

# So Great Salvation

Arlen L. Chitwood

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by  
Arlen L. Chitwood

The  
Lamp Broadcast, Inc.  
2629 Wyandotte Way  
Norman, Okla. 73071

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*By the Same Author —*

THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE  
HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES  
THE MOST HIGH RULETH  
RUN TO WIN  
SO GREAT SALVATION  
SALVATION OF THE SOUL  
FROM ACTS TO THE EPISTLES  
IN THE LORD'S DAY  
FOCUS ON THE MIDDLE EAST  
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN  
LET US GO ON  
REDEEMED FOR A PURPOSE  
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST  
MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM  
THE BRIDE IN GENESIS  
SEARCH FOR THE BRIDE  
SEVEN, TEN GENERATIONS  
GOD'S FIRSTBORN SONS  
THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE  
JUDE  
RUTH  
ESTHER

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# 1

## Heirs of Salvation

**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? (Heb. 1:13, 14).**

The writer of Hebrews opens his epistle after a similar fashion to the way Christ, following His resurrection, opened His conversation and dealt with the two disciples on the Emmaus road and the eleven later in Jerusalem.

Christ, on the Emmaus road and in Jerusalem, called His disciples' attention to certain things about Himself (His past sufferings and future glory, and the reality of His resurrection in a literal, physical body of "flesh and bones"); and He then opened their understanding to these things concerning Himself through reference to the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24:25-27, 39, 44, 45).

The writer of Hebrews, after calling attention to certain things about Christ (His appointed position as "heir of all things," His person, His finished work on Calvary, and His present position at God's right hand [1:2-4]), then does the same thing which Christ had previously done. He refers those whom he is addressing to things in the Old Testament Scriptures concerning Christ. And to accomplish his purpose, he quotes from seven different Old Testament passages (1:5-13).



In Luke's account of Christ revealing Himself to His disciples, we're not told what Old Testament Scriptures He called to their attention. We're only told that He began at "Moses and all the prophets" and "expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27, 44, 45).

These Scriptures though would, of necessity, have had to include both Christ's *past sufferings* and *future glory* (v. 26). Even though Christ, the One destined to rule and reign, had previously taught His disciples things concerning His rejection and sufferings (Matt. 16:21; 17:22, 23; 20:17-19; 26:1, 2), they still failed to grasp the overall picture and see both the sufferings and the glory in their proper perspective. Thus, Christ's revelation of Himself to His disciples through the Old Testament Scriptures would have had to include passages concerning both; and He could have drawn such dual teachings from Old Testament Scriptures such as those surrounding the life of Joseph in Genesis or those surrounding the life of Moses in Exodus, along with numerous other passages.

Though the writer of Hebrews approaches the matter after a similar fashion to Luke, there is a marked difference. The writer of this epistle begins by referring to Christ's *coming glory* (v. 2) prior to recording anything about His *past sufferings* (v. 3). And he then reflects back upon the glory which he had mentioned *first* by focusing his readers' attention *only* upon Old Testament Scriptures which have to do with Christ as the "appointed heir of all things" (vv. 2, 5-13). Thus, though there is a reference to Christ's past sufferings in the first chapter of Hebrews, this is *not* what is mentioned first, and this is *not* what the chapter is about. This chapter begins with and centers upon teachings surrounding the coming glory of Christ, and this is accomplished mainly through reference to the Old Testament Scriptures.

### SEVEN TIMES (PSA. 12:6)

Introducing the subject matter in Hebrews through different quotations from the Old Testament is strictly by Divine design. There are "seven quotations" having to do with *Christ in His coming glory*. "Seven" is a number which refers to *the completion of that which is in view*; and these seven quotations present a complete, composite

Messianic portrait of Christ, setting the stage for that which follows, covering the remainder of this Book.

Hebrews is built around five major warnings; and to properly understand these warnings and related passages, a person must understand the opening verses of the book in their correct perspective, for these verses can only be looked upon as forming an introductory *key* to the remainder of this book.

The last of the seven quotations (1:13) leads directly into the introductory verse (1:14) for the first of the five major warnings (2:1-4). And, contextually, it would not be sound exegesis at all for one to attempt to understand this warning apart from the Old Testament quotations which precede the warning; nor, in a larger context, would it be sound exegesis for one to attempt to understand the remaining four warnings and other related subject matter in the book apart from these introductory verses and the first warning.

For this reason, the remainder of this study will be taken up with two things: 1) showing the Messianic nature of the seven quotations in the first chapter, and 2) showing how these quotations logically lead into the first of the five warnings in the book, and thus the book at large.

The first two quotations in Hebrews, chapter one center upon Christ's *Sonship*, with the preceding mention of *heirship* (vv. 2-4) forming the basis for these two introductory statements:

“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’?” (v. 5; cf. Ps. 2:7; II Sam. 7:14).

Christ is the “appointed heir...he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they [angels]” (vv. 2, 4). “Sonship” implies *rulership*, and, as God's Son, Christ is the One destined to exercise *the rights of primogeniture* and rule the earth with “a rod of iron” (cf. Ps. 2:7, 9). Though angels are “sons of God” (because of their individual creation), God has not spoken after the fashion revealed in Ps. 2:7 and II Sam. 7:14 (v. 5) relative to angels. He has spoken after this fashion relative to His Son, Jesus, alone.

The Messianic nature of these two passages cannot be questioned,

for both appear in Messianic settings in the Old Testament.

Verses on either side of Psa. 2:7 have to do with Christ during the Messianic Era. Verse six states, “Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion”; and verses eight and nine state, “Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen [Gentiles] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron...” (cf. Rev. 2:26, 27).

The quotation from II Sam. 7:14 was spoken in a dual sense. It was spoken in a near sense concerning David’s immediate successor, his son, Solomon, and in a far sense concerning David’s greater successor, his greater Son, Christ. And the Father-Son relationship relative to the kingdom and the throne are in view in both instances (vv. 12-14a, 16). The greater Son is the One to Whom God will give “the sure mercies of David [*lit.*, ‘the holy things of David’]” (Acts 13:34; cf. v. 33).

The seven quotations from the Old Testament in the first chapter of Hebrews are thus introduced with Messianic statements (vv. 2-4), they begin with Messianic verses (v. 5), they continue with Messianic verses (vv. 6-13), and they lead into that which can only be Messianic in its fulfillment (vv. 14ff).

The third quotation refers to that future time when “the firstbegotten [‘the firstborn’]” will again be brought into the inhabited world (v. 6a), continuing the thought of Sonship and the rights of primogeniture from the previous verse:

“And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world [*lit.*, ‘And when He shall again bring the firstborn into the inhabited world’] he saith, ‘And let all the angels of God worship him’” (v. 6; cf. Deut. 32:43 [LXX]; Psa. 97:7).

A distinction is here made between Jesus and angels insofar as *Both* being “Sons” but only *One* possessing the “rights of primogeniture” is concerned. The rights of the firstborn (Gk. *prototokia*) are reserved for firstborn (Gk. *prototokos*) sons. The former Greek word is derived from the latter, and no angel can come within the scope of either word. That is, no angel is a firstborn son, in line to inherit the rights of the firstborn.

Rather, at this time, the angels of God will worship the Son (v. 6b).

Sons of God will worship God's firstborn Son after He comes into possession of the rights of the firstborn; and since only God is to be worshipped (*cf.* Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9), the One Whom angels will worship at this time must Himself be God. And this is a fact specifically stated in a later Old Testament quotation in Hebrews, chapter one where the Father says to the Son, "Thy throne, *O God...*" (v. 8).

The fourth quotation continues the thought of angelic ministry, and contextually this angelic ministry must be looked upon as a ministry surrounding the Son during the Messianic Era:

"And of the angels he saith, 'Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire'" (v. 7; *cf.* Psa. 104:4).

The one hundred fourth Psalm, from which this quotation is taken, reveals a number of things about the Creator and His creation (the earth, angels, and man). Thoughts in this Psalm move all the way from the creation of the earth in the beginning (v. 5) to the coming Messianic Era (vv. 31, 35). Angelic ministry, thus, within this Psalm, could refer to a ministry occurring in the *past*, the *present*, or the *future*.

In passages such as Luke 2:9, 13 (referring to angelic ministry surrounding Christ's birth), such a ministry is *past*; in Heb. 1:14 (referring to angelic ministry surrounding Christians in the world today), such a ministry is *present*; but in Heb. 1:7 (referring to angelic ministry surrounding Christ in His kingdom), such a ministry is *future*.

The fifth quotation refers to the Lord with His co-heirs seated upon His throne, holding the sceptre, during the coming day of His power:

"But unto the Son he saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows ['companions']'" (vv. 8, 9; *cf.* Psa. 45:6, 7).

The duration of time in which the Son rules (the time during which He sits on the throne and holds the sceptre) is said to be "forever and

ever [*i.e.*, eternal in duration].” Christ will sit on His Own throne in the new Jerusalem above the earth during the millennium and, with His “companions [co-heirs],” rule the earth for 1,000 years. During the eternal ages beyond the millennium, Christ will sit alongside His Father on “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1, 3), which will be in the new Jerusalem on the new earth. Universal rule will emanate from this throne, Christ’s “companions” will continue to rule with Him, and in this sense Christ’s rule with His saints can be said to last “forever and ever” (*cf.* Rev. 11:15; 22:5).

The sixth quotation refers to the eternity of Christ within both a historic and prophetic setting:

“And, ‘Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they shall all wax old as doth a garment;

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” (vv. 10-12; *cf.* Psa. 102:25-27).

These three verses appear near the end of the one hundred second Psalm and, in this Psalm, are addressed to God (as were the words in the previous quotation from Psa. 45:6, 7). However, the writer of Hebrews, being “moved by the Holy Spirit [the One Who originally moved the Psalmist to pen these words],” applies these verses also to the Son. There is no stronger language in the New Testament concerning the Deity of Christ than the first chapter of Hebrews.

It was *the blood of God* which was shed on Calvary (Acts 20:28), and God (“Thy throne, O God...”), in the person of His Son (or, as in Heb. 1:2, “in Son [literal rendering]”), is the One Who will rule the earth during the coming age. He was present and co-equal with the Father in the beginning. “All things” were brought into existence through Him (John 1:1-3). “All things were created by [‘through’] him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist [*i.e.*, He upholds ‘all things by the word of his power’ (Heb. 1:3)]” (Col. 1:16, 17).

Hebrews 1:10-12, quoting Psalm 102:25-27 (which appears in a

Messianic setting in the Psalms [*cf.* vv. 16, 21, 22] and is quoted in a Messianic setting in Hebrews), presents Christ as both *Creator* at the time the heavens and earth were brought into existence and *Destroyer* at the time the same heavens and earth will pass out of existence (*cf.* Gen. 1:1; Isa. 65:17; John 1:3; II Peter 3:10-12). And though change occurs in the creation, the Creator remains unchanged, for He is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

The seventh quotation, as the first quotation, is preceded by a reference to angels once again:

“But to which of the angels said he at any time, ‘Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?’” (v. 13; *cf.* Psa. 110:1).

