

The background of the cover features a close-up, slightly blurred view of an open book. The pages are filled with handwritten text in a cursive script, which is Hebrew. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the paper and the ink of the text. The book is open, showing two pages, and the spine is visible in the center.

CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

SWINDOLL'S  
LIVING  
INSIGHTS

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

**HEBREWS**

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*Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.*  
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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

For more than sixty years I have loved the Bible. It was that love for the Scriptures, mixed with a clear call into the gospel ministry during my tour of duty in the Marine Corps, that resulted in my going to Dallas Theological Seminary to prepare for a lifetime of ministry. During those four great years I had the privilege of studying under outstanding men of God, who also loved God's Word. They not only held the inerrant Word of God in high esteem, they taught it carefully, preached it passionately, and modeled it consistently. A week never passes without my giving thanks to God for the grand heritage that has been mine to claim! I am forever indebted to those fine theologians and mentors, who cultivated in me a strong commitment to the understanding, exposition, and application of God's truth.

For more than fifty years I have been engaged in doing just that—*and how I love it!* I confess without hesitation that I am addicted to the examination and the proclamation of the Scriptures. Because of this, books have played a major role in my life for as long as I have been in ministry—especially those volumes that explain the truths and enhance my understanding of what God has written. Through these many years I have collected a large personal library, which has proven invaluable as I have sought to remain a faithful student of the Bible. To the end of my days, my major goal in life is to communicate the Word with accuracy, insight, clarity, and practicality. Without informative and reliable books to turn to, I would have “run dry” decades ago.

Among my favorite and most well-worn volumes are those that have enabled me to get a better grasp of the biblical text. Like most expositors, I am forever searching for literary tools that I can use to hone my gifts and sharpen my skills. For me, that means finding resources that make the complicated simple and easy to understand, that offer insightful comments and word pictures that enable me to see the relevance of sacred truth in light of my twenty-first-century world, and that drive those truths home to my heart in ways I do not easily forget. When I come across such books, they wind up in my hands as I devour them and then place them in my library for further reference . . . and, believe me, I often return to them. What a relief it is to have these resources to turn to when I lack fresh insight, or when I need just the right story or illustration, or when I get stuck in the tangled text and cannot find my way out. For the serious expositor, a library is essential. As a mentor of mine once said, “Where else can you have ten thousand professors at your fingertips?”

In recent years I have discovered there are not nearly enough resources like those I just described. It was such a discovery that prompted me to consider

becoming a part of the answer instead of lamenting the problem. But the solution would result in a huge undertaking. A writing project that covers all of the books and letters of the New Testament seemed overwhelming and intimidating. A rush of relief came when I realized that during the past fifty-plus years I've taught and preached through most of the New Testament. In my files were folders filled with notes from those messages that were just lying there, waiting to be brought out of hiding, given a fresh and relevant touch in light of today's needs, and applied to fit into the lives of men and women who long for a fresh word from the Lord. *That did it!* I began to work on plans to turn all of those notes into this commentary on the New Testament.

I must express my gratitude to Mike Svigel for his tireless and devoted efforts, serving as my hands-on, day-to-day editor. He has done superb work as we have walked our way through the verses and chapters of all twenty-seven New Testament books. It has been a pleasure to see how he has taken my original material and helped me shape it into a style that remains true to the text of the Scriptures, at the same time interestingly and creatively developed, and all the while allowing my voice to come through in a natural and easy-to-read manner.

I need to add sincere words of appreciation to the congregations I have served in various parts of these United States for more than five decades. It has been my good fortune to be the recipient of their love, support, encouragement, patience, and frequent words of affirmation as I have fulfilled my calling to stand and deliver God's message year after year. The sheep from all those flocks have endeared themselves to this shepherd in more ways than I can put into words . . . and none more than those I currently serve with delight at Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas.

Finally, I must thank my wife, Cynthia, for her understanding of my addiction to studying, to preaching, and to writing. Never has she discouraged me from staying at it. Never has she failed to urge me in the pursuit of doing my very best. On the contrary, her affectionate support personally, and her own commitment to excellence in leading *Insight for Living* for more than three and a half decades, have combined to keep me faithful to my calling "in season and out of season." Without her devotion to me and apart from our mutual partnership throughout our lifetime of ministry together, *Swindoll's Living Insights* would never have been undertaken.

I am grateful that it has now found its way into your hands and, ultimately, onto the shelves of your library. My continued hope and prayer is that you will find these volumes helpful in your own study and personal application of the Bible. May they help you come to realize, as I have over these many years, that God's Word is as timeless as it is true.

The grass withers, the flower fades,  
But the word of our God stands forever. (Isa. 40:8, NASB)

*Chuck Swindoll*  
Frisco, Texas

# THE STRONG'S NUMBERING SYSTEM

Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary uses the Strong's word-study numbering system to give both newer and more advanced Bible students alike quicker, more convenient access to helpful original-language tools (e.g., concordances, lexicons, and theological dictionaries). The Strong's numbering system, made popular by the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, is used with the majority of biblical Greek and Hebrew reference works. Those who are unfamiliar with the ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek alphabets can quickly find information on a given word by looking up the appropriate index number. Advanced students will find the system helpful because it allows them to quickly find the lexical form of obscure conjugations and inflections.

When a Greek word is mentioned in the text, the Strong's number is included in square brackets after the Greek word. So in the example of the Greek word *agapē* [26], "love," the number is used with Greek tools keyed to the Strong's system.

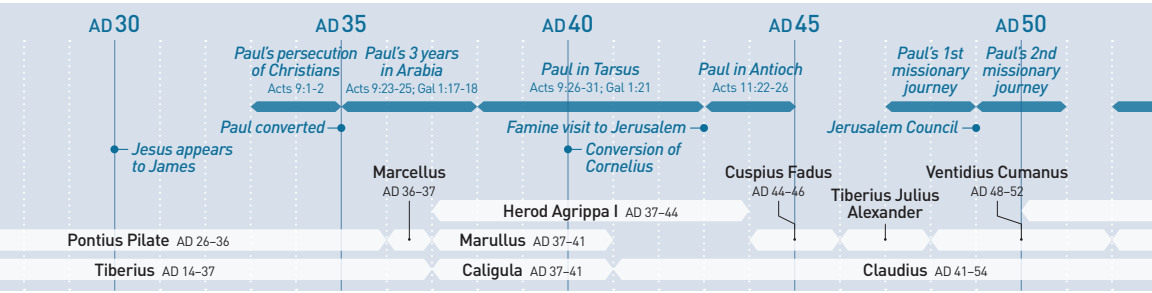
On occasion, a Hebrew word is mentioned in the text. The Strong's Hebrew numbers are completely separate from the Greek numbers, so Hebrew numbers are prefixed with a letter "H." So, for example, the Hebrew word *kapporet* [H3727], "mercy seat," comes from *kopher* [H3722], "to ransom," "to secure favor through a gift."



