

Hebrews 2 (Chap. 1 con't.)

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Remember, the writer of Hebrews is writing to 3 types of Hebrews in this congregation:

1. Born again believers... Jews who have come to true faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who are experiencing persecution from other Jews and from Gentiles.
2. Those who have become intellectually convinced of the truth of who Jesus Christ is but who have not gone all the way to trusting in Him and His finished work on the Cross for their own Salvation... one reason is because of the threat of persecution; they have held back from true commitment.
3. And those who are not yet convinced at all of the truth of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah of Israel.

God's elect... Jews and Gentiles... will hear the Word of God, believe it and place their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for Salvation. Others will understand and even believe it's true but never come to saving faith and eventually God will even remove the understanding they have. Others still will hear but never believe at all.

This is exactly what Jesus was talking about in Matt. 13 after teaching the '*Parable of the Sower*'...

'The disciples came to him and asked, 'Why do you speak to the people in parables?' He replied, 'Because the knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. This is why I speak to them in parables.' Matt 13:10

To understand Hebrews we must always remember and differentiate these three groups and recognize, at any given time, to whom a particular passage is written.

Verse 1,2: 'God, who at various times and in various ways, spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds...'

God spoke... He chose to reveal Himself. All through the Old Testament, He spoke through many different prophets at many different times, progressively revealing Himself and His plan. Then finally, in the last days, He chose to fully reveal Himself and speak through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator and rightful Heir of all that is. The word God chose here for 'worlds' (He made the *worlds*...) is the Greek word, 'Aion.' It means more than just physical planets... it means all the physical Universe, as well as the concepts of time, space and eternity. Before the Lord Jesus Christ spoke Creation into being... there was nothing.

He is presenting the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ as Superior to all else... He is Almighty God, the Creator.

John said the same thing in John 1:1: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ ***Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.***'

He used the term '*in these last days*,' because when Hebrews heard that, they would immediately think of the Messiah. The Messiah was promised to come in the last days to fulfill all God's promises to Israel.

To Zechariah He said, 'Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.' 9:9

To Jeremiah He said, 'In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this *is the name* by which she will be called: THE LORD ***OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.***' 33:14

You ask, 'How was an Old Testament believer saved?' The answer is, **Just like us!** Faith in God, the Son... by believing in these and other promises from God regarding the coming Messiah. The fact of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ being imputed to us was not new with Paul's teaching... the complete forgiveness of our sins through the crucifixion and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God and then risen as King of Kings... these 'doctrines' are not new to the New Testament. Here in Jeremiah, God is saying, 'Your righteousness will come from the Messiah.' (The Lord our Righteousness) Through Isaiah He said that the Messiah would be crucified for 'our' transgressions, and that He would be like a lamb... He would be the One to Whom the entire Old Testament Sacrificial System had pointed. Every drop of sacrificial lamb's blood shed on every altar from Abel down through the Mosaic Law was looking forward to the shed blood of the perfect, sinless Lamb of God, whose blood was shed for the true forgiveness of sin on the altar of the Cross.

Remember, the name and title, the Lord Jesus Christ, is simply the Greek form of the Hebrew name and title of the promised Messiah... Adonai-Jeshua-Messiah... Sovereign Lord-God is Salvation-Anointed One.

All the Old Testament points to this same person:

Surely **He** has borne our griefs

And carried our sorrows;

Yet we esteemed Him stricken,

Smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But **He was wounded for our transgressions,**

He was bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,

And by His stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;

We have turned, every one, to his own way;

And **the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted,

Yet He opened not His mouth;

He was led **as a lamb to the slaughter,**

And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,

So He opened not His mouth. Isa. 53:4

Believing, by faith in these and many other Old Testament passages is how an Old Testament believer was saved... and the Hebrews to whom this letter is written would have been familiar with all of them.

All of these Messianic promises came to mind when the writer used the phrase, 'these last days.'

Through Zechariah He calls Him the King... and to every Old Testament believer, just like to every one of us... to those who willingly receive and act upon the understanding from the Holy Spirit through His Word, the Holy Spirit will then give even more understanding from His Word.

No one in the Old Testament had the full picture or understanding until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ but they were required to believe in what had been revealed, (even though they didn't fully understand it) and the same is true for us... it is **saving faith**, the foundation of which is always God's Love, Grace and Mercy.

