

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

STUDY NUMBER ONE - Hebrews 1:1-14

TEXT:

v. 1 In many ways and in many portions, God, in former times having spoken to the fathers by means of the prophets,

v. 2 in the last of these days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds (ages),

v. 3 who being the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (real being), and who is bearing up all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

v. 4 having become as much superior to the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

v. 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 a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to me"?

v. 6 And when He shall have brought again the firstborn into the inhabited earth, He is saying, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."

v. 7 And with reference to the angels He is saying, "Who is making His angels winds, and His servants a flame of fire."

v. 8 But with reference to the Son He is saying, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His Kingdom.

v. 9 You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness: therefore God, your God, anointed you, with the oil of gladness above your companions."

v.10 And "as for you, in the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands;

v.11 they themselves will perish, but as for you, you are remaining; and they all will become old as a garment,

v.12 and as a cloak you will roll them up; as a garment they will also be changed. But as for you, you are the same, and your years will not come to an end."

v.13 But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Be sitting at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"?

v.14 Are they not all ministering spirits, being sent out to render service for the sake of those who are about to be inheriting salvation?

INTRODUCTION:

O, the joys of parenting. Tommy Godfrey expresses it well in his little poem:

A Boy and a Girl

It takes alot o' bringing up for a boy and a girl,
 A lot o' toilsome drudgery, the hardest in the world.
 You've got to wash 'em up and fix 'em in the sweetest
 kind o' way,
 And try to keep 'em happy every minute of the day.
 You gotta love 'em while they're crying, the same as
 when they're glad.
 And love 'em while they're smilin', the same as when
 they're bad.
 And pamper 'em an awful lot and feed 'em with a spoon
 And sit with both upon your lap and hum a good night
 tune.
 And then to wake up in the night and find that one is
 ill,
 And sit and watch beside the bed all through the night
 so still.
 And then for days with anxious heart you watch each
 labored breath,
 And pray to God in heaven above to spare your child from
 death.
 It takes a lot o' worry when you're climbin' up fool's
 hill,
 And lots o' grace to love 'em when they go against your
 will,
 A lot o' anxious longing when they're out somewhere at
 night,
 A lot o' earnest prayin' for the Lord to keep 'em right.
 It takes a million other things a'fore the job's
 complete
 And they go marchin' down the aisle, their lover for to
 meet.
 And there to say "I do" for life, 'mid roses white as
 pearl.
 It takes alot o' bringin' up for a boy and a girl.

(The Tribute by Dennis Rainey with David Boehi)

I'm reminded of the story of a little boy who came home from school with yet another bad report card. When he handed the report to his dad, the boy

looked up and asked, "What do you think it is this time--heredity or environment?"
p. 51

(Encyclopedia of Good Clean Jokes by Bob Phillips)

Sunday school teacher: Now, who decreed that all the world should be taxed?

Student: The Democrats.
p. 264

What is the difference between a taxidermist and a tax collector? The taxidermist takes only your skin.
p. 272

Teacher: What does trickle mean?

Student one: To run slowly.

Teacher: Good. And what does anecdote mean?

Student two: It's a short, funny tale.

Teacher: Well done. Now, give me a sentence with both of those words in it.

Student three: Our dog trickled down the street wagging her anecdote.
p. 291

The Book of Hebrews is a book written to Christians, inspired by a loving Father who issues a number of warnings and desires with loving restraint that His children manifest those two qualities that He delights to see above all others, those qualities of SUBMISSION and OBEDIENCE.

If He really knows what is best then these things should come easy, right? Wrong! The reason is we want to do it our way. Someone has said, "Submission to the divine will is the softest pillow on which to recline."

One writer, in speaking of the Book of Hebrews, said, "It is, in fact, a profoundly Christian appeal to trust in God, come what may. It is written to people passing through a critical period in their Christian life."

It is the divine plan that once we are born again by the Spirit into God's family, as His sons and daughters, we begin to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because our heavenly Father is all-knowing and all-powerful, He mixes in our lives those experiences and circumstances, trials and triumphs to bring about maximum growth and fruitful productivity. It is when we resist this program toward development that God has to deal with us in chastening, such as described in Hebrews chapter 12.

(Perilous Pursuits by Joseph M. Stowell)

R. C. Sproul is right when he says, "Modern man has an aching void. The emptiness we feel cannot be relieved by one more gourmet meal or another snort of cocaine. We carry water in a sieve when we try to fill the empty space with a better job or a bigger house."

p. 73

(Carpe Diem by Tony Campolo)

Sometimes when I am on a walk and happen upon wild rabbits or deer I feel as Walt Whitman did, and I say to God, "I think I want to live with them. 'They do not sweat and whine about their condition. They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins. Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things.'"

p. 82

(Perilous Pursuits by Joseph M. Stowell)

The hymn writer Clara Task Williams celebrated the truth with this proclamation:

Hallelujah I have found Him
 Whom my soul so long has craved!
 Jesus satisfies my longing
 Through His blood I now am saved.

p. 78

Isaiah 55:6-11

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord, and he will have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it fair and sprout and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

Christian growth is best described by Chuck Swindoll in his book Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back:

Growing and learning. That's the Christian life in a nutshell, isn't it? It seems to me that more of us in God's family ought to admit that there are more "growing and learning" days than "great and fantastic" days. And that's nothing to be ashamed of. Growing and learning are healthy, normal experiences. Both have to do with a process . . . and that process is sometimes painful, often slow, and occasionally downright awful! It's like taking three steps forward and two steps back.

Don't misunderstand. Jesus is still Lord. God is still good. The victory is still ours. Nevertheless, life is tough. It's not a Disneyland. Or a rose garden. Or a Cloud Nine delight complete with loud fireworks and big-time tingles. Or daily miracles that make our checkbooks balance and recharge our dead batteries. Such expectations are not only unrealistic, they are unbiblical.

Listen to the apostle Paul:

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed (2 Cor. 4:8,9).

Now that's where it's at. And that is precisely what this book is all about. Persevering through the afflictions, the crushings, the blasts of life . . . without despairing and giving up.
pp. 17-18

The Book of Hebrews is written to a group of people who are going through the process of growth and spiritual development and are contemplating the possibility of giving up and thwarting the divine process to produce growth in the life.

GINGER WOOD says it so well in her little poetic piece.

He met me at my point of need that only he could know,
He allowed it all to come about, He knew I needed to grow.
I sought to find solutions in the way that I thought best,
But because He loved me so He chose another way to bless.
O Lord, the author of all life, how I pray that I may learn
To rest and wait on thee. To see the miracles and love That You have in
mind. That I may become for all the
world to see
Your wonderful and perfect design.

As we approach this study on the Book of Hebrews, we find a group of people who have a different mind-set than would lead to Christian victory. It is the thought of quitting. It is the thought of turning back to more comfortable surroundings because it is too tough in the battle.

Because of this condition the apostle has to write and remind these Christians that there really is no other alternative. Once you are born, you cannot be unborn. And once you start to grow and develop, you cannot go back and do over again those areas which you did not do so well.

Just as you cannot reverse the laws of nature in the natural realm from a human point of view, so you cannot spiritually. Once a person is born again, he cannot be unborn. Once he begins to progress on a line of spiritual development, he cannot undo this.

The message of the book is loud and clear. There is no other alternative. We must forget those things which are behind and press toward those things which are in front.

Growth in our Christian lives does not come by service. It comes by learning how to fellowship with the heavenly Father, who wants to bring about His designs in our lives.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The Epistle to the Hebrews is a rich part of the New Testament canon. In a unique fashion it exalts the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (ie., incarnation, substitutionary death, priesthood).

Wiersbe begins his commentary by saying:

A man from Leeds, England, visited his doctor to have his hearing checked. The doctor removed the man's hearing aid, and the patient's hearing immediately improved! He had been wearing the device in the wrong ear for over 20 years!

I once asked a pastor friend, "Do you have a deaf ministry in your church?" He replied, "There are times when I think the whole church needs a deaf ministry--they just don't seem to hear me."

There is a difference between listening and really hearing. Jesus often cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" This statement suggests that it takes more than physical ears to hear the voice of God. It also requires a receptive heart. "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 3:7-8).

John MacArthur says:

I have titled this study of the book of Hebrews, "The Preeminence of Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is superior to and preeminent over everyone and everything.
p. ix

MacArthur holds to the position that the recipients of this book are divided into 3 GROUPS:

- 1.the HEBREW CHRISTIANS in GROUP 1
- 2.the HEBREW NON-CHRISTIANS WHO WERE INTELLECTUALLY CONVINCED in GROUP 2
- 3.the HEBREW NON-CHRISTIANS WHO WERE NOT CONVINCED in GROUP 3.

MacArthur says further:

These messages speak directly to unbelievers, not to Christians and not to those who are already convinced of the gospel intellectually. They are given to those who first need to know who Christ really is.

These, then, are the three groups in view in the epistle. The key to interpreting any part of Hebrews is to understand which group is being addressed. If we do not understand that, we are bound to confuse issues. For example, the Spirit is surely not saying to believers, "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (9:27). We must always understand what group it is to whom He speaks. As we study the book of Hebrews, we will relate each text to one of the three groups.

The primary message is addressed to believers. Periodically there are interspersed warnings to the two unbelieving groups. In a masterful way, in a way that could only be divine, the Holy Spirit speaks to all three. He meets every one of their particular needs and their specific questions in this one supernatural masterpiece.

p. xv

Bruce points out:

The addresses appear, then, to have been a group of Jewish Christians who had never seen or heard Jesus in person, but learned of him (as the writer of the epistle also did) from someone who had themselves listened to him. Since their conversion they had been exposed to persecution --particularly at one stage shortly after the beginning of their Christian career--but while they had had to endure public abuse, imprisonment, and the looting of their property, they had not yet been called upon to die for their faith. They had given practical evidence of their faith by serving their fellow-Christians and especially by caring for those of their number who suffered most in the time of persecution. Yet their Christian development had been arrested; instead of pressing ahead they were inclined to come to a full stop in their spiritual progress, if not indeed to slip back to a stage which they had left. Very probably they were reluctant to sever their last ties with a religion which enjoyed the protection of Roman law and face the risks of irrevocable commitment to the Christian way. The writer, who has known them, or known about them, for a considerable time, and feels a pastoral concern for their welfare, warns them against falling back, for this may result in falling away from their Christian faith altogether; he encourages them with the assurance that they have everything to lose if they fall back, but everything to gain if they press on.

p. 9

A. T. Robertson says:

The Glory of Jesus runs through the whole book.

p. 328

William Barclay says:

I believe that no New Testament book gives us such a glorious picture of Jesus Christ, in all the splendour of His manhood and in all the majesty of His deity.

p. ix

Barclay speaking further about the reality of faith in Christ says:

If that be so, clearly the great task of this life is to get away from the shadows and the imperfections and to reach reality. It is exactly that that the writer to the Hebrews claims that Jesus Christ can enable us to do. To the Greek the writer to the Hebrews would have said, did in fact say: "All your lives you have been searching for reality; all your lives you have been trying to get from the shadows to the truth. That is just what this Jesus Christ can enable you to do."