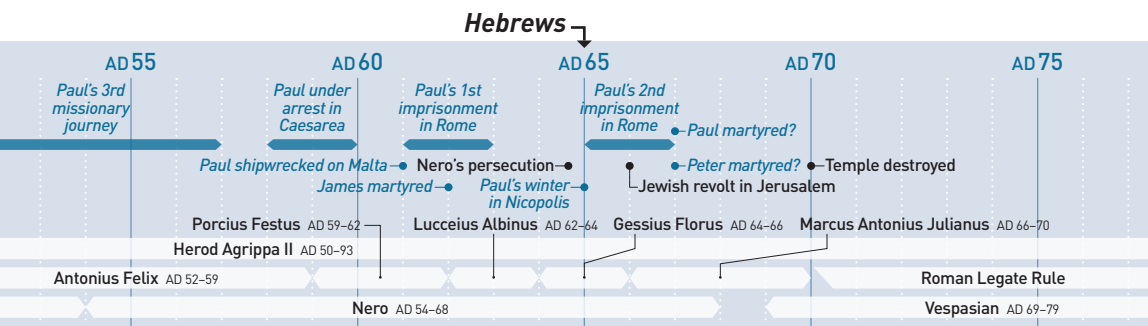


# INSIGHTS ON HEBREWS

*As we begin to dive in, we'll soon discover that numerous ancient springs from the Old Testament contribute to its fresh message to God's people. Rich in history, vibrant in imagery, and eloquent in style, the book of Hebrews has the words to refresh our minds and cleanse our souls.*



The people who originally received and heard Hebrews were most likely living in Rome. The author is anonymous, and he could have been writing from a variety of places where other Christians gathered, perhaps one of the cities highlighted above in blue.



# HEBREWS

## INTRODUCTION

The letter to the Hebrews isn't casual bedside reading. Dense and deep, complex and compelling, profound and practical—it requires mental focus and spiritual motivation to grasp its content and grapple with its application. But the return on this big investment has benefits that pay off in eternal dividends.

With thirteen chapters, Hebrews is one of the longest epistles of the New Testament, surpassed only by Romans and 1 Corinthians. Yet Hebrews has received much less attention by preachers and teachers than its similarly sized siblings. The reluctance of some to dive into the depths of this book shouldn't dissuade us from drinking deeply from its wells of spiritual insight and refreshment. As we begin to dive in, we'll soon discover that numerous ancient springs from the Old Testament contribute to its fresh message to God's people. Rich in history, vibrant in imagery, and eloquent in style, the book of Hebrews has the words to refresh our minds and cleanse our souls.

Before we get wet, however, we need to understand the background of the book. Who wrote it, and to whom was it written? When was it written and why?

### QUICK FACTS ON HEBREWS

**When was it written?** Around AD 65

**Where was it written?** Unknown, but likely written to a Roman church (see Heb. 13:24)

**Who wrote it?** Anonymous, but a known and influential minister to the original audience; probably someone closely associated with Timothy and Paul (see 13:23)

**Why was it written?** In order to encourage Jewish believers under persecution to remain true to their Messiah and to discourage them from returning to their old covenant ways, the author presents a simple theme: *Christ is superior in His person and work.*

# THE BOOK OF HEBREWS AT A GLANCE

| SECTION   | CHRIST IS SUPERIOR IN HIS PERSON  | CHRIST IS SUPERIOR AS OUR HIGH PRIEST   | CHRIST IS SUPERIOR FOR PRESSING ON  |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| PASSAGE   | 1:1–4:16  | 5:1–10:39   | 11:1–13:25  |
| THEMES    | Instruction concerning the Preeminent Person of Christ  |   | Exhortation for the Practical Life of Faith   |
|           | <b>Jesus is better than:</b><br>Prophets<br>Angels<br>Moses<br>Joshua<br>Sabbath<br>Other priests | <b>Jesus is greater than:</b><br>Earthly priesthood<br>Old covenant<br>(Mosaic Law)<br>Animal sacrifices<br>Daily offerings | <b>Jesus is the source of:</b><br>Faith to trust God<br>Hope to endure trials<br>Love to encourage others |
|           | <i>Warnings</i><br>2:1-4<br>3:7-4:13  | <i>Warnings</i><br>5:11-6:20<br>10:19-39  | <i>Warning</i><br>12:25-29  |
| KEY TERMS | Much better<br>Glory<br>Rest  | Dull<br>Fall aside<br>Covenant  | Faith<br>Discipline   |

A brief overview of these precious thirteen chapters will help us see how they fit with the rest of the Bible . . . and how they might address us today.

## THE AUTHOR, AUDIENCE, AND OCCASION OF HEBREWS

Most epistles in the New Testament clearly indicate who was the main author, who assisted or collaborated in the writing, or who served as a secretary in its composition (see chart, “Authors and Contributors of New Testament Letters”). And even in the case of the three epistles attributed to the apostle John, in which no author is named, very early church testimony clearly links these letters to Jesus’ beloved disciple, who was also the disciple James’s brother.

| AUTHORS AND CONTRIBUTORS OF NEW TESTAMENT LETTERS         |   |
|---|---|
| EPISTLE   | AUTHOR, COAUTHORS, OR SCRIBES                                   |
| Romans  | Paul, with Tertius (Rom. 1:1; 16:22)                            |
| 1 Corinthians   | Paul, with Sosthenes (1 Cor. 1:1)                               |
| Galatians<br>Ephesians<br>1 Timothy<br>2 Timothy<br>Titus | Paul (Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:1)    |
| 2 Corinthians<br>Philippians<br>Colossians<br>Philemon    | Paul, with Timothy (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; Phlm. 1:1) |
| 1 Thessalonians<br>2 Thessalonians                        | Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy (1 Thes. 1:1; 2 Thes. 1:1)          |
| Hebrews   | Unnamed   |
| James   | James (Jas. 1:1)  |
| 1 Peter   | Peter, with Silvanus (1 Pet. 1:1; 5:12)                         |
| 2 Peter   | Peter (2 Pet. 1:1)  |
| 1–3 John  | Unnamed “elder” (2 Jn 1:1; 3 Jn 1:1)                            |
| Jude  | Jude (Jude 1:1)   |

