

**A PERSONAL
VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY
HEBREWS
BY SHARON CRAVENS**

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

Heb. 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

The author, in words breathed into Him by the Holy Spirit, is addressing his letter to the Hebrews, Jewish believers in the Messiah Jesus Christ. As you read through the book, it would seem that this letter is meant to encourage these early Jewish Christians to guard against falling back into the rituals of the Jewish religious system from which Christ had liberated them, to encourage them to enjoy the benefits of their faith—living under grace and embracing the peace of God available to them through the finished work of Jesus.

God = the supreme Divinity; I would add, the one and only Divinity.

The writer begins with the assumption that there is no question that God Is.

Burton Coffman uses a reference to comments from William Buckley concerning the personal nature of God that I liked.

William F. Buckley, in NATIONAL REVIEW magazine, noted that the concept of an impersonal God robs religion of its three "R's," these being revelation, regeneration, and responsibility. If God is not personal, there can be no such thing as revelation; for, if there is no speaker, nothing has been spoken. Likewise, there could be no such thing as regeneration, because no one can be the son of some natural law, such as the law of osmosis or the law of gravitation. Responsibility also derives from the fact that God is a person; and, if God is not a person, then feeble, fallible man must be hailed as the highest thing in heaven and upon earth; and it is precisely that delusion which is the source of so much human sorrow.

The writer acknowledges that in the past God spoke to His people through His prophets, to whom He revealed His word in various ways. In these last days, however, He has completed His revelation to us through His Son, Jesus—not just through His words, but by how He lived. "His Son" is obviously a messenger of higher standing than the prophets of old. I like the wording by Kenneth Wuest in his expanded translation: "...spoke to us in One who by nature is [His] Son...."

The phrase "last days" is a reference to "end times" from the Greek. The end times from my general understanding is all time between the first and second coming of Jesus.

God appointed His Son, Jesus, to be His sole heir; in other words, He gave Him ownership of everything in the creation. Not only did He give Him ownership, He gave Him the responsibility of enacting His plan for creation. As the Word, He spoke, and it was done.

John 1:1&14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,

1John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

He also enjoyed some actual hands on work in the process.

Gen. 2:21-22 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Psa. 8:3 ¶ When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained....

I was listening to Jon Courson recently, and he gave an interesting explanation of God as the Creator. My paraphrase—God the Father devised the plan, and the Son brought the plan to fruition through the power of the Holy Spirit. I thought that was the best explanation I had heard in rectifying all the statements in scripture regarding Father and Son as Creator.

the “worlds” – The Hebrew for this word states: “properly, an age; by extension, perpetuity (also past); by implication, the world; specially (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future):—age....” It was the plural that caught my eye. As I looked at the definition, it came to my mind that this world would eventually experience an initial creation that became a worthless, desolate undistinguishable ruin (from the Hebrew for “without form and void” in Genesis 1:2), a recreation of the world as we know it and recorded in Genesis 1-2, and another recreation when God creates the new heavens and earth for our eternal enjoyment. (See journal on Genesis for further explanation.)

Heb. 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Who = Jesus, “His Son”

The word *brightness* is a reference to light and the word *glory* is a reference to that for which it is apparent He is worthy of praise and honor. (Brings to mind the words of the hold hymn, “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus,” Look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.)

It is through Jesus the Son that God the Spirit manifests His Being to His creation.

John 4:24 **God is a Spirit:** and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

He is the Great I AM in flesh.

John 1:1 ¶ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.**

John 1:14 And **the Word was made flesh**, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

1John 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh** is of God:

1John 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that **Jesus is the Son of God**, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Jesus in His person is an exact representation of God the Father and His Spirit in fleshly form.

It is through Jesus the Son that "all" (*things* has been added by the translators) is upheld or endures (from the Greek). In other words it is by the power of His word that the creation continues to function, sometimes even in spite of known "laws" of science. I used an excerpt from an article by Lambert Dolphin in my study of Colossians that I think is worth repeating here.

