

It seems obvious that Psalms 110:1 is eluded to here. The way the author uses this passage indicates his understanding of the “Mystery of Messiah” much like Paul. This same Scripture is used by Christ to debate the Pharisees in Jerusalem concerning the identity of Messiah (Mt 22:41). If Messiah is the Son of David, how is it that David calls Him Lord? How can Messiah be his son? It is because Messiah was the ^ASon of David and Lord at the same time gave him both human and super human qualities. The Pharisees must have realized this point.

B. Hebrews 1:4: Greater than the Angels

This verse introduces the theme that will be played out throughout the rest of the book. In the previous section, Messiah proved to be greater than man. Ancient scholarship saw Messiah as the archetype of man. Here the Author proves that He

is also greater than the angels. The Author establishes Christ as the Creator and the angelic host as a part of His creation. John recorded that the disciple is not greater than the master. Likewise, the creature is never greater than the Creator. Most religions placed a great deal of emphasis on the authority of the angelic messengers. Such was the case with Judaism. Judaism had a sophisticated Angelology. Judaism was divided between those who believed in the angelic host, the Pharisees, and those who did not, the Sadducees. The question for those who believed in the angelic host was where does Messiah fit in the realm of rank and order? The authority of angels was secondary to God Himself. The Jews had received the Law as ordained by the ministry of angels (Acts 7:53). Because of the high opinion of angels, the Author seeks to exalt Christ far above any possible subordinate object of worship or minor deity. The author of Hebrews places Messiah above the angelic host and equal with God. The contrast established here is between the Son and the servant. Christ, after making a sacrifice for sins, took His honored place in the heavens right along side God, far higher than any angel in rank and rule. The writer presents overwhelming evidence showing that Messiah is to be exalted. As the exalted Messiah (Savior), Jesus is given the place of superiority above all the angelic host. As Heir, he possesses dominion and authority over all the powers of the heavens and earth.

He has inherited a name much more honorable than any Angel. Many of the angelic names are more titles than they are names. Their name often depicts their function as messenger and servants. The Hebrew name for Jesus is *Yeshua*. This name *Yeshua* is virtually the same as Joshua. It means the "Salvation of God."

The Hebrew concept of Salvation is that of deliverance. They were "saved from Egypt." The Salvation that Jesus provided included all of a person's being. Jesus has made provision for our complete Salvation, and deliverance.

C. Hebrews 1:5-13

The author of Hebrews makes extensive use of the Hebrew Scriptures. His use exceeds all other New Testament writers in his use of the Old Testament. Here the writer gives a collage of passages from the Old Testament proving Christ's place and authority. The following passages are much like the sermon notes or the outline of a Preacher. The Author uses the appropriate passages from the Bible to make his case. It must be remembered that there was no New Testament in the hands of the Believers until about three-hundred (300) A.D. There were some letters and documents that were circulated within the believing communities. However, the dominate source of Scriptures available was the Old Testament. Therefore, to prove his point by Scripture was to quote the only available Scripture. These Scriptures might not have been necessary to prove his point to a group of Gentiles. Still, proving his case and point to a Jewish audience required more than adequate knowledge of the Hebrew Text. The following is an outline of the author's sermon and polemic in the remainder of this chapter.

1. Messiah: Rightful King and Heir to the Throne

To establish Messiah's rightful place as heir the Author quotes appropriate, Messianic, scriptural reference. Psalms chapter two (2) established the enthronement rights of the Son. The terminology of this Psalm is covenantal, establishing Messiah's right to the throne and inheritance. God has made His decree, He will keep it. When He swore to Abraham, God could swear by no greater so He swore by Himself. Which angel was so high in place or position that God called him his Son? Lucifer, the highest of the fallen angels was called "son of the morning" but never the Son of God. Obviously this Psalm is a prophecy of the birth of Christ. The promise of this prophecy is spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles to the forefathers; God fulfilled His promise of bringing Messiah. The events of Psalms are a decree within time, not the timeless eternity before Christ was manifest upon the earth to redeem humanity. Psalms two (2) is cited here to identify Jesus as Messiah, Son of God.