The book of Hebrews stands alone as a letter that has no named author, and there was a lot of uncertainty in the early church regarding who

may have been responsible for its composition. These two facts led the third-century church father Origen of Alexandria to note, “Who wrote the epistle is known to God alone.”<sup>1</sup> However, Kent Hughes notes, “The author, whoever he was, was a magnificent stylist with an immense vocabulary and a vast knowledge of the Greek Old Testament.”<sup>2</sup> Though we can’t be sure of the identity of the writer of Hebrews, we do know that the author was personally known to the original audience, and he was an associate of Timothy, one of Paul’s protégés (Heb. 13:23). This gives us confidence that it was not written by some marginal outsider with an agenda contrary to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. The Christ-honoring and theologically sound contents confirm this.

**TOP CANDIDATES FOR THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Paul             | Many in the early church believed Paul was the source of the ideas in Hebrews, but the text was written by someone with a different style than Paul’s. Or, alternatively, Paul originally wrote the book in Hebrew, and it was translated by another—perhaps Luke—into highly stylized Greek. <sup>3</sup>  |
| Luke             | The style of Greek seems to be more similar to that of the Gospel of Luke and Acts than that of Paul’s epistles, leading some to suggest Luke himself as the author, perhaps drawing on Paul’s teachings. <sup>4</sup>  |
| Apollos          | Many, including Martin Luther, suggest that the eloquence and intelligence displayed in the epistle matches the description of Apollos in Acts 18:24. <sup>5</sup>  |
| Barnabas         | Tertullian of Carthage in the late second to early third century regarded Barnabas as the author, though few have followed him on this. <sup>6</sup>  |
| Silvanus (Silas) | Silas was a close associate of Paul and a “prophet” (Acts 15:32) who was also named as a coauthor (or at least a joint authority) of 1 and 2 Thessalonians (1 Thes. 1:1; 2 Thes. 1:1) and perhaps even 1 Peter (1 Pet. 5:12). <sup>7</sup>  |
| Clement of Rome  | Clement of Rome, writing his letter to the Corinthian church in the AD 90s, was the first person to quote extensively from Hebrews, and he did not name the author (1 Clement 36). This has prompted some to conclude that he may have been personally responsible for writing the letter years earlier under Paul’s guidance (see Phil. 4:3). <sup>8</sup> |

The authorship of Hebrews remains a mystery to us, but the general identification and circumstances of the original recipients are much clearer. The letter was addressed to Jewish Christians estranged from the world in every way. A Jewish person would have already been, as it

were, “a stranger in a strange land” with regard to neighboring Gentiles (see Exod. 2:22, KJV)—the focus of stares, a target of prejudice, and an object of scorn. It seems that persecution worsened after a Jewish believer placed their faith in Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah, received the promised Spirit of God, and was incorporated into the church body of Jews and Gentiles. Already snubbed by Gentiles and now shunned by fellow Jews, these Jewish-Christian converts would have often found themselves without homes, without families, without jobs, and without the support of their former, Jewish peers.

Although written generally for people of Hebrew descent, it is possible that the letter originally went to a specific group of Jewish believers huddled together in Italy. Why Italy? Why not Jerusalem or some other location in Judea? A possible key is found in Hebrews 13:24. The author notes, “Those from Italy greet you.” One commentator notes, “*Those who come from Italy* is most naturally interpreted not of people who, at the time of writing, are living in Italy, but of Italian people who are resident in some other part of the world.”<sup>9</sup> Actually, the Greek text itself is a bit ambiguous. Some believe it refers to those who are in Italy with the author as he’s writing—making Rome the source of the letter, not the destination.<sup>10</sup> However, when we realize that quotations from, and allusions to, the letter to the Hebrews first appear in Rome in the late first and early second centuries,<sup>11</sup> the idea that the letter was written to Jewish Christians living in Rome makes a lot of sense.

So the book of Hebrews was probably written to Jewish Christians living in Rome around the year AD 65, though it is also possible that it was written from Rome to Jewish believers who had close connections with Italian Christians. In either case, the dire situation of persecution in Rome and the fears that it could spread across the Empire would have had all Christians shaking in their sandals. Between AD 65 and 68, the Emperor Nero’s insanity and his persecution against Christians in Rome were at their worst. One author notes:

In A.D. 64 a great fire broke out in Rome that destroyed a large part of the city. Nero was suspected of having deliberately set it in order to make room for his new Golden House, a splendid palace that he had built on the Esquiline hill. . . . In order to divert the blame from himself, he accused the Christians of having caused the disaster. Their attitude of aloofness from the heathen and their talk of the ultimate destruction of the world by fire lent plausibility to the charge. Many of them were brought to trial and were tortured to death. Tradition says that Peter and



Paul perished in this persecution, the first one conducted by the state.<sup>12</sup>

This would have been a particularly traumatic time for Jewish believers in Jesus. They were already scorned by the unbelieving Jewish community for their conversion to what most Jews regarded as a heretical sect. Now their faith in the Messiah and membership in the church were proving to be deadly. In this context of severe persecution, many Jewish believers would have been tempted to follow the path of least resistance—returning to the synagogue. There they would have found refuge from the flames of fiery trials facing the church. They would have found protection under the canopy of a religion that had legal status under Roman law. And they would have returned to the ancient faith of their fathers, to the comfort of following the clear mandates of the Law, and to the familiar writings of Moses and the Prophets.

But then the letter to the Hebrews began to circulate. It sought to bolster their faith, firm up their convictions, and give them strength to persevere in the storms of persecution. Encouraging them to remain true to their Messiah as the Way, the Truth, and the Life and discouraging them from returning to the old, obsolete life of the old covenant, the author of Hebrews presents a simple theme: *Christ is superior in His person and work*.

## THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST IN HEBREWS

The theme of the superiority of Christ in His person and work resounds from every chapter of the book of Hebrews. It is the repeated melody with which every subject of the letter resonates in perfect harmony. To develop his anthem of Christ's superiority, the author conducts his readers through three major movements:

- 1) Christ is superior in His person. (1:1–4:16)
- 2) Christ is superior as our high priest. (5:1–10:39)
- 3) Christ is superior for pressing on. (11:1–13:25)

*Christ is superior in His person.* In this first section (1:1–4:16), the author asserts that God gave the fullest manifestation of His word through Jesus Christ and emphasizes that Jesus is fully divine (1:1-3). As such, He is therefore greater than the angels (chapters 1–2), greater than Moses and Joshua (chapters 3–4), and greater than the Law and its priesthood (chapter 4). There is nothing on heaven or earth that surpasses the superiority of the Son. By demonstrating the absolute splendor of the Savior, who is fully human and fully divine, the author

sought to encourage Jewish believers to reaffirm allegiance to their true Messiah and King, Jesus.

*Christ is superior as our high priest.* Expanding on the idea of Christ's preeminence over the Old Testament Law and priesthood (chapter 4), the author gives numerous examples of how Jesus is greater than the earthly priesthood (chapters 5–7), greater than the old covenant (chapters 8–9), and greater than the whole Mosaic sacrificial system (chapter 10). These comparisons would have made it clear to Jewish believers that their return to Judaism would have been a move backward in God's progressing plan of redemption.

*Christ is superior for pressing on.* Finally, chapters 11–13 argue that following Jesus by faith far surpasses the worn-out way of life through the Law offered by Judaism. Christ is our guide for life's challenges, and the walk of righteousness is a walk of faith (chapter 11). With a life of faith comes hope, which provides strength to endure trials (chapter 12). And with faith and hope comes love, which enables believers to encourage others to endure (chapter 13). These eminently practical concluding chapters would have compelled uncertain Jewish believers to persevere in faith, hope, and love in the midst of brutal trials and temptations.

## THE RELEVANCE OF HEBREWS FOR US

Most people reading the book of Hebrews today are not Jewish believers. And even if they are of Hebrew ancestry, none are living in the terrors of first-century Rome under the madness of Nero. However, all of us—whether Jew or Gentile—can sense the heat rising in our increasingly anti-Christian culture and feel the pressure to conform to the values and priorities of this darkening world. Like the first-century Jewish followers of the Messiah who were tempted to abandon His way, truth, and life for a more comfortable path, we need to come to grips with the sufficiency of Christ and His absolute superiority over all things. We need to stand and say a pledge of allegiance to the Lord who bought us with His own blood.

Whatever the trial or turmoil you may be dealing with today, *Christ is superior*. It may be pressure from outside yourself. An unbelieving uncle ridiculing you for your “antiquated” religion. Or an overbearing boss refusing to promote you because of your faith. Or a spouse who's jealous of your personal relationship with Christ. Whether it's disharmony in the home, a medical prognosis that sounds bleak, or an upheaval in your church, *Christ is superior*. You could also be struggling

with pressure from within yourself. Emotional baggage you've been carrying around for decades. Or feelings of loneliness, sadness, or disappointment. Or worry about the future, regret over the past, and stress in the present. Whatever you're turning over and over and over in your mind and obsessing about as you lie awake at night, you can have peace knowing that *Christ is superior*.

Maybe you're thinking about throwing in the towel and calling it quits. Maybe you've been tempted to let life not only knock you down but knock you out. If that's you, Hebrews is for you. Christ—and Christ alone—is superior to our greatest challenges and our lowest despair. He knows you intimately, cares about you deeply, and most importantly, has the superior power, wisdom, and love to save you completely.

Why? Because, in His person and work, He's superior to everything.

# CHRIST IS SUPERIOR IN HIS PERSON (HEBREWS 1:1–4:16)

The central theme of the book of Hebrews is simple but powerful: *Christ is superior in His person and work*. Throughout the book, the author develops this theme in vivid detail. In this first section, 1:1–4:16, the author demonstrates that *Christ is superior in His person*. As the God-man, Jesus Christ is greater than all the prophets of old, being perfect not only in His prophesying but also perfect in His person (1:1-3). He is also greater than the angels (chapters 1–2), greater than Moses and Joshua (chapters 3–4), and even greater than the Law and its priesthood (chapter 4).

The application of Christ’s superior personhood is clear. With Christ standing at the pinnacle of perfection, to defect from Him would be to exchange Him who is greatest for things that are lesser. Because Jesus Christ is better than all things, we should take care not to drift away from Him or the gospel. As the author asserts in the climax of this section: “Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. . . . Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (4:14, 16).

## KEY TERMS IN HEBREWS 1:1–4:16

### ***kreittōn* (κρείττων) [2909] “much better,” “greater”**

Though this term only occurs once in this section (1:4), *kreittōn* introduces the entire theme, not only of 1:1–4:16, but also of the entire book of Hebrews. The word means “being of high status, more prominent, higher in rank, preferable, better.”<sup>1</sup> This word expresses the primary focus of the author of Hebrews: Christ is superior in His person and work over everyone and everything—from angels to Moses, from the Aaronic priesthood to the Old Testament sacrifices.

**doxa (δόξα) [1391] “glory,” “honor”**

In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, God’s *doxa* is usually a physical manifestation of His holy, righteous, transcendent essence (Exod. 16:7; Isa. 6:1). In Hebrews, this background of *doxa* as a manifestation of the divine presence is assumed, but it is developed in several different directions. Jesus is the “radiance” of God’s glory (Heb. 1:3). Through a saving relationship with Christ, redeemed humanity is crowned with “glory” (2:7, 9, 10). And by His work, Christ is worthy of more glory than even Moses (3:3). As such, Christ is the epitome and embodiment of *doxa*—“the image and glory of God” (1 Cor. 11:7; Heb. 1:3).

**katapausis (κατάπαυσις) [2663] “rest,” “cessation of labor,” “resting place”**

This Greek term can mean a “state of cessation of work or activity” as well as a “place of rest.”<sup>2</sup> In its specific use in Hebrews 3–4, some view it as referring specifically to heavenly rest (glorification).<sup>3</sup> Others view the “rest” as the state of salvation entered into by faith at conversion (justification).<sup>4</sup> Still others consider the “rest” to be a present experience available to believers today by trusting and obeying (sanctification).<sup>5</sup> Though all these notions of “rest” have a basis in the Bible’s teaching concerning salvation, the author of Hebrews emphasizes “rest” as a present reality available for believers, similar to the “peace . . . which surpasses all comprehension” (Phil. 4:7), “joy” in the midst of “various trials” (Jas. 1:2), and “hope” that helps us persevere in “tribulation” (Rom. 12:12).

