

## Introduction

Although many Bibles will show this as “The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews,” there is nothing within the book to specifically identify Paul as its author, nor is such a title inspired by God. Some have ascribed it to Luke, Apollos, Barnabas, or Peter;<sup>1</sup> however, as I have read and re-read this amazing book, I, like many others, attribute the authorship to Paul. The depth of understanding of the Jewish traditions that is evident had to come from someone who was very well trained in the Law of Moses – who better than Paul, a zealous and blameless Pharisee (Philippians 3:5-6)?

Unlike the typical epistle, there is no salutation that specifically names its audience, and this is where many biases will show through. I’ve heard the extreme that this is not a book for us (non-Jewish Christians); or, because there is no mention made of Gentiles, it is meant for the Jews – so there is really no point in us reading and studying it. However, there is a more subtle approach taken by John MacArthur that can lead to the same end, without him having to say it. He says that there are three groups of people in view throughout the book, and we must be very aware of which group is being addressed so that we are able to understand what is being said; the groups are: Hebrew Christians, Hebrew non-Christians who have been intellectually convinced concerning Christ, and Hebrew non-Christians who have not been convinced.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the book was written for Hebrews of various persuasions, the Gentiles are never mentioned, and so, unless you are in one of these three groups, it really could be wasted on you. MacArthur cautions: “If one does not keep these groups in mind, the book becomes very confusing”;<sup>3</sup> the truth, as I see it, is that he is raising a barrier against finding out that he does not teach the whole truth of Scripture. By segmenting Hebrews as he has, he is able to

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<sup>1</sup> Thompson Chain Bible #4280; John MacArthur, Hebrews: an Expository Commentary, p. x.

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, Hebrews, p. xi-xv.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. xi.

deflect truths that would otherwise destroy his theology; like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, he will do his utmost to protect his well-honed doctrines – even against God's Word!

The reality is this: this book contains an extensive explanation of the change from Judaism to the New Covenant in Christ – it explains how Christ fulfilled the Law of Moses and is **our** High Priest. It sheds light on the OT Scriptures so that we are able to understand them more fully from the perspective of their fulfillment in Christ. “For he is our peace, who hath made both [the Jew and the Gentile (Ephesians 2:11-13)] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished [to render invalid] in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both [the Jew and the Gentile] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby ...” (Ephesians 2:14-16).<sup>4</sup> Too many Evangelicals focus solely on the NT books, along with a smattering of the Psalms and Proverbs (which is why a NT with Psalms and Proverbs is so popular); the basis for the New Covenant (i.e., the fulfillment of the Old) is foreign to most today. They prefer the “simple Gospel” that they have been convinced is all that is needed to secure their place in heaven; this was not taught by Jesus, and is not the message that we find in the NT Scriptures, if we have a heart to look carefully.

My approach, in this study, is to accept this book as another that has been given to us by God and bears His inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16). I will not divide it into audiences being addressed, but will take it as God's Word that simply needs to be studied as a part of the entirety of what God has given to, and preserved for, **us**.

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<sup>4</sup> Gingrich Lexicon; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

## Chapter 1

**1. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,**

*God, Who in many portions and in many ways in time past, did speak to the fathers by the prophets* (literal).<sup>5</sup> The foundation for this book is what the Lord has made known to the OT saints. *At sundry times* (*in many portions*, or bit-by-bit) identifies that it was through many small revelations that God kept His faithful ones apprised of the progress that was being made toward the coming of the One Who was promised in Genesis 3:15 – the One Who would *bruise*, or crush, Satan’s head.<sup>6</sup> There has never been a time when God’s desire was not known to those who had ears to hear.

Some, like David Cloud, consider the time from Adam to Moses as being a spiritual wilderness where there was *no law* (from Adam to the flood), followed by a few basic laws (Noah to Abraham), then a time of promise that culminated with the Law of Moses.<sup>7</sup> There is a particular problem with Cloud’s position on this matter because he forthrightly states that for *almost 1,600 years* there was *no law*! Paul stated (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit): “... where no law is, *there is* no transgression” (Romans 4:15b); in other words, if for 1,600 years there was *no law*, then for that time there could have been no sin! Paul explains this matter further: “For until the law [of Moses] sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed [taken into account] when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses ...” (Romans 5:13-14a).<sup>8</sup> Therefore, since



**David Cloud**

<sup>5</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

<sup>6</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.wayoflife.org/database/study\\_bible\\_dispensationally.html](https://www.wayoflife.org/database/study_bible_dispensationally.html).

<sup>8</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

death was a reality from Adam to Moses, and death is the just reward for sin (Romans 6:23), for that *almost 1,600 years* sin was being taken into account because death was present; there **was** an understanding of what God required. We may have no evidence of a written law until Moses, but that did not leave man justifiably lawless before God prior to Mt. Sinai.

As God spoke to Isaac, He said: “Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee ... Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Genesis 26:3-5). Isaac received a reiteration of the promise that God made to his father *because* Abraham had obeyed God’s voice, and paid careful attention to His charge, commands (*mitzvah*), customs and laws (*torah*).<sup>9</sup> Abraham lived over 400 years before Moses came to Mt. Sinai, and yet the Lord commends him for his obedience to His *commands* and *laws*. It is safe to say that man has never been without an understanding of what God desired, even if it might have been ignored or suppressed. Cain’s agitation that his sacrifice was rejected by God tells us that he knew of God’s requirements; he just wanted to do his own thing (Genesis 4:5).

At the time that God called Abraham out of his paganism, He also gave him a *portion* of His ongoing revelation of the Promised One: “... in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:3b). Out of all who were living on the earth at this time, God told Abraham that the Promised Deliverer would come through his family line. By reiterating this promise to Isaac (Genesis 26:4), the Lord further restricted the fulfillment of this promise to the descendants of Isaac (Abraham’s other children were excluded from carrying the promise forward) – the promise was the same, but it became just a little more defined. With the passing years, more *portions* served to refine God’s promise and point ever more specifically to the miraculous coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: Immanuel, God with us (Isaiah 7:14). These *portions* revealed that the Redeemer is God (as just noted), where He would be born (Micah 5:2), His purpose for coming

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<sup>9</sup> Strong’s Dictionary; Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon; Theological Wordbook of the OT (TWOT), #2414.

(Isaiah 53:5), His rejection by those created in His image (Isaiah 53:3), and that He came to bear our sins (Isaiah 53:6). The OT prophets received many pieces that together formed an amazing tapestry of the Messiah, yet the full reality of what God had prepared remained hidden in Him until the Lord Jesus came (Ephesians 3:9), and even then, the truth of the amazing change that He brought remained a mystery to the blind, religious elite of Jesus' day (Mark 4:11). Indeed, even today, much of what Jesus brought into being continues to remain a mystery because of the well-defined theologies of religious men who exclude the *mystery* that Paul explained so carefully in his writings.