2 Samuel 7 is the covenantal promise God made to David. The Davidic Covenant furthered the covenant mentioned in Psalms chapter two (2). The dynasty of David's Son, Jesus, would last forever.

Psalms 97:7 and Deuteronomy 32:43 recognize Messiah as the universal King and the Sovereign of the universe. As the highest in rank and order, Messiah is to be the object of worship of man and angel. The Books of Daniel and Revelation record angelic worship of Messiah in unity of man with the angels.

The title "First-born" is a term of tribute. The term first-born can be used with both positive and negative connotations. Those who are the first-born of the poor are the poorest of all (Is 14:30). Those who are the first-born of death are those who have suffered a violent and horrible death. (Job 18:13).

2. Messiah: The Eternal King

Psalms 104:4: the spirits or angels were created to be servants to the King. As His servants, they do His bidding, carrying His messages, and carrying out His commands.

The Hebrew text in which this passage was derived from says, "He makes the winds his messengers and flames of fire His servants." However, it is possible within Hebrew grammar to reverse the subject and predicate. Here the author does exactly that.

Psalms 45:6-8: Here we have the Anointing and Coronation of Messiah. The Throne of God is eternal and God has Anointed Messiah with the oil of gladness above His fellows or brothers. As heirs with Christ, we are to be

governed by our older brother (Ro 8:14-17). This picture is more fully developed in the Book of Revelation. The dominant theme of the Book of Revelation is the Coronation and Wedding ceremonies of the Messiah. He will rule, not just as our brother but as our King. Upon Coronation, the Messiah, like David, destroys all the enemies of God. The term "brothers" is also a reference to those of the audience that our Author is addressing, the Jews. It is also a reference to those who share in His circumstance. All the language of the Author's quote from Psalms is in the kingly metaphor. He is Anointed, He has a scepter, and He rules his fellows or brothers. Therefore, this Psalm establishes the Kingly Authority of Messiah. The use of the term "scepter" is a symbol of His authority. His scepter is one of righteousness indicating the type of Kingdom He would rule.

The spices mentioned in verse eight (8) of Psalms chapter forty-five (45) are a part of the Sacred Anointing Oil used to Anoint the Kings, Priests, Prophets, and Lepers. Because of His fragrance, the virgins love Him (Song 1:3).

Often times Christ is seen as a somber sad faced individual. Multitudes of passages paint a picture of Christ in gladness and joy. He was anointed with the "Oil of gladness." Likewise, He endured the shame of the Cross for the Joy that was set before Him (He 12:2). His joy was bound up in His obedience to His Father and the redemption He was bringing to humanity.

His throne and rule is one of righteousness. He will say to the "*antinomian*" (workers of iniquity) to depart from me. Messiah will later be compared to Melchizedek. Melchizedek is not a name, as we will discuss later, it is a title. The meaning of that title is "King of Righteousness." From a youth, He loved righteousness. In His righteousness, we see obedience and loyalty to God the Father. He did not act until the Spirit told Him to do so. Even when He was "led into the wilderness to be tempted of the adversary," He obeyed. His obedience to the Will and Word of God is irreproachable. Job's redeemer also feared God and chased away evil (Job 1:1).

Psalms 102:26-28: While everything and everyone else will perish Messiah is eternal outlasting His creation. While all of creation is subject to change, Messiah is immutable. In chapter thirteen, verse eight Messiah is described as the changeless one. The heavens and the earth will undergo a renewal. Man will be changed and this corruption will put on incorruption (1 Co 15.)

3. The Rank and Authority of Messiah

Psalms 110:1: This Psalm has a threefold implement of the number seven (7). Because of the implementation of the threefold use of seven (7) this Psalm is considered Prophetic. Scholars have noted that this is the number of the oath or covenant.

Again, Christ is given the greatest place possible. He is seated at the right hand of God. The hand is typical of Salvation. The right hand is the hand of direct intervention. God, through Christ, has directly intervened in the affairs of man to provide redemption for those who will accept it.

D. Hebrews 1:14:

In the above verses, we saw that the angels were subordinate to Messiah. Here the Author will define the angelic host and their functions within the realm of God. In verse 14, we find out the angelic occupation. What are angels? Are they not ministering spirits? As ministering spirits, they are sent to minister to and on behalf of those who are the heirs of Salvation. It was an angel who told Cornelius where to find the "Good News." However, the angel did not bring the Gospel to Cornelius or his family. The occupation of preaching the Gospel is a human affair.