Just like us... for those in the Old Testament times, this same verse holds true: For by grace they (OT believers) were saved through faith, and that not of themselves; *it was* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For they were His workmanship, created in Jeshua Messiah for good works, which God prepared beforehand that they should walk in them. Eph 2:8

It was true even then... the Messiah was saying... 'I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life... no one comes to the Father except through (faith in) Me.' John 14:6

God has spoken in these last days and His Word, His Revelation **is** the Lord Jesus Christ: 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.' John 1:14

Verse 3: 'Who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...'

'The brightness of *His* glory'... The Lord Jesus Christ shines with the Glory of God. When Moses came down from meeting with Him on Mt. Sinai, Moses had to cover his face because it shone brightly with the reflected Glory of God. When Jesus Christ appeared in His Glory on the Mount of Transfiguration it says 'There he was transfigured before them. ***His face shone like the sun*** and his clothes became as white as the light.' Matt. 17:2

When John saw the Lord Jesus Christ at His Revelation, he wrote, 'His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength.' Rev 1:16

He is the Light of the World. His light and Glory emanate from within Himself... He is the source... it is the same Glory as from the Father. He is the same essence as God the Father... the writer is telling these Hebrews and all of us, the Lord Jesus Christ is God Almighty... Creator, Sustainer, Source of Light and Glory and he says that He is the express image of the Person of God the Father... the only exact representation of God the Father... He is of identical essence and yet distinct. He is not a reflection of God Almighty... He is how God has chosen to reveal Himself in time and space.

Not only is He the Creator of all that is... He is the One Who is holding it all together; He is keeping it from disintegrating and becoming clouds of dust drifting through space... and He is guiding and directing everything to His planned consummation and conclusion.

Col 1:15 says, 'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ ***For by Him all things were created*** that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, ***and in Him all things consist.***'

He alone, by Himself purged our sins. Nothing but His sinless life, shed blood and sacrificial death were necessary or even possible for the purging, the complete forgiveness of all our sin. There is nothing that we could do ourselves that could add to what He has done or to help in any way. We could never be good enough to help with our salvation and we could never be bad enough to hinder or negate what Jesus has done.

He sat down at the Right Hand of God the Father... the place of honor, power and authority but it is also the place of voluntary subordination under the authority of God the Father.

He is seated, signifying the completion of His work of Atonement. On the Cross, He said, 'It is finished.' He is still active, however... He prays for us. 'Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives ***to make intercession for them.***' For us! Heb 7:25

Verse 4: '...having become ***so much better than the angels***, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.'

Here we come to the main thrust of this first chapter of Hebrews. The writer goes into great detail to prove the all surpassing excellence of the Lord Jesus Christ as compared to angels. He is God Almighty, angels are created beings. We saw that back in Col 1:15... He created 'thrones, dominions, principalities and powers.'

In the first Century, Jew and Gentile, Christian and Pagan all accorded great power and significance to angels. They were worshipped. For the most part, all civilization believed in angels. They may not have thought of them as 'angels,' but worshipped them as gods or guiding spirits, but whether they understood it or not, all their belief systems had as their foundation, the truth of Genesis 6, the time before the Flood and after also:

'Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God (angels) saw the daughters of men, that they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for

themselves of all whom they chose. ³ And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." ⁴ ***There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them.*** Those *were* the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. ⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.' Gen 6

This is the true report of fallen angels mating with human women and producing giants. These giants were destroyed in the flood but it says that it also happened afterward, and we see these later offspring from fallen angels, giants, throughout the Middle East when the Israelites enter into Canaan after the Exodus from Egypt.

The telling and retelling of this monumental historical episode would have been known down through the generations of descendants from all three of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, who spread out over all the Earth. It would have been especially known and believed by the Hebrews, descendants of Shem, who had this accurate written account from Moses. All of the world's religious belief systems came from this. These 'giants' were probably the first kings, ruling by force. The fallen angels would have been worshipped as gods, their offspring would have been worshipped as demigods. The mythologies or Pantheons (meaning ***many gods***) of Rome and Greece as well as Norse and Celtic and many others around the world all came from this... fallen angels who appeared to humans, even mated with humans and demanded worship, sacrifice and offerings.

Now, the writer of Hebrews is writing to prove the all surpassing excellence of the Lord Jesus Christ over even angels which were worshipped as gods. Notice he doesn't see the need to prove their existence at all.