Perhaps nothing has detracted more from a proper study of Hebrews (as well as many other Scriptures) than the prevalence of dispensational theology – it has become commonplace and, frankly, is unbiblical. David Cloud, an ardent follower of this theology, defines it this way: “Dispensationalism refers to the fact that Bible history can be divided into distinct periods of time during which God works out His purposes.”<sup>10</sup> Within his mind, it is a *fact* that the Bible can be *divided* into various dispensations, or *periods of time*; he goes so far as to say that, if you apply a literal interpretation of the Bible, it will then “result in a dispensational theology.”<sup>11</sup> I would beg to differ most vehemently! The three tenets of dispensationalism, according to Cloud, are: 1) a literal interpretation of Scripture, 2) it is an aid to studying the Bible contextually, and 3) there is a “**clear distinction** between Israel and the Church.”<sup>12</sup> I believe and practice a literal interpretation of Scripture, I seek to carefully consider the context of any passage on which I am working, but I **do not** find that Scripture supports the dispensationalist's sharp separation between Israel and the *ekklesia* – rather than never the twain shall meet, I find that God, from Adam onward, has been carefully drawing all of His saints into one Body! What's more, we'll find evidence for that in our study of Hebrews!

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<sup>10</sup> [https://www.wayoflife.org/database/study\\_bible\\_dispensationally.html](https://www.wayoflife.org/database/study_bible_dispensationally.html).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

2. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Whereas God spoke through prophets in times past, He has now spoken through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. *In these last days He did speak to us through a Son, Whom He did appoint heir of all, by way of Whom also He did make the worlds* (literal).<sup>13</sup> This fits precisely with a parable that Jesus told of someone who built a vineyard and then leased it out while he went away (Matthew 21:33-39). When harvest time came, he sent a servant to receive of his produce; however, the tenant farmers abused his servants and sent them away empty handed. This happened several more times, and finally, he sent his own son, expecting the farmers to respect his son; when they recognized the heir, they killed him, hoping to gain the inheritance. The priests and elders correctly understood that the landlord would destroy those tenants and then find someone else who was worthy to attend to the vineyard. The application that Jesus made was this: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you [plural: at the very least, the Jewish leadership, more likely the Jews], and given to a nation [*ethnei*, a people] bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 21:43).

The OT prophets went to the tenant farmers (Israel) in an effort to bring them back to the place of attending to the Lord’s work, but they were mocked, scourged, imprisoned, stoned, sawn into two, killed with the sword, and, those who survived were destitute, afflicted and tormented (Hebrews 11:36-38).<sup>14</sup> Jesus accurately identified the treatment that the OT prophets received from their Jewish brethren. Then He came as the only Son of the Father, and the Jews determined to kill Him so that they could retain their hold over the common people and protect their positions of authority. The Son of God came to reveal the purpose of the Father,

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<sup>13</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

<sup>14</sup> Friberg Lexicon.



fulfill all of the OT prophecies concerning His coming, and replace the Law of Moses with a New Covenant for all people.

God, the eternal Word, the Creator of all things, took on a body of flesh and dwelt among His created ones (John 1:1, 3, 14). “For by him [Jesus, the Word] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible ... all things were created by him, and for him” (Colossians 1:16). Jesus is the Creator of all things, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead, will one day place all under Him (Ephesians 1:20-22). Why would God the Father appoint the Lord Jesus to be *heir of all things*?

When God created Adam and Eve in His image, He “blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [*fill*] the earth, and subdue [*dominate*] it: and have dominion [*rule*] over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:28).<sup>15</sup> Adam and Eve, bearing the image of the Creator, were given full control over all of the earth: they were to *fill* it with their offspring, dominate it, and were given authority over *every living thing* upon the earth, the sea and the air – *all things* were placed under them. Through the sin of Adam, humanity’s dominant place over the earth was relinquished to the devil, and they became subject to sin and Satan. As the Lord pronounced His judgment upon Satan, He declared: “I will put enmity [*hostility*] between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it [*He*] shall bruise [or crush] thy head, and thou shalt bruise [or crush] his heel” (Genesis 3:15).<sup>16</sup> Let’s consider this for a moment. Just a little earlier, Eve had had a very congenial conversation with Satan (wearing the disguise of the appealing serpent), but now the Lord promises that He will place hostility between them – probably more so on the part of the woman. However, the Lord goes on to place that same hostility between the *seed* of Satan (those who follow him) and the *seed*

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<sup>15</sup> Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew Lexicon (BDB).

<sup>16</sup> BDB.

of the woman. *Seed* is a singular noun that is used either as a collective (referring, in this case, both to the descendants of the followers of Satan and the posterity of the woman), **or** that single individual who represents all of the descendants: for the woman, that individual Seed is Christ; for Satan, it will be the Antichrist. The Lord told Abraham: “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ...” (Genesis 22:18a); Paul explained this as: “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Galatians 3:16). Clearly, the *seed* of Genesis 3:15 refers to the long line of humanity who have followed the devil on the one hand (*thy seed*), and those who held to the promise that would be fulfilled through the woman; however, we are also told that the *seed* of the woman is not only used collectively, but also very specifically points to the Promised One, Christ. In our text, the culmination of generations of those who placed their faith in the promise of God, is found in His Son, Jesus Christ.

*In these last days* is a somewhat difficult phrase to understand. *Days* (*hemeron*) refers to a period of time, and *last* (*eschaton*) refers to a situation where nothing will follow.<sup>17</sup> God, *in these last days*, did speak to us by His Son; following the reference to the OT prophets, this gives us a clue. “When the fulness of the time was come” (Galatians 4:4), Jesus was born of a woman by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), and so He brought to an end God’s revelation by the prophets who came under the Law of Moses. Jesus was born under the Law so that He could fulfill the Law, and establish the New Covenant that came into being through His blood that was shed for the sins of the world (Luke 22:20; 1 John 2:2). Jesus testified that He did not come from heaven to do His own will, but the will of the Father Who had sent Him (John 6:38); His coming, and the work that He accomplished, were all part of the plan that God had in place before the world was created (Revelation 13:8). “For I have not spoken of

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<sup>17</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.



myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say [*eipo* (from *lego*), the concepts to be voiced], and what I should speak [*laleso* (from *laleo*), the words that are used]” (John 12:49).<sup>18</sup> God’s plan was perfectly executed through the Word, Jesus; all of the prophecies of the OT pointed forward to this Promised One Who would pay the price for the sins of humanity. Therefore, with the coming of Jesus came 1) the closing of the time when the prophets of old spoke of the coming Redeemer, and 2) and end of God’s revelations to mankind – there would be nothing further. Jesus is God’s final voice to us – all of the NT Scriptures clarify for us what He has done and what He will yet do. Jesus accomplished the fulfillment of the Law of Moses – it was ended (fulfilled) in favor of the New Covenant, which we will learn more of in our study of this book.

Because Jesus, as both man and God, fulfilled the Law, paid the price for the sins of humanity, and rose from the dead to instill new life into those who place their faith in His finished work, God “also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:9) – what an exaltation! God raised Christ and set Him on His right, that place of honor, *far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is being named, not only in this era but also in that which is coming, and all things are put into subjection under His feet and He has been appointed head over all to the ekklesia* (Ephesians 1:21-22, literal).<sup>19</sup> Christ has won the victory over Satan: all things are *under His feet* and He is the *Head* of the *ekklesia*; even though we do not see the full evidence of all being under Christ, we have the surety that this will take place (Hebrews 2:8).

**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**

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<sup>18</sup> Vine’s, “say.”

<sup>19</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

The writer continues to describe *the Son of God*: *Who, being the radiance of the glory and the exact representation of His [God's] essence, and He is sustaining the universe by the word of His power; after He, of Himself, did cleanse our sins, He did sit on the right of the Majesty on high* (literal).<sup>20</sup> This is the One through Whom God has spoken to us – eternal God in the form of a man: “I and *my* Father are one” (John 10:30).