The occupation of angels is that of ministering spirits that are sent to minister to the heirs of Salvation. Christ was not sent to minister to the heirs of Salvation, He was sent to redeem them. No angel was qualified to take the sin of man. It was Christ alone who was able to pay the penalty for the sins of humanity.

The angelic hierarchy and occupations have filled volumes. Christianity has yet to understand and take advantage of their attendance. They are sent for our welfare.

The use of the word "heirs" indicates our legal right to the provision of Salvation by God. Furthermore, we are entitled to all the benefits that Salvation was to provide. Just as Christ is above the angels in rank and authority, so are those who accept their position "in Christ." The Author's use of the term "Ministering spirits" suggests their subservience to the heirs of Salvation. Therefore, we should avail them of their knowledge and potency just as Elisha, Elijah, and Christ did. This is their occupation. As one scholar pointed out, angels are not mere spectators. They are an active essential part of Gods plan and creation.

III. WARNING AGAINST DRIFTING AWAY

A. Hebrews 2:1-4:

This section is actually a continuation of the previous chapter. The word "therefore" naturally connects this section with the previous chapter and verses. In fact, this section is the conclusion of the first chapter. Since Messiah is superior to Prophets and Angels, we should pay more careful attention to His words.

The Author begins to more fully develop his thoughts on the excellence of Christ. As we have mentioned above, there are five (5) warnings in the Book of Hebrews. The First warning is against the danger of neglect. It would benefit us to learn our lesson from the Book of Hebrews. This book was not written specifically to us, as Gentiles, but nevertheless, we can benefit from reading it studiously. We, just as they, need to pay closer attention to the Word of God.

The Author uses reason as a means of conveying his polemic. The New Testament sets the contrast against the Old. The Old Testament demanded various punishments for certain sins. However, the New Testament demands eternal damnation for those who will reject Christ. While this letter is sent to Hebrews, it is a fitting message to Gentiles as well. The Word given by the Angelic messengers was legally binding. Since this is true of the creature, it must be more binding of the Creator. The Author weighs one passage against one another to verify His argument. In the context of what the Author intended, he was in reference to the message of Christ and the truths that He conveyed. The neglect of God's Word will cause wandering.

The use of the term "slip" or "drift" depending on the translation, means to let something slide or slip. We must hold on to the things we have heard and not allow them to slip. The holding is an activity of the mind. We must mentally rehearse them repeatedly so we do not forget what we have heard. The most accurate interpretation of this thought here requires guarding ourselves against letting thoughts slip in that would cause us to defect from the faith. The Greek language contains the idea of liquid leaking out of vessels filled with fluid. We are reminded of the parable of wineskins (Lk 5:38). New wine must be placed in new wineskins. The Message of Messiah will naturally produce a new Believer. However, if we are not careful to be actively involved in the truth of His words, we will let the wine leak out. Likewise, we are reminded of the parable of the virgins. There were those who were not mindful of their circumstances and they ran out of oil. We must defend ourselves against complacency, lethargy and neglect. Growth in God requires forward motion. If we are not growing we are drifting.

B. Pneumatology of Hebrews

Here in verse four (4) the Author begins his pneumatology. Unlike Paul, the Author of Hebrews sheds a different light on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Believer. Pauline Pneumatology is highly developed. However, scholars have noted that his pneumatology is very much in line with the pneumatology of First Century Judaism. In brief, Pauline Pneumatology is as follows.

The Presence of the Holy Spirit within the Believer produced two (2) basic results.

1. The first was ethical behavior.
2. The second was inspirational.

The Author of Hebrews views the Holy Spirit in an entirely different way. However, this does not negate Pauline Pneumatology. The Holy Spirit is mentioned seven (7) times in the Book of Hebrews. The first mention, here in verse four (4), demonstrates Him as a Miracle Worker. This fits the First Century perspective very well.

The Holy Spirit conveyed two basic images.