The writer of Hebrews terminates his seven quotations from the Old Testament at the same point the Apostle John terminates his seven overcomers’ promises in Revelation, chapters two and three. Both the Father’s and the Son’s thrones are in view in both instances. In Hebrews the Son has been invited to sit alongside His Father, on His Father’s throne, until His enemies are made His footstool. Then He will sit on His Own throne. In the Book of Revelation, in the last of the overcomers’ promises, reference is also made to the Son being seated on the throne with His Father; and the promise is given to overcoming Christians that they will one day be allowed to sit with Him on His Own throne (Rev. 3:21).

Thus, the introductory verses in Hebrews, presenting a complete, composite Messianic portrait of Christ, terminate with a view to Christ ascending the throne and holding the sceptre, fulfilling these verses. And this logically leads into the same subject matter the Apostle John in Revelation, chapters two and three deals with — others (*companions, overcomers* ascending the throne and occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in that coming day).

The five major warnings in the Book of Hebrews and the seven overcomers’ promises in the Book of Revelation, in this respect, have to do with the same thing. They are both Messianic in their outlook and are directed to the saved, not the unsaved. They both have to do, not with the salvation which we presently possess, but with the salvation of the soul. It is the *overcomer* (Rev. 2, 3) who will realize so

*great salvation* (Heb. 2:3) and be allowed to ascend the throne with God's Son during the coming age (cf. Heb. 1:8, 9, 14; Rev. 3:21).

(Note also that the warning passages in Hebrews and the overcomers' promises in Revelation are both preceded by the author's portrait of Christ. In the Book of Revelation [1:13-16], the picture is that of Christ as *Judge* in the midst of the seven Churches [a scene presenting the Householder and His servants at the judgment seat of Christ, occurring at the end of the present dispensation but preceding the Messianic Era]; and in the Book of Hebrews [1:5-13], the picture is that of Christ as *King*, with the overcomers from the Churches seated with Him on the throne [a scene presenting Christ and His co-heirs holding the sceptre together in the Messianic Era itself].)

#### ANGELIC MINISTRY

"Angels" occupy a very prominent place in the opening two chapters of Hebrews. They are referred to eleven times throughout these chapters (1:4-7, 13; 2:2, 5, 7, 9, 16), though only two times throughout the remaining eleven chapters of the book (12:22; 13:2). There is no similar section in the other twenty New Testament epistles where repeated references such as these are made to angels. In fact, the word "angel [Gk. *aggelos*]" only appears in these other epistles the same number of times as there are other epistles — a total of twenty times. In nine of these twenty epistles the word doesn't even appear; and in Gal. 4:14 and James 2:25, even though the Greek word *aggelos* is used (translated "messengers" in James 2:25, KJV), the reference is to men.

The writer repeatedly calling attention to "angels" in the opening two chapters of Hebrews is, in one respect, somewhat like his nine references to "Melchizedek" in chapters five through seven (5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10, 11, 15, 17, 21). There are no references to Melchizedek elsewhere in the New Testament, and there are only two in all of the Old Testament (Gen. 14:18; Psa. 110:4). Hebrews though is different, for the writer calls attention to Melchizedek nine times in the short space of three chapters.

The repeated reference to "angels" throughout the first two chapters (something not seen at all in any other New Testament

epistle) and the repeated reference to “Melchizedek” in chapters five through seven (something not seen in any other book in all Scripture) are simply two interrelated peculiarities of the Book of Hebrews which should cause one to stop and think. There’s a definite reason why the Spirit of God moved the writer to pen the epistle after this fashion; and this reason, contextually, is very easy to see, though often missed.

(Melchizedek was a king-priest in Jerusalem [Gen. 14:18; Heb. 7:1, 2; cf. Psa. 76:2]. The two Old Testament references to Melchizedek are both Messianic. Both refer to activities surrounding Christ as the great King-Priest in Jerusalem [both heavenly and earthly (cf. Gen. 14:19)] during the coming age. And the references to Melchizedek in Heb. 5-7 must be understood accordingly, as the references to angels in the first two chapters of the book must be understood in the light of what is being dealt with in these chapters.)

Angels are of an entirely different creation than man and occupy one main role in Scripture. They are special, individual created beings who render service for and under God in numerous capacities. They serve God in various assigned positions as executors of His will and purpose.

God uses angels to do His bidding in all areas of His sovereign rule and control of the universe (Psa. 103:19, 20). He has angelic armies (II Kings 6:17; Job 25:3; Rev. 12:7; 19:14; cf. II Thess. 1:7), angelic messengers (Dan. 10:5ff; Luke 2:9ff), angels who minister on behalf of others (Acts 12:7-16; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 1:20), angels who occupy various positions of power and authority within God’s government of the universe (Job. 1:6; 2:1; cf. Isa. 14:12, 13; Ezek. 28:14), and angels who carry out His bidding in numerous other capacities (Gen. 19:13; Deut. 33:2; cf. Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2).

Angels, unlike God, as man, had a beginning. There was a point in time when God created angels; and God’s actions since that time have been, in different capacities and numerous realms, connected with angels. Not only so, but angels minister under the Lord after such a fashion (within the scope of established, set laws, etc.) that their actions are looked upon as those of the Lord Himself (cf. Gen. 19:13, 24, 25; Dan. 4:17, 25-32; *ref.* the author’s book, PROPHECY ON MOUNT



OLIVET, Ch. XXII).

A major problem ensued in God's government of the universe when one ruling angel moved outside the scope of God's established laws. He sought to exalt his throne (the position he occupied by Divine decree [Ezek. 28:14]) and take the place of God Himself as Ruler over the entire universe (Isa. 14:13, 14). This, of course, was the one we know today as Satan, the ruler over one province in the universe, the province upon which we reside, the earth. And Satan didn't attempt this God-dishonoring act alone. He led one-third of the angels under His command to go along with him in this attempted coup (*cf.* Rev. 12:4).

This brought about Satan's disqualification to rule and the destruction of his kingdom (Gen. 1:2a; Ezek. 28:16; *cf.* I Sam. 15:23; Isa. 45:18). This was later followed by a restoration of the ruined domain and the creation of man to rule the earth in the stead of Satan and his angels (Gen. 1:2b-28). Man though, because of Satan's deception of Eve, was himself disqualified through sin (Gen. 3:1-7). And this left Satan continuing to occupy the throne.

Man's fall though, unlike Satan's fall, was followed by not only God's promise of a future redeemer but by God's immediate redemptive act as well (Gen. 3:15, 21). But God's redemptive act did not nullify that which had occurred. Man was still in no position to take the governmental reigns of the earth, for, though redeemed, he was still a fallen being with an old sin nature.

Man holding the earth's sceptre must await the reappearance of the promised Redeemer from Gen. 3:15. He has appeared once "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:26-28). Redemption was provided for fallen man at Christ's first appearance; and He is going to one day reappear, take the sceptre, and position redeemed man on the throne with Him.

During the time between Christ's redemptive work on Calvary and His actually taking control of the government — a period lasting approximately 2,000 years — God has set aside an entire dispensation, during which time the co-heirs who will ascend the throne with His Son are being called out. The coming kingdom of Christ will require numerous rulers, and it is during the present dispensation that these

are being acquired.

And it is with this backdrop that the Book of Hebrews begins and must be understood.

### INHERITING WITH THE SON

In Heb. 1:6, 7, angelic activity surrounding God's Son during the coming Messianic Era appears to be twofold: 1) *worship of the Son* (v. 6) and 2) *a ministry on behalf of the Son* (v. 7). Angelic activity in Heb. 1:14 though is different. It has to do with a present ministry "*for them who shall be heirs of salvation [lit., 'on behalf of the ones about to inherit salvation']*." And there can be no question concerning the identity of the ones to whom angels are presently ministering or exactly what is meant by these individuals inheriting salvation.

Continuing the thought from verse fourteen in the verses following (Heb. 2:1ff), it can only be Christians who are in view — "Therefore we..." Christians are the ones referred to in the previous quotation from Psa. 45:6, 7 (1:8, 9) as Christ's "companions" in that coming day; and they are also the ones referred to in Heb. 2:10 as the "many sons" whom Christ will bring unto glory with Him.

Then also continuing the thought of an inheritance in connection with salvation, the context leaves no room to question that which is in view. Christ is the "appointed heir of all things" (1:2, 4), an inheritance which will be realized in the Messianic Era; and the seven Old Testament quotations leading into verse fourteen (1:5-13) all refer to that time when Christ, with His co-heirs, will come into possession of this inheritance. The inheritance in view in verse fourteen is for Christians, not the unsaved (*cf.* 1:8, 9; 2:1); and, viewing the first chapter as a whole, this inheritance can only be associated with the Son's inheritance during the coming age.

This inheritance is spoken of in connection with "salvation" because that is exactly what is involved. Inheriting with the Son is the same as realizing the rights of primogeniture, which, in turn, is the same as realizing the "end [goal] of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (I Peter 1:9; *cf.* Heb. 9:28; 10:37-39).

Salvation is spoken of in the Word of God in three tenses — past, present, and future: *We have been saved* (Eph. 2:8, 9), *we are being saved*

(*1 Cor. 1:18*), and we are about to be saved (*Heb. 1:14*). And when dealing with salvation in Scripture one must first ascertain to which of these three any given passage pertains (see the author's book, SALVATION OF THE SOUL, Ch. I).

In Heb. 1:14, both the text and context will show beyond any shadow of a doubt that this verse has nothing to do with the Christians' presently possessed eternal salvation. The verses leading into this passage have to do with Christ coming into possession of His inheritance, along with His co-heirs. And a person cannot even be in a position to inherit with Christ, realize the rights of the firstborn, unless he has first been saved (experienced the *past* aspect of salvation, placing him in the family of God [a firstborn child via the birth from above], in line to inherit the rights of the firstborn). Romans 8:17 plainly states, "if children, then heirs." One must be a child of the Owner before he can be in line to receive the inheritance.

Further, continuing the thought in Heb. 2:1ff, we're told exactly what is involved in the heirship from verse fourteen. Hebrews 2:3 refers to "so great salvation," which can only be the same salvation previously mentioned in verse fourteen. And then the writer, in verse five, plainly reveals the subject matter at hand: For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak [*lit.*, 'concerning which we are speaking']. That is, the world to come (which will not be ruled by angels, but by man) is what the writer had been dealing with in the immediately preceding verses. *So great salvation (2:3), inheriting salvation (1:14), and the Messianic quotations from the Old Testament (1:5-13)* all have to do with the same thing. They all have to do with that time when the One Who has been "appointed heir of all things" (1:2, 4), along with His "companions" (v. 9), will ascend the throne and rule the earth for 1,000 years.

Angels presently ministering "on behalf of the ones about to inherit salvation" are conducting this ministry with a view to not only Christians entering into "so great salvation" but with a view to a continued ministry of a different nature once their present ministry is complete, a ministry which will occur during the coming age. During the Messianic Era, angels will worship Christ and apparently minister on his behalf (Heb. 1:6, 7); and such a ministry (though not worship) will apparently extend to Christ's "companions" as well, for they will

be occupying positions on the throne as co-heirs with Him. In this respect, angels presently ministering on behalf of the ones about to inherit salvation will apparently one day minister, in a different capacity, for these same individuals after they have inherited salvation.