## The Last Word . . . Worthy of Worship

### HEBREWS 1:1-14

NASB

<sup>1</sup>God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, <sup>2a</sup>in these last days has spoken to us <sup>b</sup>in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the <sup>c</sup>world. <sup>3a</sup>And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and <sup>b</sup>upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of

NLT

<sup>1</sup>Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. <sup>2</sup>And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. <sup>3</sup>The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God

the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup>having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

<sup>5</sup>For to which of the angels did He ever say,

“YOU ARE MY SON,  
TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU”?

And again,

“I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM  
AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME”?

<sup>6</sup>And <sup>a</sup>when He again brings the first-born into <sup>b</sup>the world, He says,

“AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD  
WORSHIP HIM.”

<sup>7</sup>And of the angels He says,

“WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS,  
AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF  
FIRE.”

<sup>8</sup>But of the Son *He says*,

“YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS  
FOREVER AND EVER,  
AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER  
IS THE SCEPTER OF <sup>a</sup>HIS  
KINGDOM.

<sup>9</sup> “YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS  
AND HATED LAWLESSNESS;  
THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS  
ANOINTED YOU  
WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS  
ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS.”

<sup>10</sup>And,

“YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING  
LAID THE FOUNDATION OF  
THE EARTH,  
AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE  
WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;

<sup>11</sup> THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU  
REMAIN;  
AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD  
LIKE A GARMENT,

<sup>12</sup> AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL  
ROLL THEM UP;  
LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO  
BE CHANGED.

BUT YOU ARE THE SAME,  
AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME  
TO AN END.”

in heaven. <sup>4</sup>This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names.

<sup>5</sup>For God never said to any angel what he said to Jesus:

“You are my Son.  
Today I have become your  
Father.”\*

God also said,

“I will be his Father,  
and he will be my Son.”\*\*

<sup>6</sup>And when he brought his supreme\* Son into the world, God said,\*

“Let all of God’s angels worship  
him.”\*\*

<sup>7</sup>Regarding the angels, he says,

“He sends his angels like the  
winds,  
his servants like flames of fire.”\*\*

<sup>8</sup>But to the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, endures  
forever and ever.  
You rule with a scepter of  
justice.

<sup>9</sup> You love justice and hate evil.  
Therefore, O God, your God has  
anointed you,  
pouring out the oil of joy on  
you more than on anyone  
else.”\*

<sup>10</sup>He also says to the Son,

“In the beginning, Lord, you laid  
the foundation of the earth  
and made the heavens with  
your hands.

<sup>11</sup> They will perish, but you remain  
forever.  
They will wear out like old  
clothing.

<sup>12</sup> You will fold them up like a cloak  
and discard them like old  
clothing.  
But you are always the same;  
you will live forever.”\*

NASB

<sup>13</sup>But to which of the angels has He ever said,

“SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,  
UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES  
A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET”?

<sup>14</sup>Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

<sup>1:2</sup> <sup>a</sup>Or at the end of these days <sup>b</sup>Lit in Son; or in the person of a Son <sup>c</sup>Lit ages <sup>1:3</sup> <sup>a</sup>Lit Who being <sup>b</sup>Lit upholding <sup>1:6</sup> <sup>a</sup>Or again when He brings <sup>b</sup>Lit the inhabited earth <sup>1:8</sup> <sup>a</sup>Late mss read Your

LTN

<sup>13</sup>And God never said to any of the angels,

“Sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your feet.”\*

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, angels are only servants—spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation.

<sup>1:5a</sup> Or Today I reveal you as my Son. Ps 2:7. <sup>1:5b</sup> 2 Sam 7:14. <sup>1:6a</sup> Or firstborn. <sup>1:6b</sup> Or when he again brings his supreme Son [or firstborn Son] into the world, God will say. <sup>1:6c</sup> Deut 32:43. <sup>1:7</sup> Ps 104:4 (Greek version). <sup>1:8-9</sup> Ps 45:6-7. <sup>1:10-12</sup> Ps 102:25-27. <sup>1:13</sup> Ps 110:1.

What happens when E. F. Hutton talks? Well, if you’re over fifty and watched TV in the 1970s, you know the answer: “When E. F. Hutton talks, people listen.” That television ad for a once-prominent financial advising firm has stuck with me for decades—long after the company itself stopped talking!

I never watched that ad without my mind jumping to another well-known group that thrived thousands of years before anybody heard of E. F. Hutton. They weren’t a financial group peddling products or services. They were Spirit-empowered prophets, and when God’s prophets spoke, God’s people listened. They had clout because when they spoke, it was as if they were speaking with the very breath of God. Their words were God’s words. However, though every prophet’s words were worthy of obedience, not a single prophet of God was worthy of worship.

Drawing on the great regard the Hebrew people had for the major means of revelation in the Old Testament, the prophets and angels, the author of Hebrews compares these celebrated earthly and heavenly beings with God’s Final Word and Messenger, Jesus Christ. As powerful and significant as those holy people and holy angels were, they were inferior to the Son of God. He alone is God’s Last Word, superior in His person to God’s previous messengers and ministers—whether human or angelic. Why? Because Jesus is the Word incarnate—fully human and fully divine—who occupies a superior place over all things.

— 1:1 —

In the first century, the apostle Peter described the ministry of the Old Testament prophets, noting that “no prophecy was ever made by an

act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Pet. 1:21). For centuries leading up to Peter’s simple summary of the process of divine inspiration, a long line of prophets spoke and wrote God’s words under the supernatural guidance of the Spirit. Their words were “inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). These prophets issued warnings and rebukes, which flew off their lips like arrows from a bow to strike at the hearts of their hearers.

The names of these servants of God endowed with the prophetic gift reads like a roll call from the Bible’s Who’s Who list: Elijah and Elisha . . . Isaiah and Jeremiah . . . Daniel and Jonah . . . Malachi and John the Baptist. The prophet was God’s representative and spokesperson—saying, doing, and writing down what God wanted said, done, and written. It never took them long to win a hearing as they stood up—often standing alone—to speak the truth. They were never very easy to listen to, especially by those who had drifted far from God. But as the sole bearers of God’s messages to humankind, they couldn’t be ignored.