The *radiance* (*brightness*) is no ordinary light; it describes a brilliance of great intensity. This is the *glory* of God that is radiating from the Lord Jesus. When John turned and beheld the glorified Jesus, resplendent as the sun, he fell at His feet as if he were dead (Revelation 1:17). Moses had much close communication with Jehovah, but when he asked to see His *glory* (Exodus 33:18), God said, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exodus 33:20). *Face* (*pânîym*) describes the part that is turned toward someone; God is telling Moses that if he beheld the full glory of God, he would not survive.<sup>21</sup> However, God did show him His fading glory, His *back parts* – not the full glory of His *face*, but His retreating glory with His *face* away from Moses. Our sun, in all of its brilliance, declares the *glory of God*, along with all of the other lights of the heavens (Psalm 19:1) – not the full glory, but that which we are able to behold. Jesus exudes the full glory of God, because He is God!

Christ is the exact representation of the essence of God, because He **is** God! God made man in His image (Genesis 1:27), yet we understand that God is a spirit and does not have a physical body (Numbers 23:19; John 4:24). *Image* (*tselem*) speaks of a likeness, or resemblance, but certainly not an exact depiction of God.<sup>22</sup> When the Lord created Adam, He formed him from the *dust of the ground* and then “breathed into his nostrils the

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<sup>20</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

<sup>21</sup> Strong's Dictionary.

<sup>22</sup> Strong's Online.

breath [*neshamah*] of life [*chay* (plural)]; and man became a living [*chay* (singular)] soul [*nepshesh*, or *being*]" (Genesis 2:7).<sup>23</sup> *Life*, in Hebrew, is plural – God breathed *lives* into the formed man: a spiritual life (what we refer to as the *soul* – *neshamah*) and physical life (the breath – *ruach*).<sup>24</sup> Man is unique within God's creation, being the only creature into whom God *breathed lives*, all of the other creatures were simply spoken into existence. It is the *neshamah* of man (his soul) that identifies him as bearing the image of God – an eternal element uniquely placed within man at the moment that he was created.

Everyone born today, despite being a sinner, still bears the image of God (Genesis 9:6). However, that does **not** describe the Lord Jesus – He **is** God wrapped in the flesh of humanity, but without the taint of sin that comes through the man (1 John 3:5). The Lord's promise in Genesis 3:15 identifies that it will be *her Seed* Who will crush Satan's head; Jesus is uniquely the Son of God (conceived by the Holy Spirit) and the Son of Man, born of Mary (Luke 1:34-35) – He did not have an earthly father (Romans 5:12). Jesus, as the eternal Word, set His heavenly glory aside in order to bring salvation to humanity: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God [*did not consider being equal to God something to grasp and hold onto*, literal] : But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:6-8).<sup>25</sup> Jesus willingly submitted to the plan of which He had been a part before the world was set into place (1 Peter 1:19-20).

Jesus is identified as being the One Who is supporting the universe: *upholding all things by the word of his power*. To the Colossians, Paul wrote: "And he is before [*prior to*] all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17); *consist* (*sunistemi*) is, literally, to stand

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<sup>23</sup> Strong's Online; BDB.

<sup>24</sup> Strong's Dictionary, *ESword* (both are used in Genesis 7:22, referring to mankind destroyed in the flood).

<sup>25</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

together, but also: to continue, to hold together, or to be permanently framed.<sup>26</sup> Jesus orchestrates all of the motion within the universe, so that the promise is: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22).

After Jesus had completed His mission on earth (He had paid for the cleansing of our sins), He returned to heaven to sit to the right of God the Father. Heaven is forever changed with His return. From eternity to His incarnation by way of Mary, Jesus, as the Word, did not have a physical body; then, “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). After completing the sacrifice for sin, Jesus was raised from the dead in a glorified body (not displaying the full glory of God, but with greater abilities than displayed before). “Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut [not just closed, but locked/barred] where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst” (John 20:19).<sup>27</sup> Jesus had a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39; He was no longer just a spirit, the *Word*), and He could eat (Luke 24:43), but His body also had abilities that we generally attribute to a spirit. He is described as the Firstfruit from the dead – the first to rise from the dead, nevermore to die (1 Corinthians 15:20). In this body, He left His disciples for heaven: “And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:10-11). He departed from His disciples in a physical body (with glorified abilities), and one day He will return in that same body. When John was called to heaven in the spirit to see things that *must be hereafter*, he saw God sitting upon a throne, and described Him by the colors of stones, but not His form because He is a spirit (Revelation 4:1-3). When

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<sup>26</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Vine's, “consist”; Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary, *ESword*.

<sup>27</sup> Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

John first saw Jesus in heaven, he saw Him as a slain Lamb (Revelation 5:6); Jesus bore the signs of the sacrifice that He made for the sins of humanity, and still had a physical form.

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

*He became so much higher than the angels, having received a more excellent name than they* (literal).<sup>28</sup> When we think of the Lord as the eternal Word, it would seem without a doubt that He would be higher than the creatures whom He created. However, here the writer is reflecting on Christ's heavenly position **after** He came to earth in a body of flesh, and then returned to the Father.

The Psalmist wrote: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels [*elohim*], and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalm 8:4-5).<sup>29</sup> As noted, *angels* is from the Hebrew word *elohim*, and in its 2,606 appearances in the OT, this is the **only** time that it is translated as *angels* – over 90% of the time it has a specific reference to Jehovah.<sup>30</sup> *Elohim* is a plural noun that can refer to rulers or judges as representing divine authority, or to those who are divine, i.e., God, gods, or godly beings.<sup>31</sup> For some reason, the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the OT made in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC<sup>32</sup>; abbreviated as LXX) shows *elohim* in this Psalm as *aggelous* (*angels*).<sup>33</sup> With the conquests of Alexander the Great, Greek became the language common to those under his jurisdiction, including the land of Israel. The Septuagint (LXX) made the Hebrew Scriptures available to all of the Greek-speaking world, and

<sup>28</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

<sup>29</sup> Strong's Online.

<sup>30</sup> Strong's Online.

<sup>31</sup> BDB; <https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1747-arelim>.

<sup>32</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint>.

<sup>33</sup> Strong's Online.

most notably to the many Jews who no longer spoke Hebrew.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, this Greek OT became widely known and accepted as the OT Scriptures, and so we find that when the NT writers quote from the OT, they frequently use the LXX (most commonly known, even by the Jews), and, for the most part, this is not a problem. However, there are some instances when a careful examination of the Hebrew will lead to an understanding that does not align itself completely with the rendering of the LXX. We find two examples of English translations that followed the Hebrew rather than the Septuagint in Psalm 8:5: the Geneva Bible (1587) reads: “for thou hast made him a little lower then God” [the OE comparative *then*, did not become *than* until the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>35</sup>]; Young’s Literal (1898): “And causest him to lack a little of Godhead.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the psalmist is expressing that man was created lacking a little from God – although he bore the image of his Creator (something that is not ascribed to the angels), man was a physical creation and, as such, was definitely lower than God.

Throughout both the OT and NT, we find evidence for angels as the messengers of the Lord: as Jacob returned from Laban, he was met by the *angels (malak)* of God (Genesis 32:1); a *multitude* of angels came to the shepherds (Luke 2:13); *thousands of thousands* of angels stand around God’s throne, the Lamb, the living creatures and the elders (Revelation 5:11). There is no doubt that there are myriads of angels in heaven, who are ready to do the bidding of God (both the Hebrew and Greek words translated as *angel* mean *a messenger*).<sup>37</sup> Yet, as we consider God’s special creation, we recognize that only man is a bearer of His image – even sinful man (Genesis 9:6; James 3:9)! Indeed, man was created lacking from God (*a little lower*), but he has an eternal soul and the capacity to choose to love and serve Him. Adam chose to disobey the Lord’s command, but God ensured that a method of redemption was

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<sup>34</sup> <https://biblearchaeology.org/research/new-testament-era/4022-a-brief-history-of-the-septuagint>.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=than>.