Throughout history God has used angels to carry out His bidding in all aspects of His sovereign rule and control of the universe. And there is no reason to believe, especially in the light of Heb. 1:7, that affairs in the Son's kingdom will be carried out in a manner that is any different. The sceptre in that day will be held by man, not by angels (Heb. 2:5); but angels will apparently occupy a prominent place in the kingdom as ministers for those who do hold the sceptre.

Christ and His co-heirs will rule, and angels will worship and minister. Thus will affairs in the Son's kingdom be carried out during the coming age.



## 2

### Because of the Angels

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

**Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip (Heb. 1:14-2:1).**

The Book of Hebrews opens by presenting Christ as the appointed “heir of all things” and Christians as those “who shall be heirs of salvation [*lit.*, ‘who are about to inherit salvation’]” (1:2, 14). The Father has given “all that he hath” to the Son (*cf.* Gen. 24:36; 25:5; John 16:15); and Christians, realizing the salvation of their souls (Heb. 10:36-39), will inherit as co-heirs with Christ, exercising with God’s Son the rights of the firstborn.

There are seven Messianic quotations, forming most of the first chapter of Hebrews (vv. 5-13), and Christ’s co-heirs are mentioned within the scope of these quotations as “thy fellows [‘thy companions’; same word in the Greek text translated ‘partakers’ in Heb. 3:14]” (v. 9). These seven quotations open with two references to Christ as the One in possession of the rights of primogeniture (v. 5; *cf.* v.6), and they close with a reference to Christ being seated at God’s right hand, awaiting that day when His enemies will be made His footstool, allowing Christ and His companions to exercise the rights of primogeniture (v. 13; *cf.* v. 9).

All of this then naturally leads into the mention of Christ's companions as "those who are about to inherit salvation" (v. 14), and from there the subject matter leads immediately into the first of five major warnings directed to Christians (2:1-4). And there can be no separating the first warning or any of the subsequent four warnings from the Messianic nature of the opening chapter. The introductory material in the book points to one thing and one thing only — *Christ and His companions taking the sceptre and exercising regal power and authority over the earth*, leaving the subsequent warnings to be understood within this same framework.

Such would also apply to the repeated reference to angels throughout the first two chapters. "Angels" are mentioned eleven times in these opening chapters, *within a Messianic setting*; and God's purpose behind providing such a design for the Book of Hebrews should be obvious.

This book deals with a change in the government of the earth, with "angels" presently holding the sceptre and "man" about to hold the sceptre. Thus, when the Son is presented as the appointed "heir of all things" (pointing to future rulership), one should naturally expect a corresponding reference to "angels" (pointing to present rulership), for the Son's inheritance has to do with their domain and the exercise of dominion therein. And because of the Son's identity — God's Firstborn (v. 6) — the Spirit of God chose to introduce the subject of heirship through showing the Son's superiority to "the angels": "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (v. 4).

Then the verse which immediately follows reveals that "more excellent name": "*Thou art my Son...*" (v. 5). The appointed Heir is *God's Son*, the One in possession of the rights of the firstborn (v. 6). And though angels are "sons of God," God has not said to any angel, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (v. 5; *cf. Ps. 2:7*); nor has He said to any angel, "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (v. 13; *cf. Ps. 110:1*). He has said this to His Son, Jesus, alone.

Further, these same angels are also spoken of in another sense. They are spoken of as "ministering spirits," ministering both during the present time (v. 14) and during the coming Messianic Era (v. 7).

During the present time they minister on behalf of “those who are about to inherit salvation”; and during the Messianic Era they, along with worshipping the Son (v. 6), will minister on behalf of the Son and undoubtedly His companions also.

Who though are these angels? Can anything be said about them other than that they are just angels within the kingdom of God? They certainly cannot be looked upon as consisting of all the angels which God has at His disposal, for vast numbers (without question, most) of His angels have nothing to do with this earth. Numerous angels of God occupy positions under other provincial rulers (other than Satan) over other provinces (other than the earth) in the universe (*ref.* the author’s book, PROPHECY ON MOUNT OLIVET, Conclusion); and numerous other angels occupy positions in other capacities, either related to this earth or other provinces.

Note very carefully that the angels in view throughout the first two chapters of Hebrews can only be identified as angels having a connection with *the government of this earth*. The Son occupies an appointed position superior to them in this capacity (1:4-7, 13), and they minister on behalf of those who are about to occupy positions of governmental power with God’s Son (1:14). Then in Heb. 2:5 reference is made to “the world to come [‘inhabited world to come’]” as not being placed in subjection to angels (an allusion to the position which angels presently occupy).

Angels will not hold the sceptre in “the inhabited world to come,” the Messianic Era. Rather, God’s *firstborn Son* (1:6) and the *many sons* He is in the process of bringing “unto glory” with Him (2:10) will hold the sceptre in that day.

Everything about the mention of angels from Heb. 1:4 through Heb. 2:5 is, after some fashion, associated with the government of this earth. And it is evident that the reference to “man” and the “son of man” being made “a little [‘for a short time’] lower than the angels” in Heb. 2:6-9 can only have to do with this same thing. The sufferings of Calvary (v. 9), the glory which should follow (vv. 7-9), and the “many sons” Christ will bring unto glory with Him (v. 10) are all in view.

Man was made, “for a short time, lower than the angels” when he was created. He was created to possess dominion over the earth but



did not hold the sceptre at the time of his creation. Angels held the sceptre at that time, and they still hold it today. Thus, in this respect, man during the present time still finds himself in a position “lower than the angels.”

Christ was made, “for a short time, lower than the angels” when He appeared on this earth, apart from His glory, in the same position as man. He appeared in order that “he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (v. 9), with a view to bringing “many sons unto glory” (v. 10). Christ, in this position, thus provided redemption (v. 9) so that man might ultimately be placed back in the position for which he had been created (v. 10).

And with all of these things in view, again the question, Who are these angels? Since they must be angels connected with the government of this earth but cannot be angels presently ruling with the incumbent ruler, Satan (note that they are “all ministering spirits,” ministering on behalf of Christians [1:14]), there’s really only one group of angels in the Word of God which could be in view. These would have to be the angels who held positions of power and authority in Satan’s kingdom prior to his attempt to exalt his throne but refused to go along with him, for these are the only other angels in the Word of God having a direct connection with the government of the earth.

Thus, the angels mentioned in the opening verses of Hebrews would have to be identified as that two-thirds contingent of angels who refused to follow Satan in his attempted coup. And since these angels are still crowned, though not actually reigning (a principle of Biblical government necessitates an incumbent ruler retaining his crown until he is actually replaced [cf. II Sam. 1:10; Luke 4:6; Rev. 13:2]), “man” and the “son of man” could be made “for a short time, a little lower than the angels.” In relation to the government of this earth, both the First Adam and the Last Adam held crownless positions, a little lower than this particular group of angels. But man’s destiny, made possible through the redemptive work of the Last Adam, is another matter entirely.

#### MINISTERING SPIRITS

Contextually, the angelic ministry set forth in Heb. 1:14 can only

have one thing in view. These angels are presently ministering on behalf of Christians in view of these same Christians one day realizing an inheritance in a realm which they once occupied, an inheritance with the One Who has been appointed “heir of all things.” They are ministering in view of seeing Christians ultimately elevated into positions as “companions” with Christ in His kingdom, realizing, as firstborn sons, the rights of primogeniture.

Angelic ministry, in this respect, would have to be intimately connected with the spiritual warfare in which Christians presently find themselves (Eph. 6:10ff). Christians possess a “heavenly calling” (Heb. 3:1; *cf.* Phil. 3:14), a calling to one day move into, possess a heavenly land, and rule over the earth within that land as co-heirs with Christ; and the land to which they have been called is today occupied by Satan and his angels. Accordingly, a present angelic ministry “on behalf of those who are about to inherit salvation [which has to do with moving into this heavenly land and exercising regal power and authority therein],” would, of necessity, have to involve the spiritual warfare.

### *1. TWO OPPOSING SIDES*

On one side of the conflict within this spiritual warfare there are powerful angelic beings (“world-rulers of the present darkness” [Eph. 6:12, literal rendering]) seeking to hold onto presently possessed territory and their regal positions, and on the other side there are those called into existence (Christians) to one day move into and occupy this territory, bearing rule from this realm in the stead of the incumbent rulers. Territorial rights and governmental control of the earth within that territory, together, form the crux of the entire matter.

This is what the warfare in Eph. 6:10ff is all about, which can be easily seen in the type surrounding Israel’s earthly calling. Israel had passed through the experiences of Ex. 12 while in Egypt in view of the nation being removed from Egypt, placed in another land, and allowed to exercise the rights of the firstborn in that land (*cf.* Ex. 4:22, 23). That is, Israel had appropriated the blood of the paschal lambs in Egypt (redemption had been provided) in view of the nation being removed from Egypt and placed in the land of Canaan, “above all people” as “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Ex. 19:5, 6).

Once in the land, Israel was to exercise God-given kingly rights over all the Gentile nations. And not only so, but within this rule Israel was to also exercise a priestly function, being the channel through which God would pour out His blessings upon the Gentile nations.

However, the land to which Israel had been called during Moses' day was already occupied. It was occupied by Gentile nations infiltrated by individuals referred to in Scripture as "giants [Heb. *Nephilim*, the offspring of a cohabitation of angels in the kingdom of Satan with female descendants of Adam]" (Num. 13:28-33; cf. Gen. 6:4). And the Israelites were called upon to move into this land, overcome the inhabitants, and take possession.

They were to accomplish this conquest in view of fulfilling the kingly and priestly aspects of the birthright; and this was the goal toward which *everything*, beyond Ex. 12, after some fashion, moved. Exercising the rights of the firstborn in the land constituted the *purpose* for the appropriation of the blood in Egypt and the departure of the people from Egypt.

Christians, in the antitype, have appropriated the blood of the Passover Lamb while in the world ("Egypt" is always a type of the *world* in Scripture) with a view to their one day being removed from the world and placed in another land — a heavenly land — for a specific purpose; and that *purpose* has to do with exercising the rights of the firstborn in that land, with carrying out regal and priestly duties in that land.

That is to say, Christians have been saved with a view to their occupying positions as "kings and priests" (Rev. 5:10), positions as co-heirs with the great King-Priest in a heavenly land. And not only are the nations to be ruled by those occupying this land but the nations are also to be blessed through them as well (Gen. 22:17, 18).

As in the type, *everything* from the appropriation of the blood of the Passover Lamb (from the point of one's salvation) in the Christian's life moves, after some fashion, toward the Christian realizing his calling, which centers around co-heirship with Christ in a heavenly land presently occupied by Satan and his angels. Christians, as the Israelites under Moses, are to enter the land and slay "the giants," with a view to dwelling in the land and exercising the rights of the firstborn therein.

The battle today though, unlike the battle during Moses' day, is *spiritual*. It is a battle against spirit being in a heavenly land, which is why Eph. 6:12 states, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but..." The battle is against individuals in one realm who are far more powerful than man, which he cannot see or physically reach out and touch; and this is the reason help has been provided for man from another *spiritual* realm.

## 2. THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S

As the Israelites within their own strength could not go in and take the land during Moses' day (Num. 14:40-45), neither can Christians bring about such a conquest within their own strength today. The means for successful conquest of the enemy and possession of the land during Moses' day was the same as it is during the present time (*cf.* Num. 13:30; 14:42; Eph. 6:10). "*The battle is the Lord's.*" It always has been, and it always will be. He is the One Who, through His strength, gives the enemy over into the hands of those placing their trust in him (I Sam. 17:47; II Chron. 20:15).

