

Sunday May 1<sup>st</sup> 2011  
The Letter to the Hebrews  
Part One

1). Heb 3:1 ¶ *Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,*

a). The Book of Hebrews is the only Book in the NT that does not provide the name of the human being through whose pen the Holy Spirit wrote. The KJV uses the title ‘The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews’, but there is apparently no manuscript evidence to support Paul as the writer. Rather the oldest and most reliable manuscript title is simply, ‘*Pros Ebraious*’ = ‘To Hebrews’.

b). That being said, and knowing that according to - 2Ti 3:16 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

c). Knowing, on the clear evidence of scripture, that all scripture is God breathed and therefore we know who the author is, we can safely and prudently leave behind all speculation concerning whose name should be attached to this letter and concentrate on that which is really important, which is the letter itself.

d). Also, after a similar fashion, the name for this letter, ‘To Hebrews’, has led to incorrect thinking and incorrect teaching that this letter is exclusively for a community of Jews, whether eternally saved or unsaved, depending on which source you go to, and therefore has nothing to do with the Church. However, our opening scripture for today addresses ‘holy brethren’, those who are ‘partakers [companions] of the heavenly calling’ and such an address should make it abundantly clear for us that the letter is written to the eternally saved – a letter written in relation to the eternally saved’s ‘heavenly calling’; the calling to be a joint heir with Christ in the heavenly realm of the Kingdom during the Millennium - Php 3:14 *I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

e). And again, according to the clear evidence of scripture – Ga 3:27 *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

f). Our scripture teaches us that whether we are born in the natural a Jew or a Greek/Gentile once we have put on Christ we are no longer known by God by our natural identity, but we are rather a new creation, part of the one new man in Christ

Jesus, a Christian - 2Co 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

g). And therefore as the recipients of this letter are the eternally saved who have in their sights the fulfillment of their calling to be a joint heir with Christ, even though they may be Jewish in their origin, we must see them as Christians; and a letter written under inspiration of the Holy Spirit to Christians in pursuit of the Kingdom then must be equally applicable to Christians in pursuit of the Kingdom now. That being said then, this letter is for us.

h). And this letter is most poignantly for us as it is built around 5 major warnings concerning entrance into or exclusion from the Kingdom of the Heavens, warnings that we must take most seriously if we are to avoid the outcome that is contained in those warnings.

2). Interestingly enough the word 'Hebrew' is first used in scripture with regards to Abraham - Ge 14:13 ¶ *Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram.*

a). The origin of the word comes from the name 'Eber' – a descendent of the grandson of Shem – an 'Eberite', a Hebrew.

b). The name Eber has its root in the word 'eber' which means to cross over and particularly to cross over the Jordan river to the land beyond.

c). So this is really just a thought for us to consider – crossing over the Jordan would take you to the land of promise and would reference leaving the land of your birth to go to the land of promise, just as Abraham did. In this sense leaving Egypt and crossing the Jordan would both be a picture of leaving behind this world as we focus on that which is to come.

d). Now the scripture says - Ga 3:29 *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

e). We are Abraham's seed through faith with respect to the promise of the Heavenly Kingdom and we could therefore be considered as those who have 'crossed over', therefore 'Hebrews', by faith.

f). Again this is just something for us to consider.

3). And so to go back to our letter, in order to set the correct context for the five warnings our letter begins in foundation - Heb 1:1 ¶ *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty*

*on high, 4 ¶ having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

a). Our letter begins by pointing out that God gave His revelation to Israel [and by extension the rest of us], contained in the OT scriptures, at ‘various times’, over a considerable period of time, and He did this ‘in various ways’, by speaking through a variety of prophets, all of whom presented God’s revelation after a different fashion.

b). This is not to say that God’s revelation was different, but rather that different parts of it were entrusted to different individuals. Moses presented God’s revelation one way and Isaiah another etc.

c). That which was given in the OT by different prophets over an extended period of time is then brought to an apex, a point of fulfillment, in Christ at His first advent – *[God] 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,*

d). Now this statement is not drawing attention to the words that Christ spoke of themselves, although His words would obviously be the words of God, but to that which God says through the literal presence of His Son upon the earth.

e). Christ’s literal birth, His earthly ministry, His death, resurrection and ascension are all validation, proof positive if you will, of all that God had said at various times and in various ways by the prophets with respect to His Son. The literal fulfillment of prophecy with respect to Christ in the past is the precursor to the literal fulfillment of all that the prophets have spoken concerning Christ that remain yet future.

f). Then, as if the scriptures themselves were not enough, God accomplishes that recorded in - *Joh 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

g). That which God had spoken by the prophets became flesh in Christ and in Christ’s literal presence God’s voice thundered with the absolute certainty of His revelation past, present and future - *Ga 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

h). And what did we just read in John 1:14? – ‘we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father....’ – the Disciples beheld His glory on the mount of transfiguration, which we will remember is an event that happened after 6 days, therefore on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, picturing Christ’s coming Kingdom.

i). And what did we read at the beginning of Hebrews? - *His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds [ages]; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person,*

j). Through His Son, the only begotten of the Father, He made the worlds, literally the ages, a statement that takes us back to the very beginning of God's revelation - Ge 1:1 ¶ *In beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

k). And takes us forward to His own commentary on that event – Joh 1:1 ¶ *In beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

l). In Genesis chapters 1 and 2 the foundation concludes with the 7<sup>th</sup> Day, the day of rest, and in John's gospel Chapters 1 and 2 also bring us to the 7<sup>th</sup> Day and a wedding, and then in Hebrews we find that Jesus is a Firstborn Son, with the rights and privileges that accompany that position, having been appointed 'heir of all things', taking us once again to the age to come, previously pictured in the 7<sup>th</sup> Day in Genesis and John.