Though English translations of Hebrews 1:1 usually begin with “God,” the original Greek text actually begins, “In many portions and in many ways . . .” For the sake of emphasis, the author points out the varied manner in which God’s messages were delivered “long ago.” If we flip through the pages of the Old Testament, we see what he meant. God spoke through dreams (Gen. 37:5), visions (Isa. 1:1), angels (Zech. 1:9), voices (1 Sam. 3:4), writing (Dan 5:5), and even Balaam’s donkey (Num. 22:28)!

Not only did the messages from God come in various ways, but they also came at various times rather than all at once. Though all the messages were accurate, they were also incomplete. God always has more He can say. This reminds me of my own childhood. I got a lot of information from my parents over the course of many years—fragmentary, partial, incomplete. Sometimes this information would be in the form of instruction or discipline or living examples to follow. Sometimes it would come in conversations over supper, or alone with my father, or over the telephone, or through a handwritten note. Of course, we can all remember profound, wordless messages that came to us from our mothers with “that look.” Those messages came to me continually throughout childhood and into adolescence—all for progressively building me up toward maturity as an adult.

This experience of childhood is similar to the ministry of the



prophets in the Old Testament. Their messages were accurate and contributed to the growing body of revelation from God to His people. Like an instrument played in the hands of a master musician, the prophet conveyed the notes God wanted to communicate. Together, the individual prophets whose writings were gathered in the Old Testament canon formed a symphonic harmony of revelation building up toward a great crescendo, when the final movement of God's revelation would be unveiled: the Lord Jesus Christ.

— 1:2-4 —

“Long ago” versus “these last days”—the contrast between the prophetic anticipation of the Old Testament and the fulfillment of the new covenant in Christ is immediately highlighted in Hebrews 1:1 and 2. Through the prophets, God spoke “long ago” (1:1). But now He has spoken “in these last days” (1:2). Literally, the Greek says, “in the last of these days”; that is, at the culminating moment when He had spoken through the prophets. The point is that God's message of the Old Testament prophets has found its climax and supreme expression through the person and work of the Son (1:2).

Let me modify my musical metaphor a little to indicate the profundity of God's ultimate revelation through Christ. It's not simply that the symphony of revelation culminated in a moving climax, like the booming cannons of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*. Rather, the composer and conductor Himself stepped onto the stage and became the soloist, summing up in His performance all the themes, motifs, and melodies of everything that came before.

In other words, *Christ is superior in His person and work*. And He is the final and fullest expression of God's message and word to all humankind. Not that the old means and manner of speaking to His people were defective or deficient. They were great. But Christ is Greatness. The prophets' messages from the Lord were perfect. Jesus is Perfection. The seers of old were the instruments. The Son is the Music. He is the One to whom, for whom, through whom, and about whom all the musicians had been playing.

In what follows in the argument of Hebrews, the centrality of Christ in God's work of revelation depends on the superiority of Christ in His person and work. To underscore this point, the author of Hebrews opens his sermon-like letter with seven strong statements that demonstrate the superiority of the Son as God's Word to all things on heaven and earth, visible and invisible.

First, *the Son rightly rules as heir of all things* (Heb. 1:2). And “all things” means *all* things. Nothing stands outside that circle. God had given a share of the responsibility to rule over this created realm to Adam and Eve as His image-bearers (Gen. 1:26-28). But when those first humans fell into sin, they forfeited their right to rule as heirs of God’s creation (Gen. 3). However, when the divine Son took on humanity, He became the “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45)—Jesus Christ. All that Adam lost has been restored to Him.

Second, *the Son created the universe of time and space* (Heb. 1:2). The Greek term translated as “world” (*aiōn* [165]) literally means “ages.” It’s the word from which we get the term “eons.” It includes “the periods of time through which the created order exists.”<sup>6</sup> As the perfect human, Jesus is ruler over the created realm; and as the perfect Creator, He is the sovereign ruler over all creation—past, present, and future. Paul also clarifies Christ’s role as Creator in his writings: “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him” (Col. 1:16). Similarly, the apostle John opens his Gospel with this same majestic truth: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (John 1:1-3).

Third, *the Son brilliantly radiates God’s glory* (Heb. 1:3). The noun “radiance” (*apaugasma* [541]) refers to “brightness from a source.”<sup>7</sup> As the rays of the sun continually convey light, heat, and energy as long as the flaming orb continues to burn, the Son of God eternally conveys the glory, majesty, and power of God from eternity past to eternity future. No prophet, however holy or wise, could claim that. They were merely reflectors of God’s glorious light. The Son is the light itself.

Fourth, *the Son exactly represents God’s nature* (Heb. 1:3). The four words that make up this Greek phrase are packed with profound theological significance. This clause basically asserts that the Son shares in everything that God is in His divine nature. The word translated “exact representation” is a figurative use of the noun *charaktēr* [5481], a word used in reference to “an engraved character or impress made by a die or seal,” like the minted impression on coins.<sup>8</sup> The Son is no cheap knockoff of deity, no inferior reproduction of a superior original. The term for “nature” is *hypostasis* [5287], referring to the authentic being of God. The Son is therefore “completely the same in his being as the

Father,”<sup>9</sup> though Father and Son are distinct persons. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father, but everything the Father is, the Son is too.

Fifth, *the Son powerfully upholds all things by His word* (Heb. 1:3). You may have seen the image of the god Atlas holding the globe on his back and shoulders, straining under the weight, his bulging muscles beading with sweat. Banish that image from your mind! The Son of God upholds not just this world but also the entire universe. And He sustains this creation not by physical strength but by His almighty word. The Son Himself has the power to sustain through His very word.

Sixth, *the Son made perfect purification for sins* (Heb. 1:3). The first Adam undid humanity by his disobedience, plunging this world into darkness, death, sin, and suffering. But the last Adam, Jesus Christ, through His voluntary suffering and death on the cross, drove out the darkness and banished death. What had been poisoned by sin was cured by the blood of Christ—forever, once for all, never to be repeated. As the author of Hebrews will explain throughout, neither earthly humans nor heavenly angels could have accomplished this.

Finally, *the Son sat down at the right hand of Majesty* (Heb. 1:3). The book of Revelation describes a scene in the heavenly throne room where humans and angels—indeed “every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea” (Rev. 5:13)—worship God as Creator and Redeemer. No exalted saint or powerful angel can stand at the right hand of the Father to receive praise and glory that is due only to the divine Majesty. But the exalted Son, Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God, is worthy to sit in this place of glory and receive the worship of all creation: “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever” (Rev. 5:13).