The Lord though is seen time after time in Scripture using angels to carry out His bidding, which would include delivering His people from the hand of the enemy (*cf.* II Kings 6:17; Psa. 103:20). Angels appear to be instrumental in every aspect of God's affairs in His kingdom, with God choosing to act through surrounding Himself with angels to carry out that which He has commanded. And angels carrying out affairs in God's kingdom apparently act under fixed laws, resulting in their actions being looked upon as actions of the Lord Himself.

(A case in point would be the destruction of the cities of the Jordan plain during Abraham's day. The Lord sent angels to destroy these cities, and they carried out this destruction [Gen. 19:13]; but the Lord is also said to be the One Who destroyed these cities [Gen. 19:24, 25, 29].)

The same thing is in view in Heb. 1:14. Angels are seen performing a work which the Lord is elsewhere said to perform. That is, since the ministry of these angels, of necessity, has to center around the spiritual warfare in which Christians find themselves (since it surrounds Christians realizing an inheritance in that heavenly land presently

occupied by Satan and his angels), they are seen fighting a battle which the Lord is said to fight. And such would be in perfect keeping with angelic ministry presented elsewhere in the Word of God. The actions of these angels, acting under fixed laws, are looked upon as actions of the Lord Himself.

The ministry of these angels on behalf of Christians results in what could be looked upon as an angelic conflict — angels warring against angels (*cf.* Dan. 10:13, 20; Rev. 12:7-10). But the entire matter, in its larger scope, must also be looked upon as a conflict involving Christians warring against angels and the Lord Himself warring against angels, with *the battle being the Lord's*.

### 3. THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME

To get a better grasp of the whole spiritual warfare and to understand where things are headed, it is necessary to look at the larger picture and view Satan's kingdom both before and after his fall. And viewing Satan's kingdom after this fashion, several things must be kept in mind.

All of the angels involved in the present conflict ruled with Satan prior to his fall, which allowed *perfection* to exist within the governmental structure of his kingdom (as will be shown [*cf.* Ezek. 28:15]). After the fall though, with the split among those occupying positions of power with him, this perfection ceased to exist. Ruin, caused by sin, now marked conditions in his kingdom.

Only one-third of the angels ruling with Satan followed him in his God-dishonoring act (Rev. 12:4). The other two-thirds, synonymous with the "ministering spirits" in Heb. 1:14, refused, separating themselves from Satan. It was Satan's sin which caused this separation, but it was the separation itself which produced imperfection in the governmental structure of Satan's kingdom.

The present spiritual warfare is intimately connected with a restoration of perfection in the earth's government where imperfection presently exists, and the key to understanding the entire matter can be found in that which is revealed in the Book of Revelation about the two-thirds contingent of angels who separated themselves from Satan.

These angels are presented in the Book of Revelation as "twenty-

four elders [which could only be a representative group, referring to individuals ‘of old’ in relation to that which is in view (which in this case, as is evident from that which is revealed, would have to be *the government of the earth*)]” (cf. Rev. 4:4, 10; 5:5, 6, 8, 11, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4).

(These twenty-four elders are usually identified by expositors as representing “the Church” [by some as representing “the Church and Israel”]. However, such cannot possibly be correct.)

First, note that the twenty-four elders are not only seated on thrones and crowned (the word “seats” [KJV] should be translated, “thrones” [4:4]) but they, numerically, form *two sets of twelves*. “Twelve” is the number in Scripture of *governmental perfection*; and the fact that they are seated on thrones and crowned, along with forming two sets of twelves, shows that they would have to be somehow connected with a facet of God’s government in the universe; and the only facet of this government in view here is that of the earth. Thus, these twenty-four elders can only be looked upon as occupying regal positions of some type within the structure of the earth’s government.

Christians do not presently occupy regal positions of this nature (the earth’s government is still under angelic rule), but they one day will. However, though Christians are destined to occupy such positions, Christians cannot be represented by these twenty-four elders, for Christians will not be seated on thrones and crowned at the time this event occurs; nor would Christians cast their crowns before God’s throne if they did occupy such positions, for Christians who occupy positions with Christ during the coming age will wear their crowns as they sit on the throne with Him, not cast them before God’s throne prior to this time.

The twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne shows just the opposite of what an act of this nature should show if Christians were in view. Such an act shows the *relinquishment* of regal positions, and Christians, at this point in the Book of Revelation, will be about to *assume* regal positions.

Crowns which reigning Christians will wear when they ascend the throne with Christ are presently in existence and worn by two classes of angels — the two-thirds who refused to go along with Satan

in his attempted coup, and the one-third remaining with him. And all of these crowns will not be available for Christians until after Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation.

The fact that the twenty-four elders are connected with the government of this earth, in itself, leaves no room to question their identity. They can only be identified as *angels*, for angels alone will (as during the present time) occupy positions of such a nature at this point in the Book of Revelation. Consequently, they would have to be looked upon as representing, at least in part, angels placed by God in positions of power and authority with Satan over the earth in the beginning; and since they cannot be identified with the angels actively ruling at the present time in Satan's kingdom (*cf.* Heb. 1:14), there is only one other group of angels left — those angels who refused to follow Satan in his attempt to exalt his throne. Thus, ascertaining their identity is really a very simple matter.

(Also note the pronouns in the song which the twenty-four elders sing in Rev. 5:9, 10. The pronoun "us" in v. 9 is not in the Greek text, and the better Greek manuscripts have "them" and "they" rather than "us" and "we" in v. 10, further distinguishing the twenty-four elders from redeemed man [*ref.* ASV].)

Then in view of man assuming the sceptre, those angels represented by the twenty-four elders (presently ministering on behalf of individuals about to move into these positions of power and authority) will willingly relinquish their crowns, but crowns worn by Satan and his angels will have to be taken by force at the time of Christ's return.

The twenty-four elders are also seen wearing a type crown (a *stephanos*) which shows that even though they occupy regal positions they are not presently reigning. This type crown (in contrast to a *diadem*) shows that the wearer either actively occupied a position of power and authority in the past, but now doesn't, or that he aspires to occupy such a position in the future, though he presently doesn't (see the author's book, JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, Ch. XII).

Then the place which the twenty-four elders occupy in the Book of Revelation will further reveal their identity. They appear at a point in the book immediately following events of the judgment seat (re-

ferred to in chapter one, with judgment occurring on the basis of that which is revealed in chapters two and three ["works," resulting in Christians being shown either to have overcome or to have been overcome]). They appear at this point in the book in order to show a relinquishment of crowns in view of others (previously shown qualified at the judgment seat) possessing and wearing these crowns during the coming age (*cf.* Heb. 2:5).

The crowns relinquished by the twenty-four elders are apparently the "many crowns" which Christ will have in his possession at the time of His return (to be worn by Christ's co-heirs [Rev. 19:12]); and the crown which Satan presently wears (which Christ will wear during the millennium [*cf.* II Sam. 1:10; 5:4, 5]), and crowns worn by angels presently ruling with Satan (the remainder of the crowns to be worn by Christians), will be taken by force when Christ returns (Rev. 19:17ff). Thus, though all decisions and determinations concerning the placing of Christians in various positions in the kingdom of Christ will be made at the judgment seat, Christians will not actually receive crowns and occupy positions on the throne until after Christ returns and takes the kingdom.

Why though does Scripture show the two-thirds contingent of angels who refused to follow Satan as represented by the number "twenty-four"? Note that there are "two" sets of twelves, one set short of "three," the number of *Divine perfection*. That is, "three sets of twelves" would show *Divine perfection within a governmental structure*, which is the only way God would have established the government of this earth in the beginning; and, beyond that, viewing three sets of "twelves," He apparently established this government in accord with His Own triune being.

Remaining within this framework, there is a missing set of "twelve" in Rev. 4:4, 10. And this is exactly what is shown, for these twenty-four elders represent only *two-thirds* of the original group. The other *one-third*, the other set of "twelve," remained with Satan (Rev. 12:4). "Two" is the number of *division* in Scripture. Two sets of twelves separated themselves from Satan. "One" though is the number of *unity*. The other set of twelve remained with Satan.

As a consequence of Satan's attempt to exalt his throne, Divine perfection ceased to exist in his kingdom in more ways than one. Not



only was the domain over which he ruled brought into a state of ruin (Gen. 1:2a), but the governmental administration within his kingdom ceased to exist in its previous perfect triune state.

All of this brings us to a point concerning the coming kingdom of Christ and how it will be structured. Angels represented by the twenty-four elders will relinquish their crowns willingly in view of Christians wearing these crowns during the coming age. But these are not all of the crowns, either presently worn by angels or which Christians will wear in that future day. The full complement must be shown by *three sets of twelves*, not two sets.

The other one-third, presently ruling under Satan, must also relinquish their crowns, along with Satan himself. *Only then* can Christ and His co-heirs assume regal positions on His throne, allowing Divine perfection to once again be set forth in the government of this earth, with the government established after God's Own triune being.

*Thus, that is the goal of angelic ministry in Heb. 1:14*—redeemed man inheriting with God's Son within a restored governmental structure which will be both perfect and established after God's Own triune being. It is clear from Scripture that this is the manner in which the past government of the earth was originally established; and in the "restitution ['restoration'] of all things" the future government under God's Son could not, it will not, be established after any other fashion (Acts 3:21).

Thus, it is no wonder that the inheritance with God's Son spoken of in Heb. 1:14 — occupying a position of power and authority as co-heir with Christ within a restored, perfect government — is called, in Heb. 2:3, "*so great salvation.*"

### THEREFORE...

Because of that which the Spirit of God reveals through the writer of Hebrews in chapter one, especially verse fourteen, a two-part statement is immediately given. In Heb. 2:1, Christians are *compelled* on the one hand and *warned* on the other. They are *compelled* concerning the necessity of keeping one's attention fixed on the inheritance which lies out ahead, and they are *warned* concerning the consequences of not so doing.

Hebrews 2:1 could be better translated:

“Because of this it is necessary, so much the more, to keep our attention fixed upon the things which we have heard, lest, at any time, we might drift away.”

“Because of this,” of course, refers back to that which has previously been stated; and the words, “it is necessary,” refer to the Divine destiny of man and to man being compelled (within the scope of this Divine destiny, on the basis of that which has been revealed to him) to attain to a particular goal. Man was created for a purpose which will ultimately be realized; and man understanding this purpose, along with that which is presently being done on his behalf in order to bring him into a realization of this purpose (revealed in chapter one), should be compelled to exert every effort within his being to reach the desired goal.

And, “so much the more,” compulsion should cause that person *to keep his attention fixed on the things which he has heard* (things revealed in chapter one). One’s attention must be focused on the *goal*, as in putting one’s hand to the plow (Luke 9:62), or in running the race (Heb. 12:1, 2). If a person does otherwise, according to the text, there is an ever-present danger of drifting away rather than attaining the goal of his calling.

Christians have been compelled to excel in the race of the faith through God’s revelation concerning that which lies at the end of the race (*cf.* I Cor. 9:24-27; I Tim. 6:12; Heb. 12:1, 2); and God has made the necessary provision (angelic ministry, etc.) for victory.