p. xv

So to the Greek the writer to the Hebrews said: "You are looking for the way from the shadows to reality; you will find it in Jesus Christ." So to the Jew the writer to the Hebrews said: "You are looking for that perfect sacrifice which will open the way to God which your sins have closed; you will find it in Jesus Christ." To the writer to the Hebrews Jesus was the one person on earth who gave access to reality and access to God. That is the key-thought of the whole letter.

p. xvii

Larry Richards says:

The Book of Hebrews insists that there is more. It was written to people who have somehow missed the way to maturity and are stumbling. It was written to help us put our fragments of faith in Jesus all together into a fully satisfying whole, and to move us out to experience the fullness of this complete salvation. Jesus put together all the fragments of truth about God to give us the whole truth. But more than that, Jesus also puts fragmented lives together, to give us wholeness and maturity as persons. In Hebrews, we can discover all these treasures!

p. 10

J. Vernon McGee says:

The Epistle to the Hebrews is of such importance that I rank it beside the epistle to the Romans (which is excelled by no other book).

p. 502

M. R. DeHaan says:

These Hebrew Christians had stopped short of a victorious and fruitful life, and were sorely tempted to become legalistic and to neglect their salvation. They are, therefore, admonished to "go on to perfection" (maturity), lest they harden their hearts and come to a place where it is impossible for them to be renewed again unto repentance, but become unfruitful castaways to suffer loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ. To prevent this from happening, the writer reminds them of the sacrifice of Christ in their behalf, of the presence of the High Priest in heaven, and the power of the solid meat of the Word to enable them to gain the victory and the crown. If this does not induce them to a yielding and surrender to His will, He warns them of the chastening which they are inviting, and finally, if chastening is despised, the Lord may judge them by setting them aside, or visiting them with death, to be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
p. 13

G. Campbell Morgan says:

Now we turn to consider the One referred to as "the Son." In the opening paragraph we have a sevenfold description of "the Son." He is first "Heir of all things"; secondly, "through Whom He fashioned the ages"; thirdly, in Himself He is "the Effulgence" of the Divine glory; fourthly, He is "the very Image of His substance," that is of the essence of Deity; fifthly, He is spoken of as "upholding all things by the word of His power," a reference to the maintenance of the moral order; sixthly, He is revealed in redeeming activity, making "purification of sins"; finally, His administrative position is declared, "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High." That sevenfold description is completed by another statement, perfecting the octave of the revelation. We are told that presently He will come again into the economy, and that when He does so, all the angels shall worship Him.
pp. 12-13

Ray Stedman puts it this way:

Whoever the writer is, he sees one thing very clearly: that Jesus Christ is the total answer to every human need. No book of the New Testament focuses upon Christ like the book of Hebrews does. It is the clearest and most systematic presentation of the availability and adequacy of Jesus Christ in the whole of the Bible. It presents Christianity as the perfect and final religion, simply because the incomparable person and work of Jesus Christ permits men free and unrestricted access to God. In every age that is man's desperate need. There is no hunger like God-hunger.

p. 3

Herbert Lockyer, in the preface to John Owen's commentary on the Book of Hebrews, says this of Owen:

The end of this gifted expositor of "The Epistle of Hebrews" was as triumphant as his life. John Owen spent his closing days in writing his "Meditations on the Glory of Christ." What a spiritual treasure this is! On the morning of the day he died, a friend called to tell him the work was put to press. "I am glad to hear it," said the dying expositor; and lifting up his hands and eyes as if transformed with joy, he exclaimed, "But O! the long wished-for day is come at last, in which I shall see that glory in another manner than I have ever done, or was capable of doing in this world."

p. intro.

Griffith Thomas speaking about the introductory verses says:

In these four opening verses almost everything in the Epistle will be found in germ.

p. 20

Hughes begins his commentary by saying:

C. S. Lewis memorably portrayed the growing Christian's experience of an ever-enlarging Christ in his Chronicles of Narnia. Lucy, caught up in her spiritual quest, saw the lion Aslan--Christ--shining white and huge in the moonlight. In a burst of emotion Lucy rushed to him, burying her face in the rich silkiness of his mane, whereupon the great beast rolled over on his side so that Lucy fell, half-sitting and half-lying between his front paws. He bend forward and touched her nose with his tongue. His warm breath was all around her. She gazed up into the large, wise face.

"Welcome, child," he said.

"Aslan," said Lucy, "you're bigger."

"That is because you are older, little one," answered he.

"Not because you are?"

"I am not. But every year you grow, you will find me bigger."

Expanding souls encounter an expanding Christ!
p. 17

It would be well for us to pause for a few moments and reflect on some INTRODUCTORY MATTERS that will clarify our own understanding of the Book of Hebrews.

There are 3 THINGS that will help us greatly in our comprehension of the message to the Book of Hebrews:

- 1.The folks who are receiving this letter are of Jewish nationality. This explains much of the content and the many references to the Old Testament and the sacrificial system throughout the book.
- 2.The book is written to genuine believers so the message is for Christians.
- 3.The group that is receiving the letter are contemplating the possibility of going back to Judaism, away from Christ, because of the persecution and suffering they have experienced.

The writer to the Book of Hebrews is pointing up the fact that there is no way for man to undo what God has already done and is doing in their lives. Their personal neglect of growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ will be met with some serious consequences at the judgment seat of Christ.

Sanford in his thesis on the Book of Hebrews says:

The temptation to relapse into the well-worn paths of traditionalism and to shrink from the full implications of Christian discipleship is ever-present with Christians today as it was with them. God's people today, like them, need to be reminded of the cost of obedience and the need of patient endurance and faith.

One is reminded of Peter's experience when he came to Antioch to see the ministry that Paul was having among the Gentiles:

Galatians 2:11ff

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews? We are Jews by nature, and not sinners from among the Gentiles; nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary dates the book of Hebrews somewhere around 68-69 A.D.

Because of the many references to the temple sacrifice and the worship of Judaism, it is believed that this particular group that is being addressed lived in Palestine, somewhere in the Jerusalem area; and that they existed prior to the destruction of the temple in the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This letter was written possibly during the period between A.D. 64 and 70.

There are numerous choices for the author of the epistle but God only knows certainly who it is that was the instrument of divine inspiration for its production. Jackie Deere in his thesis says, "In the attempt to solve the problem of authorship, two likely choices emerge: Paul or Barnabas. Of these two Barnabas is the most probable."

J. Vernon McGee points out:

After all, the human author is unimportant. The important thing is that the epistle to the Hebrews is part of the inspired word of God.

Jensen says:

Hebrews, an anonymous book, is a rare gem among a king's treasures. Christ's glory shines from its pages.

The challenge of the Book of Hebrews is to endure whatever circumstances may come because they have been created by the divine hand for our maximum growth. In summary we can say, the purpose of the epistle is to exhort these believers to patiently endure their present situation by considering the superiority of Christ's person and work and by pressing on to maturity.

It would be well for us to reflect on some critical verses as we prepare to launch into a verse by verse study of the Book of Hebrews.

Galatians 5:7

You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth?

Hebrews 5:11-14

Concerning which there is much that we can be saying. Yet when it comes to the saying of it, one finds it difficult to explain since you have become hard of hearing. In fact, when at this time you are under moral obligation to be teachers by reason of the extent of time, again you are having need of someone to be teaching you the very elements of the truths of God and have become those who are having need of milk, not solid food. For everyone who is partaking only of milk is unacquainted with the teaching about righteousness, for he is a baby. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Let us reflect further on these CHALLENGES:

- 1.DON'T EVEN THINK OF QUITTING
- 2.IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO STOP GROWTH AND START OVER
- 3.WE WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST
- 4.LIFE ABUNDANT COMES WHEN WE ARE COOPERATING WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN OUR LIVES DESIGNED BY OUR HEAVENLY FATHER FOR GROWTH
- 5.GROWTH INVOLVES DISCIPLINE, DESIRE, DETERMINATION AND DEDICATION

Someone said it well, "The problem in the garden of Eden was not the fruit on the tree but the pair on the ground."

As we launch into this wonderful epistle, may God guide and direct us with open, sensitive hearts and eyes to behold wondrous things from His truth.

v. 1 In many ways and in many portions, God, in former times having spoken to the fathers by means of the prophets,

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says of these first 4 verses:

In a majestically constructed opening paragraph, the writer introduced his readers at once to the surpassing greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Son, he declared, is the par excellence vehicle for divine revelation.

"IN MANY WAYS AND IN MANY PORTIONS,"

God communicated, first of all, in "MANY WAYS."

That is, by:

VISIONS,

the LAW,

the TYPES,

the PROPHECIES.

F. F. Bruce says:

They were partial and piecemeal.

F. B. Meyer says:

The earlier revelation was in many forms.--The earthquake, the fire, the tempest, and the still small voice--each had its ministry. Symbol and parable, vision and metaphor, type and historic foreshadowing--all in turn served the divine end; like the ray which is broken into many prismatic hues. But in Jesus, there is the steady shining of the pure ray of his glory, one uniform and invariable method of revelation.
p. 8

Wiersbe says:

In other words, the theme of Hebrews seems to be: "God has spoken; we have His Word. What are we doing about it?"
p. 11

MacArthur says:

These two Greek words are interesting. They mean, respectively, "in many portions" (as of books) and "in many different manners." There are many books in the Old Testament--thirty-nine of them. In all those many portions and in many ways God spoke to men. Sometimes it was in a vision, sometimes by a parable, sometimes through a type or a symbol. There were many different ways in which God spoke in the Old Testament. But it is always God speaking. Even the words spoken by men and angels are included because He wants us to know them.
p. 3

J. Vernon McGee says:

He appeared in dreams to Abraham, but He gave Moses the Law. Later on He made certain promises to Joshua. He spoke through dreams, He spoke through the Law, He spoke through the types, He spoke through rituals, He spoke through history, He spoke through poetry, and He spoke through prophecy. He used all these different ways over a long period of time, using about forty-five writers and communicating His Word over a period of about fifteen hundred years. The writer to the Hebrews is saying something quite wonderful to us at this point.
p. 506

"IN MANY WAYS AND IN MANY PORTIONS, GOD, IN FORMER TIMES HAVING SPOKEN TO THE FATHERS BY MEANS OF THE PROPHETS,"

J. Vernon McGee asks the question:

Who are the fathers mentioned in this verse? They are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joshua, Moses, David, Isaiah, etc. These are the fathers, but they are not my fathers--and they may not be your fathers either. Obviously this is being written to people who could call Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob their fathers, which is the reason it is called the Epistle to the Hebrews. Nevertheless, He is God of the Gentiles also, and we can be thankful for that!

"IN MANY WAYS AND IN MANY PORTIONS, GOD, IN FORMER TIMES HAVING SPOKEN TO THE FATHERS BY MEANS OF THE PROPHETS,"

The INSTRUMENT that God used to communicate His message in former times was by means of the "PROPHETS."

