

First, some nuts and bolts:

The book, based on writings of our Church fathers, appears to have been written somewhere between 63-65 AD but some have it as late as 67-69AD.

The most controversial issue is its authorship. Was it Paul? Or was it one of the other 6-8 men or 1 woman (Priscilla) who have been proposed? Some believe Paul originally wrote it in Hebrew and it was later translated into Greek by Luke. Others don't believe it was even a "letter" written to a specific church, but rather was written as a sermon. Regardless, the bottom line of its authorship was summed up by Origen who lived in the latter 2<sup>nd</sup> C and into the first-half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> C. He said: "But who wrote the Epistle God alone knows for certain." To that I might say "I know exactly who wrote it: The Holy Spirit!"

It was most certainly written to the Jewish Believers in Judea – uniformly referred to as "Hebrews" as much as those outside of Israel were referred to as "Hellenists".

The book has 29 quotations and 53 allusions to the Old Testament, for a total of 82 references. The author knew his OC Scriptures.

Let's not get so immersed in the details that we lose sight of the fact that first and foremost, this is a Book about Jesus, the Christ, The one and only begotten God-Man. The book is challenging; the book is difficult in places; but the book is also brilliant, and its brilliance is best seen as it sheds light on Christ Jesus who is superior just as the Substance is superior to the "types and shadows".

There are other thoughts that must be considered:

First, the letter shows the superiority of Christ:

- One who is greater than the prophets.
- One who is greater than the angels.
- One who is greater than Moses.
- One who is greater than Joshua.
- One whose priesthood is superior to that of Aaron.
- One who serves in a better sanctuary.
- One who has introduced a better covenant.
- One who is the antitype of the typical furniture and veil.
- One whose once-for-all offering of Himself for sin is superior to the repeated sacrifices of bulls and goats.

Second, it deals with a seemingly unbearable struggle of the Jewish Believers in Judea, to whom the letter is written. They were under great persecution from the Rabbi's, the Pharisees, Sadducees and the scribes because they viewed the Jewish Believers as

traitors

- 1) to their religion,
- 2) to their ancestors,
- 3) to the revered Law of Moses and
- 4) the Traditions of the Fathers.

They also went from being in the 'majority' to being a 'minority'; They were allowed access to the Temple at first but that quickly changed as the unclean, pagan Gentiles came to this "new religion".

But these believers are really no different than us. Some believed in the LORD Christ Jesus and were genuine followers of the Messiah. Some had a **verbal** profession, perhaps were even baptized and then joined a local body of believers; but like many today who say they are Christians but have no depth of faith nor have truly received the Holy Spirit, they are just playing a dangerous game (a Christian in name only).

And since these two types of believers are spoken of or referred to in the book, I thought it would be helpful to hear the Master teach on this subject:

Jesus had just given a teaching called "The Parable of the Sower". Let me relate what He told His disciples a short while later:

**Matthew 13:18-23** "Therefore hear the parable of the sower: (19) When anyone hears the **word** of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. (20) But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; (21) yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. (22) Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. (23) But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Good ground is that person whose heart and mind are prepared **by God the Holy Spirit** to receive. He takes it in and the 'seed' takes root and produces fruit as the Holy Spirit deems.

Our Epistle deals with the first two classes—truly saved Christian Hebrews and those who had nothing but an outward veneer of Christianity.

## **I want to read the first 4 verses together then look at them more closely.**

([Hebrews 1:1](#)) God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, (2) has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; (3) who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (4) having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

These first 4 verses are densely packed with Truth. Let's look at the details:

1. God is the one who spoke and is still speaking. I say still because the word "by" *His* Son is actually translated "in" Son. It's a weird text "spoken in Son"; that's why some translations use "by", "through" as if the Son is speaking here. But God is doing the speaking then and now. **He is declaring His Son to the readers.**
2. "last days" most likely, in the context of the letter, refers to the end of the Mosaic dispensation of Law.
3. God describes the Son:
  - a. As a "Son", and as opposed to what we will see shortly the generic "sons of god", i.e., the angels.
  - b. God appointed the Son as heir of all things. Why? Because all things were created by Him and for Him.
    - i. [Colossians 1:16](#) For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.
  - c. He is the brightness of His Glory
    - i. [2 Corinthians 3:7-18](#) But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away, (8) how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? (9) For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. .... (18) But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.
    - ii. [2 Peter 1:17](#) For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
  - d. the express image of His person,
    - i. [Colossians 1:15](#) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.
  - e. upholding all things by the word of His power,

- i. [Colossians 1:17](#) And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (consist also means "held together").
- f. when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
  - i. [Jude 1:24-25](#) Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present *you* faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, (25) To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.
  - ii. [Revelation 3:21](#) **To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.**

The next section deals with how Jesus, the Christ is fundamentally different than the angels in heaven. Why include this, especially after the first 4 verses?

As we learned when we studied 1<sup>st</sup> John, a gnostic heresy was being perpetrated into the church. One aspect of this was that they declared Jesus to be a "super angel", some even thought he was an Arch-Angel. No, this Jesus, the Promised Messiah, was no angel.