Christians have been saved with a view to their running the race in a satisfactory manner, not failing to so run. But along with God’s revelation compelling Christians to keep their eyes fixed on the goal is also His warning concerning that which will occur should Christians choose to direct their attention elsewhere.



# 3

## God Has Spoken

**Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.**

**For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;**

**How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;**

**God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will? (Heb. 2:1-4).**

The first of the five major warnings in the Book of Hebrews actually begins with chapter two. All of chapter one provides introductory material which leads into this first warning. And neither this warning nor any one of the other four warnings can be properly understood apart from this introductory material.

When expositors go astray in interpreting Hebrews — *i.e.*, for example, when they understand Hebrews to be a book dealing with issues surrounding eternal salvation and thus view the warning passages as God's dealing with the unsaved (a common misinterpretation of the book) — it can invariably be traced back to a misunder-

standing of chapter one and the connection this chapter has with the remainder of the book. The Spirit of God led individuals to begin that which they wrote after certain fashions for particular reasons, and Hebrews provides as good of an example of this as can be found in Scripture. Hebrews is a book built around five major warnings, and the first fourteen verses of the book, comprising the first chapter, set the tone for not only the first warning but for the remaining four as well.

The entire first chapter, made up mainly of quotations from the Old Testament, centers around the thought of *heirship*. Christ has been appointed “heir of all things” (v. 2); and when He comes into His inheritance, He will have many “fellows [‘companions’]” with Him (v. 9), who are spoken of as those “who shall be heirs of salvation [*lit.*, ‘who are about to inherit salvation’]” (v. 14). Christ’s future ‘companions’ are Christians who will inherit as co-heirs with Him in that day.

Then, there are the seven Old Testament quotations, from which most of the teaching is drawn in this introductory chapter (vv. 5-13). These quotations are all Messianic in their scope of fulfillment and present a complete, composite Messianic portrait of Christ, drawing from that which the Spirit of God had previously revealed concerning Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The first chapter has one central focus: a forward look to that day when Christ and His companions ascend the throne together and rule the earth with a rod of iron for one thousand years. This chapter then leads immediately into the first warning, recorded in chapter two, which sets the tone for the other four warnings in the book. In this respect, contextually, it is possible to understand all five warnings only one way — *as warnings directed to Christians relative to the inheritance which lies out ahead.*

Then, the very nature of the way the first warning begins in chapter two should eliminate all controversy. This warning begins with the word “Therefore,” or more literally, “Because of this.” Because of what? It’s very simple — Because of that which has preceded in chapter one.

Introductory material has been given, and now the Spirit of God can move beyond this material and sound the first warning to Christians without the possibility of being misunderstood (provided one

heeds the introductory material). If though one ignores this introductory material...

### THEREFORE

Hebrews 2:1 could be better translated:

“Because of this it is necessary, so much the more, to keep our attention fixed upon the things which we have heard, lest, at any time, we might drift away.”

Because of that which precedes, especially the immediately preceding verse dealing with Christians as “those who are about to inherit salvation” (v. 14), Christians are *compelled* on the one hand and *warned* on the other. They are *compelled* concerning the necessity of keeping their attention fixed on the inheritance which lies out ahead, and they are *warned* concerning the consequences of not so doing.

Christians, through the birth from above, through being firstborn children of God, possess a birthright. They are in line to inherit the rights of the firstborn, the rights of primogeniture. This is what chapter one is about — Christ (as God’s firstborn Son) one day coming into possession of His inheritance, and Christians (as firstborn children, awaiting the adoption) coming into possession of this same inheritance as co-heirs with Him.

And the heart of all the warning passages, reflecting back on material in chapter one, surrounds the fact that it is possible for a Christian to forfeit his birthright and fail to realize this inheritance. The entire matter is looked upon from different angles in the first four warnings, viewing the inheritance from different perspectives and showing different facets of the present pilgrim walk, warning and exhorting Christians. Then the fifth and final warning deals with the matter in a more direct manner, summing up the previous four warnings by drawing from the account of Esau forfeiting his birthright (Heb. 12:14-17; cf. Gen. 25:27-34; 27:1-38).

The thought in Heb. 2:1 is very similar to the thought set forth in Heb. 12:2 where Christians, running the race of the faith, are exhorted to center their attention upon Jesus. Literally (drawing from the Greek

text) Christians are to *look away from* anything which could distract and *look unto* Jesus alone in the course of the race.

In Heb. 12:2, the person upon Whom we are to keep our attention fixed is described 1) as the One Who, at Calvary, kept His attention fixed on “the joy that was set before him [the day when He and His co-heirs would rule and reign over the earth]” and 2) as the One Who is presently seated at God’s right hand, anticipating that future day when “the joy” will be realized (*cf.* Heb. 1:13); and in Heb. 2:1, it is the overall scope of this future inheritance upon which we are to keep our attention fixed — *Christ* as the appointed “heir of all things” and *Christians* as those who are about to come into the position of “companions” with Him.

The danger of not keeping our eyes fixed on the goal in either passage is the same. In Heb. 2:1, the thought is that of drifting away from these things (as a ship, because of improper navigation by the crew, might drift past its mooring) and in the end, because of this, fail to realize the goal of our calling; and in Heb. 12:1, 2, the thought is that of failing in the race of the faith and, as a consequence, fail to realize the goal of our calling. In each instance the goal is the same. It is as outlined in the opening chapter of the book — coming into the position of co-heir with the One Who has been appointed “heir of all things.”

“It is necessary, so much the more, to keep our attention fixed upon the things which we have heard” — *i.e.*, in the light of Heb. 12:2, our attention is to be fixed upon Jesus, the “heir of all things”; and by fixing our attention upon Him, our attention will also be fixed upon the coming inheritance of the saints. Our attention cannot really be fixed upon one apart from the other, for they are inseparably related. Christ, within the scope of the inheritance given to Him by the Father, cannot be separated from His co-heirs, for *both* are to exercise the rights of primogeniture *together*.

Jesus paid the price for His co-heirs’ redemption at Calvary, and, at the same time, had His eyes fixed upon “the joy set before him” (referring to that day when He and those for whom He was paying redemption’s price [His shed blood] would occupy the throne together [*ref.* the author’s book, RUN TO WIN, Ch. III]). There is no such thing as viewing Calvary in its proper perspective apart from viewing this future inheritance, just as there is no such thing as viewing Christ

in a proper perspective as “heir of all things” apart from also viewing the “companions” which He will have with Him in that day. The *glory* must follow the *sufferings*, and Christ and His co-heirs, within the scope of this future glory, *must realize the inheritance together*. *Sufferings, glory, Heir, co-heirs* are all inseparably related, one to the other.

We *must* fix our attention upon *the Christ of the Scriptures*, the “heir of all things”; we *must* look at redemption’s price, paid at Calvary, the same way Christ looked at it — “for the joy set before him...” If we don’t, “at any time, we might drift away” from these things. And such a drifting away — an erroneous course in the navigation of one’s life — will, unless corrective action is taken, ultimately result in tragic consequences.

#### A JUST RECOMPENSE OF REWARD

Two things are brought to light in Heb. 2:2: 1) “The word spoken by angels was steadfast,” and 2) “every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward.”

God gave His Word to Moses at Sinai through the instrumentality of angels (*cf.* Deut. 33:2; Psa. 68:17; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19), and that which they spoke was “steadfast [*i.e.*, ‘settled,’ ‘established’].” This word was given “perfect” in the beginning (Psa. 12:6); it was “firm,” “established” at the time it was given. And the Israelites’ adherence to or departure from this Word always resulted in that which Scripture calls, “a just recompense of reward,” referring to *payment exactly commensurate with services rendered*.

God told Moses at this time, “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Ex. 19:5, 6). The matter was then later reiterated at length, along with the negative side, as recorded in both Lev. 26:3ff and Deut. 28:1ff.

God always acts in perfect accord with that which He has revealed, that which is “steadfast”: “If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them: Then I will...” Or, “But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that



ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will..." (cf. Lev. 26:3, 4, 14-16; Deut. 28:1, 2, 15).

The latter is what Heb. 2:2 deals with — acting contrary to God's revealed Word and ultimately receiving "a just recompense of reward." Receiving such a recompense has to do with receiving exactly what a person deserves, and such a recompense must *always* be based on the person's actions in the light of revealed Truth.

*God will not act apart from His revealed Word, and He will always act in perfect accord with this Word.* This is the reason that there must always be "a just recompense of reward."

God had revealed certain things to the Israelites, and, numerous times, they acted contrary to revealed Truth. Ultimately, they always reaped exactly what they had sown (cf. Gal. 6:7, 8). There was always a just recompense, for if such a recompense had not been forthcoming, God would not have acted in complete accord with His Word. Apart from such a recompense, God would not have been perfectly just and righteous in His dealings.

This is the reason for God's wrath falling upon the Israelites at Sinai, the subsequent overthrow of an entire generation in the wilderness, the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities centuries later, and the worldwide dispersion of the Jewish people today. God has rendered a just recompense, *based on the actions of His people with respect to His Word.* God has done *exactly* what He said that He would do. His actions in relation to that which He revealed in His Word have been *exactly commensurate* with Israel's actions in relation to that which He revealed in this same Word. There has been "a just recompense of reward."

### HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE

The heart of the warning now comes into view, and the thought turns from that which happened to the Israelites (who acted contrary to God's Word) to that which will also happen to Christians (who act contrary to God's Word). God dealt with the Israelites after a just fashion, based upon that which He had revealed in His Word; and God will, in like manner, also deal with Christians after the same just fashion, based upon the same thing — that which He has revealed in

His Word.

The question is asked, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" How shall we escape what? The answer is obvious. How shall we escape "a just recompense of reward"? God's people did not escape in the past, and they, in like fashion, cannot escape today. That is, the Israelites did not escape in past time (v. 2), and neither can Christians escape during the present time (v. 3).

God spoke to the Israelites "at sundry times and in divers manners...in time past...by ['in'] the prophets," and He has spoken unto Christians "in these last days...by his Son ['in Son']" (Heb. 1:1, 2). The Word in either instance is the same in the sense that it is *God's Word*. That which was given to man through the Son "in these last days" is no different, insofar as its power or binding force is concerned, than that which was previously given through Jewish prophets. It is *all* the Word of the same individual. It is *all* God's Word, which is *settled, established, perfect*.

The actions of the Israelites in the past, in relation to that which God had said, pertained to *an earthly calling*; and the actions of Christians today, in relation to that which God has said, pertains to a *heavenly calling*. The Israelites, following the appropriation of the blood of the paschal lambs (the point of beginning), were called to depart Egypt and go to another land, the land of Canaan. And Christians, in like manner, following the appropriation of the blood of the Passover Lamb (the point of beginning), have been called to separate themselves from this world ("Egypt" is always a type of the *world* in Scripture) in view of one day inhabiting another land, a heavenly land.

The generation of Israelites which left Egypt, because of "transgression and disobedience" (save Caleb and Joshua), failed to realize that to which they had been called. They failed to realize their earthly inheritance. They were overthrown in the wilderness, on the right side of the blood (eternally saved) but on the wrong side of the goal of their calling (entrance into the land of Canaan in a position "above all people" as a "kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" [Ex. 19:5, 6]). They forfeited and were denied the rights of the firstborn (*cf.* Ex. 4:22, 23).