MacArthur says:

A prophet is one who speaks to men for God; a priest is one who speaks to God for men. The priest takes man's problems to God; the prophet takes God's message to men.
p. 5

Psalm 81:10

I am the Lord your God,
who brought you up out of Egypt.
Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

2 Peter 1:21

For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Amos 3:7

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

God communicated his message through the prophets.

Jeremiah 1:4-9

The word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."
"Ah, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do

not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth."

v. 2 in the last of these days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds (ages),

In verse 1 the KEY PHRASE is:

"in former times He spoke by means of the prophets."

Now in verse 2:

"IN THE LAST OF THESE DAYS HE SPOKE TO US IN HIS SON."

THE FOCUS OF THE WHOLE BOOK IS ON "HIS SON."

Whereas the message was communicated:

"in former times by means of the prophets" in verse 1,

"in these last days His message is communicated through His Son."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Though God has by various means and in various ways revealed Himself in the past, Old Testament prophetic revelation has now received its end-times climax through God's Son. They must now listen most closely to the Son.

G. Campbell Morgan says:

When God spoke to men in Christ He said everything He had to say, which means that He said everything man needs to hear for his earthly life.
pp. 14-15

Griffith Thomas says:

In marked contrast to the Old Testament, Christ is described as the One in

Whom God has spoken "at the end of these days." Instead of a fragmentary, His is a complete revelation; instead of being temporary, it is permanent; instead of being preparatory, it is final; and instead of coming through subordinates, it is embodied in the One Who is supreme.

p. 21

Hughes quotes the poet:

God hath spoken by His prophets,
Spoken his unchanging Word;
Brightness of the Father's glory,
With the Father ever one;

Spoken by the Word Incarnate,
God of God ere time began,
Light of Light, to earth descending,
Man, revealing God to man.

p. 22

MacArthur says:

Someone has said that Jesus Christ came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman. He put on humanity that we might put on divinity. He became Son of Man that we might become sons of God. He was born contrary to the laws of nature, lived in poverty, was reared in obscurity, and only once crossed the boundary of the land in which He was born--and that is His childhood. He had no wealth or influence and had neither training nor education in the world's schools. His relatives were inconspicuous and uninfluential. In infancy He startled a king. In boyhood He puzzled the learned doctors. In manhood He ruled the course of nature. He walked upon the billows and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book and yet all the libraries of the world could not hold the books about Him. He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all songwriters together. He never founded a college, yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as He has. He never practiced medicine and yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors have healed broken bodies. This Jesus Christ is the star of astronomy, the rock of geology, the lion and the lamb of zoology, the harmonizer of all discords, and the healer of all diseases. Throughout history great men have come and gone, yet He lives on. Herod could not kill Him. Satan could not seduce Him. Death could not destroy Him and the grave could not hold Him.

pp. 9-10

Lenski says:

The point is that "the prophets," exalted though they were, are not the limit for God who finally used his "Son."

p. 32

Delitzsch says:

God has made a final revelation of Himself in the Son as fulfiller of the work of atonement; who being from all eternity above all things, by virtue of the essential dignity of His divine person is now exalted above all in the nature which He assumed in time.

p. 39

Draper says:

The whole thrust of these first verses is to show us that God at a point in time opened his heart and showed us exactly what he was like. God did not just write us a song; he did not just deliver a prophecy. He sent himself, and he is telling us here about the spoken Word. He has spoken not just in word, but he has spoken in the person of the Word, even himself, Christ Jesus. There are several things that this revelation of himself in Christ tells us.

p. 13

Draper says further:

In his Son he said it all. He revealed his heart. It was a complete revelation, not just a fragmented part.

p. 15

(How to Talk So People Will Listen by Steve Brown)

A bishop . . . asked David Garrick, the great actor, how it was possible to take fiction and produce such a tremendous effect on his audience. Garrick replied, "Because I recite fiction as if it were truth, and you preach truth as if it were fiction."

Walter L. Lingle

p. 144

"IN THE LAST OF THESE DAYS SPOKE TO US IN HIS SON."

This makes us appreciate the many times the affirming voice of the Father was heard during the ministry of Jesus Christ:

"This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased"

(Matt. 17:5).

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In a series of subordinate constructions, the author sets forth the Son's greatness. To begin with, the Son is the designated Heir of all things, as it should be since He is also their maker.

J. Vernon McGee says:

Now we are shown the superiority of the Son in seven matchless statements. None of us, I am sure, feel that we can comprehend any one of them completely.
p. 507

MacArthur says:

In just half of verse 2 and in verse 3 is a sevenfold presentation of the excellencies of Jesus Christ. In all these excellencies He is clearly much more than a man.
p. 11

Hughes points out:

Ingmar Bergman, the celebrated Swedish filmmaker, recounts that one day while he was listening to Stravinsky, he had a vision of a nineteenth-century cathedral. In the vision Bergman found himself wandering about a great building and finally coming before a picture of Christ. Realizing its importance, Bergman said to the picture, "Speak to me! I will not leave this cathedral until you speak to me!" But of course the picture did not speak. That same year he produced The Silence, a film about characters who despair of ever finding God.

Bergman's problem was, he was looking at the wrong picture. Rather, he needed to listen to the massive eloquence of the Christ of Scripture--"in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son." He needs to see the eloquence of Christ's character and speech and actions and, above all, the sublime eloquence of the cross, for there he speaks salvation.
p. 22

Griffith Thomas says:

No fewer than seven things are said about Christ in proof of His superiority as the sphere and embodiment of the divine revelation (vv. 2-4).

- (1) Christ the Heir (v. 2)
- (2) Christ the Creator (v. 2)
- (3) Christ the Revealer (v. 3)
- (4) Christ the Sustainer (v. 3)
- (5) Christ the Redeemer (v. 3)
- (6) Christ the Ruler (v. 3)
- (7) Christ Supreme (v. 4)

pp. 22-24

F. F. Bruce says basically the same thing:

Seven facts are stated about the Son of God which bring out his greatness and show why the revelation given in him is the highest which God can give.

p. 46

The Best Picture

The Scriptures are full of expressions like "the word of the Lord came unto me," and "God spoke all these words." Someone has counted such phrases and says that they appear 680 times in the Pentateuch, 196 times in its poetical books, 481 times in the historical writings, and 370 times in its prophetic portions. Never did the Lord communicate to us more clearly, however, than in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ; for He is the brightness of the Father's glory, "the express image of His person." One writer has aptly commented, "Jesus is the best photograph God ever had taken."

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

Jesus Christ is God's last message to the world.

God has changed His method of communication.

One is reminded of the PARABLE OF THE OWNER OF THE VINEYARD in Mark 12:

Mark 12:1-8

And He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard, and put a wall around it, and dug a vat under the wine press, and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. And at the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers. And they took him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and that one they killed; and so with many others, beating some, and killing others. He had one more to send, a beloved son; he sent him last of all to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!' And they took him, and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

Let us now look at these 7 GREAT STATEMENTS that are made about the Lord Jesus Christ.

"IN THE LAST OF THESE DAYS SPOKE TO US IN HIS SON, WHOM HE APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS."

STATEMENT #1 is seen in the phrase:

"WHOM HE APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS."

STATEMENT #1:

HIS APPOINTMENT AS HEIR.

The Son is the sole heir of all the Father has.

Sonship qualifies Him to be an heir.

Owen places his emphasis on the words "ALL THINGS":

He is appointed heir of "all things." He the author of the gospel--being heir and lord of all things whatever, the sovereign disposal of all the rites and ceremonies of worship about which the Jews contended must needs be in His hand, to change and to alter them as He saw good. Also, He being Lord and heir of all things, it was easy for them to conclude that if they intended to be made partakers of any good in heaven or earth, in a way of love and mercy, it must be by an interest in Him.

p. 4

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

To begin with, the Son is the designated Heir of all things
--as it should be since He is also their Maker.

Romans 8:16, 17

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

"THROUGH WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS (AGES)."

STATEMENT #2:

HE IS THE CREATOR.

Not only the Creator, but also He planned the program.

J. Vernon McGee says:

"By whom also he made the worlds." Many people believe this refers to the creative act--"In the beginning God created the heaven and earth" (Gen. 1:1). Actually, it does not refer to that at all. The Greek word here for "worlds" is ai n. It means "ages"--"by whom He made the ages." This goes beyond His being the Creator. This lends purpose to everything. He is the heir who gives the program for the future. He made the ages, giving purpose for everything. Not only did He create everything, He did it for a purpose.

The Bible makes sense. God had a reason for the things He did, and He has a reason today for the things He continues to do.
p. 508

Draper says:

He has been in control; he has guided men through time; he has been the agent who directs the ages as they have been unfolded in history. He is superior to the prophets because he is the agent of creation, of time, and of history.

p. 16

Bruce points out:

The whole created universe of space and time is meant, and the affirmation that God brought this universe into being by the agency of his Son is in line with the statements of other New Testament writers that "all things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3) and that "all things were created through him and for him" (Col. 1:16). In these and other statements to the same effect we may trace the language of a primitive christian hymn or confession of faith in which Christ, as the Word or Wisdom of God, is acknowledged as the Father's agent in the work of creation.

p. 47

Hughes points out:

Cambridge physicist Stephen Hawking, who has been called "the most brilliant theoretical physicist since Einstein," says in his best-selling A Brief History of Time that our galaxy is an average-sized spiral galaxy that looks to other galaxies like a swirl in a pastry roll and that it is over 100,000 light years across--about six hundred trillion miles. He says, "We now know that our galaxy is only one of some hundred thousand million that can be seen using modern telescopes, each galaxy itself containing some hundred thousand million stars." It is commonly held that the average distance between these hundred thousand million galaxies (each six hundred trillion miles across and containing one hundred thousand million stars) is three million light-years! On top of that, the work of Edwin Hubble, based on the Doppler effect, has shown that all red-spectrumed galaxies are moving away from us--and that nearly all are red. Thus, the universe is constantly expanding. Some estimates say that the most distant galaxy is eight billion light-years away--and racing away at two hundred million miles an hour. Finally, the fact of the expanding universe demands a beginning, though Hawking now doubts that a Big Bang was its beginning.

p. 27

Max Lucado in his book God Came Near: Chronicles of the Christ says:

Wide awake is Mary. My, how young she looks! Her head rests on the soft leather of Joseph's saddle. The pain has been eclipsed by wonder. She looks into the face of the baby. Her son. Her Lord. His Majesty. At this point in history, the human being who best understands who God is and what he is doing is a teenage girl in a smelly stable. She can't take her eyes off him. Somehow Mary knows she is holding God. So this is he. She remembers the words of the angels. "His kingdom will never end."¹

He looks like anything but a king. His face is prunish and red. His cry, though strong and healthy, is still the helpless and piercing cry of a baby. And he is absolutely dependent upon Mary for his well-being.

Majesty in the midst of the mundane. Holiness in the filth of sheep manure and sweat. Divinity entering the world on the floor of a stable, through the womb of a teenager and in the presence of a carpenter.

She touches the face of the infant-God. How long was your journey!

