

# Examining the Text of Hebrews 1

By Jeremy Lucas

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To those who share in the grace of God,

As we dive ever so carefully into the Epistle to the Hebrews, I would encourage you to read over the brief introduction given here. The teacher by whom many presentations, thoughts, and perspectives are being examined is Stuart Allen. My written words are simply a combination of assessing his insight, offering my own thoughts, and then sharing that which stands out as unanswered.

Hebrews itself is a very difficult book to evaluate if the entrance to that evaluation has a single purpose of discrediting authenticity. As mentioned in the overview linked above, we do ourselves a great disservice if the only reason we look at the text of Hebrews is to determine whether or not it is this person or that person speaking. For once we discover the truth one way or another, what then? I believe it to be imperative that we move forward in studying the material as the following will suggest.

May you be encouraged and livened to His Holy Word as we begin this gentle breakdown of Hebrews, chapter 1.

As an introduction to how I will proceed, please note that there are literally hundreds upon hundreds of directions, tangents, thoughts, and angles that we could go in each and every verse of this book. It's difficult for any examiner to fully lay out or see everything there is to see in one test or presentation of material. That, I believe, is where your consideration of the things shared will bring about discussion and added perspective. The things I choose to highlight will not necessarily be more valuable than those things which I choose not to highlight. My intention is primarily to get you engaged in the Scripture of Hebrews as we begin our dialogue. That said, let us begin.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, 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;" Hebrews 1:1-2

Probably one of the more unique aspects of our present reality in the dispensation of the mystery is the manner by which God communicates. In our sideline study called, "The Present Hand of God," we're beginning to isolate the things that He does having, at times, nothing at all to do with communication or speaking. However, setting those things aside and focusing on these first two verses, we're introduced to a very plain and simple truth.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners."

The phrase "sundry times" and "divers manners" come from the two Greek words, *polumeros* and *polutropos*, which mean in their simplicity: "at many times" and "in many ways."

God's method of direct communication came, as we well know, through signs, wonders, miracles, mountains, rocks, bushes, and waters. The list goes on and on to define the "many ways" of diversity that God Almighty chose to communicate with His audiences. Why is this significant? Look at the beginning of verse two after excluding the clause phrase of verse one...

"God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son,"

One complete thought is given here. And it is this message which states, in THESE LAST DAYS (not the end of times, but the literal last days that they were familiar), God was now speaking solely through His Son directly. Ultimately, the application and comprehension being that God was shifting His broad diversity to a single communicator of truth... Jesus Christ His Son.

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

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

God had always been the Word, but because He had not, as the Word BECOME flesh to dwell among man, His communication was necessarily diverse. Having now BECOME flesh, God's communication vessel ceased to be so multi-dimensional and was now driven through the Son.

For those of us who are faithful in right division, this should be a tremendous lightswitch. We spend a great deal of time dealing with those who believe that God said this or said that to them and we're often not sure how to address the statements they make which include things like, "But God spoke to people all throughout Scripture! Why would He not speak to me like He did yesterday?"

These "last days" mentioned by the Hebrew author are indicative of very questionable environments and suggestive ideas about God...

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." II Timothy 4:3

People are incredibly fickle. How then, can one know for sure if another is true to the absolution of God's communication method? For if everyone can say, "God told me this" or "God told me that," then what funnel do we have for isolating truth from foolishness? This very message:

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, 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;" Hebrews 1:1-2

God, who at one time DID speak to men through prophets and other "divers manners" now speaks through His Son. And His Son is the Word. The very Word that we have access to right now.

"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 out sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" Hebrews 1:3

By the "word of his power?" All things are upheld, kept in place, maintained, or stable because His Word says that they are so. This, I believe, is a furtherance of distinction between recognizing God who once spoke in many facets and many forms, but now speaks through His Son Jesus Christ.

Probably the most significant point in verse 3 is the final section which Brother Allen sheds a fair amount of logical light.

When you've spent a great deal of time working and reach the end of that project, what is it that you're likely to do? Sit down, correct? When we've completed our work at the end of a day, we do not continue working... we sit down where we are.

Christ, upon whom the entire world was created, upon whom all things are upheld, upon whom there was a lowering of Himself from His throne in heaven, upon whom our sins were purged in great suffering, and upon whom the heavens welcomed His return... sat down.

Perhaps you have each thought of the magnificence of this truth, but it says so much about the journey that God our Father endured in becoming flesh.