The Spirit of God in I Cor. 10:1-11 makes it very clear that the

experiences of the Israelites “happened unto them for ensamples [Gk. *tupoi*, ‘types]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [‘ages’] are come” (v. 11; cf. v.6 where the Gk. word translated “examples” is also *tupoi*). That which happened to Israel happened as types for us.

God, within His sovereign control of matters, allowed these things to occur; and these things have been recorded so God can draw from the type and teach His people numerous spiritual truths in the antitype. That is, God has these events surrounding Israel’s earthly calling to draw from in order to teach Christians things surrounding their heavenly calling.

And many of “the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:10) surrounding the Christians’ heavenly calling can be found *only* in the types surrounding Israel’s earthly calling. The Spirit of God didn’t move different men to record the actions of the Israelites through hundreds of pages in the Old Testament just to provide man with a history of this nation. God’s purpose goes far beyond that. All historical incidents in the Old Testament form types. This is the manner in which God has seen fit to give His revelation to man, and anyone who would study and teach that which God has revealed in the Old Testament *must* study and teach it after the fashion in which it was written.

In the antitype of Israel’s past experiences is the Christians’ present experiences, which is exactly what is referred to in Heb. 2:2, 3. If “the word spoken by angels was steadfast [and it was], and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward [and they did], How shall we escape, if...[we won’t, we can’t]? God has established the experiences of the Israelites as types for us. That which occurred in the type will also occur in the antitype. One is an exact replica of the other.

God has established this in His Word, and it is a settled matter. God acting in accord with His Word must act in accord with the type which He has established. There can be no deviation from this established pattern. This is the reason that we can’t escape if we, relative to our heavenly calling, follow a parallel course of action to that which the Israelites followed relative to their earthly calling. They didn’t escape in the type, and we can’t escape in the antitype; there was “a just recompense of reward” in the type, and there will be “a just

recompense of reward” in the antitype.

As the generation of Israelites which left Egypt, because of “transgression and disobedience” (save Caleb and Joshua), failed to realize that to which they had been called (an earthly inheritance), so will it be for Christians who follow a parallel course of action relative to their heavenly calling (which involves a heavenly inheritance). And as the Israelites were overthrown on the right side of the blood but on the wrong side of the goal of their calling, so will like-minded Christians be overthrown. The Israelites forfeited and were denied the rights of the firstborn, and numerous Christians are presently forfeiting and will, in the coming kingdom, be denied these same rights.

### 1. IF WE NEGLECT

The word “neglect” is a translation of the Greek word *ameleo*, which means, “to be unconcerned about,” “to care nothing for,” to disregard.” This word is used four other places in the New Testament: Matt. 22:5; I Tim. 4:14; Heb. 8:9; II Peter 1:12.

In Matt. 22:5, certain individuals “made light of,” they “disregarded” an invitation to the festivities surrounding a royal wedding; in I Tim. 4:14, Timothy is warned to not “neglect,” “disregard” the gift given to him; in Heb. 8:9, the Israelites had failed to keep the Lord’s covenant — they had “disregarded” that which the Lord had said — and He, exactly as He had said that He would do, had correspondingly “disregarded” them. They reaped exactly what they had sown. And in the last usage, in II Peter 1:12, the writer explained that he would “not be negligent” to keep the attention of those to whom he was writing channeled in the proper direction by keeping them “always in remembrance of these things [things having to do with Christian maturity in relation to the Lord’s return and an *abundant entrance* ‘into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’ (vv. 2-11; cf. vv. 15-19)].”

Understanding how the Greek word *ameleo* is used in several of the preceding passages will suffice to show exactly how this word is also use in Heb. 2:3 (note that which is in view in three of the four references where this word is found [Matt. 22:5; Heb. 8:9; II Peter 1:12]. It is man’s attitude [and resulting action on his part] toward that which the Lord has revealed in His Word).

The parable of the wedding festival in Matt. 22:2-14 provides three different invitations to two groups of individuals, requesting their attendance at a royal wedding. The first group was invited on two different occasions. The first time the invitation was extended, Scripture states that they simply “would not come” (v. 3); and the second time the invitation was extended, these individuals not only “made light of” the invitation, but some of them went so far as to extend ill treatment to the King’s servants who, on behalf of the King, extended the invitation (vv. 4-6). Then the King sent His servants out with the message a third time, to other individuals. Some of these individuals showed a proper attitude toward the invitation (vv. 10, 14), but others didn’t (vv. 11-14).

The wedding festivities in view are those surrounding the marriage of God’s Son. The first two times the invitation was extended had to do with God’s servants sent to the Israelites, along with the Israelites’ response. It is the same as in the immediately preceding parable of the Householder and His vineyard (21:33-44).

Then, following judgment falling upon the Israelites for their attitude toward this invitation (21:41; 22:7), the King’s servants were sent to a different group of individuals — the group called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected, the Church (21:43; 22:8-10). Some from this last group accepted the invitation (vv. 10, 14), but others didn’t (vv. 11-14). And the emphasis in this part of the parable, as in the first part, is upon those who rejected the invitation.

The man appearing at the wedding festivities improperly clothed in verses eleven through thirteen would, in the light of verse fourteen, be representative of many like-minded individuals. He appeared without a wedding garment, and the way the Greek text is worded (vv. 11, 12) shows that the man knew he was supposed to have a wedding garment but deliberately, willingly refused to provide himself with one. Consequently, when the King came in and asked the man what he was doing at the festivities, knowing that he was improperly clothed, “*he was speechless.*” There was nothing he could say, for his innermost thoughts had been revealed — laid bare before the all-searching eyes of the King (*cf.* Rev. 1:14) — through the question which had been asked.

The attitude of numerous Christians during the present dispensation toward the invitation to attend the festivities surrounding the marriage of God's Son is no different than that exhibited by the Israelites in the past dispensation. Christians are making light of this invitation; there is an utter disregard for that which God has revealed about the matter, recorded in His Word. And the end result will be, it can only be, the same as that which Israel experienced for doing exactly the same thing.

The Israelites, acting contrary to God's Word in the past, did not escape a just recompense of reward; and neither can Christians acting contrary to this Word escape today. The Israelites disregarded that which the Lord had said, and He correspondingly disregarded them (Heb. 8:9). And Christians are warned in Heb. 2:2, 3 that if they "neglect ['disregard'] so great salvation," the Lord will extend like treatment to them, in perfect keeping with His Word.

We, as expressed in II Peter 1:12, must not disregard that which the Lord has revealed about His return and coming kingdom. We must, rather, keep these things "always in remembrance." Even though we "know" these things and are "established in the present truth," we still *must* keep these things uppermost in our thinking. We *must* keep our eyes fixed on the goal out ahead (*cf.* Heb. 12:2).

If we don't, according to Heb. 2:1, there is an ever-present danger of *drifting away* from these things. And continuing on to Heb. 2:3, there would correspondingly be an ever-present danger of *neglecting, disregarding* "so great salvation."

## 2. SO GREAT SALVATION

Understood contextually, "so great salvation" would have to refer to the same salvation previously mentioned in Heb. 1:14 — Christians inheriting as co-heirs with the "heir of all things," realizing the rights of the firstborn. This is the "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time...the salvation of your souls" (I Peter 1:5, 9).

Further, the message surrounding this salvation "began to be spoken by the Lord," it "was confirmed unto us by them that heard him," and it was attended by "signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Heb. 2:3b, 4).

The Lord and His disciples offered to Israel the kingdom of the

heavens (a rule from heavenly places as co-heirs with the Heir); and this message was attended by signs, wonders, and miracles, which were the credentials of the messengers, bearing witness concerning the validity of the message which they proclaimed. They were “powers of the world [‘age’] to come” (Heb. 6:5; cf. Isa. 35:1, 5, 6; Matt. 4:17, 23-25; 10:7, 8), powers of that coming day, not the present day.

The salvation in view is that which was taken from Israel and is presently being offered to Christians (Matt. 21:43). And though the offer is no longer attended by signs, wonders, and miracles (it was the Jew who required a sign [I Cor. 1:22]), that which is stated in Heb. 2:3b, 4, as that which is stated in Heb. 1:14, leaves no room to question what is meant by “so great salvation.”

The Spirit of God in Heb. 2:3 chose to use a qualifying word, setting this salvation apart. The thought is not that of Christians (“we”) *disregarding* “salvation,” but that of Christians *disregarding* “so great salvation.”

The adjective in the Greek text translated “so great [Gk. *telikoutos*]” is only found three other places in the New Testament (II Cor. 1:10; James 3:4; Rev. 16:18); and its full force can be seen in the latter reference, in Rev. 16:18: “...there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty [*telikoutos*] an earthquake, and so great.”

The earthquake in Rev. 16:18 will occur in connection with the termination of God’s judgments during the Tribulation. The seventh vial poured out in the preceding verse (v. 17) will complete God’s judgments upon the earth-dwellers, preceding His Son’s return. The words, “It is done,” at the end of the verse are the translation of a perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating action completed in past time with the results of this action extending into the present and existing in a finished state. The succeeding four verses (vv. 18-21) simply describe, in brief form, the completion of God’s judgments within the seventh vial in verse seventeen. Then chapters seventeen and eighteen elaborate more in detail concerning these judgments.

The evident thought incorporated into Heb. 2:3 and Rev. 16:18 through the use of the word *telikoutos* is that, in each instance, something *unexampled* is being dealt with. In Revelation it is “so mighty an

earthquake [one beyond anything having previously existed on the earth, dating all the way back to the days of Adam],” and in Hebrews it is “so great salvation [the greatest thing God could ever design for redeemed man, for it has to do with removing man from the earth and positioning him in the heavens as co-heir with the ‘heir of all things’].”

It is such a salvation as this — *so great salvation* — that is in view. God is the designer, He has declared it to be something unexampled, and He has offered it to redeemed man. Resultingly, God is not going to countenance individuals whom He has redeemed through the finished work of His Son *making light of, disregarding* this salvation.





# 4

## The World to Come

**For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.**

**For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:5, 10).**

The first warning must not be separated from its context, either preceding or following. The verses preceding the first warning set the tone for not only this warning but the succeeding four warnings as well, along with the book at large; and the verses which follow the first warning continue with the same line of thought.

“So great salvation” in Heb. 2:3 is not the salvation which we presently possess. Rather it is a *future salvation*, and it is clearly set forth as such in the immediately preceding context, in the text itself, and in the context which immediately follows.

*The immediately preceding context (1:1-14)* has to do with Christ exercising the rights of the firstborn during the coming Messianic Era and with Christians exercising these same rights as companions, co-heirs with Him. It has to do with the time when God will again bring His firstborn Son (the One Who is to exercise the rights of primogeniture), the “heir of all things,” into the inhabited world (vv. 2, 5, 6); and

it has to do with those redeemed individuals who are to appear as His companions, inheriting with him in that day (vv. 9, 14).