1. Luke 1:33

p. 23

Yes, God has changed His message: It's from WORDS to a PERSON.

And His final revelation is His own Son, Jesus Christ.

This final revelation begins at CHRISTMAS and ends at EASTER.

There are 2 THINGS that are said about His Son here in verse 2:

- 1."HE APPOINTED HIM HEIR OF ALL THINGS."
- 2."THROUGH WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE AGES."

God the Father trusted the Son with the responsibility to plan the program.

So, we can say there are 2 THINGS that are ACTS OF THE FATHER TOWARD HIS SON:

- 1.He appointed Him HEIR OF ALL THINGS.
- 2.Through the Son, HE PLANNED THE PROGRAM.

The overwhelming, incredible thing about all of this is that the Son planned in the program to sacrificially give of Himself:

that we might have a means of redemption,
a plan of salvation,

that we might be redeemed from the bondage of sin.

v. 3 who being the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (real being), and who is bearing up all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

J. Vernon McGee says:

What tremendous statements we have here!

"Who being the brightness of his glory." Brightness means "the outshining"; it means "the effulgence." The material sun out in space gives us a good illustration of this. We could never know the glory of the sun by looking at it because we can't look at it directly--it would blind us if we tried.

But from the rays of the sun we get light and we get heat, and probably we get healing from it. That is the way we know about the sun. Now in somewhat the same way we would know very little about God apart from the revelation that God has given in His Son. The Lord Jesus Christ is the brightness we see. No one has seen God, but we know about Him now through Jesus Christ. Just as the rays of the sun with their warmth and light tell me about the physical sun, so the Lord Jesus reveals God to us today.

p. 508

In these next 3 STATEMENTS we are going to see 3 THINGS about Christ:

STATEMENT #3 - His GLORY,

STATEMENT #4 - His NATURE,

STATEMENT #5 - His POWER.

STATEMENT #3 has to do with His GLORY:

"WHO BEING THE RADIANCE OF HIS GLORY"

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The One who is both Creator and Heir is also a perfect reflection of the God who has spoken in Him.

Lenski says:

The inscrutable glory of God streams forth in the Son who is the effulgence of that glory.

p. 36

English says:

The Son is "the brightness of His [God's] glory." The word "brightness" might also be rendered, "effulgence," "shining forth," or "ray." However it is read it denotes that the Son, God manifest in the flesh, is the shining forth of God. He is the Light. Where He is not, there is darkness; where He is, is light.

Of old the glory of the Lord rested, as it were, in the ark of the covenant which, when it was taken away, signified that the glory of the Lord had departed (1 Sam. 4:22, cf. Psalms 78:61). But now the effulgence of God shines forth in a new way, "in Son"; He is "the brightness of His glory."

p. 44

Matthew 17:1-4

And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

John 17:4, 5

I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee before the world was.

He could either REFLECT or RADIATE the glory of God.

The writer makes it specific that He radiates His glory.

It is not something EXTERNAL but INTERNAL.

Christ is not a moon but is a sun. He radiates that which He possesses.

So we can say that:

Like the SUN, He RADIATES;

not like the MOON that REFLECTS.

It is in Christ that God is revealed.

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

1 Samuel 4:21, 22

She named the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel"--because of the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. She said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

Whereas, in STATEMENT #3 we focus on His GLORY.

In STATEMENT #4 we will focus on His NATURE.

"WHO BEING THE RADIANCE OF HIS GLORY AND THE EXACT REPRESENTATION OF HIS NATURE (REAL BEING)"

STATEMENT #4:

"THE EXACT REPRESENTATION OF HIS NATURE (REAL BEING)"

Wuest says:

This word was used in classical Greek of an engraver, one who mints coins, a graving tool, a die, a stamp, a branding iron, a mark engraved, an impress, a stamp on coins and seals. Metaphorically it meant "a distinctive mark or token impressed on a person or thing, by which it is known from others, a characteristic, the character of." It was a Greek idiom for a person's features. It was used of the type or character regarded as shared with others. It meant also an impress or an image. The classical usage of this word should throw some light upon its use in the New Testament.

Moulton and Milligan say that it was used to denote the tool for engraving; then it came to be used of the mark or impress made, with special reference to any distinguishing peculiarity. Hence it referred to an exact reproduction. pp. 37-38

Bruce says:

He is the very image of the essence of God--the impress of his being. Just as the image and superscription on a coin exactly correspond to the device on the die, so the Son of God "bears the very stamp of his nature" (RSV). The Greek word character, occurring here only in the New Testament, expresses this truth even more emphatically than eik n, which is used elsewhere to denote Christ as the "image" of God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). Just as the glory is really in the effulgence, so the being (Gk. hypostasis) of God is really in Christ, who is its impress, its exact representation and embodiment. What God essentially is, is made manifest in Christ. To see Christ is to see what the Father is like. p. 48

Lenski says:

The word used means not what Christ has received from God, but what he is for us and for the world as the expression of the very being, essence, reality of God. Language fairly groans with the weight of meaning. Our poor human tongue and mind, which are occupied so much with the things that are beneath us, strain to rise to the heights of the divine persons. But these mighty expressions form the rock bottom of our Christian faith, the essence of the sweet gospel realities. If the Son in whose person God drew nigh to us were less than He is said here, in Col. 1:15; Phil. 2:6; John 14:9; 20:28; etc., our faith and our hope would be vain indeed. p. 38

John 14:9

Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Colossians 2:9

For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.

John 8:56-58

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." The Jews therefore said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

Max Lucado in his book God Came Near: Chronicles of the Christ says:

He came, not as a flash of light or as an unapproachable conqueror, but as one whose first cries were heard by a peasant girl and a sleepy carpenter. The hands that first held him were unmanicured, calloused, and dirty.

No silk. No ivory. No hype. No party. No hoopla.

Were it not for the shepherds, there would have been no reception. And were it not for a group of stargazers, there would have been no gifts.

Angels watched as Mary changed God's diaper. The universe watched with wonder as The Almighty learned to walk and talk. Children played in the street with him. And had the synagogue leader in Nazareth known who was listening to his sermons . . .

Jesus may have had pimples. He may have been tone-deaf. Perhaps a girl down the street had a crush on him or vice-versa. It could be that his knees were bony. One thing's for sure: He was, while completely divine, completely human.

For thirty-three years he would feel everything you and I have ever felt. He felt weak. He grew weary. He was afraid of failure. He was susceptible to wooing women. He got colds, burped, and had body odor. His feelings got hurt. His feet got tired. And his head ached.

p. 26

A Visit From God!

Charles Spurgeon wrote, "This great Prince entered our abode. This little planet of ours was made to burn with a superior light among its sister stars while the Creator sojourned here in human form. If for the first time you had heard of the visit of the Incarnate God to this world, you would be struck with a wonder which would last throughout eternity. This is the heart of the Gospel--the incomparable fact of the incarnation of the Son of God, His dwelling upon the earth, and His presentation of Himself as a sacrifice unto God for the sins of mankind."

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

(In His Image by Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey)

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
.....
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

John Milton
"On the Morning of Christ's Nativity"

He whom the world could not inwrap
Yonder lies in Mary's lap.

Martin Luther

p. 130

"WHO BEING THE RADIANCE OF HIS GLORY AND THE EXACT REPRESENTATION OF HIS NATURE (REAL BEING), AND WHO IS BEARING UP ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER."

In this verse we have considered:

His GLORY,

His NATURE,

and now we are going to look at:

His POWER.

STATEMENT #5:

"WHO IS BEARING UP ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

His Word is so powerful that all He has made is sustained by that Word.

The word "UPHOLDING" can be translated: "bearing along." It communicates the idea of movement and progress to a given end.

Colossians 1:17

And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

John 2:9, 10

And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is poorer; you have kept the good wine until now."

John 9:6, 7

When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). And so he went away and washed, and came back seeing.

John 11:43, 44

And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Pink, in commenting on this phrase that we are considering, says:

The Spirit of truth continues to describe the dignity and majesty of Him in whom God now "speaks" to us. Here is a declaration that is unequivocal in meaning and unlimited in its scope. Against the statement "by whom" God "made the worlds," it might be argued that, after all, the "Son" was only a minister, an agent whom God employed for that great work. In reply it would be sufficient to point out that there is no hint in Scripture of God ever having assigned to a mere creature, no matter how exalted his rank, a work which was in any wise comparable with the stupendous task of "making the worlds." But as if to anticipate such an objection, to show that the "Son" is high above the noblest and most honoured of God's ministers, it is here affirmed that "He upholdeth all things by the word of His power," that is His own power; we may add that the Greek reads "His own" as in Matt. 16:26-- "his own soul"; and "His own house" (Heb. 3:6). The "upholding" of all things is a Divine work.

p. 37

F. B. Meyer says:

At his word rainwater and dew become grape juice; tiny handfuls of grain fill the autumn barns; storms die away into calm; fish are led through the paths of the seas; rills are sent among the mountains; and stars are maintained in their courses, so that "not one faileth."

p. 13

Black points out:

What is here being ascribed to the Son is the providential government of the universe, which is the function of God himself.

p. 35

Owen says:

Such is the nature and condition of the universe, that it could not subsist a moment, nor could anything in it act regularly unto its appointed end, without the continued supportment, guidance, influence, disposal, of the Son of God.

p. 6

J. Vernon McGee says:

He keeps the thing running, keeps it functioning. This is one of the tremendous things He is doing today.

p. 509

Who Holds It?

Eugene Cernan, one of the astronauts who enjoyed the exciting adventure of walking on the moon, said with wonder, "Our world appears big and beautiful, all blue and white! You can see from the Antarctic to the North Pole. The earth looks so perfect. There are no strings to hold it up; there is no fulcrum upon which it rests." Contemplating the infinity of space and time, he said he felt as if he were seeing earth from God's perspective when it was created.

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

In these 3 STATEMENTS that we have been looking at in verse 3 we have considered:

- 1.His NATURE,
- 2.His GLORY,
- 3.and His POWER.

In other words, we have examined His PERSON.

Now, in the remainder of the verse, we are going to turn from His PERSON to His WORK.

We will see:

the CROSS

and the INTERCESSORY MINISTRY

of our Savior described in these last phrases.

First of all, we see the CROSS:

STATEMENT #6:

"WHEN HE HAD MADE PURIFICATION OF SINS"

1 Peter 1:18, 19

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

1 Peter 2:24

And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

And it is this Person who has provided purification for sins. This is God's supremely great Son; hear Him!