One side-note: there is some question as to the applicability of these OC verses to this issue. Scholars tend to agree that the writer of Hebrews would NOT have included them if it wasn't any agreement from the readers as to their meaning and applicability. In addition to this, it was a well known practice to give a single verse to clue the reader or hearer into the entire passage: Remember: [Matthew 27:46](#) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

The hearer would understand the reference to the entire text of Psalm 22...

**(Hebrews 1:5) For to which of the angels did He ever say: "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"? And again: "I WILL BE TO HIM A FATHER, AND HE SHALL BE TO ME A SON"?**

Psalms 2:6-8 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." (7) "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. (8) Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.

1 Chronicles 17:13-14 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. (14) And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever." ' "

The Book of Job clearly states that the angels were called "sons of God".

**Job 1:6** Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

And none of the angels is referred to as a son of God or even the Son of God.

**(Hebrews 1:6)** **But** when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."

Psa 97:7 Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, Who boast of idols. Worship Him, all you gods.

**Psalms 97:1-12** The LORD reigns; Let the earth rejoice; Let the multitude of isles be glad! (2) Clouds and darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of His throne. (3) A fire goes before Him, And burns up His enemies round about. (4) His lightnings light the world; The earth sees and trembles. (5) The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. (6) The heavens declare His righteousness, And all the peoples see His glory. (7) Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, Who boast of idols. Worship Him, all *you* gods. (8) Zion hears and is glad, And the daughters of Judah rejoice Because of Your judgments, O LORD. (9) For You, LORD, *are* most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods. (10) You who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked. (11) Light is sown for the righteous, And gladness for the upright in heart. (12) Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.

(( I won't be reading all of the Psalms in full. I encourage you to do that on your own)))

**(Hebrews 1:7)** **And of the angels He says:** "WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS SPIRITS AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE."

Psalms 104:4 Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.

The root word of Seraphim refers to a fire! These minister to God at the very Throne.

**(Hebrews 1:8)** **But to the Son He says:** "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER; A SCEPTER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SCEPTER OF YOUR KINGDOM. **(Hebrews 1:9)** YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS MORE THAN YOUR COMPANIONS."

Psalms 45:6-7 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. (7) You love righteousness and

hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

**(Hebrews 1:10) And:** "YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORK OF YOUR HANDS. **(Hebrews 1:11)** THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN; AND THEY WILL ALL GROW OLD LIKE A GARMENT; **(Hebrews 1:12)** LIKE A CLOAK YOU WILL FOLD THEM UP, AND THEY WILL BE CHANGED. BUT YOU ARE THE SAME, AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT FAIL."

Psalms 102:25-27 Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. (26) They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be changed. (27) But You are the same, And Your years will have no end.

Angels are created beings; They are not eternal as God is; they have life everlasting but they have a beginning and an end!

**(Hebrews 1:13) But to which of the angels has He ever said:** "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, TILL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES YOUR FOOTSTOOL"?

Psalms 110:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

**(Hebrews 1:14)** Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

Angels are ministering spirits serving God. Even the Arch-Angels serve God and always do His bidding. To misquote a line I heard on the TV show, West Wing: They serve at the pleasure of their God!

They cannot save, they cannot redeem. They cannot truly understand.

**1 Peter 1:10-12** Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, **(11)** searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. **(12)** To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

**WHAT'S THE POINT? I think the writer gave the point in the next 4 verses:**

**Hebrews 2:1-4** **Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.** **(2)** For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, **(3)** how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken

by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, (4) God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

### **I need to show another translation :**

**Hebrews 2:1** (KJV) Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time **we should let *them* slip.**

In most translations, the idea is that we might 'drift away', in others, the idea is that we would allow the 'things which we heard' to slip away – or more literally, 'all the things we heard to leak out' as the Greek implies.

In either case, something is moving away from the things we heard: either we are or the things themselves are.

So, the author is saying we need to strongly cling to the Truth we have heard. And by 'strongly cling' the idea also includes "applying ourselves to the truth"...Perhaps this is what James meant about having faith without works...if it's all in your head, nothing good can come of it.

SO, the POINT is, if the 'word' spoken of through angels had such an impact and was in force for so long....

Wait, what 'word' was this? In Stephen's last teaching moment he said of his hearers (Jewish leaders):

**Acts 7:53** who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it.*"

The Rabbi's believed that there were ranks of angels attending God when He gave the law from Mt Sinai. And even Paul wrote of this to the Galatians:

**Galatians 3:19** What purpose then *does* the law *serve*? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.

So, what's the point?

If the 'Law', given to Moses in the company of angels proved so steadfast and through it every sin received its just reward, how much MORE should we give "earnest heed" what was spoken by our LORD Jesus who IS the LORD God and not just another created being?

AND! What was being offered? "A GREAT SALVATION"! And how can we confirm it? GOD Himself bore witness with "both with signs and wonders, with various miracles".

AND! Even better...with Gifts of the Holy Spirit! The Law came with thunder, lightening and earthquakes! Salvation came by the Son of God. The Law was given, and the people trembled! Salvation came, and the people fell to their knees! The Law came with fire that could turn a man into ash...the Holy Spirit who sealed our salvation for our ultimate inheritance, would set a fire in our souls to be witnesses of such a "GREAT SALVATION" – given freely by our LORD and Savior, Christ Jesus.