<sup>36</sup> Both Geneva and Young’s Bibles quoted from *ESword*.

<sup>37</sup> *Cyclopedia*, “angels,” *ESword*.



already in place – even though all men are now born with a sinful nature, they still have the ability to choose the Lord and live in obedience to Him. We find this in the OT as Moses made his final appeal to the children of Israel: “I call heaven and earth to record [as a witness] this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed [both singular; God’s call is for the individual to respond] may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).<sup>38</sup> Jesus proclaimed: “If ye love [*are loving*, a present tense condition] me, keep [a command to obedience] my commandments” (John 14:15).<sup>39</sup> Nothing has changed! If we choose *life* by loving the Lord, then we must also live in obedience to His commands – there is no other way to eternal life with Him. Jesus also clarified that it is the one who remains faithful to Him unto the end of his earthly life, who will be saved (Matthew 24:13). Salvation begins when we place our faith in the Lord Jesus and then continues to grow as we live in faithfulness to Him; it is not that we look back to the day when we *received* salvation, rather, we look forward to the day when we will be *awarded* His salvation, and hear: “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:23).

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him [Jesus], and given him a name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:9). Jesus has received a name from the Father that is superior to *every name*, both in this world and the next (Ephesians 1:21). As Jesus comes to establish His reign over the earth, we are told that He has “a name written, that no man knew, but he himself” (Revelation 19:12) – could this be that name? From Scripture we know that Jesus has many names: Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God (*El* – God, singular<sup>40</sup>), the everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), Good Shepherd (John 10:11), Son of God (Matthew 14:33), Son of Man (Matthew 16:13), Lamb of God (John 1:29), and the Word of God (Revelation 19:13), to name just a few. It is before this One, Whose name

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<sup>38</sup> BDB.

<sup>39</sup> Strong’s Online.

<sup>40</sup> BDB.

is highly exalted, that everyone will bow: *at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow – of heavenly, and of earthly, and of below-earthly* (Philippians 2:10, literal).<sup>41</sup> Heavenly creatures willingly show their submission to Jesus (Revelation 5:12); those who are living on the earth are divided between those who willingly bow before the Lord and those who will not. The *below-earthly* are the dead who either did not submit to the Lord in this life, or did not remain faithful to the Lord – these occupy Hades until that day when they stand before God and submit (bow) to His final judgment (Revelation 20:12-15). It is while we are alive that we deal with the eternal question of who Jesus is and what He has done. “...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27); in essence, when we die our eternal destiny is forever sealed – at the moment of death, the determination has been made as to where we will spend eternity. If, in this life, we place our faith in Jesus as our Lord and remain in faithful obedience to Him until our death, then His salvation will be ours (John 14:15; Matthew 24:13). For those who do not identify with Christ in His death and resurrection, or do not live faithfully for Him, upon death they will find their place in Hades, that temporary home of the unrighteous dead (Luke 16:22-23). Truly, Jesus’ name is above all, for before Him everyone will submit – whether that will be willingly or unwillingly, is the decision that we all face in this life.

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

The writer quotes twice from a *prophet* of old, David. The first is found in the Psalms: “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Psalm 2:7). This is a Messianic prophecy; many, such as this one, can have an immediate

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<sup>41</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/subj-purpose.htm](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm).

application and also a future relevance that speaks of the coming Promised One. We understand that David was the son of Jesse (1 Samuel 17:12), and that he was not born of God in the same way as Jesus. However, *begotten* (*yalad*), although primarily meaning to bear or to bring forth, can also, in a figurative application, speak of the installation of a king.<sup>42</sup> The Lord declared: “I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him” (Psalm 89:20); 1 Samuel 16:13 records Samuel anointing David as the king of Israel according to the Lord’s direction (1 Samuel 16:1, 12). A little further the Lord proclaims: “Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth” (Psalm 89:27); truly, David was the first king of Israel through whom the Promised Seed would come (Matthew 1:5-6), and he defeated the nations around Israel; nevertheless, this is primarily a Messianic prophecy that identifies the Lord Jesus as the *firstborn* of Mary (Luke 2:7) and the *only begotten* of the Father (John 1:14). It is Jesus Who is exalted far above all kings and powers (Ephesians 1:19-22).

The second is from the word that the Lord spoke to David concerning his son Solomon: “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* that was before thee” (1 Chronicles 17:13); the immediate application of this is found in Solomon, but a more complete fulfillment is found in Jesus, the Son of God. Indeed, the Lord prospered Solomon with wisdom and wealth, and, even when he had fallen into idolatry, the Lord extended to him His mercy by delaying the judgment of his failure until after he was dead (1 Kings 11:11-13); this was unlike the Lord’s dealings with Saul who was *before* David. However, the *father-son* relationship speaks uniquely of the Lord Jesus, the promised Messiah.

The writer underscores the fact that the Lord has **never** suggested a *Father-Son* relationship with any of the angels. The opening phrase of our

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<sup>42</sup> BDB.

verse is important: *for to which of the angels did He ever say ...* (literal).<sup>43</sup> The Greek includes the word *pote* (*ever, or at any time* – KJV), which anticipates a negative response to the rhetorical question asked. The two quotations were **not** addressed to any of the angels, but find their ultimate fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ. “And the Word was made flesh ... the only begotten [*monogenous, unique, only one*<sup>44</sup>] of the Father ...” (John 1:14); “God sent his only begotten Son into the world” (1 John 4:9). “These words spake Jesus ... Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, *in order that Thy Son will glorify Thee ...*” (John 17:1, literal in italics);<sup>45</sup> the Greek words used, *pater* (Father) and *huios* (Son), are the same as those used for earthly fathers and sons.<sup>46</sup> Jesus is uniquely the Son of God!

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

The writer continues to express the vast difference between Jesus, the *firstbegotten* as the Son of God, and the heavenly *angels*. *And again, when He did bring in the Firstborn into the world, saying, “And all ye angels of God, worship Him”* (literal).<sup>47</sup> *Firstborn*, or *firstbegotten* (*prototokos*), not only identifies the birth order, but also includes the special consideration given to the firstborn.<sup>48</sup> Within the Jewish culture, the firstborn of man and beast was set apart for the Lord (Numbers 8:17); nevertheless, the firstborn child was to be redeemed (Exodus 13:2, 13), and also had right to a double portion of the inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17).

Let’s take a moment to consider what Scripture says about Jesus as being the *firstborn*. He was the *firstborn* (*prototokos*) of Mary (Luke 2:7),

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<sup>43</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>44</sup> Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

<sup>45</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/subj-purpose.htm](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm).

<sup>46</sup> Strong’s Online.