Griffith Thomas says:

He is not only the Revealer of God, but the Redeemer of man, and this particular aspect of His redemptive work, "purification of sins," is probably emphasized here because cleansing is the main theme of the Epistle.
pp. 23

MacArthur says:

It was a wondrous work when Jesus Christ created the world. It is wondrous that He sustains the world. But a greater work than making and upholding the world is that of purging men of sin.
p. 18

Bruce points out:

He has "made purification for our sins." Here we pass from the cosmic functions of the Son of God to his personal relationship with mankind, to his work as his people's high priest, which is elaborated throughout the epistle. The reference here as appears from its fuller development later is to the cleansing efficacy of "his one oblation of himself once offered." The wisdom which created the worlds and maintains them in their due order may well beget in us a sense of wondering awe; but the grace which has provided a remedy for the defilement of sin by a life freely offered up to God on our behalf calls forth a sense of personal indebtedness which the contemplation of divine activity on the cosmic scale could never evoke. The underlying emphasis here, however, is that by making purification for sins the Son of God has accomplished something incapable of achievement by anyone else.
p. 49

F. B. Meyer says:

But notice the finality of this act. "He made purging of sins (see Greek). It is finished; forever complete; done irrevocably and finally. If only we are one with Him by a living faith, our sins, which were many, are washed out; as an inscription from a slate, as a stain from a robe, as a cloud from the azure of heaven. Gone--as a stone into the bottomless abyss! Gone--never to confront us here or hereafter! "Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34).
p. 14

This word for PURIFICATION is a priestly word. It is purification OF sins, not FROM sins that we are talking about here.

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Psalm 22:1

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from the words of my groaning?

2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 John 2:1, 2

My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

Max Lucado describes Mary's ponderings as she comes to the realization of this fact:

(God Came Near: Chronicles of the Christ)

Rest well, tiny hands. For though you belong to a king, you will touch no satin, own no gold. You will grasp no pen, guide no brush. No, your tiny hands are reserved for works more precious:

to touch a leper's open wound,
to wipe a widow's weary tear,
to claw the ground of Gethsemane.

Your hands, so tiny, so tender, so white--clutched tonight in an infant's fist. They aren't destined to hold a scepter nor wave from a palace balcony. They are reserved instead for a Roman spike that will staple them to a

Roman cross.

Sleep deeply, tiny eyes. Sleep while you can. For soon the blurriness will clear and you will see the mess we have made of your world.

You will see our nakedness, for we cannot hide.

You will see our selfishness, for we cannot give.

You will see our pain, for we cannot heal.

O eyes that will see hell's darkest pit and witness her ugly prince . . . sleep, sleep please sleep; sleep while you can.

Lay still, tiny mouth. Lay still mouth from which eternity will speak.

Tiny tongue that will soon summon the dead,

that will define grace,

that will silence our foolishness.

Rosebud lips--upon which ride a starborn kiss of forgiveness to those who believe you, and of death to those who deny you--lay still.

And tiny feet cupped in the palm of my hand, rest. For many difficult steps lie ahead for you.

Do you taste the dust of the trails you will travel?

Do you feel the cold sea water upon which you will walk?

Do you wrench at the invasion of the nail you will bear?

Do you fear the steep descent down the spiral staircase into Satan's domain?

Rest, tiny feet. Rest today so that tomorrow you might walk with power. Rest. For millions will follow in your steps.

And little heart . . . holy heart . . . pumping the blood of life through the universe: How many times will we break you?

You'll be torn by the thorns of our accusations.

You'll be ravaged by the cancer of our sin.

You'll be crushed under the weight of your own sorrow.

And you'll be pierced by the spear of our rejection.

Yet in that piercing, in that ultimate ripping of muscle and membrane, in that final rush of blood and of water, you will find rest. Your hands will be freed, your eyes will see justice, your lips will smile, and your feet will carry you home.

And there you'll rest again--this time in the embrace of your Father.
pp. 35-37

Our third verse concludes with the 7TH AND FINAL STATEMENT about Jesus Christ:

"HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH."

In STATEMENT #6:

"HE MADE PURIFICATION OF SINS."

In STATEMENT #7:

"HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH."

Colossians 2:9, 10

For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

The work of redemption has been accomplished and now the victorious Son of God sits "DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH."

We move in this 7TH STATEMENT from:

His REDEMPTIVE WORK on the cross

to His INTERCESSORY WORK as He represents us before "THE MAJESTY ON HIGH."

It is interesting that there is no CHAIR in the tabernacle because the priest's work under the old covenant was never finished.

Hewitt says:

The completeness of the great work of purification is seen in the next movement of Christ, which was from the cross to the crown, from earth's footstool to heaven's throne where He sat down at the right hand of God. This well-known language taken from Psalm 110:1 proclaims His dominion over the whole world and shows His supreme dignity. The Son came to earth in humiliation, but by such condescension revealed His Father to humanity. He died on the cross, but in so doing opened the gateway of life to sinners. He ascended to heaven, and there reigns not only as King of the Jews, nor as man's King, but as Sovereign of the universe.
p. 53

MacArthur says:

Here we have God's portrait of Jesus Christ. We have seen the preeminent Christ in all His offices. We have seen Him as prophet, the final spokesman for God. We have seen Him as priest, atoning and interceding. We have seen Him as King, controlling, sustaining, and seated on a throne. This is our Lord Jesus Christ.

A man who says that Jesus Christ is anything less than this is a fool and makes God out a liar. God says that His son is preeminent in all things.
p. 20

J. Vernon McGee says:

"He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." This actually is the message of Hebrews. The Lord Jesus received a glory and a majesty when He went back to the Father's throne that He never had before. There is something in heaven today that was not there twenty-five hundred years ago or in eternity past, because in the glory now is the man with nail-pierced hands and the prints of nails in His feet and a spear wound in His side. Even in His glorified body they are there, and when we see Him, we shall know Him by the prints of the nails in His hands. Twenty-five hundred years ago He was God, but today He is the God-man.
p. 509

Bruce sums up the third verse well by saying:

Thus the greatness of the Son of God receives sevenfold confirmation, and it appears, without being expressly emphasized, that he possesses in himself all the qualifications to be the mediator between God and the human race. He is the Prophet through whom God has spoken his final word; he is the Priest who has accomplished a perfect work of cleansing for his people's sins; he is the King who sits enthroned in the place of chief honor alongside the Majesty on high.

p. 50

F. B. Meyer says:

The Lamb is in the midst of the Throne. Behold his majesty, and worship Him with angels and archangels, and all the throng of the redeemed. Prostrate yourself at his feet, consecrating to Him all you are and all you have. Comfort yourself also by remembering that He would not sit to rest from his labors in redemption, and in the purging away of sins, unless they were so completely finished that there was nothing more to do. It is all accomplished and it is all very good. He has ceased from his works, because they are done; and therefore He is entered into his rest. And that word "until" is full of hope. God speaks it, and encourages us to expect the time when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power; and when death itself, the last enemy, shall be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:24-26).

p. 15

Hebrews 7:25

Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

Westcott also observes:

It will be noticed that the Lord is regarded even in this brief introductory statement in His threefold office as Prophet (God spake in His Son), Priest (having made purification of sins), and King (He sat down).
p. 3

DeHaan says:

In these three verses the Holy Spirit introduces the Book of Hebrews and its inexhaustible treasure of divine revelation concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of Man, Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the Saviour of the world, the Purger of our sins, the rightful Heir of all things and the coming eternal King, now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.
p. 15

Wiersbe summarizes by saying:

Creator, Prophet, Priest, and King--Jesus Christ is superior to all the prophets and servants of God who have ever appeared on the sacred pages of the Scriptures. It is no wonder that the Father said, at the hour of Christ's transfiguration, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear yet Him" (Matt. 17:5). Two of the greatest prophets were there with Jesus--Moses and Elijah; but Christ is superior to them.
p. 19

(A Dance With Deception: Revealing the Truth Behind the Headlines by Charles Colson with Nancy R. Pearcey)

A few protesters brought banners. One banner read: "A baby in a manger or a fat guy in a red suit? The choice is yours."

Another banner took aim at the ACLU "The ACLU is jealous of manger scenes," it read, "because it doesn't have three wise men or a virgin in its organization."

It was a well-aimed jab. But all humor aside, I will never forget the pathos of the image on the news that evening. The protesters were huddled behind barricades--carefully keeping their feet off public property--praying and singing their carols.

Instead of Christmas joy, the atmosphere was one of confrontation and protest.

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

We must ask them to lay their hands on their hearts, and tell us whether their favourite opinions comfort them in the day of sickness, in the hour of death, by the bedside of dying parents, by the grave of a beloved wife or child.

We must ask them whether a vague earnestness, without definite doctrine, gives them peace at seasons like these. We must challenge them to tell us whether they do not sometimes feel a gnawing 'something' within, which all the free inquiry and philosophy and science in the world cannot satisfy.

p. 11

v. 4 having become as much superior to the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Obviously "Son" is the superior name which Jesus "has inherited." There is a special sense in this name, in its kingly ramifications.

The words "HAVING BECOME AS MUCH" point us back to all the things that we have considered in His PERSON and in His WORK.

A KEY WORD here is the word "SUPERIOR."

He is indeed "SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS" as the argument is going to unfold before us.

Why does the writer bring ANGELS into the picture at this point? The fact is that angels were also revealers by the fact that many times they brought the message to man.

We see ANGELS at the GIVING OF THE LAW:

Acts 7:53

You who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."

Galatians 3:19

Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made.

We see the CHERUBIM at the GARDEN OF EDEN:

Genesis 3:24

After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

We see ANGELIC BEINGS EMBROIDERED IN THE VEIL OF THE TABERNACLE separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies,

and we see them BOWING OVER THE MERCY SEAT on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant.

Isaiah 6:2, 3

Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Revelation 20:1

And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

Lewis Sperry Chafer in his Systematic Theology says:

These celestial beings are mentioned at least 108 times in the Old Testament and 165 times in the New Testament, and out of this extended body of Scripture the student may construct his doctrine of the angels.

The designation angel--whether mal'ak of the Old Testament Hebrew or aggelos of the New Testament Greek--means 'messenger.' These beings execute the purpose of the One whom they serve. The holy angels are the messengers of their Creator, while the fallen angels are the messengers of

Satan--"the god of this world"--whom they elect to serve.
p. 3

John Calvin in his Institutes says:

The angels are the dispensers and administrators of the divine beneficence toward us. They regard our safety, undertake our defense, direct our ways, and exercise a constant solicitude that no evil befall us.

Westcott says:

The fourth verse forms a transition to the special development of the argument of the Epistle. The general contrast between 'the Son' as the mediator of the new revelation and 'the prophets' as mediators of the old, is offered in the extreme case.

p. 16

The thought of the exaltation of the Incarnate Son fixes attention on His Manhood. Under this aspect He was shewn to have become superior to angels in His historic work. And the glory of 'the name' which He has 'inherited' is the measure of His excellence.

p. 16

By the 'name' we are to understand probably not the name of 'Son' simply, though this as applied to Christ in His humanity is part of it, but the Name which gathered up all that Christ was found to be by believers, Son, Sovereign and Creator, the Lord of the Old Covenant, as is shewn in the remainder of the chapter.

p. 17

F. B. Meyer says:

Apart from Scripture, we should have been disposed to infer the existence of other orders of intelligent and spiritual beings besides man. As the order of creation climbs up to man from the lowest living organism through many various stages of existence, so surely the series must be continued beyond man, through rank on rank of spiritual existence up to the very steps of the eternal throne. The Divine mind must be as prolific in spiritual as it has been in natural forms of life.