1. The first was miracle working power.
2. The second was the Presence of God.

Here we have both of those demonstrations. However, the pneumatology of Hebrews is far more intricate than what we see in this passage. In basic summary, the pneumatology of Hebrews is that of the ratifier of the message of Messiah. He confirms the Word of Christ, His Disciples and the Prophets by miraculous signs. In the Book of Hebrews the Spirit is likewise the source of revelation and enlightenment.

C. Hebrews 2:5:

So great is Christ that this world and the “world to come” are subjected to His rulership. The Rabbinic scholars differentiated between the present age or world and the “world to come.” The “world to come” is somewhat parallel with the Christian concept of heaven. Likewise, it contains all the imagery of the Garden and Paradise. However, the difference is that the Christian concept of heaven is often an ethereal existence in some spiritual nonmaterial place. The true Biblical view of the afterlife is that of the World to Come. There are a multitude of Biblical passages that refer to the coming “New Heavens and Earth.” The Book of Revelation is very clear that once we have concluded our heavenly business, we will return to the renewed earth. However, the point being made here is that no angel will rule over humanity in either period. The Ruler and King of both worlds is and will be Messiah.

D. Hebrews 2:6-9:

What is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you visited Him? This is a quote from Psalms chapter eight (8). The Hebrew text reads, “What is man that he permeates your thinking? You made Him a little lower than or just under God.” Many translations read “man was created a little lower than the angels.” However, the text of Psalms eight (8) literally reads man was made a little lower than God. This establishes the order of the created host. The Hebrew word translated angels is *Elohim*. The word *Elohim* is a clear reference to God. The Pauline Epistles confirm this order when talking about our place and position in Christ. Angels are subservient to the heirs of Salvation. This could never be the

case if the angels were higher in rank than man or Messiah. Man is above the angels and Messiah is above man. God is above them all. The literal translation of this Psalm is that man is just under God. The context of the argument of Hebrews is the superiority of Christ to the angels. Therefore, the Author quotes from Psalms showing the superiority of Christ to angels and yet, He is subordinate to God the Father.

Where is the victory of death? Death could not hold Christ. Death was the prescribed punishment for sin. Yet, Christ was the sinless eternal sacrifice. Therefore, death had no right or power to hold Him. Why did He taste death? He tasted death so that we would not have to. Now, death has no dominion over those who are Δ in Christ. Does this mean that we will never die? In order for death to be victorious over its victim, it must be able to hold it. Death's occupation now is to escort us to the world to come. Because of the victory of Christ, it is powerless to do any more than that. The phrase "taste death" is a rabbinic phrase. Jesus uses this phrase in the Book of Matthew chapter sixteen (16) verse twenty-eight (28). That someone tastes death means that the experience the temporary hostility of death. The taste of death is the result of sin. Therefore, those who have accepted the propitiatory work of Christ will only feel the temporary effects of death.

E. Hebrews 2:10:

It was suitable to Divine wisdom, justice, and to the program of grace to offer Jesus as a sacrifice in order to bring to the Father many sons. Jesus' death brought about a harvest of souls. Without suffering, He could not have died, without dying; He could not have made atonement for sin. Christ could not have been made complete or brought a complete end the work He was supposed to do without His sufferings and death. It is obvious that He did not go to all this trouble for angels. His passion and death were to redeem humanity. As a High Priest, He was not estranged from the conditions that we face in our humanity. It is easy to label Messiah as God and therefore alienate Him from our suffering. However, He clothed Himself in humanity to identify with our suffering and human experiences. Therefore, we are left without excuse. He lived an exemplary life animated and motivated by the Spirit of God. We have been endued with the same Spirit (Ro 8:9-11).

Here in verse ten (10) Messiah is described as the author of Salvation. Other translations render the Greek *Arche*gos as Ruler, Captain and Pioneer. However, the basis for this word is *Arche*. We see this word combined with the word angel, "archangel," and understand that it means the highest angel. *Arche* is symbolic of the highest authority and power. This is the power possessed by magistrates and rulers. Therefore, His is the Ruler of Salvation. He perfected or accomplished the goal of Salvation. The Greek word "*telios*" is used to describe the goal of Salvation being accomplished. That goal was not the Salvation of a race or nation. The goal of Salvation was to redeem all humanity from the bondage of sin and the adversary. As our High Priest, He made atonement for our sins once and for all.