<sup>47</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>48</sup> Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

literally the eldest son in the family;<sup>49</sup> to be the *eldest* would infer that there are other children, otherwise he would be an only child. The Roman Catholic Church has established the doctrine that “Mary remained a virgin when she conceived and gave birth to her Divine Son, as well as after the birth of Jesus.”<sup>50</sup> In this regard, Catholic tradition and teaching speaks of Mary’s *perpetual virginity*, thereby denying that she had any other children. The Gospel writers tell of a time when Jesus’ mother and brethren came to see Him (Matthew 12:46; cp. Mark 3:31, Luke 8:19); in each case the Greek word *adelphoi* is used for *brethren*, which identifies *sons of the same mother*.<sup>51</sup> This fits perfectly with Jesus being the *firstborn* of Mary – the eldest child of the family, and permits Mary the role of a typical Jewish wife; the Catholic departure into heresy finds no support from God’s Word.

Christ, “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Colossians 1:15). *Firstborn*, in all of these cases, is the Greek word *protokos*, which literally is *first (protos) begotten (tikto, a strengthened form of teko)*.<sup>52</sup> Jesus, as the *firstborn of all creation* (literal), might sound like He is a part of creation, but the following verse clarifies that *by Him were all things created* (Colossians 1:16).<sup>53</sup> Therefore, we must understand this to mean that before creation was begun, it was already set in the plan of God that the Word would be born to bear the sins of the yet to be created humanity. Peter caught this thought by clarifying that we have not been redeemed by anything of this world (*corruptible*), “but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot ... foreordained before the foundation of the world ...” (1 Peter 1:19-20a). Even as Jesus, as the eternal Word (John 1:1), was considered to be the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8), so, in the eternal plan of God, He was also that

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<sup>49</sup> Friberg Lexicon; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15464b.htm>.

<sup>51</sup> Liddell-Scott Greek Lexicon.

<sup>52</sup> *Vine’s*, “firstborn”; Strong’s Online.

<sup>53</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

*Firstborn* Who would take on the form of humanity in order to pay the price for sin.

“And he is the ... firstborn from the dead ...” (Colossians 1:18). Jesus is the first to rise from the dead over Whom death no longer has any hold. We read of many who were raised from the dead, both in the OT and NT, but Jesus is the **first** Who will never die again; all of those who were raised from the dead, eventually died again – Jesus will not! He is the *firstborn* of those who will come to know everlasting life – those who will “bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Corinthians 15:49).

Finally, He will be “the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29b), because those who are *in Him* will one day be conformed to His likeness. John tells us that a day is coming when we will be like Him for we will see Him as He is (1 John 3:2); He is the first to live without any possibility of death, and, at His appearing, we will also be changed from mortality (being subject to death) to immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53). Faith in the Lord Jesus and faithful obedience to His commands will ensure that we will experience this change into immortality – indeed, He will be the first among a host of *immortal brethren* who have been redeemed from sin through His sacrifice.

The final part of our verse is quoted from Deuteronomy 32:43; however, if you check the KJV, you will not find anything that resembles it: *and all ye angels of God, worship Him* (literal).<sup>54</sup> The Masoretic text of the Hebrew Scriptures that underlies our OT, is the product of centuries of intense work by traditionalist Jewish scholars in an effort to protect the integrity of the Hebrew OT – most Jews had lost the ability to read Hebrew correctly, since the original writings lacked any vowels, punctuation or stress marks.<sup>55</sup> These Jewish rabbis labored to combine the best OT manuscripts with their memorized oral traditions in order to arrive at the Masoretic text that removed the ambiguity of the Hebrew by

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<sup>54</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>55</sup> <https://overviewbible.com/masoretic-text/>.



including the missing vowels, punctuation and stress marks.<sup>56</sup> However, this massive undertaking didn't occur until after Jerusalem had been completely destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, with the completion date of this text estimated to be in the ninth century AD. Since the completion of the Masoretic OT, other fragments of Hebrew manuscripts have been found that confirm the majority of the texts, and also verify that the words in question are missing from Deuteronomy 32:43; interestingly, the LXX (the Greek translation of the OT that was completed in the third century BC) includes them. The phrase in the Septuagint reads: *and all ye angels of God, worship Him*; this confirms that the NT writers regarded the LXX as being the OT Scriptures that were in common use, even among the Jews. As we continue with our study of Hebrews, this is something to keep in mind, as there are many quotations made from the OT.

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

This is a quote from Psalm 104:4 – “Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire”; the LXX follows this closely. As the psalmist expresses the greatness of Jehovah, he has just declared that Jehovah “walketh upon the wings of the wind” (Psalm 104:3), and then goes on: Who is making the winds His messengers, His ministers a flaming fire.<sup>57</sup> We understand that the Greek *aggelos* (pronounced *ang'-el-os*), which we like to see as *angel*, primarily means messenger, and divine messengers can, indeed, be angels, but it does not exclude God from using others as *messengers*.<sup>58</sup> It is not that the *winds* and *fire* cannot be the work of *angels*: Moses saw a burning bush, but we are told that the flame was an angel of the Lord (Exodus 3:2); John, as he was being shown marvellous things from a heavenly perspective, saw four angels holding the four winds of

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<sup>56</sup> <https://overviewbible.com/masoretic-text/>.

<sup>57</sup> BDB.

<sup>58</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

the earth (Revelation 7:1), and Revelation 14:18 tells us of an angel who had power over fire. Angels were created as spirit beings, therefore to say that God *is making His angels* [to be] *spirits* is inaccurate – they were made (past tense) to be spirit beings; however, to say that He *is making the winds His messengers* is completely in keeping with the preceding words where He walks on the wings of the wind. As we have also seen, the winds can certainly involve the work of divine messengers (angels).

However, as we consider the context for this verse, we notice that it follows on the heels of a command that the angels worship the Son of God. The thrust of this entire introductory passage is that God has now spoken to His people through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has been given the highest position and name. Jesus is the Messenger Who has come at the close of the OT prophets, with a Message that was established in eternity past in the heart of God the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:7). All of God's messengers, whether heavenly angels, wind or fire, are subject to His *First Begotten*, Who brought to earth an expression of God's love for those who bear His image (John 3:16).

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

As important and glorious as the heavenly angels are, the writer continues to establish the superiority of the Son through Whom God has spoken to us in the days since the OT prophets. *But to the Son: God, Thy throne [is] unto the age of the age [forevermore], a sceptre of righteousness [is] the sceptre of Thy kingdom; You [singular] love righteousness and hate wickedness; because of this, God, Thy God, did anoint Thee [the Son][with] the oil of great joy above Thy companions*

(literal).<sup>59</sup> This is a quote taken from Psalm 45:6-7 – “Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” A comparison of the Hebrew OT, Greek Septuagint (LXX) and our English shows that there is almost no variation in this text.

The writer makes it very clear that these OT passages are to be understood in the light of the Son of God as the promised Messiah. Therefore, we need to consider how these prophecies have been, or will be, fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.

First of all, the Son is addressed as *the God* (*ó theos*), singular, yet as we look at the Hebrew text from which this comes, we see *elohim*, plural.<sup>60</sup> *Elohim* is an interesting Hebrew word: it is plural, yet it is frequently used with singular verbs and adjectives. To the Jews, it is plural in form, but singular in concept;<sup>61</sup> “Hear, O Israel: The LORD [*Yahweh*, *Jehovah*] our God [*Elohim*] *is* one LORD [*Jehovah*]” (Deuteronomy 6:4).<sup>62</sup> *Yahweh* (*Jehovah*, no gender or number) is the proper name of the God of Israel, whereas *Elohim* (masculine, plural) is generally understood to speak of power or might, and can refer to *Jehovah* (within a singular context), pagan deities, and even to rulers and authorities.<sup>63</sup> The Jewish contention is that Hebrew abstractions (of which *Elohim* is a part) are frequently plural in form, e.g., *mercy* bears a plural form but is a singular concept (Genesis 43:14).<sup>64</sup> It is important for the Jewish mind to protect the construct of a single God, and they permit no place for a plurality; yet as we understand the Tri-unity of God, we can see this contained within *Elohim*.