I heard a wonderful audio presentation of the truth of this verse by Dr. Mark Eastman on Chuck Missler's www.khouse.org website. The excerpts from this article (shown below) by Lambert Dolphin (found at the same website) is similar to the type of information that I heard and explains in a way I never could a bit more about what this verse means.

What Holds the Universe Together?

The nucleus of the atom contains positively charged and neutral particles- to use a simplistic model. Mutual electrostatic repulsion between the like-positive protons would drive the nucleus apart if it were not for the "strong force" which binds the nucleus together....Similarly, accelerated electrons circling the nucleus should quickly radiate all their energy away and fall into the nucleus unless there exists an invisible energy source to counteract this.

The third New Testament creation-related passage which talks about atomic structure and physics is found in the Apostle Peter's Second Epistle: But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise [rhoizedon, a rushing roar] and the elements [stoicheion, atoms] will be dissolved with fire and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10) The Greek word translated "elements" in the above mentioned passage from Colossians (and in 2 Peter also) is stoicheion, which can mean "the building blocks of the universe," or "the ordered arrangement of things." It can also mean the "atomic elements." The word translated "dissolved" in 2 Peter 3:10 is literally (in Greek) luo, meaning "unloosed." This language suggests that there will come a time in the future when God lets go of the nuclear forces which hold the atom together. This passage, like the one in Colossians, strongly suggests that the active power of God is behind the mysterious strong force that holds every atomic nucleus together. If this is so, all the other fundamental forces of nature are likewise forces that originate with Christ and His sustaining direction of the old creation.

If God "sustains the universe by His mighty word of power," moment by moment, were He to merely relax His grasp on the universe, every atom would come apart "by fire" (that is, by nuclear fire). It is inescapable that the Bible claims that God dynamically sustains the universe, including the very atoms themselves. Atoms, it would seem, are "stable" only because force and energy are being supplied into their physical nuclear binding fields from "outside" the system.

The writer goes on to emphasize that this same Jesus “by Himself purged our sins.” Remember that the writer is speaking to those who have claimed Jesus as Lord and Savior. In doing so they were imputed the righteousness of God through Jesus.

2Cor. 5:21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Being clothed in the righteousness of God is evidence that we have been purged or thoroughly cleansed of our sin; we are made pure in Jesus. It was the man Jesus alone who suffered the shame of the cross and the rejection of the Father to provide for our redemption. The Apostle Peter stated it this way:

1Pet. 2:21-24 For even hereunto were ye called: because **Christ also suffered for us**, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: **Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness:** by whose stripes ye were healed.

The fact that after enduring the cross and raising victorious from the grave He sat down at the right hand of God the Father is an affirmation of the Father’s acceptance of His sacrifice. To sit at the right hand was recognized as the place of highest honor. By taking His seat, He is declaring His work of redemption complete.

Heb. 1:4 ¶ Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

“being made” = being found (a better translation from the Greek in my opinion)

The Greek for “by inheritance obtained” is from a root that indicates a “sharer by lot, a possessor.” In other words, as God the Father’s heir, He is a sharer in and joint possessor of His name. Again, the Apostle John affirms this truth.

[Jesus speaking] - John 10:30 I and *my* Father are one.

John 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;** and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?

Jesus is by very nature God. The angels, however, are created beings.

Neh. 9:6 Thou, *even* thou, *art* LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things* that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

Col. 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

The writer is emphasizing that Jesus is *better* than the angels, having more power and authority (from the Greek).

Heb. 1:5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

This is one of many rhetorical questions you will find throughout scripture. The answer is obvious—none. This is a quote from Psalm 2:7; in context, the Father is speaking to His Son who has been enthroned in Zion and will rule over all nations. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul also declared this Psalm to be in reference to Jesus as he taught in the synagogue at Antioch.

Acts 13:32-33 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Jesus was also declared by God to be His Son at His baptism.

Luke 3:21-22 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

The next quote is from 2Samuel and is part of a message being delivered to David by the prophet Nathan.