F. Hebrews 2:11:

Here the mystical union of the Believer is described. How can this union be fully described? The Greek word for "sanctify" used here is *hagiazō* from the root *hagios*.

Having become partakers of the nature of His Son, Christ becomes the firstborn among many brothers. Christ, our Great High Priest and Advocate, presents us sinless before the Lord. Through Him, we have been restored to fellowship with God and we can come boldly before the throne of Grace. Likewise, Paul's Letter to the Ephesians declares that God is demonstrating our righteousness and His excellent wisdom to the underworld (Ep 3:9-11).

G. Hebrews 2:14-15:

Because of Christ's conquest of death and hell, deliverance has come for the righteous souls delivering them from captivity (Eph. 4:7). By Christ's completed works in His life and His death on the cross, He destroyed the enemy's hold on death.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus proclaims the Year of Jubilee. We are not certain if it was the actual year of Jubilee or not. However, He presents to His hearers the great Messianic occupation. How many even to this day are held captive by the fear of death? What will deliver us from the fear of death? The hope of eternal life! The New Testament furthers the theology of the afterlife. Paul's words in His Letter to the Corinthians says, "*That if this life is the only hope we have we are miserable*" (1Co 15:19). The angel of death was stayed by the blood of the Passover Lamb. The imagery of the Passover sacrifice continues from verse eleven (11). There must have been a great deal of fear on the night of the Passover. Likewise, for those who did not fear God on the night of Passover, death became a prevalent enemy. Now for the Believer, death and the fear that lorded itself over humanity is powerless. Christ recorded that He had taken the keys of death, hell and the grave (Re 1:18). As we have stated above, death is only the vehicle of commuting from one realm of existence to another. This mortality will one day be exchanged for immortality. This is not just a hope it is death's defeat.

What was the great power of death? The great fear that death produced was judgment. The Covenant of Moses revealed sin. Sin was to be punished. What punishment would God demand for the souls that had not been atoned for? Death lorded fear over humanity never letting the mind rest. Messiah destroyed this fear of death by receiving our judgment for sin upon Himself. This passage calls to mind the imagery of Isaiah chapter fifty-three (53) where Messiah is punished for our sins.

H. Hebrews 2:16-18:

Sin required a much greater sacrifice than any angel could make. As the promised “Seed” of both woman and Abraham, the promise of redemption was secured through a sacrifice of eternal worth and value.

This is the first time that the occupation of High Priest is accredited to Messiah in the Book of Hebrews. The occupation of the High Priest was that of an intercessor. Biblical and secular History records the deeds of the High Priesthood. Not all the Priests were compassionate toward their people or faithful to God. This was especially true during New Testament times. The High Priesthood of the New Testament was not legitimate, nor was it as sympathetic. It was an opportunity to swindle money from the people of God. It was marked with corruption and prejudice. That Christ is compared to the High Priest requires that He follow the order of Melchizedek. The legitimate High Priest must be from the tribe of Levi. Christ was from the tribe of Judah.

Because Christ became incarnate, we have a Priest that understands every aspect of our humanity. Because He suffered all that we will ever suffer, He can offer help. The Messianic occupation did not stop with deliverance from the penalty of sin. It continued to the actual assistance of those who suffered at the hands of the tempter. Christ was tempted and overcame. It is often consolation to find out that others have similar faults. However, we need to seek out those who have overcome; such is the case in Messiah. He was tempted just as we were and yet, He did not succumb to the advances of the enemy. Therefore, He can help us learn how to do just as He did. He offers His assistance mercifully and faithfully.

IV. MESSIAH GREATER THAN MOSES

In the third chapter of Hebrews Christ is compared to Moses. The similarities are immense. We are called to consider the similarities so that we can see the excellence of Christ.