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<sup>59</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>60</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.jewsforjudaism.org/knowledge/articles/oneness-of-god-the-meaning-of-elohim>.

<sup>62</sup> Strong's Online.

<sup>63</sup> BDB.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.jewsforjudaism.org/knowledge/articles/oneness-of-god-the-meaning-of-elohim>.

As we noted earlier, the Greek Septuagint was the primary OT Scriptures in use by the time of Jesus, and the quotations made in our verse follow that translation. Although the Greek language does have a plural for *theos* (God), as they translated the Hebrew *Elohim* when it referred to the Lord God, they used *theos*, singular – hence, we have *ó theos* from *Elohim* in Psalm 45:6. Unlike Hebrew, Greek requires the number of the verb or adjective to be the same as its subject; i.e., if the subject noun is singular, then the verb or adjective must also be singular. In this case, the Hebrew subject noun is plural (*Elohim*), but *throne* is *Thy throne*, the suffix that is used shows the possessive to be singular.<sup>65</sup> As a result, the Greek shows this as *ó θρόνος σου ó θεός* (literally: *the throne of Thee, the God*); this is the same in both the LXX and the quote in our verse.

This first quotation from the OT is clearly pointing to the Lord Jesus. The *throne* of David and his descendants ended with the removal of Judah into captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem, because of their stubborn idolatry (2 Chronicles 36:15-20). However, because Jesus is both of the family of David and God, His throne will endure forever – but He also made it very clear that His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). Yes, He will establish a rule upon this earth, but that is limited to 1,000 years (the Millennium; Revelation 20:6); His *forever* rule is over His kingdom that is not of this world: as John sees the New Heaven and Earth, and the New Jerusalem, he is told by *a great voice out of heaven*: “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God” (Revelation 21:3). This is an everlasting state of God abiding with those who are His through the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus; His throne will endure *forever* (Revelation 21:5) because all is *new* and without any defilement (Revelation 21:27). In this place where all is *new*, the righteousness of God will flourish – there will be nothing else!

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<sup>65</sup> *Bibleworks 8*; <https://www.teachmehebrew.com/lesson-9.html>.

When the Lord comes to defeat the armies of the Antichrist and False Prophet, and establish His Millennial reign, we are told that He will “rule them [*ta ethna*, a people who do not know Him] with a rod of iron” (Revelation 19:15).<sup>66</sup> This will be a time when “the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together” (Isaiah 11:7), and civil law will be according to God’s design and maintained with strict compliance. The Redeemed, in their glorified bodies, will be granted the privilege of administering a shepherd’s *rod of iron* as they reign with Christ (Revelation 2:27; 20:6). This *rod* will apply justice in keeping with the righteousness of God; during the Millennium, Jesus’ sceptre will be one of iron, and it will maintain His justice among a people who do not know Him. At the close of the Millennium, Satan will be loosed from his confines and he will gather a massive following from all over the earth to come against the Lord and His righteous ones (Revelation 20:7-8). What is evident from this is that outward compliance does not indicate a change of heart; for 1,000 years everyone on the earth will live in submission to the Lord in a time of unprecedented peace and prosperity, yet for most, their hearts will remain closed to Him.

The Son loves *righteousness* and hates *iniquity*; it should not surprise us that the Father and the Son are alike – after all, we’ve learned that the Son is an exact representation of the Father (Hebrews 1:3)! “For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright” (Psalm 11:7); so, too, the Son *loveth righteousness*. “The way of the wicked *is* an abomination unto [hated by] the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness” (Proverbs 15:9); likewise, iniquity and wickedness, are detestable to the Son.<sup>67</sup>

God has *anointed* the Son with the *oil of great joy*. Oil had a significant place within Jewish culture and the Law of Moses. The Lord’s instructions to Moses regarding the completed tabernacle began this way: “And thou

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<sup>66</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>67</sup> <https://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/abomination>.

shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and **it shall be holy**” (Exodus 40:9). The anointing oil was applied to the tabernacle and all that was in it, so that they would be sanctified – set apart as holy unto the Lord. This anointing was also applied to the altar of burnt offering, its tools, and the laver, which were all outside of the tabernacle; moreover, Aaron (the high priest) and his sons (the priests) were anointed after they had been washed and had donned their priestly garments (Exodus 40:10-15). After baptising the Lord Jesus, the testimony of John the Baptist is this: “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him” (John 1:32). Jesus, the Word made flesh, was baptized by John (symbolic of the priestly washing), and was anointed with the Spirit of God. Before His public ministry began, Jesus received the priestly rituals of the Law of Moses; He was immediately set apart for God’s purposes, and, as we will see later in our study, He is now our High Priest!

What of the *oil of great joy above Thy companions*? The primary word for joy in the NT is *chara*, which describes an inner feeling of joy, happiness, and delight.<sup>68</sup> When the Magi left Herod and saw the star again, they “rejoiced with exceeding great joy [*chara*]” (Matthew 2:10); their delight in seeing their guiding star again was *great*, but it was not as great as the word in our verse: *agalliasis* (*great joy, gladness*), which is a tremendous joy, a feeling of ecstasy, or exhilaration that is often expressed with a loud exclamation, a leap, or both.<sup>69</sup>

*Companions* (or, *fellows*) is from the Greek *metochos*, which only appears six times in the NT, and five are in Hebrews.<sup>70</sup> It can mean sharing or participating in something, or a business partner or companion; four of the five times that it is in Hebrews, it speaks of our sharing in the heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1), in Christ (3:14), in the Holy Spirit (6:4), and in the Lord’s correction (12:8). The OT prophecy is that God has anointed Christ

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<sup>68</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>69</sup> Friberg Lexicon; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

<sup>70</sup> Strong’s Online.



with the oil of ecstasy more than His companions. Jesus said, “*Greater love no one has than this: that one will lay his life down for the sake of his friends; ye are My friends if ye are doing everything that I am commanding you*” (John 15:13-14, literal).<sup>71</sup> *Friends (philo)* speaks of close companions;<sup>72</sup> from Jesus’ words we note that His *companions* are those who are living in obedience to His commands. Therefore, God has favored Christ more than all who are *in Him* – those who have placed their faith in His saving work **and** are walking faithfully with Him. Those who are *in Christ* make up the *ekklesia*, over which Christ is the Pre-eminent One – it is His Body: “And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church [*ekklesia*]: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the pre-eminence” (Colossians 1:18). The *Body* exists because Christ paid the penalty for the sins of humanity, and the Body (the *ekklesia*) is composed of those who have submitted to Him as their Redeemer – the One Who bought them out of slavery to sin!

These Messianic prophecies have elaborated on the supremacy of Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah. What has become very evident is that Jesus **is** God: He is equal in every respect (John 10:30), He is the eternal Word become flesh (John 1:14), the Mighty God (*El Gibbor*,<sup>73</sup> Isaiah 9:6), and the everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6, John 14:9). God sent His only begotten Son into the world to open unto us the way to life through Him; God’s eternal plan for the salvation of those who willingly and faithfully submit to the Son is now in place. The question that we all face is this: will we choose *life*?