Seated in the most exalted position in the universe, Jesus is superior in His person and work over all things. This includes “the angels” (Heb. 1:4)—those spiritual creatures fashioned by God through the Son to be ministers and servants (1:7). When the Son took on a human nature, endured death for sin, rose from the dead victorious, and ascended into heaven, He inherited a name that no angel had the right to bear (1:4). What name was this? As a son bears the name of his father, so the Son of God would bear the name of God, the divine name YHWH, often translated *kyrios* [2962] in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Paul also teaches this in Philippians 2:9-11, where he writes, “God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name

which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”<sup>10</sup>

— 1:5-6 —

Nowhere in the Bible do we have such a sustained, thorough treatment on angels as we do in Hebrews 1–2. In fact, nowhere do we even have a clear account of when they were created! Genesis 1–2 is silent on the creation of angelic beings, though we know that immediately after the fall of Adam and Eve, God stationed angelic cherubim east of the Garden of Eden to guard the entrance to Paradise (Gen. 3:24). So sometime before Genesis 3, God created the angels.

As powerful creations of God, angels conduct various services for the Lord. They carry His messages and perform His will among us—warning, protecting, helping, and rescuing. These supernatural creatures render service from heaven to earth. They aren’t a pantheon of “mini-gods” worthy of veneration; they are God’s servants who, like us, render worship to Him alone (Rev. 5:13). Nor are they cosmic go-betweens who pass messages for us from earth to heaven. Rather, they carry God’s messages from heaven to earth. But as remarkable as angels are, their blazing light dims in the glorious blast of pure radiance that is the Son of God. Without denigrating the vital role of angels in the service of God, the writer of Hebrews puts them in their place in comparison with the person and the work of the Son.

To establish the superiority of the Son to angels, the author of Hebrews skillfully builds his case from a string of Old Testament passages.

**PSALMS CITED IN HEBREWS 1**

| <b>HEBREWS</b>  | <b>PSALMS</b>    |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Hebrews 1:5a    | Psalms 2:7       |
| Hebrews 1:5b    | Psalms 89:26-27  |
| Hebrews 1:6     | Psalms 97:7      |
| Hebrews 1:7     | Psalms 104:4     |
| Hebrews 1:8-9   | Psalms 45:6-7    |
| Hebrews 1:10-12 | Psalms 102:25-27 |
| Hebrews 1:13    | Psalms 110:1     |

Remember that many of his Jewish audience were tempted to surrender their new faith in the Messiah to the old dictates of the synagogue, where the Old Testament Scriptures would have been held in highest regard. By showing from those very same Scriptures that the Messiah was superior to all things on heaven and earth, the author would have moved his audience toward a stronger commitment to their Lord and Savior, Jesus.

He begins by citing two lines rich with prophetic import—especially related to the coming Messiah, the son of David. Psalm 2 and Psalm 89 were both key texts for the Old Testament anticipation of the future Davidic king. The first of these two psalms begins:

Why are the nations in an uproar  
And the peoples devising a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth take their stand  
And the rulers take counsel together  
Against the Lord and against His Anointed. (Ps. 2:1-2)

The Hebrew word *mashiyach* [H4899] and the Greek equivalent *christos* [5547] both mean “anointed one,” which could refer to any person anointed in consecration to a sacred office: a prophet (1 Kgs. 19:16), a priest (Exod. 40:15), or a king (1 Sam. 10:1). In the case of Psalm 2:2, God’s “Anointed” is a reference to the Davidic king, against whom the nations and rulers of the earth take a stand. The author of Hebrews solidifies the Messianic identification by citing Psalm 89:26-27, in which God declares, “He will cry to Me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.’ I also shall make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.”<sup>11</sup>

To this Messiah, God decrees, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You” (Ps. 2:7). On this citation, David Allen notes, “Since Psalm 2 is a royal coronation psalm, ‘become’ in v. 5 [“Today I have become your father,” NIV] applies to coming into the royal position of kingship, and the moment of this becoming was the exaltation and enthronement which followed the resurrection.”<sup>12</sup> The scope and scale of the inheritance granted to the Messianic Son is to encompass the whole of creation (Ps. 2:8-9; cf. Ps. 89:25, 27).

With the Messianic title of “Son” as a backdrop, the author of Hebrews rightly points out that at no time did God ever address an angelic being as “My Son,” nor did He ever call himself the father of an angel.<sup>13</sup> Unlike the Messianic Son, angels are never promised kingship or rule over heaven and earth. Rather, angels are created beings who

have been assigned high and holy tasks in the plan and purpose of God. But the Son is Himself the One through whom even the angels were created (Col. 1:16).

In fact, the author advances his argument a step further, indicating that the angels are required to worship the Son because of who He is—the author of their existence and God over all creation (Heb. 1:6). To make his point, the author quotes Psalm 97, which praises Yahweh as the ruler of the earth (Ps. 97:1-6). Whereas God is to be honored, idolaters are ashamed (Ps. 97:7), and the so-called “gods” themselves ought to worship Yahweh as God. The Greek version of Psalm 97:7 translates the Hebrew word for “gods,” *elohim* [H430], with the Greek word for angelic beings, *angelos* [32]. By citing the Greek text, the author of Hebrews makes a sweeping claim: All supernatural beings—imagined or real, angelic or demonic—are inferior to the Son. And with this claim about the status of the created supernatural realm, he also asserts something profound about the person of the Son: He is identified as Yahweh of the Old Testament. Finally, against those unbelieving Jews who may have been claiming that worshipping the Messiah as God was tantamount to idolatry, the citation of Psalm 97:7 turns the tables: To not worship the Son, who is both God and man, is blasphemy.

Perhaps the stern warning of Psalm 2:12 concerning one’s response to the Son lingered in the back of the author’s argument, convicting those who rejected the Messiah or who were tempted to abandon Him: “Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way.”

### — 1:7-14 —

Next, in Hebrews 1:7, the writer provides another point of contrast between angelic beings and the Son. In a psalm that praises God for His magnificent handiwork of creation, the psalmist numbers God’s “messengers” and “ministers” (Ps. 104:4) among all other created things (Ps. 104:1-35). Angelic ministers are likened to wind and fire (Heb. 1:7)—swift and potent in their own right, but nevertheless finite creatures of God under His sovereign rule.