But we are not left to conjecture. From every part of Scripture come testimonies to the existence of angels. They rejoiced when the world was made, and they are depicted as ushering in with songs that new creation for which we long. They stood sentries at the gate of a lost Paradise; and at each of the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem an angel stands (Rev. 21:12). They trod the plains of Mamre, and sang over the fields of Bethlehem. One prepared the meal on the desert sands for Elijah; another led Peter out of jail; and a third flashed through the storm to stand by the hammock where the Apostle Paul was sleeping (Acts 27:23, 24).

But in the mind of the pious Hebrew the greatest work which the angels ever wrought was in connection with the giving of the law. The children of Israel received the law "as it was ordained by angels" (Acts 7:53, R.V.). It was necessary, therefore, in showing the superiority of the Gospel to the Law, to begin by showing the superiority of Him, through whom the Gospel was given, over all orders of bright and blessed spirits, which, in their shining ranks and their twenty thousand chariots, went and came during the giving of the decalogue from the brow of Sinai (Psa. 68:17).
pp. 10-11

Bruce says of the remaining verses in our passage:

In these ten verses our author adduces seven Old Testament passages to corroborate his argument that the Son of God is superior to the angels.
p. 52

MacArthur says:

Angels minister to God and do His bidding. They are both spectators and participants in His mighty works, both redemptive and judgmental. They ministered to Christ in His humiliation. At the conclusion of His temptation angels came and ministered to Him. They also minister to God's redeemed by watching over the church--assisting God in answering prayer, delivering from danger, giving encouragement, and protecting children. They also minister to the unsaved, by announcing and inflicting judgment.
p. 24

Wiersbe says:

Jesus is greater than the angels because He is the eternal Son of God Whom the angels worship and serve. Angels serve God's people (Heb. 1:14), even though we may not recognize them (Heb. 13:2; Gen. 18). Angels give special care to children (Matt. 18:10) and intervene in the lives of God's servants when they need special help (Acts 5:17-21; 12:1-10). When believers die, the angels escort them to glory (Luke 16:22); and when Christ returns, angels will accompany Him (Matt 25:31). We must not worship angels (Rev. 22:9) or pray to them; but we can trust God to send them when we need them most.
p. 812

In the Tyler Morning Telegraph for Friday, June 24, 1994 we have an article called:

Angels' Popularity Reaching New Heights
by Judy Tarjanyi
The Toledo Blade

For heavenly beings who supposedly can't be seen, angels are enjoying high visibility these days.

They're the subject of enough books to warrant their own section at your neighborhood bookstore, the theme for songs by musicians as diverse as Enya and Rickie Lee Jones, and resplendent in a host of products ranging from guardian-angel pins (with or without one's birthstone) to automobile visor clips.

They're even on Broadway, in Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," and on television. NBC recently aired a two-hour special, "Angels: The Mysterious Messengers," and PBS has a similar program in the works, based loosely on David Connolly's book, "In Search of Angels."

"Anything that comes out with angels just sells," says Ken Churchill, of Churchill's Religious Goods and Gifts, whose angel trade has picked up noticeably in the last three years.

Mr. Churchill's store in West Toledo, Ohio, carries angel mugs, stickers, boxes, pictures, plaques, puzzles, and rings, plus a sprinkling of angelic book titles and a wide selection of celestial figures, which stand, at least for the moment, among a panoply of saintly statues.

Lee Post, a Toledo bookseller, said she created an angels subsection of the religion and metaphysics sections at her store three or four months ago because she had so many titles that specifically dealt with angels. A recent check of her shelves revealed nearly 30 separate titles.

Ms. Post thinks angels are flying high in popularity these days because of the comfort derived from believing in them. "It gives people hope that there is a higher plan and a source, that there's help and guidance for them."

The Rev. Robert Haas, pastor of Toledo's Good Shepherd Parish and a lifelong angel believer, agreed.

"People want something beyond to give meaning to life, to reach God. But God is so vastly superior to us. Angels are above us, but they're kind of more on our level."

The Rev. Edward O'Connor, who taught theology for 41 years at the University of Notre Dame, said he thinks the revival of interest in angels follows a period in which they were neglected.

"Intellectuals in the church by and large don't believe in them and brush them off, so they disappeared from currency and people realized they lost something important," O'Connor said.

Angels appear in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, but they also pop up among New Agers, who view them as resources that can be contacted for personal empowerment and enrichment.

Likewise, angels bear some similarity to the Native American concept of spirit guides and to the Bodhisattvas in Buddhism, individuals who are ready to become Buddhas, but who postpone their enlightenment to help mankind.

The other orthodox view of angels, drawn from the Judeo-Christian tradition, is that they are spiritual beings created by God to serve God and to aid humanity.

Although they possess understanding and free will, they are considered superior to humans. They also have the ability to take on human form to deliver messages, but, contrary to some popular film portrayals, angels are not humans who have died and gone to heaven.

The Rev. Billy Graham, who may well have planted the seeds of the current angelic revival with his 1975 book, "Angels: God's Secret Agents" (just re-issued by Word Publishing as "Angels"), says angels can speak, change appearance, and shuttle quickly between heaven and earth.

He also says they are believed to number in the millions, but do not reproduce. And they are mentioned nearly 300 times in the Jewish and Christian scriptures.

When Dr. Graham wrote his best-selling book nearly 20 years ago, it was because he felt the times warranted a reminder of the special power and blessings offered by angels. At the time, he predicted that angels would be a comfort in a coming period of world crisis.

Most of the current interest in angels centers around the angel encounter, an eyewitness account of an angel sighting by an earthling.

People love such stories, said Rick Hamlin, a senior editor of Guideposts magazine, because in them, "God does all the work. We all love mystery and we're fascinated with sort of a glimpse of the beyond."

Since long before the onset of the current angel rage, Guideposts, the inspirational periodical founded by the late Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, has provided a regular forum for angel stories. Many of them have been published in a collection entitled "Angels Among Us."

Mr. Hamlin said angel stories remain among the magazine's most popular. In fact, he said, the publication's single most requested story is about an angel encounter entitled "The Host of Heaven," first published in December 1963.

The story tells how the author, Dr. S. Ralph Harlow, and his wife were walking through the woods near their home in Massachusetts on a spring morning when they heard the murmur of muted voices in the distance. The voices seemed to be coming close at a faster pace than the Harlows were walking. But no one appeared to be around them.

Then, they looked up and saw a group of six beautiful young women in flowing white garments about 10 feet above. Dr. Harlow said the group appeared to be engaged in earnest conversation.

After comparing notes with his wife, Dr. Harlow concluded the two had seen the same thing. Although he had previously considered angels to be largely symbolic, after that experience he was no longer skeptical and came to believe that the biblical account of the angels at Christ's birth was an objective experience.

Guideposts always checks the stories it receives for credibility and biblical soundness and tries to make sure they are grounded in reality, Mr. Hamlin said. Dr. Harlow's was considered a good one because of the presence of two eyewitnesses and the credibility of the author, who was a college professor with degrees from Harvard, Columbia University, and Hartford Theological Seminary.

Having read countless angel manuscripts, Mr. Hamlin said he has concluded that often angels come to people who have car trouble.

"They seem always to be wearing blue jeans and T-shirts. They fix the car, and the person turns around to thank them and is no longer there.

". . . A lot of the stories we get are protection stories, and one of the angel's traditional roles in life is that of protector."

His favorites are what he calls "angels unaware" stories, where, for instance, a dog suddenly appears to protect someone in a dangerous area.

Mr. Hamlin said he thinks that the proliferation of angel interest has come about as a popular reaction against religion de-emphasizing the transcendental, mystical side of things.

Scripps Howard News Service

Famous Angels

Some famous angels:

-- Michael: Often depicted with a sword, Michael is the archangel who led the angels remaining faithful to God during Lucifer's rebellion.

-- Gabriel: According to Christian teaching, Gabriel appeared to Zachary to announce the birth of John the Baptist and to Mary to tell her she had been chosen by God to be the mother of Christ. Muslims believe that Gabriel also appeared to the prophet Mohammed in the caves of Mount Hira, near Mecca.

-- Raphael: In Judaism and Christianity, Raphael is an angel of healing and the guardian of Tobias. Muslims believe Raphael will sound the trumpet on the Last Day.

-- Lucifer: Originally one of the brightest of the archangels, Lucifer, or Satan, is the angel who led a rebellion against God and was banished from heaven. Muslims refer to him as Shaitan or Iblis. As chief of the fallen angels, it is said that Satan can disguise himself as an "angel of light."

-- Munkar and Nakir: In Islam, the angels who will interrogate all those who rise on the Last Day, except martyrs, who go directly to their reward.

-- Kirman-Kathibeen: The angels who sit on each side of Muslims, writing down their good and bad deeds.

-- Jonathan Smith: Smith was a "probationary angel" portrayed by the late Michael Landon on the popular television series, "Highway to Heaven." As a human who died and went to heaven, Smith does not fit the true definition of an angel, but his efforts to do good on the earth are in keeping with the mission of traditional angels.

Scripps Howard News Service

The real problem with this focus on angels can well be seen in the Scriptures. Back in Ezekiel 28 we have the description of Satan, that anointed cherub:

Ezekiel 28:14, 15

You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.

Isaiah 14:13-15

You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

Revelation 12:9

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

Ephesians 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Colossians 2:18

Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind.

God the Father's intention and plan is that the entire focus of truth be upon His eternal Son and on no other created being, whether it be men or angels or whatever.

The FOCUS OF TRUTH, then, is upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

Back in verse 2 we learned that he was:

"APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS."

And now here He has:

"A MORE EXCELLENT NAME."

What does it mean to have:

"INHERITED A MORE EXCELLENT NAME THAN THEY"?

He is a SON.

He is SOVEREIGN.

He is CREATOR.

He is the LORD of the Old Covenant.

The Father's PET NAME for His Son was to call Him, "SON."

The fact that Jesus Christ is an heir and that He has inherited this better name, lends DIGNITY and DOMINION to Jesus Christ.

Psalm 29:1, 2

Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.

Ephesians 1:21

Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

Philippians 2:9

Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name.

In the remainder of the passage, the writer is going to quote from 7 DIFFERENT OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES,

focusing on 4 IMPORTANT ISSUES--

the first being that He is "SUPERIOR TO ANGELS."

v. 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 a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to me"?

The word "FOR" indicates that now we have a REASON for the previous statement in verse 4 that He is much superior to the angels.

There are 2 QUESTIONS here, and both of these are quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures:

QUESTION #1 is a quotation from Psalms 2:7:

"YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BECOME YOUR FATHER."

QUESTION #2 is from 2 Samuel 7:14:

"I WILL BE HIS FATHER, AND HE WILL BE MY SON."

The FOCUS here is on the RELATIONSHIP that the Son has with the Father.

Ray Stedman quotes C. S. Lewis:

. . . what we make with our hands is always something different from us, but what we beget with our bodies is always the dearest thing in the world to us because it is part of us. Thus, the angels were made; the Son begotten. What we beget has the same nature we have; what we make is always different. The angels, being made, cannot have the same relationship as the Son, who was begotten.
p. 9

We must see the word "TODAY" from an eternal perspective. A primary focus of the word is upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ and His sitting at the right hand of God, which takes us back to verse 3.