**10. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: 11. They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; 12. And**

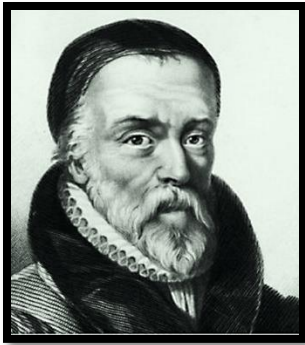
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<sup>71</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Abbot-Smith Greek Lexicon; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>72</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>73</sup> [https://hebrew4christians.com/Names\\_of\\_G-d/El/el.html#loaded](https://hebrew4christians.com/Names_of_G-d/El/el.html#loaded).

as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.



William Tyndale

This is a quote from Psalm 102:25-27, and it is very close to the Hebrew, except for one phrase: *fold them up* – the Hebrew reads: *change them*, as does the Septuagint (LXX).<sup>74</sup> It is difficult to say where the difference came; Wycliffe (1395) and Tyndale (1525) followed the Hebrew, but the Latin Vulgate (late 4<sup>th</sup> century AD), the Bishop’s Bible (1568), and the Geneva Bible (1587) all show this as some form of *fold them up*.<sup>75</sup> The complexity of it all is amazing: the Geneva Bible (particularly the NT) was primarily based upon Tyndale’s work (that followed the Hebrew), yet the Geneva translators chose to follow the Latin Vulgate.<sup>76</sup> However, all agree that it is the Lord Who will either *change them* or *fold them up*.

This OT passage is addressed to the Son as *Lord* (*kurie*, singular); in the Hebrew Scriptures, this follows a verse that is directed to *El* (singular; hence, *God*). However, the LXX also includes (*kurie*), showing that it is the *Lord* Who is being addressed; the vocative form of this Greek word (*kurie* from *kurios*) tells us that what follows is being directed to the Lord.<sup>77</sup> What the OT saints would have understood as a reference to God (*El*) as the Creator, the writer of Hebrews quotes and shows that it is addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is evident that the NT writers understood that Jesus was the Creator: “For by him [Jesus] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth ...” (Colossians 1:16). This follows that pattern, except that it comes from the Psalms.

<sup>74</sup> BDB; *Bibleworks 8*.

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.study-light.org/>; *ESword*.

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/1599-Geneva-Bible-GNV/>.

<sup>77</sup> <https://pressbooks.pub/ancientgreek/chapter/40/>.

*Laid the foundation of the earth* has become a support for those who promote a flat earth; they assume that this says that the earth has a *foundation* like a building, and so it must be flat; after all, there is no *foundation* for a ball. However, as is so often the case, those who make such superficial claims, have not taken a moment to look beyond the English words used. Clearly, *laid the foundation* is the problem phrase – it comes from a single Hebrew word, *yasad*, which means to establish.<sup>78</sup> The Lord Jesus *established* the earth: He created and formed it, and set it in place. Job declared that the Lord “hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7b); there is no *foundation* upon which the earth is set – God established its place in the universe, free from all physical attachments!

The *heavens* (plural) are also the product of the Son’s creating, which immediately places this within the physical universe, and is not speaking of the dwelling place of God. The *heavens* include the earth’s atmosphere (life-supporting air and the means for watering the earth) and everything beyond that (where the moon, sun, stars and planets have been established). The massive universe, with all of its millions of moving bits, was created by the Son, and its complexity and beauty declare His glory (Psalm 19:1).

Concerning this immense and magnificent creation of the earth and heavens: *they shall perish*. We read more of this time: “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them” (Revelation 20:11). As the doors of eternity open, the created universe (the earth and heaven) will vanish, and be replaced by a New Heaven and Earth for those who are *in Christ* (Revelation 21:1). Peter tells of the destruction of the physical heavens and earth: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). Clearly, the whole

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<sup>78</sup> BDB; TWOT #875.

physical universe has been impacted by the sin of man (Romans 8:20), and, one day, it will be completely gone.

This universe will *wax old*, or become worn out, like an outer garment; like an outer covering, it will be rolled up (*helisso; fold them up*) and changed.<sup>79</sup> It is on this latter that the Hebrew differs: like a garment, the heavens and earth will be changed (*chalaph*) and they will pass away (*chalaph*); the difference between the two is that the first uses the hiphil stem, and the latter a qal stem, which changes how the word is to be understood.<sup>80</sup> Taken within the context, it is evident that the Hebrew is more in keeping with the theme that the created universe will *perish*; it won't simply become worn out and be changed – it will actually *pass away*, or vanish. As physical beings in a material world, we only experience what our senses can take in, but the assurance is that this world is only temporary and, by faith, we need to identify with Christ Who abides in eternity.

In contrast with the destiny of the created universe, the Creator (the Lord Jesus Christ) will live on (*diameno/remainest*), He is the same, and His years will not come to an end.<sup>81</sup> As Jesus appeared to John on Patmos, He identified Himself as *He Who is living, and became dead, and, lo, I am living unto the ages of the ages* (Revelation 1:18a, literal).<sup>82</sup> He is *living*, the eternal *Word* (1 John 5:7); He took on the flesh of humanity so that He could bear the penalty for our sin as the pure Lamb of God (*death*, Romans 6:23), and He was raised in victory over death (the *firstborn from the dead*, Colossians 1:18) to never die again! The Son, through Whom the Lord has now spoken to us, is eternally the *Word of God* (Revelation 19:13), the *Lamb slain* for the sins of humanity (Revelation 13:8), and the eternal *Light* of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:23). The created earth and heavens will vanish, but the Creator is eternal and will establish an

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<sup>79</sup> Strong's Dictionary; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>80</sup> Leningrad Hebrew OT; BDB, *ESword*.

<sup>81</sup> Bauer Greek-English Lexicon; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>82</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

eternal New Heaven, Earth and Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-2); He will clothe His faithful *overcomers* in white and will walk with them because their names are found in the Book of Life (Revelation 3:4-5; 21:27).

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

The writer brings in another OT prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and, again, draws a comparison between the angels and the Son, Who is the Lord's final Voice to us. "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Psalm 110:1). The words of David, the psalmist: *the declaration of Jehovah to my Lord: sit to My right until I make Thine enemies a stool for Thy feet* (literal).<sup>83</sup> Jesus used this passage in His effort to get the Pharisees to see the truth concerning the Messiah: "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ [the Anointed One, *Christos*; from the Hebrew *Messiah*]? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The Son of David*. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matthew 22:41-45).<sup>84</sup> The Pharisees acknowledged that the Messiah would be the Son of David, but they had no response to Jesus' question as to why David would then call Him his Lord. Within the minds of the Jewish leadership, David was the shining star in their history as a nation – there was no one greater than David: he had melded the twelve tribes into one nation, and then raised it to a place of peace, prosperity and great glory.<sup>85</sup> For this most esteemed of their ancestors to call the Messiah his Lord meant that David acknowledged his submission to the Messiah, Someone to be born of his lineage many

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<sup>83</sup> Leningrad Hebrew OT, *Bibleworks 8*; BDB.

<sup>84</sup> Liddell-Scott Greek Lexicon.

<sup>85</sup> <https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4922-david#anchor23>.



generations hence. A parallel to this thought comes in another statement that Jesus made to the Jews who were unwilling to accept Him as their promised Messiah: “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58b); the Jews fully understood that Jesus had just applied the name of Jehovah to Himself, because they immediately set out to stone Him. If they had understood why David called Him Lord, they would have accepted that He was God in flesh.