By comparison, however, the writer of Hebrews places the Son of God on the other side of the dividing line between creature and Creator. Hebrews 1:8-9 clearly calls the Son “God,” or rather, the author applies Psalm 45:6-7 to the Son. The original purpose of Psalm 45 seems to have been as “a nuptial Psalm addressed originally to a Hebrew king,”<sup>14</sup> and

the original Hebrew word used for “God” is *elohim*, which is sometimes used to refer to “rulers,” “judges,” or a “godlike one.”<sup>15</sup> Though the psalm could have originally addressed the human king of Israel in such exalted terms without ascribing to him actual divinity, the author of Hebrews understands the powerful language to refer in a special sense to the ultimate Davidic king, the divine-human Messiah. Thus, the author of Hebrews recognizes that the figurative language of the psalm had a literal, prophetic fulfillment in the Messiah, who is literally God, enthroned forever and ever.<sup>16</sup>

While the angels are merely ministers of the heavenly kingdom, Jesus is the divine monarch (Heb. 1:8). No angel has ever had a throne, kingdom, or scepter of authority. And no merely human ruler has had an eternal kingdom or perfect righteousness. The Son of God has all of these. He is morally superior to all other creatures—humans and angels (1:9). The anointed Son of God—who is Himself God—is not merely “righteous,” but is righteousness incarnate.

As if to highlight the fact that Christ is truly God and not merely a “godlike one,” the author of Hebrews quotes from Psalm 102:25-27 and applies it directly to the Son. Throughout this psalm it is Yahweh, the Creator God, who is in view. Therefore, the author of Hebrews associates the Son of God not with other creatures, whether angels or humans, heavenly or earthly, but with the Creator, who “founded the earth” (Heb. 1:10-12). And even though everything created is subject to growing old and wearing out like a garment of clothing, Jesus—as the God-man—will never perish. As God, He is eternal. He had no beginning. He will have no end.

Not only is the Son superior to angels in His person and work, but He is also superior in His exalted position “at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (1:3). No angel ever took the seat at the Father’s right hand (1:13). But the Son, in fulfillment of the messianic prophecy of Psalm 110:1, is enthroned with the Father in heaven until all His enemies are subdued (see Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; 1 Pet. 3:22).

In contrast, the angelic messengers have a different role. They are actively ministering at the will of their divine Master (Heb. 1:14). They are “ministering spirits” rendering service on behalf of the Son for the benefit of the saints—“those who will inherit salvation.” What an astonishing thought! Behind the scenes, unperceivable to you and me, those invisible spirit beings are working out God’s purposes for our good.

## APPLICATION: HEBREWS 1:1-14

### God's Words, His Word, His Angels, and Us

The book of Hebrews doesn't open with a subtle glow that gradually grows into a bright flame; it starts with a brilliant explosion that destroys every flimsy concept of the person and work of Christ and every faulty notion of His position in the universe. He is superior to the greatest of created beings—the angels. And if He's greater than the greatest creatures, what else can He be but the Creator Himself? In this powerful passage, I see a few lasting principles for us today—practical applications we should never forget.

First, *God's angelic servants intrigue us, but only God's Word can enlighten us.* God has spoken directly to us. He has done so through His written Word, which is God-breathed, resulting in His very words conveying His very thoughts (2 Tim. 3:16). God's Word—the Bible—should consume us. He has also sent to us His Word incarnate (John 1:1, 14), to whom the written Word points and who points us back to the written Word. As interesting as angels are, they are “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14). They are never to be the recipients of our prayers, the objects of our worship, or the subjects of our obsessions. The Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—should command our worship and praise. And the Son of God alone is the Source of life and Savior of our lives.

Second, *God's angelic servants minister to us, but only God's Spirit can minister in us.* Just because they are spirit beings, angels should not be confused with the Holy Spirit. Angels don't transform souls; that's the Holy Spirit's job. He is the Paraclete, the Comforter, the One called alongside to help us. He is our stability, our comfort, our guide. Though angels occupy an important place in New Age mysticism and popular “folk theology,” we're never meant to exchange the Holy Spirit, sent by the exalted Christ, for angelic spirits. Yes, they exist, and yes, they minister on our behalf; but they, too, are subject to the Son of God.

Third, *God's angelic servants protect us physically, but only God's Son can save us spiritually.* The One who is to occupy the throne of our lives is Jesus. Angelic beings watch on their tiptoes and crane their necks to see, but only from afar. The apostle Peter pointed out that not only did Old Testament prophets long for the spiritual salvation through the Son of God that we experience today, but angelic beings also desire to see what it's all about. He writes, “It was revealed to [the Old



Testament prophets] that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look” (1 Pet. 1:12).

In light of the superior revelation and spiritual salvation we have in the Son—superior to the anticipatory work of the prophets and the ministerial work of angels—we should respond by acknowledging in thought, word, and deed, that Jesus Christ is superior to all things in His person and work.

## Don't Neglect So Great a Salvation!

### HEBREWS 2:1-4

NASB

<sup>1</sup>For this reason we must pay much closer attention to <sup>a</sup>what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*. <sup>2</sup>For if the word spoken through angels proved <sup>a</sup>unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just <sup>b</sup>penalty, <sup>3</sup>how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? <sup>a</sup>After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, <sup>4</sup>God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various <sup>a</sup>miracles and by <sup>b</sup>gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

2:1 <sup>a</sup>Lit the things that have been heard 2:2 <sup>a</sup>Or steadfast <sup>b</sup>Or recompense 2:3 <sup>a</sup>Lit Which was 2:4 <sup>a</sup>Or works of power <sup>b</sup>Lit distributions

LIT

<sup>1</sup>So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it. <sup>2</sup>For the message God delivered through angels has always stood firm, and every violation of the law and every act of disobedience was punished. <sup>3</sup>So what makes us think we can escape if we ignore this great salvation that was first announced by the Lord Jesus himself and then delivered to us by those who heard him speak? <sup>4</sup>And God confirmed the message by giving signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever he chose.

It's hard to imagine any context in which drifting is a good thing. If a car begins to drift from its lane, it's only a matter of time before there's an accident. When a boat drifts off course, at best it will miss its destination, and at worst it could crash and sink! If an airplane drifts from its flight path, there could be disastrous consequences. Of course, a little drifting, caught early, can be corrected with little more than inconvenient consequences. But if a driver, sailor, or pilot doesn't pay attention and neglects their responsibilities, the drift could end up in injury or death.