A. Hebrews 3:1-6

1. Holy Brothers

The Author uses the Greek word “*hagios*” again to describe the holiness of the followers of Messiah. Holiness is the inherent character of those who have given their lives to God, in Christ. This is the result of the indwelling Spirit of Christ. Being “In Christ” makes us partakers of the Divine nature and citizenship (2Pe 1:4). Here the Author says that we are also partakers of the heavenly calling. The Author gives an exhortation to his readers to conduct themselves after the manner of their heavenly vocation. Those who had mimicked Christ were called Christians in Acts chapter nine (9). This was because they understood their heavenly occupation and conducted themselves accordingly. Men and women commit to God because they feel called to do so. However, the heavenly calling implies conducting ourselves after the manner of those in Heaven, such as God.

2. Apostle and High Priest

“Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession Jesus the Messiah.”

The Author makes an appeal to their reasoning. Notice the titles given to Messiah. He was an Apostle and High Priest. An Apostle is an Emissary or “Sent One.” Being an Apostle implies a definite and specific mission. The Apostle is sent for a very specific purpose. In the Gospel of John chapter six (6), Jesus is declared “The Sent One.” This establishes His Messianic occupation of redemption. The first Epistle of John defines the Messianic occupation as destroying the works of the enemy (1Jo 3:8).

3. Greater than Moses

Moses was the greatest Prophet of the Hebrew Scriptures. He was not just a “Lawgiver” he was also an “Emancipator” and “Intercessor.” He is a prototype of Christ himself. In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses prophesies of the Messianic Prophet who would come after him (De 18: 15-19). The Rabbis looked forward to the day when the “Second Moses” would arise. Like Moses, Messiah explained God’s expectations. Moses was pictured as the First “Savior” in rabbinic literature. Moses performed miracles to liberate the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Rabbinic literature looked forward to the “Last Savior” who would do as Moses had done. Jesus demonstrated the miracle working power of God to liberate all of humanity from the oppressive torments of the enemy. The Messiah would also perform supra-historical miracles. Jesus did exactly that. He brought Salvation for those in history past, present and future. Therefore, He performed supra-historical miracles. Moses fed the Children of Israel with the Bread of Heaven. Jesus was the “Bread of Heaven.” However, Messiah demonstrated the same supernatural ability by feeding the multitude. Moses produced water from the Rock. Messiah was that Rock. Nevertheless, Messiah offered the woman at the well the “Living Water.”

B. Hebrews 3:7-11: Second Warning: Danger of Unbelief

1. The Voice of the Spirit

Here the Holy Spirit makes His second appearance in the Book of Hebrews. His Voice speaks to us today. The key word here is, today. The Voice of the Spirit is Messiah. In the Garden the Voice of God appeared to Adam and Eve. Over and over throughout Scripture the Voice of God speaks or appears to man. These are pre-incarnate appearances of Messiah. Here, the Spirit calls to remembrance the stubbornness and rebellion of the generation that died in the wilderness. Even though they watched God work for over forty years, the Hebrew's ancestors refused to let God do things His way. They continually provoked God. Sin produces continuity for further sin.

Habitual sin brings about rebellion. Rebellion produces a hard heart. The term “hard heart” is figurative of those who refuse to listen to and obey the voice of God.

2. Peace and Rebellion

For those who walk in rebellion there is no peace. This is because there is no faith in God. Faith in God naturally produces peace. Peace of mind brings mental rest. The heart can be permeated with peace when it is filled with confidence in God. This is one of the most outstanding definitions of faith. Simply defined faith is “confidence in God.” The generation that died in the wilderness saw miracle after miracle however, they had no confidence in God. The First Century generation is warned against following the example of the rebellious generation of the Exodus.

In the Book of Exodus, the children of Israel have been delivered from the tyranny of the Egyptian Pharaoh through the slaughter of the Paschal Lamb, also a picture of Jesus. They have crossed the Red Sea and have been once and for all delivered from any possible attempt by Pharaoh’s schemes; as he was drown in the sea with his mighty army. God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2Pe 3:9).

The Author of Hebrews makes an appeal to the First Century generation by drawing a comparison between the rebellious generation and their present circumstances.

C. Hebrews 3:11:

The rebellious generation was not able to obtain rest because of their behavior and hardened hearts. God fully intends for His people to have rest and peace but often we cause the strife and hardships that comes our way. God does have a promised land that has all the provision and rest we need.