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

Another rather vague point to consider here is how, in our human minds, it is possible to conceive of God Almighty BECOMING better than the angels. What kind of comparison could be made that is even remotely equivalent prior to this becoming? Was there a time that God was NOT better than the angels in heaven? Of course not. So how can this be?

As we move through the book of Hebrews, we're consistently thrust into the things, types, and roles that God became in His flesh. And as a result, having BECOME flesh as God, He then would BECOME, upon rising to the right hand of God from the fleshly existence, better than the angels. Had He already been? Absolutely. But now, through His flesh and position at the right hand of the Father, His becoming was a condition built by human appearance. When we look at Chapter two, we'll see the truth of His having become lower than the angels.

"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?" Hebrews 1:5

This is, by far, the most challenging verse of the first chapter. Each of the others have their depth of insight easily comprehensible when considered. This, however, is not quite so clean-cut. Let me elaborate and note that this is where I differ quite a bit from Brother Allen in his assessment.

In verse 5, what we're introduced to is a somewhat rhetorical question that suggests it to be impossible for an angel to say to God, "Thou art my Father." Or for God Himself to say to an angel, "Thou art my Son." Seems basic enough, right?

Were it not for the following pieces of Hebrew knowledge and truth, it certainly would be...

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them." Job 1:6

"Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD." Job 2:1

"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Job 38:7

These are the bene-Elohim... the sons of God... the angels and heavenly host.

Though I could have referenced the same bene-Elohim from Genesis, that would be its own tangent study into the Nephilim of which I am most enthralled. Steering clear of such possibilities and keeping in tune with the Hebrew references to "sons of God" that were not human, how then can we say that the angels were not considered "sons" just as much as Christ could say that God was His Father? Through what understanding beyond this verse do we recognize that angels were in some way not created uniquely by the hand of God and given names just as we were?

I leave that to your discussion and study. For me, however, this is presently an unsettled and heavily unclear dilemma of seeming contradiction.

"And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom." Hebrews 1:6-8

How some can question the Deity of Jesus Christ as God Himself seems very odd when the foundation is His Word. For we find nearly direct, yet overly subtle implications that the Son has a throne and upon that throne, He is referred to as God forever and ever. Among the many things that Hebrews has to offer, the one most shining reflection is a determining absolute that Jesus Christ our Savior is God Himself.

"Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." Hebrews 1:9-12

Quite a refreshing point of reference for the Hebrew who, upon seeing the coming change of message and dispensation, begins to question whether or not God is still the same God. Indeed He is. And while garments wax old and the earth and heavens perish... God is still the same.

There are those who make the fair and balanced argument in favor of Open Theism, which states that God can be, upon the pouring heart of man, persuaded to change His mind. I do not wholeheartedly disagree with this, for it is by prayer and supplication that man, throughout history, has on occasion warmed God's heart to compassion when He was angry. But the matter here is not whether a prayer can

bring about God's change in mind for a particular person, rather, whether or not God can or would ever change His entire being for any reason at all. On this, I believe we can see without question that as other things fade away and get old, God remains.

"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Hebrews 1:13-14

Verse 13 is simple enough to assess even into our Body truth. For do we not know that our role is ALSO at the right hand? The angels have not received this command, this request, or this invitation. They can look TO the throne, but cannot sit at the right hand of the throne.

It is, however, verse 14 that brings about some fascinating debate. If indeed, angels are ministering spirits sent forth for them who are heirs of salvation, and Israel's age is completed, then would this not equally extend to an angelic ministering of the Body believers? For otherwise, we would and could only imagine the angelic host sitting in heavenly realms without any task, without any need, and more brash... without any purpose.

The study into angelic works is quite an intriguing one, but I'm certainly welcome to hear your thoughts and your perspectives on this one. Perhaps you might take us into further Scripture so as to isolate the nature and purpose of angels in this dispensation. For we would be foolish to concretely decide that they do nothing at this time unless there is an absolute reason to believe it is so.

If there is anything substantial, beyond the questions of verse 5 and 14, that I'd like you to take away, it's the relationship of this study in chapter one to the Present Hand of God. Consider that Christ's movement to sit down was a matter of communication and completeness to the work of salvation, not a removal of Himself from the presence of the world. He is very much AT WORK in the world, but not exactly in the way He was prior to Christ when diversity of presentation was immense and the audience was conditioned to see it as such.

May the Lord use these simple words again to encourage you toward a thorough look into His Word.