'...having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.' We see the same thing from Paul in Ephesians: 'He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion (angels), and ***every name that is named...***' 1:20

To prove Jesus Christ's superiority over angels, the writer references several Old Testament passages. Just like today... the best way to witness to a Jew is to reveal the Gospel from the Old Testament.

The Lord Jesus Christ is God Almighty, the Creator of all that is.

Angels are created spiritual beings, created to minister to God and to do all He commands. We also find, a few verses down, that they have been created and assigned to minister to us, God's elect, born again believers and also to those of God's elect who have not yet placed their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for Salvation.

His 'more excellent name' is The Lord (sovereign) Jesus (God is Salvation) Christ (anointed one)...

His name means Sovereign-Salvation-Anointed ... that is His name... ***'The Anointed, Sovereign Salvation of God.'*** ***He is the One in Whom the Old Testament Saints' faith for salvation was placed... They said, 'I have faith in the One Whom God has promised to send... Whose name is: 'The Anointed, Sovereign Salvation of God.'***

Angels' names merely point back to God and not to themselves because they are servants of God.

Michael means 'who is like God?'

Gabriel means 'warrior of God.'

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name:" Phps 2:10

Verse 5: 'For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"?'

Here the writer is quoting from Psalm 2:7 and 2 Sam. 7:14 where God is speaking of the Messiah and establishing the very special relationship of Father and Son... the relationship which no angel has.

When God says, 'today I have begotten you,' He is referring to the time of the Lord Jesus Christ's incarnation, the time of His taking on human flesh. This has nothing to do with a time of supposed creation of the Son. He has always existed as the second person of the Trinity, God the Son. Cults such as Mormonism teach that Jesus is a created being, that He and Lucifer are brothers; others claim that He is the Archangel, Michael.

Again, the Father/Son relationship shows Jesus Christ's willingness to submit Himself under the authority of God the Father for the purpose of God's plan to glorify Himself and to redeem His elect out from lost humanity.

Verse 6: But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

This refers to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to take His rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords. His title of 'Firstborn' or 'First begotten' speaks to His place as rightful Heir of all Creation and His highest position of sovereignty. Everything was created by Him, to Him and for Him. When God commands that all the angels of God worship the Son, He means fallen angels, Lucifer and all the rest. The angels of Heaven don't need a command to worship Jesus Christ. They all do it unreservedly. The fallen angels will be forced to submit to His Lordship before being cast into the Lake of Fire.

These Hebrews would have been familiar with this passage from Isaiah: 'I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in Righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath. Isa 45:23

Paul quotes this in Romans: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Rom 14:11

And: '...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' Phps 2:10

Peter says, '...Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.' 1 Pet 3:22

The writer is showing these Hebrews that Jesus Christ is superior to all the angels who had been revered and worshipped, but are in reality subject to Him and must worship Him.

Verse 7: 'And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire."

Here the writer reiterates that angels have been created by God, that they are spirits and he causes his readers to remember some well known examples of angels having been seen by humans as fiery spiritual beings.

The angel placed at the entrance to the Garden of Eden had a flaming sword. Gen 3

Elijah was taken up to Heaven when a flaming chariot, probably driven by a flaming angel appears: 'Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.' 2 Kings 2:11

God set a flaming army on the hill around Elisha and his servant as protection from the Syrian army: 'So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who *are* with us *are* more than those who *are* with them." ¹⁷ And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.' 2 Kings 6:16

Verse 8: 'But to the Son *He says:* 'Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom

Here God the Father calls the Son, God! The writer then points to that great Messianic passage from Isaiah:

For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ Of the increase of *His* government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. Isa 9:6

Verse 9: 'You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.'

The Lord Jesus Christ holds the 3 offices of Prophet, Priest and King. His title Messiah means, 'Anointed One.' He has been highly exalted by God the Father because He is completely Righteous and completely '*lawlessnessless*.'

His companions are angels, other prophets, priests and kings, His disciples and apostles and even all of us, but He alone is highly exalted above any and all others. He alone is anointed by God the Father as the rightful Heir of all Creation, the Preeminent One, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Almighty God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this verse the writer takes his readers again, back to a great Messianic prophecy to identify the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Anointed One, superior even to angels.

Jesus stood up and read this at the very beginning of His ministry:

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn,
To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” Isaiah 61

On to verse 19 next time.