In Hebrew the word rest is associated with peace. The Hebrew word for peace is *Shalom*. The word *Shalom* is full of meaning. It also means to be complete, whole and lacking nothing. The rebellious generation were lacking in this quality because of their murmuring.

D. Hebrews 3:12:

A warning is being issued to the readers about the danger of falling away from the faith. We need to heed this warning, also. He could be our God but we fall short of

His rest and blessing. Note that the Hebrews were not warned about falling away from God Himself. It is unbelief that causes us to fall away from a Living God. Our falling away usually comes little by little, day by day, and here a little there a little.

The Greek word for unbelief is *Apistis* meaning no faith. As we have stated above, the rebellious generation placed no confidence or faith in God even though He had performed mighty miracles on their behalf. The word "heart" is the Greek word *kardia*. It is indicative of the human soul. The soul (heart) is described as being deceitfully wicked in the writings of Jeremiah (Jer 17:9). The soul is the source of man's actions. Here the Author suggests that there is a soul or heart of unbelief. Abraham was persuaded to faith by continually hearing what God had planned for His life. Likewise, the soul can be persuaded to distrust God through continual evil suggestions.

E. Hebrews 3:13-19:

1. Comfort One Another

We are given the answer to doubt and unbelief. If we will remain faithful to each other we will exhort one another to press in and on. Trust God and believe in His Word. *You who are strong restore the weak* (Ga 6:1). We are to exhort or encourage one another daily to keep on keeping on so our hearts will not be hardened. Remember that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. The flesh is the degenerate soul. That means that there is a part of the soul that remains untransformed. Paul's resolve of this dilemma is the whole transformation of the soul (Ro 12:1-3).

2. Partakers

The word "partakers" is in the Greek, "*metochi*". In Luke 5:7, it is translated as partners. In Hebrews 3:1, it is "partakers of a heavenly calling". It indicates the calling of all true Believers in this age who have become sons. Being a son and partaker requires faithfulness and perseverance.

3. Learning from the Past

Here is an exhortation for First Century Jews to profit by the rebellious generation's failure. The word sinned has a peculiar and terrible meaning. There are acts of willful and rebellious sins which the effects go on and on. The rebellious generation of Israel came so close to entering the Promised Land; but had to die in the wilderness because of their unbelief. This generation would not receive the promises of God because of the sin of unbelief.

4. Destructive power of Unbelief

Unbelief is an attitude of the soul; it is the source of disobedience. Unbelief is not the inability to understand, but unwillingness to trust. Trusting God puts everything in God's hands. Unbelief is the attitude of neglect or distrust of God. Here, we are reminded of the words of the Psalmist in the ninety-fifth chapter (Ps 95). The Psalmist exhorts his audience to sing praises to God and not be like the rebellious generation who died in the wilderness and were forbade the peaceful rest of God.

Homework 1, Chapters I - II

Name _____

1. The Book of Hebrews is one of the most beautiful commentaries on the Old Testament that we possess as Christians.

True or False

2. Early sources of biblical text and manuscripts do not show evidence that the title was *The Epistle to the Hebrews*.

True or False

3. Who wrote the Book of Hebrews?

- A. Paul B. Timothy
C. Unknown D. Barnabas

4. Many Biblical scholars reject Paul's authorship of this book.

True or False

5. Some scholars believe that Peter makes a reference to Paul having written a letter to the Hebrews. What is the reference?

- A. Ephesians 1:6 B. 2 Peter 3:15
C. 1 Peter 1:4 D. None of the above

6. The readers of the Letter were not acquainted with the author and they did not accept the letter's authenticity.

True or False

7. We now have the Book of Hebrews as a part of Christian canon, thereby making God the author.

True or False

8. The Book of Hebrews was written to a group of Gentile Believers.

True or False

9. Jewish Believers, wanted to reverse their course in order to escape persecution by some of their own countrymen and Gentile oppression were the recipients of this letter.

True or False

10. The Book of Hebrews is a unifier of both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

True or False

11. It is easy to ascertain the date of origin of the book of Hebrews due to a wealth of information concerning the authorship.

True or False

12. When do scholars believe that Timothy died?

- A. 78 A.D. B. 82 A.D.
C. 90 A.D. D. 94 A.D.