*The text itself (2:1-4)* begins by referring back to material in chapter one (2:1a), and the warning has its basis entirely in this introductory material. The salvation in Heb. 2:3 is the same as the salvation in verse fourteen of the introductory material. That is, coming into possession of “so great salvation” (2:3) is the same as inheriting “salvation” (1:14); and inheriting salvation (or realizing “so great salvation”) is the same as realizing the rights of the firstborn, inheriting as companions with Christ (God’s Firstborn, His “appointed heir of all things” [1:2, 5, 6, 9]).

*Then the context which immediately follows (2:5ff)* has to do with a rule in the inhabited world to come (2:5) when many sons will be brought unto glory to realize the rights of the firstborn with God’s firstborn Son, Jesus (2:10). In short, it has to do with man, after 6,000 years, finally being brought into the position for which he was created in the beginning. Christ, “the second man,” “the last Adam,” will take the kingdom and ascend the throne, along with numerous companions from among those whom He has redeemed.

This is what the Book of Hebrews is about, and attempts by individuals to read into various texts in this book that which is not there (e.g., using Heb. 2:3 as an evangelistic text, a text relating to our presently possessed eternal salvation) can only result in confusion; and such confusion in Biblical exposition manifests itself in two different realms:

1) Using texts which have no relationship to the subject being taught will often result in heretical doctrine. This, for example, is why the controversy rages today within the ranks of so-called evangelical Christianity over the Lordship Salvation issue. Verses which have nothing whatsoever to do with eternal salvation have been removed from their contexts and made to refer to eternal salvation, something which the verses don’t refer to at all. Resultingly, the pure, simple gospel of the grace of God has become corrupted, and confusion abounds on every hand in the very realm of soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) itself.

2) And, using texts which have no relationship to the subject being taught will close the door to that which actually is being taught. This

is the primary reason the Word of the Kingdom (the message concerning the salvation of the soul, inheriting as companions with Christ, etc.) is not being proclaimed from the pulpits of Churches throughout the land today. Over the years expositors have closed the door to this teaching through a misinterpretation and misapplication of verses which deal with the subject. Resultingly, the Churches today are filled with Christians who are Biblically illiterate concerning the Word of the Kingdom, the one subject which should be uppermost in the minds of all Christians.

God said what He meant and meant what He said when He, through the Holy Spirit, moved men to record His Word. In the Book of Hebrews, when He spoke about bringing His firstborn Son back into the inhabited world to exercise the rights of primogeniture (1:2, 5, 6), He meant exactly that; and when He spoke about the Son having companions who would ascend the throne with Him as co-heirs in the kingdom (1:9), He meant exactly that also; and when He spoke about Christ's companions entering into this inheritance in synonymous terms with their entering into "salvation" (1:14), or their realizing "so great salvation" (2:3), He meant exactly that too. And for man to begin ignoring that which God has said, reading into various texts things which God didn't mean at all, is one of the tragedies of the age.

Connected with this is a present-day irony — something seen quite often in Christian circles. Individuals stand up and vigorously contend for the plenary, verbal inspiration of Scripture (*i.e.*, full inspiration, extending to the very words and letters of words), but they themselves then turn right around and pay little attention to the exact wording of that for which they have vigorously contended. They gloss over a text or words in a text, interpreting Scripture within a preset mold of theological thought, and often end up with a teaching completely alien to that which is actually stated in the text.

It goes without saying that the inspiration of Scripture must be looked upon in a plenary, verbal sense. Anything short of this would be out of line with that which Scripture reveals about itself (*cf.* Psa. 12:6; II Tim. 3:16). That which God gave through man for man is, it can only be, the very Word of God, spoken by God Himself.

Redeemed man must recognize and keep in mind that he has a book of this nature which tells him exactly what God wants him to

know about the past, the present, and the future. God has put this revelation of Himself, His plans, and His purposes together after a certain fashion. And it is incumbent upon man to study this book with these things in mind.

Man must pay attention to the exact wording of Scripture. He must look at words within the sentences which they form; and he must look at these words, a combination of several words, or the sentences which they form within the texts or contexts in which the words or sentences are found. Only after this fashion will redeemed man come into a proper understanding of that which God has revealed.

### A CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT

In the opening verses of Hebrews, God's revelation of His plans and purposes has to do with a change in the government of the earth. These verses reveal the outworking — after 6,000 years of time, after the completion of Man's Day — of God's original purpose for bringing man into existence. In the opening verses of Genesis, man was created to "have dominion" over the earth and all that is upon the earth (Gen. 1:26-28); and the Book of Hebrews reveals the outworking of God's plans and purposes in this realm.

Christ as "the second man," "the last Adam," is to occupy the position for which "the first man Adam" had been created, and from which he fell. He is God's "appointed heir of all things." And numerous individuals, redeemed through the finished work of "the last Adam," are to ascend the throne with Him as "companions," "co-heirs," in that day.

However, positions of this nature with Christ in the kingdom are not to be entered into merely on the basis of one's eternal salvation. These positions are to be earned by those who will ultimately occupy them. Faithful household servants, bringing forth fruit resulting from their faithfulness, will be the ones who enter into these positions. And Hebrews has been written with these things in view, relating the unsearchable riches of Christ and then exhorting, warning, and encouraging Christians concerning present faithfulness in view of that which lies out ahead.

### 1. NOT SUBJECTED TO ANGELS

The text plainly states, “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world [‘inhabited world’] to come...” (2:5). The government of the existing inhabited world is under angelic control. Angels hold the sceptre. But the government of the coming inhabited world will be under man’s control. Angels will relinquish control; and man, in the stead of angels, will then hold the sceptre.

(The Greeks used the word translated “world [‘inhabited world’]” in this passage [*oikoumene*; see also Heb. 1:6] referring to their world, a seat of settled government, as opposed to the unsettled state of affairs existing among the barbarians. Though this thought would fit the text, there is not really a usage after this fashion in other parts of the New Testament [e.g., Matt. 24:14; Luke 2:1; 4:5; 21:26]. The word is used in the Greek New Testament relative to the present world under Satan as well as the coming world under Christ.)

When this change in the government occurs — when “the kingdom of the world” *becomes* “the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Rev. 11:15, ASV) — it will be an entirely new form of government in God’s universe. Angels, since the beginning, have always been the ones who ruled, under God, over provinces throughout the galaxies of the universe. God has Messianic angels who rule over different provinces (Satan is the Messianic angel ruling over the province upon which we live), and there are numerous gradations of angels ruling under them.

God rules His universe through angels after this fashion, and though we’re told very little about angelic rule outside the one province upon which we live, there is no indication that God has ever ruled any part of the universe in any manner other than through angels. The earth has never been ruled after any other fashion, even though the provincial ruler disqualified himself (along with those angels ruling with him) ages ago. And, coupled with this fact, matters surrounding God’s creation of man and His plans and purposes for the earth would appear to clearly indicate that no change has occurred in the government at any point in the universe since the time of its institution as well.

Man’s creation is intimately connected with God’s government,

not only with the government of the earth but with the government of the universe itself. In this respect, God had in mind a *near* and a *far* purpose for man's creation. The *immediate, near* purpose had to do with the government of the earth; and the *ultimate, far* purpose had to do with the government of the universe.

Man was created, first of all, to rule in the stead of angels over the one province in the universe where rebellion against God's supreme authority entered into the ranks of the one holding the sceptre. Satan sought to exalt his throne and occupy the place which God Himself held. He became dissatisfied with ruling under God over one province and sought to become the supreme ruler over all the provinces in the universe. This was an attempted coup on his part, and he led one-third of his subordinate rulers to participate in this God-dishonoring act (Isa. 14:13, 14; Rev. 12:4). The end result was Satan's disqualification to continue holding the sceptre and the creation of man as the one to whom God would ultimately give the sceptre (Gen. 1:26, 28; Ezek. 28:15, 16).

Man thought didn't immediately assume control of the earth's government at the time of his creation; and, because of his sin, resulting from Satanic deception, he has yet to hold the sceptre. Adam fell as the federal head of the human race *before* he took the reigns of world government, which allowed the incumbent ruler, Satan, to continue on the throne. And Satan will continue to occupy his present position until such a time as God places man back in the position where he can hold the sceptre.

This is what the appearance of "the second man," "the last Adam," is all about. He appeared in order to redeem that which "the first man Adam," almost 6,000 years ago, forfeited in the fall. And, as the new Federal Head, He and redeemed man will one day take the sceptre and rule in the stead of Satan and his angels.

Christ and His co-heirs are to first rule the earth for 1,000 years, bringing order out of disorder, producing a cosmos where a chaos previously existed (I Cor. 15:24-28). They are to rule after this fashion from the heavens on the Son's throne in the new Jerusalem (Heb. 3:1; Rev. 3:21). A governmental rule of this nature is what is referred to in Heb. 2:5. Government in the "inhabited world to come" will be removed from angelic control and be placed under man's control.

Then, beyond that point — beyond the Messianic Era — the

government of the universe is to be centered in the new Jerusalem upon the new earth. God Himself will dwell upon the new earth, ruling the universe from this point; and Christ, along with redeemed man, will then exercise power which can only be universal in scope. Power will emanate from “the throne of God and of the Lamb [a throne associated with universal rule],” and man will have a part in the exercise of this power (Rev. 22:1, 3, 5).

The creation of man is an act peculiar to this earth, resulting from Satan seeking to exalt his throne. The fact that no other creature like man exists in the universe is evident. God’s future dealings with the universe center around His Son (“the second man,” “the last Adam”), around the descendants of Adam (redeemed man), and around the earth (the new earth). Man was created on the earth in God’s image, after His likeness, for purposes having to do with God’s government (Gen. 1:26) — this earth first, and then the universe.

Man will rule over this earth in the stead of angels during the coming Messianic Era; but during the eternal ages when he finds himself associated with governmental power of a universal nature, he will apparently occupy a position somehow associated with angelic rule. God will have numerous individuals, created in His Own image, after His likeness, exercising power with Him from His throne. And such individuals will apparently occupy positions of some type under God but above Messianic angels ruling in provinces throughout the universe (*cf.* I Cor. 6:3).

In this respect, the creation of man would, of necessity, have to be an act peculiar to Adam on this earth. Everything in Scripture bearing on the subject points to the creation of an individual in God’s image, after His likeness, occurring only at one time and place in all the universe — almost 6,000 years ago on this earth. And the plans and purposes of God outlined in Scripture, as they pertain to man, center around bringing to pass all that God had in mind when He brought man into existence.

This is the reason why it is all-important to understand aright the opening chapters of Genesis. If a person goes wrong here, he will be wrong the rest of the way.

## 2. *WHEREOF WE SPEAK*

The inhabited world to come stands in opposition to the inhabited



world of the present time. Angelic rule continues in the present inhabited world, but this will not be the case in the inhabited world to come. "All things" are not presently placed under man, much less under Christ (Heb. 2:6-9), but this will one day change (Heb. 2:10).

The present state of the world (fallen man residing on an earth which is both under a curse and under the rule of fallen angels) is the reason that sin, death, and corruption mark the course of the present age. We reside in a world under Satanic rule and control, which can have only one destiny. God is allowing this world system under Satan — a system which is progressively growing more corrupt with each passing day — to continue on its present course up to a certain point in time. God will then step in, and through the actions of the One to Whom He will have given the kingdom (Dan. 7:14; cf. Luke 19:12), *sudden*, *swift*, and *complete* destruction will occur (Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; 8:25).