Acts 13:33

That God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art My Son; today I have begotten Thee.'

Griffith Thomas says:

It is probable that these seven passages are descriptive of Christ as "Son," from His Incarnation to His Glory. The first two refer to His Sonship; the third to His Coming; the fourth and fifth to His Exaltation and Rule; the sixth to His Millennial Reign, and the seventh to the Culmination of all things.
p. 26

Bruce observes:

The eternity of Christ's divine Sonship is not brought into question by this view; the suggestion rather is that he who was the Son of God from everlasting entered into the full exercise of all the prerogatives implied by his Sonship when, after his suffering had proved the completeness of his obedience, he was raised to the Father's right hand.
p. 54

v. 6 And when He shall have brought again the firstborn into the inhabited earth, He is saying, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The reference is to the Second Advent when the kingly prerogatives of the Son will be recognized with open angelic worship.

This is a glorious promise of the SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST: whenever "HE SHALL HAVE BROUGHT AGAIN HIS FIRSTBORN" SON.

Jesus Christ has yet another mission into the world that is still future.

He has written over His first experience--

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

And now He awaits the time when the Father will bring Him again into the world.

2 Corinthians 9:15

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

v. 7 And with reference to the angels He is saying, "Who is making His angels winds, and His servants a flame of fire."

The FUNCTION OF THE ANGELS is to be:

like the "WINDS" THAT BLOW

and like the "FLAME OF FIRE" THAT BURNS.

How interesting it is to see that with the COMING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN ACTS CHAPTER 2 AT PENTECOST we have these 2 MANIFESTATIONS:

1. "A mighty wind"
2. "flaming tongues of fire."

Matthew 4:11

Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The writer contrasts the servanthood of angels and the eternal dominion of the Son.

The writer quotes from Psalms 104:4 here.

J. Vernon McGee says:

It is easy to understand that angels were very important to the Hebrews because most of them were well acquainted with the Old Testament. They thought of angels as next to the very throne of God. They had read of the appearance of angels to many of God's servants and to many of the prophets. Angels were very important beings to them.
p. 511

2 Kings 6:16, 17

"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Matthew 26:53

"Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

That's 72,000 angels that are on alert status!

v. 8 But with reference to the Son He is saying, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His Kingdom.

This Son is a KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The quotation in verses 8 and 9 comes from Psalm 45:6, 7.

v. 9 You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, your God, anointed you, with the oil of gladness above your companions."

The picture in our minds is the picture of the ANOINTING OF DAVID in 1 Samuel 16:10-13:

Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The Lord has not chosen these."

So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.

Being Holy Without Being Smug

"Pursuing holiness means growing into the likeness of Christ who not only hated wickedness but also loved righteousness."

Our culture regards being holy as something very negative, but that is not a biblical perspective at all. In Scripture, holiness is not a smug, holier-than-thou attitude; it is a one-word description of God's essential nature. He calls His people to be holy. His ultimate goal for us is to be conformed to Christ.

How do we measure our Christlikeness? Heb. 1:9 tells us that Jesus loved righteousness and hated wickedness. He didn't just avoid sinful words and deeds but actually loved righteousness to the point that even his emotions and motives were holy. To be like Him, we must do more than just

get rid of our grosser sins. The desire to be like Him must be the controlling influence in our lives.

In practical terms, this means doing as Paul instructed the Ephesian believers--taking off the old self and putting on the new self. Holiness, then, cuts two ways. We not only eliminate sinful habits but also pursue positive character traits. Paul specifically told the Ephesians to stop stealing and put on generosity, to replace vulgar talk with speech that edifies others, and to practice kindness and compassion in place of anger and bitterness.

"Being holy without being smug" by Jerry Bridges. Decision, Mar. 1993. Pages 13-14.

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

v.10 And "as for you, in the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands;

This is a quotation of Psalm 102:25-27.

Whereas we have seen God's Son as:

SUPERIOR TO ANGELS

THE KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

We now see Him as:

THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE.

Pink says:

The closing verses of Heb. 1 present a striking climax to the apostle's argument. They contain the most touching and also the most thrilling references to be found in this wondrous chapter. In it the Holy Spirit completes His proof for the superiority of the Mediator over the angels, proof which was all drawn from Israel's own Scriptures.

p. 68

v.11 they themselves will perish, but as for you, you are remaining; and they all will become old as a garment,

The word "THEY" refers to the earth and the heavens;

"THEY THEMSELVES SHALL PERISH."

2 Peter 3:7, 10-13

But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

1 John 2:17

And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

v.12 and as a cloak you will roll them up; as a garment they will also be changed. But as for you, you are the same, and your years will not come to an end."

Ray Stedman says:

Notice a very interesting thing here, you scientists among us. There is here described very plainly what has been called "the second law of thermodynamics," the degenerative faculty in the universe. All things will grow old like a garment, but not the one who made them and who keeps them, the Son of God.

p. 11

Draper says:

Jesus Christ is unchanging in his purpose. He will someday roll up the heavens like a vesture (1:12). The word "vesture" speaks of something like a robe or a cloak to be thrown over a shoulder or wrapped around the body. The heavens and the earth are to be changed, but Jesus Christ is the same and his "years shall not fail." Literally translated, verse 12 states that the years of Jesus Christ shall never be completed. He just never runs out of years.
p. 33

A. T. Robertson quotes Moffatt who says:

"Nature is at his mercy, not he at nature's."
p. 340

How's Your Foundation?

Did you know that the land beneath your feet is actually moving? According to the Smithsonian magazine, scientists are studying what they call "crustal plates" that are emerging at the location of ridges deep within the oceans. It is believed that when these plates abut and lock together, the sudden release of accumulated stress is the cause of earthquakes. Yes, there is a constant imperceptible change going on below us.

This "shifting" is not limited to land masses and ocean depths. It is taking place in every area of life. The songwriter summed it up in these words:

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day,
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see--
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!"

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

There are 2 CONTRASTS in verses 11 and 12:

1. THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WILL PERISH, BUT THE LORD WILL BE REMAINING.
2. "THEY (referring to the heavens and the earth) ALL WILL BECOME OLD AS A GARMENT . . . BUT (in contrast) YOU (referring to the Lord) ARE THE SAME, AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END."

Both of these phrases:

1. "YOU ARE REMAINING" in verse 11 and
2. "YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END" in verse 12

refer to the ETERNALITY of the Son of God.

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.

In an Our Daily Bread article we read the following story:

During a severe financial crisis, a farmer, whose homestead had been in the family for three generations, was forced to sell all his goods to pay his debts. After everything had been auctioned, he came back into the living room, sat down on an old box, and looked around at the empty farmhouse. Noticing a familiar item hanging over the fireplace, he said, "Thank God, there's one thing they haven't sold!" The auctioneer had overlooked it, and it became for the farmer a most precious possession. It was a little card with silver lettering that read: ("THOU REMAINEST!") His furniture and his farm implements were all gone, but there was great comfort in those words, for they reminded him that his richest treasure--the love of God and the salvation Jesus Christ provides--could not be taken from him.

v.13 But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Be sitting at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"?

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The writer drew this section to a climax with a final Old Testament quotation, one which is crucial to the entire thought of the epistle. It is taken from Psalm 110 which he later employed in his elaboration of the Melchizedek priesthood (Psalm 110:1).

We have seen God's Son as:

superior to angels,
a King of righteousness,
a Creator of the universe,

and now we see Him:

in a position of honor at the "RIGHT HAND" of the Father.

We saw this back in verse 3:

"When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

I am reminded of:

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

It would be good for us to reflect back on the 7 QUOTATIONS that the writer uses to show Christ as being superior to the angels.

The first 2 PASSAGES have to do with RELATIONSHIP.

QUOTATION #1:

Psalm 2:7

"You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.

QUOTATION #2:

2 Samuel 7:14

I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to me.

QUOTATIONS #3 and #4 have to do with ANGELS.

QUOTATION #3:

Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 96:7; 97:7

"And let all the angels of God worship Him."

QUOTATION #4:

Psalm 104:4

Who is making His angels winds,
and His ministers a flame of fire.

QUOTATION #5 has to do with the KINGDOM:

Psalm 45:6, 7

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
and the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of His kingdom.
You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.
Therefore God, your God, anointed You with the oil of gladness above
your companions.

QUOTATION #6 focuses on the ETERNAL CREATOR:

Psalm 102:25-27

You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens are the works of Your hands.
They themselves shall perish, but You are remaining;
And they will all become old as a garment,
And as a mantle you will roll them up;
As a garment they will also be changed.
But You are the same,
And Your years will not come to an end.

The final quotation that we have here in verse 13,
QUOTATION #7, focuses on AUTHORITY:

Psalm 110:1

"Be sitting at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet."

v.14 Are they not all ministering spirits, being sent out
to render service for the sake of those who are about to be inheriting
salvation?

The verse begins with a reference to the ANGELS, calling them
"MINISTERING SPIRITS."

Back in verse 7 the function of the angels is TWO-FOLD:

- 1.They are "winds"
2. and a "flame of fire"

And now we learn in verse 14 they are "MINISTERING SPIRITS."

THERE IS NO SALVATION PROVIDED FOR ANGELS.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The salvation that is referred to is the salvation of the future. The Psalm described the deliverance of God's people from the oppression of their enemies and their consequent enjoyment of God's blessings. The Son's own triumph over His enemies has just been mentioned. This is the final victory over all enemies that belongs to God's King.

Oh, how we ought to MAGNIFY and MARVEL in the grace of God in view of the fact that there is no salvation provided for angels.

2 Peter 2:4

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

Jude 1:6

And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

1 Peter 1:12

It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look.

(Basic Theology by Charles C. Ryrie)

VI. In Relation to the Church

A. Basic Ministry

Basically angels help believers (Heb. 1:14).

B. Background Ministry

Angels have been involved in communicating and revealing the meaning of truth which the church benefits from today (Dan. 7:15-27; 8:13-26; 9:20-27; Rev. 1:1; 22:6, 8).

C. Specific Ministries

1. Prayer requests. They bring answers to prayer (Acts. 12:5-10).
2. Salvation. They aid in winning people to Christ (8:26; 10:3).
3. Observing. They observe Christian order, work, and suffering (1 Cor. 4:9; 11:10; Eph. 3:10; 1 Peter 1:12).
4. Encouragement. They encourage in times of danger (Acts 27:23-24).
5. Present at death. They care for the righteous at the time of death (Luke 16:22).

Whether angels continue to function in all these ways throughout the present age is uncertain. But they did perform these ministries and may well continue to do so even though we are not aware of them. Of course, God is not obliged to use angels; He can do all these things directly. But seemingly He chooses to employ the intermediate ministry of angels on many occasions. Nevertheless, the believer recognizes that it is the Lord who does these things whether directly through using angels (notice Peter's testimony that the Lord delivered him from the prison though God actually used an angel to accomplish it, Acts 12:7-10 compared with vv. 11 and 17).