13. The questions that presented themselves to both the Jewish and Gentile communities are not answered in the Letter to The Hebrews.

True or False

14. All references to the sacrificial cult of Israel are references to the:

- A. Tabernacle B. Promised Land
C. Tent of Meeting D. A and C

15. The date of the writing of the Book of Hebrews is placed somewhere between:

- A. A.D. 60 and 95 B. A.D. 33 and 37
C. A.D. 17 and 30 D. A.D. 97 and 105

16. The New Testament does not bear witness to extensive use of the Hebrew tongue.

True or False

17. In the Book of Hebrews, Jesus is revealed as the "Key to all Scripture.

True or False

18. The general consensus is that the Jewish Community of Believers was being persecuted from without and within.

True or False

19. Paul's letter to the Galatians was written because there were those Jews that insisted that proselytization was not an essential part of Salvation.

True or False

20. Regardless of the potential audience, the Author tells those in Christ how they should act.

True or False

21. Messiah identified with man in His incarnation and offered no less a sacrifice than Himself on our behalf.
True or False

22. In the Book of Hebrews, Messiah's Deity and humanity are not asserted with equal force.
True or False

23. The word "better" in the Book of Hebrews implies a moral idea but rather a place of rank.
True or False

24. What is the common recognition of all those listed in the Hall of Faith?

- A. They were advanced in years
- B. They pleased God
- C. They were rebellious as youths
- D. None of the above

25. The Book of Hebrews builds a case for the excellence of Messiah.
True or False

26. What does the Author demonstrate in the Book of Hebrews?

- A. The excellence of Christ's person
- B. The excellence of Messiah's work
- C. Practical application to the Messianic walk of faith
- D. All of the above

27. _____ is built upon the highest form of Divine revelation.

- A. Fellowship
- B. Christianity
- C. Buddhism
- D. Monotheism

28. In the Last Adam, we have the Divine Messiah who retrieved what Adam forfeited.
True or False

29. The triumphs and accomplishments of faith in the lives of Old Testament Believers have no encouragement for the recipients of New Covenant.
True or False

30. The concept of inheritance is not very prominent in the New Testament.
True or False

31. Christ was not divinely appointed however; he still met the needs of the people.
True or False

32. It is not crucial that we keep a firm grip on what we have heard so that we do not drift off.
True or False

33. There is no punishment for turning away from Christ.
True or False

34. It is essential that we have a sound theological basis upon which to place our faith in Jesus as Messiah, the Son of God.
True or False

35. Verses one through three in chapter one is what is commonly called the prologue of Hebrews.
True or False

36. Christ is not just upholding all things with the word of His Power; He is causing them to fulfill their designed role in the earth.
True or False

37. _____ was the Scripture Jesus used to debate with the Pharisees in Jerusalem about the identity of Messiah.

- A. Psalms 119: 6
- B. Psalms 110:1
- C. Psalms 119:105
- D. Psalms 39:1

38. Ancient scholarship saw Messiah as the:

- A. Archetype of man
- B. The reason for their struggles
- C. The answer to the bondages of Egypt
- D. None of the above

39. Because of the high opinion of angels, the Author does not seek to exalt Christ far above any possible subordinate object of worship or minor deity.
True or False

40. The Hebrew name for Jesus is:

- A. Yeshayahu B. Yeshua
- C. Yeramiyahu D. Yo'el

41. The Salvation that Jesus provided included all of a person's being.

True or False

42. There was no "New Testament" in the hands of the Believers until about:

- A. 70 A.D. B. 125 A.D.
- C. 300 A.D. D. 370 A.D.

44. _____ chapter two established the enthronement rights of the Son.

- A. Daniel B. Hosea
- C. Amos D. Psalms

45. How long would the dynasty of David's Son, Jesus last?

- A. 1,000 years B. 1,000,000 years
- C. 6,000,000 years D. Forever

46. Multitudes of passages paint a picture of Christ in gladness and joy.

True or False

47. Melchizedek is a name not a title.

True or False

48. The right hand is the hand of indirect intervention.

True or False

49. Ministering spirits are sent to minister to and on behalf of those who are the heirs of Salvation.

True or False

50. Christianity has yet to understand or take advantage of the angelic ministry.

True or False