2Sam. 7:12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. **I will be his father, and he shall be my son.**

As is often the case with prophecy, the message has near and future application. David would have probably received these words with application to Solomon; however, it is obviously the throne of Messiah's kingdom that will be established forever. The Holy Spirit is affirming the truth of that application using it here in reference to Jesus.

Heb. 1:6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

I could not find the verse being referenced. After checking some of the commentaries, it would seem that this quote is from the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Septuagint reading of Psalm 97:7 states: "Let all God's angels worship Him."

The gospel of Luke does give us a picture of the angels glorifying God at the birth of the Savior. Revelation gives a vivid picture of the angels worshipping Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Rev. 5:11-14 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I

saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Again, the writer is emphasizing that if angels worship Him, Jesus is *better* (v4) than the angels.

Heb. 1:7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

This appears to be a direct quote of Psalm 104:4. Angels are spirits; Jesus is God in flesh. Angels are God's ministers, worshippers, servants; Jesus is God's Son. The word *spirit* makes reference to a current of air or breath. The angels are compared to the wind and a flame of fire. The Son is in authority over wind and fire.

Heb. 1:8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

This is a quote from Psalm 45 and its truth reiterated in Psalm 97.

Psa. 45:6 ¶ Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre.

Psa. 97:2 ...righteousness and judgment *are* the habitation of his throne.

In contrast to the angels, Jesus occupies an eternal throne. The scepter is an emblem of authority. Jesus exercises authority in His kingdom in righteousness—holy, faithful, and in truth.

Heb. 1:9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

This is a quote from Psalm 45:7.

Psa. 45:7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

In context, the reference is still to God on the throne (as quoted above). By making application to the Son, the Holy Spirit is again affirming the oneness of Father and Son.

I think it is important to note that Jesus/God loves righteousness and hates iniquity. He hates the sin, not the sinner.

“above thy *fellows*” – The Greek makes reference again to sharers, associates, and partakers. This word is different from the word “heir,” however, used in verse 4. Staying in context in relationship to the angels, this would seem to be in reference to their realm of operation—the heavenlies, the supernatural realm.

Heb. 1:10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

Heb. 1:11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

Heb. 1:12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

This is a quote from Psalm 102:25-27. Again the writer makes reference to the creative work of Jesus. "In the beginning" I take to be a reference to creation since God had no beginning. The Greek made reference to the commencement of time or rank. That made sense to me since God is outside of time and rank is reference to authority in comparison to something else. Until He chose to create, there was nothing to which comparison could be made.

The writer declares that Jesus "laid the foundation of the earth" and that the heavens are "the works of thine hands." This is a restatement of truth from verse 2. This section goes on to make a great distinction between the creation and its Creator. The heavens and earth will experience destruction and decay just like clothes will eventually do over time. Jesus, however, is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrew 13:8). The time is coming when Jesus will "roll them together" and change them, make them different (from the Greek). Again, Jesus never changes; He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

(10/08) As I was reading through this again in preparation for beginning another chapter, the word *changed* triggered a connection in my mind to what will happen to our bodies at the rapture.

1Cor. 15:51 ¶ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be *changed*....

The same Greek word is used in both places, and it simply means "to make different." There are other scriptures that declare that the world will never end, that Abraham's seed will inherit the land forever, and Messiah's kingdom will be eternal.

Eph. 3:21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Gen. 17:8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Is. 9:7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

Just as our bodies will be changed for us to live forever, so will this world be changed to fulfill these words of God as recorded in the scripture.

Heb. 1:13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

Again, a rhetorical question. The obvious answer—none.

Heb. 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Emphasis is again made that the angels are ministering spirits, servants set apart to attend or serve those who will inherit salvation. That is a reference to those of us who have chosen to follow God in faith and have accepted the gift of salvation

provided by the willing sacrifice of His Son Jesus. The continuing service of the angels is in direct contrast to the completed work of Jesus who is sitting at the right hand of God (v13).