Perhaps an inscription I once saw in an old church in Scotland states the balance well.

"Though God's Power Be Sufficient to Govern Us,

Yet for Man's Infirmary He appointed His angels to Watch over Us."

Probably the statements about angels observing the conduct of redeemed people startle our thinking as much as any of these truths. The reason for their interest in us may stem from the fact that since angels do not personally experience salvation, the only way they can see the effects of salvation is to observe how it is manifest in saved human beings. We are indeed a theater in which the world, men, and angels make up the audience (1 Cor. 4:9). Let us put on a good performance for them as well as for the Lord before whom all things are naked and open.

pp. 132-3

Lane says:

The rhetorical question in v 14 is designed to call the hearers to decision. It demands an affirmative answer. They are to recognize that in contrast to the Son, who is invited to share the divine presence and splendor, angels are sent forth on a mission of assistance to those who find themselves oppressed and confused in a hostile world.
p. 32

Wuest says:

Here the writer sums up the function of the angels as compared to that of the Son. He is the highest dignity, a co-ruler with God. They are His servants, appointed to minister to the heirs of redemption.
p. 50

Hewitt points out:

Service, not dominion, is the function of all angels, to whatever class they may belong, for are they not all ministering spirits?
p. 60

The full realization of the blessedness of salvation awaits the believer in the world to come, but as he is an heir of salvation he already partakes of this blessedness. Thus he is saved from the power and fear of death, from the practice of sin, and from the customs, spirit and love of the world, being succoured when tempted, having a conscience purged from guilt, becoming a partaker of the Holy Ghost, entering into God's rest, and inheriting the promises.
p. 61

Bruce says:

The salvation here spoken of lies in the future; it is yet to be inherited, even if its blessings can already be enjoyed in anticipation. That is to say, it is that eschatological salvation which, in Paul's words, is "nearer to us now than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11) or, in Peter's words, is "ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5). Our author does not need to explain to his readers what he means by this salvation; the term and its meaning are familiar to them already. What they do need to understand is the fearful danger to which they will be exposed if they treat this salvation lightly.

p. 65

J. Vernon McGee says:

Christ is the Son; angels are servants. Christ is King; angels are subjects. Christ is the Creator; angels are creatures. Christ at this moment is waiting until His enemies will be made His footstool. The Father never gave such a promise to an angel, but He says that some day His Son shall rule.

p. 513

F. B. Meyer says:

In verse 14 they are spoken of as ministering spirits, "sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation" (R.V.). This liturgy of service is a literal fact. When struggling against overwhelming difficulties; when walking the dark, wild mountain pass alone; when in peril or urgent need--we are surrounded by invisible forms, like those which accompanied the path of Jesus, ministering to Him in the desert, strengthening him in the garden, hovering around his cross, watching his grave, and accompanying Him to his home. They keep pace with the swiftest trains in which we travel. They come unsoiled through the murkiest air. They smooth away the heaviest difficulties. They garrison with light the darkest sepulchers. They bear us up in their hands, lest we should strike our foot against a stone. Many an escape from imminent peril; many an unexpected assistance; many a bright and holy thought whispered in the ear, we know not whence or how--is due to those bright and loving spirits. "The good Lord forgive me," says Bishop Hall, "for that, among my other offenses, I have suffered myself so much to forget the presence of his holy angels." But valuable as their office is, it is not to be mentioned in the same breath as Christ's, which is set down for us in this chapter.

p. 11

The Pickup Truck

Pastor Don Whitney and his wife had an unusual experience on their wedding night: "We were married in Fayetteville, Arkansas, on the night of January 8. The snow began to fall in the Ozarks just as we left the church, but we had no idea at the time that we were driving into the teeth of an 18-inch snowfall, the worst winter storm in Arkansas history.

"Road conditions rapidly deteriorated as we drove west across the Oklahoma border where the snow had been drifting longer. Not only did the blowing snow blind our vision, the blizzard obliterated the tracks of the few other travelers who had preceded us on the highway. For long stretches at a time, the only way to determine that we were actually on the road was for me to stick my head out of the window into the below-zero wind chill and stay to the right of the dead weeds in the ditch whose tops could still barely be seen sticking out above the snow. We feared for our lives.

"Our situation became so desperate that finally we agreed to stop at the next house we passed and ask if we could stay, even though it meant not only spending our first night together in a small country house with complete strangers, but probably most of our honeymoon as well. Heading toward a resort hotel on a secluded lake in northeastern Oklahoma, however, we were traveling relatively minor two-lane roads and in rural areas. It seemed as though we'd never drive by a house. Finally, we did, but no one was home! The same thing was true at the next house. We had no choice but to keep moving.

"We went for miles without seeing another vehicle, and we were not at all sure we could find our way on these back roads. But about 1:30 a.m., headlights appeared out of the snow in our rearview mirror. To our surprise, the vehicle pulled out to pass in spite of the treacherous conditions. An old pickup moved around us and then settled comfortably in front of us at our same rate of speed. Comforted by his company, we decided to follow in the ruts made by his tires regardless of where he went.

"For half an hour the truck turned this way and that onto desolate country backroads, plowing a path for us through the fierce storm. Suddenly the old truck slowed to a stop in front of an arch across the road. From his headlights we could read on the arch the name of our resort. He had led us to the very spot we had been trying to reach! Then the pickup turned around, drove past us and out of sight into the blizzard.

"Why, of all places, did the driver of the truck head for such a remote location on such a horrible night? And why, after traveling for so long in the storm to get there, would he turn around at that point? Was it an angel that guided us safely out of danger and escorted exactly where we needed to go? We could never prove to you that it was, but you could never convince us that it wasn't."

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

[SBC Life, Sum. 1993. Page 10.]

Knock Knock

A minister was visiting some of his members one afternoon. As he knocked on one woman's door, she called out, "Angel, is that you?"

The minister replied, "No--but I'm from the same department!"

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

If there is any point on which God's holiest saints agree it is this: that they see more and know more and feel more and do more and repent more and believe more as they get on in spiritual life, and in proportion to the closeness of their walk with God. In short, they 'grow in grace', as St Peter exhorts believers to do; and 'abound more and more', according to the words of St Paul (2 Peter 3:18, 1 Thess. 4:1).
p. 20

Psalm 34:7

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: In former times God spoke by means of the prophets, and in these last days has spoken through His Son.

LESSON #2: Jesus Christ planned the program and created the worlds.

LESSON #3: Jesus Christ is God in human flesh as we have witnessed His glory, His nature, and His power.

LESSON #4: He is the One who holds all things together.

LESSON #5: By His death on Calvary's cross He has made purification of sins.

LESSON #6: There is no chair in the tabernacle because the priests under the old covenant never finished their work.

LESSON #7: In these verses we have seen Jesus Christ as the prophet, the priest, and the king.

LESSON #8: Jesus Christ is superior to the angels.

LESSON #9: Angels have a unique ministry of service for the sake of those who are about to be inheriting salvation.

LESSON #10: We need to be reminded that Satan is a fallen angel, and he can be transformed as an angel of light.

MacArthur sums it up by saying:

In this brief fourteen-verse chapter, we see the deity of Jesus Christ established by divine names. He is called Son, Lord, and God. By divine works He creates, sustains, governs, redeems, and purges sin. By divine worth He is the one to be worshiped by the angels and all other creatures in the universe. By divine attributes He is omniscient, omnipotent, unchanging, and eternal. In all these ways the superiority of Jesus Christ is proclaimed.

p. 37

"ARE THEY NOT ALL MINISTERING SPIRITS, BEING SENT OUT TO RENDER SERVICE FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE WHO ARE ABOUT TO BE INHERITING SALVATION?"

Salvation is not something that you can earn or qualify for. It is something which is given as a gift, and it is an inheritance which is ours as a result of coming to know Jesus Christ as Savior.

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

Jesus Christ is the whole truth, and His invitation to you is to experience the wholeness that can be yours by knowing Him.

One writer said:

We can come to know Jesus better but we can never find anything better than knowing Jesus.

(If I Really Believe, Why Do I Have These Doubts?)
by Lynn Anderson)

And Lois Cheney scores a direct hit on Richard's mentality in God Is No Fool:

I once knew a young man who was searching for God. And I was touched by his search; and I prayed for his search; and I loved his search.

He read a lot of books. He thought and thought about their ideas. He talked to many people, in pairs and in groups; they matched their minds with his and they furthered his search. He walked and sought God in the rain. He climbed and sought God on the mountain. He closed himself off from the world and sought God in his soul.

He would describe his searchings and travels for truth. He would explain how he had meticulously and prayerfully sorted, rejected, and accepted.

As the years went on I changed from anticipating the recounting of his searches, to simply receiving them; to being bored with them; to avoiding them; and him. You see, he had fallen in love with his search.

God just isn't that hard to find!

p. 93

(The Seeking Heart by Fenelon)

You deceive yourself if you think you are growing spiritually because your curiosity has intellectually explored some spiritual idea. Humble yourself, and do not expect to receive from man that which God alone can give.

p. 38

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

'Man,' said a thoughtless, ungodly English traveller, to a North American Indian convert, 'Man, what is the reason that you make so much of Christ, and talk so much about Him? What has this Christ done for you, that you should make so much ado about Him?'

The converted Indian did not answer him in words. He gathered together some dry leaves and moss and made a ring with them on the ground.

He picked up a live worm and put it in the middle of the ring. He struck a light and set the moss and leaves on fire. The flame soon rose, and the heat scorched the worm. It writhed in agony, and after trying in vain to escape on every side, curled itself up in the middle, as if about to die in despair. At that moment the Indian reached forth his hand, took up the worm gently and placed it on his bosom. 'Stranger,' he said to the Englishman, 'do you see

that worm? I was that perishing creature. I was dying in my sins, hopeless, helpless and on the brink of eternal fire. It was Jesus Christ who put forth the arm of His power. It was Jesus Christ who delivered me with the hand of His grace, and plucked me from everlasting burnings. It was Jesus Christ, who placed me, a poor sinful worm, near the heart of His love. Stranger, that is the reason why I talk of Jesus Christ, and make much of Him. I am not ashamed of it, because I love Him.'

p. 245

(The Life of God in the Soul of Man by Rev. Henry Scougal)

Oh! that the holy life of the blessed Jesus may be always in my thoughts, and before mine eyes, till I receive a deep sense and impression of those excellent graces that shined so eminently in him; and let me never cease my endeavors, till that new and divine nature prevail in my soul, and Christ be formed within me."

p. 60

(Broken in The Right Place by Alan E. Nelson)

Faith is rarely a matter of information or rationale, but one of surrender and obedience. When you realize God is sovereign, you can trust Him without always understanding Him.

p. 250

When I invited Jesus into my life, I thought he was going to put up some wallpaper and hang a few pictures. But he started knocking out walls and adding on rooms. I said, "I was expecting a nice cottage." But He said, "I'm making a palace in which to live."

--C. S. Lewis

p. 19

STUDY #1 - Hebrews 1:1-14

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