This is the reason that Christ did not meddle in or seek to alter the course of world affairs at His first coming, and this is the reason that Christians should govern their lives after the same fashion today. The time when God will step in and bring about a change has not yet come (cf. Matt. 12:20); and when that time does come, there will be no long process of resistance to the present state of affairs (something which had no place in Christ's ministry while on earth, and something which should likewise have no place in a Christian's life).

Rather, when the time does come, there will be a *sudden* smiting of Gentile world power under Satan; and through that which will occur, destruction is going to be *swift* and *complete*. This destruction of Gentile world power will occur as a result of Christ's direct intervention, and it will take place after such a fashion that all His garments will be stained with the blood of those slain, blood which will run even unto the depth of "the horse bridles." And this destruction will be so complete that there will be no opposition whatsoever left (Isa. 63:3; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:17-21).

Not only will such befall the earth-dwellers, but Satan will be removed from the scene immediately afterwards (Rev. 20:1-3). The kingdom under Satan, along with his angels, will, at that point in time, cease to exist. It will have been totally destroyed, allowing Christ and His co-heirs to then move in and assume control of the government

(Rev. 20:4-6).

The Book of Hebrews sets before us, not the present inhabited world under Satan, but the inhabited world to come, which will be under the control of Christ and His co-heirs. It holds before us *a better day out ahead*. Man, following the kingdom being given to the Son and the subsequent destruction of the present world system, will rule in that world, in the stead of angels; and the writer of Hebrews states that this is the subject matter at hand. *This is what he has been talking about.*

The words, “whereof we speak,” could be better translated, “concerning which we are speaking,” or “about which we are speaking.” That is, the inhabited world to come, in which man will hold the sceptre, is what the writer had been talking about in the preceding verses. That’s what the first warning is about, and that’s what the verses leading into this warning are about.

These verses are about God’s “appointed heir of all things” coming into possession of His inheritance and about Christians inheriting as “companions” with Him (1:2, 5, 6, 9), which is referred to as a future inherited “salvation,” called “so great salvation” (1:14; 2:3). And the corresponding warning passage (2:1-4) centers around the fact that through a Christian’s failure to keep his attention centered on the things having to do with the Son’s inheritance and his own coming inheritance — a failure to keep his attention centered on the goal out ahead (*cf.* Heb. 12:1, 2) — it is possible for him to fail to enter into that inheritance, fail to reach that goal. He can, through governing his life after this fashion, forfeit the proffered inheritance with God’s Son and find himself rejected, find himself among those Christians having failed to win in the race of the faith (*cf.* I Cor. 9:24-27).

And when the writer of Hebrews states that he has been talking about the inhabited world to come, he has all these things in view, plus numerous other related things revealed in the previous verses (*ref.* Chs. I-III). It *all* centers around the Heir and His companions exercising regal power together in that coming day.

### RULERS IN THE KINGDOM

The coming kingdom of Christ will have numerous regents and vice-regents, both in the heavenly sphere and in the earthly sphere.

Christ and His co-heirs will reign from the new Jerusalem in the heavens above the earth, from Christ's throne; and Christ will also reign from the earthly Jerusalem, seated on David's throne, with Israel placed in her rightful place at the head of the nations. The rule will emanate from rulers in the heavenly sphere and be carried out through rulers in the earthly sphere — both through rulers in Israel and among the Gentile nations.

The twelve apostles will rule over Israel, from the heavens (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:28-30); and there will be numerous regents and vice-regents ruling with them (probably comprised of Old Testament saints who qualified to rule from the heavens [*cf.* Matt. 8:11, 12; Luke 13:28, 29; Heb. 11:12-16, 39, 40]). Then the 144,000 who will proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the nations of the earth during the last three and one-half years of the coming Tribulation will apparently occupy comparable positions over the Gentile nations to that which the twelve apostles will occupy over Israel (Rev. 12:5); and there will be numerous regents and vice-regents from the present dispensation ruling with them (Christians have never been promised power over Israel, only over the Gentile nations [Rev. 2:26, 27]).

All of these will be Christ's "companions" in that day. And though they are seen in Scripture as being seated upon separate, individual thrones (Matt. 19:28), they are also seen as being seated upon the throne with Christ (Rev. 3:21). This is the picture which Scripture presents, for even though Christ's companions will occupy separate thrones, the power will emanate from Christ's throne, not from the thrones of His companions.

The same thing is also seen in that which is revealed in Scripture about the past and present kingdom under Satan.

The twenty-four elders in Rev. 4:4 are seen sitting upon separate, individual thrones (the word "seats" [KJV] should be translated, "thrones"), and the type crowns on their heads (Gk. *stephanos*) clearly shows that they are not presently exercising governmental power. They, at one time, exercised power in conjunction with Satan's throne, though seated upon separate thrones (see Part II of this series). And, exercising such power, they, in effect, were seated on the throne with Satan, to whom God had given governmental power over the earth (such would have to be the correct way to look at the matter, for this

is within the scope of God's governmental structure of the universe, and the coming kingdom of Christ will be structured after this same fashion).

Note also the coming kingdom of Antichrist, wherein Satan will give unto the false Messiah "his power, and his seat ['throne'], and great authority" (Rev. 13:2). Antichrist will not necessarily sit directly upon the throne of Satan. He won't have to so do in order to be looked upon as occupying this position.

All governmental power originates with God, emanating from the one throne in the far reaches of the North — from God's throne. God conducts His governmental affairs through angels; and after this fashion, even upon the earth where rebellion has entered into the ranks of the angelic rulers, God, in His sovereignty, still rules "in the kingdom of men." In this respect, "the heavens do rule" — foremost and primary, beginning with God Himself (Dan. 4:25, 26).

Accordingly, God, in His kingdom, dispenses positions with their corresponding power to whomsoever He will (Dan. 4:17, 25, 32; cf. Matt. 20:20-23). He placed the earth's present ruler in charge of a province in His kingdom at a time in the past (Ezek. 28:14), and He will place His Son in charge of this province (referred to as a "kingdom" itself numerous places in Scripture) at a time yet future (Dan. 7:14; cf. Ezek. 28:16; Matt. 28:18; Luke 19:12). And when this change in the government occurs, man, for the first time, in line with the purpose for his creation, will hold the sceptre.

### 1. MANY SONS BROUGHT UNTO GLORY

"Sonship" implies *rulership*. Only "sons" can rule; and when the writer of Hebrews talks about Christ "bringing many *sons unto glory*," he is talking about Christ bringing many *rulers into the kingdom with Him*.

Angels, rulers in the present kingdom, are all "sons of God" (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Psa. 89:6). Christians though are not presently "sons," but "children" awaiting the adoption into "sonship" (Rom. 8:17, 23). Christians, thus, are presently in no position to rule; and the entire creation awaits "the manifestation" of Christians as *sons* (the adoption of Christians and their subsequent placement in positions of power and authority in the kingdom) in order that Christ might be "the

firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:19, 29).

The thought of Christ being “the firstborn among many brethren” in Romans and the thought of Christ “bringing many sons unto glory” in Hebrews are both referring to the same thing. The reference in each instance is to Christ and His co-heirs exercising the rights of primogeniture *together* in the coming kingdom.

Christ being “the firstborn among many brethren” should be looked upon in the same sense as His being *the Firstborn among many firstborn sons*. It is a “manifestation of the sons of God” — a manifestation of Christians as sons, with God’s Firstborn Son, Jesus. And it is toward this end that “all things work together [‘are working together’] for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). Christians have been called “unto his kingdom and glory” (I Thess. 2:12), and God’s purpose is that of “bringing many sons unto glory.”

It is one thing to be a *child of God*, saved forevermore; but it is quite another thing to be a *son of glory* who will ascend the throne with Christ in His kingdom.

## 2. THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION

Those being brought unto glory as “sons” are called *Christ’s brethren* in both Rom. 8:29 and Heb. 2:11, 12. The One sanctifying (the One setting apart) and those who are sanctified (those set apart) are “all of one” (Heb. 2:11). They all proceed from the same source, which is God.

But the text actually deals with something beyond a common unity made possible through the birth from above. It deals with something based on this unity. In verse ten, individuals entering into “salvation” and Christ being made “perfect through sufferings” are inseparably connected with Christ “bringing many sons unto glory.” And it is within this framework that both the oneness in verse eleven and the reference to Christ’s brethren in verses eleven and twelve occur.

The salvation in view is the same salvation as in Heb. 1:14; 2:3; and the reference to Christ being made perfect through sufferings must be viewed, contextually, within this same framework.

The Greek word translated “perfect” is *teleioo*, and the thought

expressed through the use of this word is to “bring something to its goal,” or to “accomplish that which is intended.”

According to Heb. 5:8, 9 (where the word *teleioo* is used again), Christ was brought to this goal “through sufferings”; and not only has He left us “an example” that we “should follow his steps” (I Peter 2:21), but, having been brought to this goal, “he became the author of eternal salvation [‘salvation for the age,’ the same salvation referred to in Heb. 1:14; 2:3, 10] unto all them that obey him.”

And the object is to bring Christians to this goal, the goal of their calling. It is this to which the *oneness* of Heb. 2:11, contextually, pertains. Christians enter into Christ’s sufferings (Rom. 8:17); and it is within the scope of Christians entering into His sufferings that Christ will not be “ashamed to call them brethren,” voicing His “praise” of them “in the midst of the church [the called-out assembly of firstborn sons as it will be manifested in that coming day (cf. Heb. 12:23 where the Greek word *teleioo* is again used relative to a future manifestation of firstborn sons)].”

Christ and Christians will be brought to this goal together. They are inseparably linked in both *sufferings* and *future glory*. They are “all of one.”



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“So great salvation” in Heb. 2:3 is not the salvation which we presently possess. Rather, it is *a future salvation*; and it is clearly set forth as such in the immediately preceding context, in the text itself, and in the context which immediately follows.

*The immediately preceding context (1:1-14)* has to do with Christ exercising the rights of the firstborn during the coming Messianic Era and with Christians exercising these same rights as companions, co-heirs with Him. It has to do with that time when God will bring His firstborn Son (the One Who is to exercise the rights of primogeniture), the “heir of all things,” into the inhabited world (vv. 2, 5, 6); and it has to do with those redeemed individuals who are to appear as His companions, inheriting with Him in that day (vv. 9, 14).

The text itself (2:1-4) begins by referring back to material in chapter one (2:1a), and the warning has its basis entirely in this introductory material. The salvation in Heb. 2:3 is the same as the salvation in verse fourteen of the introductory material. That is, coming into possession of “so great salvation” (2:3) is the same as *inheriting salvation* (1:14); and *inheriting salvation* (or realizing “so great salvation”) is the same as realizing the rights of the firstborn, inheriting as companions with Christ (God’s Firstborn, His “appointed heir of all things” [1:2, 5, 6, 9]).

*Then the context which immediately follows (2:5ff)* has to do with rulership in the inhabited world to come (2:5) when many sons will be brought unto glory to realize the rights of the firstborn with God’s firstborn Son, Jesus (2:10). In short, it has to do with man, after 6,000 years, finally being brought into the position for which he was created in the beginning. Christ, “the second man,” “the last Adam,” will take the kingdom and ascend the throne, along with numerous companions from among those whom He has redeemed.

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