The writer has already clarified that Jesus, the Son, is now to the right of the Majesty in heaven (Hebrews 1:3). The focused presence of God is in heaven: as John entered the heavenly realm, he beheld One sitting upon the throne in heaven (Revelation 4:2), the fullness of the Spirit of God was before the throne (Revelation 4:5), and the Lamb of God was in the midst thereof (Revelation 5:6). To the elder of Laodicea, Jesus said, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Revelation 3:21). In the New Jerusalem, there is a pure river of the water of life that flows out of the “throne [singular] of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1).<sup>86</sup> Although the fullness of God’s presence is experienced by John when he entered heaven, we understand that God is omnipresent, present in all places at the same time.<sup>87</sup> When Jesus spoke with Nicodemus, He revealed this truth: *and no one has gone up into heaven, except He Who came down out of heaven, the Son of Man Who is in heaven* (John 3:13, literal).<sup>88</sup> As Jesus spoke with Nicodemus, He told him that He, the Son of Man, was, at that moment, in heaven (*is* – present tense); although Jesus was in a body of flesh, He was still fully God!<sup>89</sup> “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9).

The Son of God is told to sit to the right of the Father until He will make His enemies a stool for His feet; the next verse provides a context

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<sup>86</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>87</sup> <https://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/omnipresent>.

<sup>88</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.



for this: “The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion [Jerusalem]: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies” (Psalm 110:2). Jesus, the Anointed by the Father, will remain in the presence of the Father until it is time for Him to establish His Millennial reign on earth – His 1,000-year reign on earth while Satan is confined (Revelation 20:2-6). He will descend from heaven with His armies, and out of His mouth is seen a sharp sword that will be used to strike down *ta ethna* (the peoples who are opposed to Him) – specifically, the armies of the Antichrist and False Prophet that are assembled against Him; He will then *shepherd (rule) them* (the *ta ethna*, those who oppose Him, after the destruction of the armies) with a staff of iron (Revelation 19:15, 19-21). Jesus will rule over the earth from Zion, and over peoples who do not hold Him in favor (*in the midst of Thine enemies*). Let me explain.

After the Lord removes His people from the earth (the rapture), the seven bowls of God’s wrath will be poured upon the peoples who do not know Him and have willfully rejected Him. As in the days of Noah, so those who witness the rapture, but remain on earth, cannot be saved – the door to salvation has been closed until the fullness of God’s wrath has been released upon the earth (Matthew 24:37-39; Revelation 15:8). Therefore, those who are alive and enter into the Millennium will be opposed to the Lord and His righteousness. Right after the time of God’s wrath is ended, Jesus comes from heaven to establish His Millennial reign – among peoples who can be described as His *enemies*. Those who have now been gathered to Him (the *firstfruit* [the OT saints], and the *harvest* [the saints at the rapture]) will function as kings for Jesus among these hostile people, and as kings and priests among those who will be born during the Millennium (Revelation 20:6). As has already been noted, this will be a time of peace, prosperity and compliance – the Shepherd’s staff will be of iron!

Once again, we have that little Greek word *pote* (*at any time, or ever*), which requires a negative response to this question: God has **never** said

this to any of His angels.<sup>90</sup> These instructions were intended exclusively for the only begotten of the Father, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

The writer now draws our attention to the purpose for God's holy angels. *Are they not all spirits in special service [to God] being sent out on assignment for the sake of those who are going to be inheriting salvation (literal)?*<sup>91</sup>

Let's begin by affirming that we understand who will be *inheriting salvation*. The Psalmist wrote: *happy the people when Jehovah [is] their God; the people whom He chose for His inheritance* (Psalm 33:12, literal).<sup>92</sup> What is not obvious from this quote is that *people* (*goy*) is a singular noun that refers to a specific group whose God is Jehovah, and it is these whom He *chose* to be *His inheritance*! It is important that we understand the word *chose* correctly. Paul explained this to the Ephesians: *praised [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who did bless us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, even as He did choose us in Him before the foundation of the world; we, being holy and without blemish before Him, in love He did predetermine us unto adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will* (Ephesians 1:3-5, literal).<sup>93</sup> The critical phrase in this amazing teaching is this: *in Him*; therein is the key to understanding *how* God has chosen *us* and predestined *us* for adoption. This sets the Calvinistic doctrine of Irresistible Grace aside; it is not that God has chosen individuals from eternity past to be His inheritance, rather, it is those who are *in Christ* who are the chosen ones. This is the only understanding that

<sup>90</sup> Friberg Lexicon; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

<sup>91</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>92</sup> Leningrad Hebrew OT; BDB.

<sup>93</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

aligns itself with all of Scripture so that **we** must *choose life in Christ* by placing our faith in His sacrifice for the sins of humanity. John 3:16, the Gospel in a nutshell, affirms this: *for thus did God love the world, that He did give His Son, the only begotten, in order that everyone who is believing in Him will not perish but is having everlasting life* (literal).<sup>94</sup> It is the one who *is believing* in Jesus (present tense, active voice: a continuous action by *who*) who will not perish (tied to the continuous *believing*) and *is having* everlasting life (again, linked to a continuous *believing*).<sup>95</sup> Jesus also said that *the one who endures unto the end, this is the one who will be saved* (Matthew 24:13, literal);<sup>96</sup> *endures* is from *hupomeno*, which means to hold a belief or course of action in the face of opposition – from the context, we understand this to mean that we remain faithful to the Lord despite what comes our way.<sup>97</sup> It is also noteworthy that Jesus describes our salvation as future tense (*will be saved*); we are being saved now (as we grow in our sanctification), but it is when we have remained obedient to Him (*hupomeno*) to the end of our lives that we will be saved completely.

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Revelation 21:7); these are the Lord’s words to John when he sees the New Heaven and Earth. *Overcometh*, from *nikao*, means to be conquering – another descriptive of the one who is faithfully enduring in the Lord. No one will ever coast into heaven, which is why Jesus said that it is necessary to count the cost of following Him (Luke 14:26-33), lest we should begin with Him and fail to endure. The one who is *overcoming* will persevere in the Lord to the very end – this is the one who will be saved!

The *angels* are commissioned by the Lord to work with those who will inherit His salvation. “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about

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<sup>94</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>95</sup> Strong’s Online.

<sup>96</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>97</sup> Bauer Greek-English Lexicon.

them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Psalm 34:7); *a messenger of Jehovah encamps round about those who fear Him, to deliver them* (literal).<sup>98</sup> The first thing to notice is that the work of the angel is for those who *fear* the Lord – those who are looking forward to the Lord’s inheritance because they live in willful submission to Him. Then, too, if we ponder this carefully, we will understand that even though a *messenger* of the Lord is ready *to deliver* us, that angel will only act upon the orders that he will receive from the Lord. Consider an example: Paul bore a *thorn* in his flesh, and he sought the Lord to remove it, yet the Lord said that it must remain so that His power could be displayed through Paul’s weakness (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). Even though angels are present to provide deliverance, they will only act in accordance with the will of the Lord, and, as with Paul, there may be occasions when the Lord has something greater than deliverance in mind.

As we conclude this first chapter of Hebrews, we have been overwhelmed by the greatness of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ – **He is God!** It is important that we maintain this lofty view of the Lord because He is God’s voice to us today. Whatever we desire to know about God and His Message for today, we will find it as we look ever more carefully at Jesus and the work that He accomplished for us.

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<sup>98</sup> Leningrad Hebrew OT; Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon, p. 570.