m). Our scripture continues - *when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,* - the writer of Hebrews then brings our attention to Christ's sacrifice and resurrection, reminding us in this of the provision for our eternal salvation and Christ's exalted position upon His Father's throne.

n). His exalted position is then further demonstrated in v4 - 4 ¶ *having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

o). Christ, by inheritance, is a Firstborn Son, and therefore He has become so much better than the angels and has a more excellent name than the angels – now it may appear to us to be redundant to make a statement like this, but it must be made considering the action Christ took that brought Him to this point - Heb 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.*

p). With respect to the rulership of the earth, which is presently in the hands of Satan and his fallen angels, Christ was made, for a little while, lower than the angels who presently rule. In effect He placed Himself in and under their jurisdiction and He did this for the purpose of tasting 'death for everyone'. And He tasted death for everyone for that expressly stated in - Heb 2:10 ¶ *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

q). And so the statement made in Hebrews 1:4 states categorically that He is no longer ‘lower than the angels’ and therefore His purpose was accomplished, allowing for many sons now to be brought to glory as joint heirs with Him.

r). In these opening 4 verses of our Book then we find one of the clearest statements concerning Christ’s deity that we could expect to find anywhere in the scriptures.

4). Having made these introductory statements concerning Christ and His deity, His appointed position as ‘heir of all things’, His person, His finished work at Calvary and His present position at God’s right hand the writer of Hebrews then turns to 7 OT quotations, all of which continue and expand upon our introductory verses. And immediately we will realize that there being 7 quotations, these quotations provide for us a complete picture of that which is view – which is the Christ and His coming Kingdom.

a). And in adopting this sequence the writer of Hebrews follows a pattern set by Christ following His resurrection when He spoke with the disciples on the Emmaus road - Lu 24:25 *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

b). The Lord makes introductory statements about Himself and then draws from the OT scriptures to open the eyes of His disciples concerning these statements. This is exactly the way things are done here in Hebrews with the difference that in Hebrews the writer goes directly to Christ in His glory.

c). And right here there is a lesson taught that we have seen often in past weeks which gives us an opportunity to repeat that lesson again – if we are going to understand anything concerning Christ and His coming Kingdom we must go back into foundation in order to establish the proper ground on which to build; failure to lay a correct foundation will always have disastrous results.

d). Then at the conclusion of these 7 quotations, having gone back into foundation, we are led into the first of our five warnings – a warning that can only be understood in relation to that which has preceded it.

5). So let’s begin with the first two OT quotations - Heb 1:5 *For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"?*

a). Angels of course are created beings, created to accomplish God’s will and purpose on His behalf throughout the universe. Now because of their individual creation they are classified as sons of God and a good place to see this is

in - Job 38:6 *To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, 7 When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

b). However, although all angels are by fact of their creation ‘sons of God’ God has never said to any angel, ‘You are My Son...’ – such a declaration is only made to God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

c). *"You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"* – is a quotation found in Psalm 2:7, a Psalm which is Messianic in its content; something that can be clearly seen by putting our quotation in its context - Ps 2:1 ¶ *Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." 7 ¶ "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'" 10 ¶ Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.*

b). The whole scope of this Psalm takes us from the events of the Tribulation to the establishment of the Kingdom with Christ as its focus.

c). In v7 we see that God the Father declares that the Christ is His Son, and with this declaration of sonship comes that which is associated with the rights of the Firstborn - rulership.

d). Now when God says of His Son ‘Today I have begotten you’, the translation falls short of the mark. From the Scriptures we would now that the Christ, as God’s only begotten firstborn Son, was begotten long before the events with which our Psalm begins. A more correct translation here then would be, ‘For this Day I have begotten you’.

e). And the Day that Christ was begotten for is the Day He will be set as King on God’s holy hill of Zion, when He will ask the Father for the nations as His inheritance and the ends of the earth as His possession; the Day when He will rule them with a rod of iron – the day of course is the 7<sup>th</sup> Day, the Millennial Kingdom.

f). And it is still with the Kingdom and angels in view that we come to the second quotation in the second half of v5 - *And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"?*

g). This is a very familiar quotation to us coming from 2 Samuel 7:14 and is the word of the Lord to David the king – 2Sa 7:12 *"When your days are fulfilled*

*and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. 15 "But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.""*

These are words that have a dual sense. In the near sense they are words spoken concerning David's son Solomon who was his immediate successor; and then in a far sense they are words spoken concerning David's greater successor, his greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In both instances, near and far, the Father/Son relationship with respect to the Kingdom and the throne are in view. The greater Son is the One to whom God will give 'the sure mercies of David' - Ac 13:32 *"And we declare to you glad tidings--that promise which was made to the fathers. 33 "God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.' 34 "And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.' 35 "Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'*

h). Mercies = Greek – 'hosios', *hos'-ee-os* = of uncertain affinity; properly, right (by intrinsic or divine character); i.e. hallowed (pious, sacred, sure):--holy, mercy, shalt be.

i). In order to understand 'the holy/sacred things of David' we can perhaps go to the scriptures declaring the Lord's birth - Lu 1:32 *"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*

j). And to that spoken of Christ in Revelation Chapter 3 - Re 3:7 ¶ *"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":*

k). And again the significance in all this is that it is Messianic in its scope. The One spoken of here, the One who is God's Son, is the Jewish Messiah the One destined to sit on David's throne in the earthly Jerusalem and His own throne in the heavenly Jerusalem, the One who has the key of David.

l). And to remind ourselves just one more time, God has never spoken to any angel after the fashion that He has spoken to His Son.

6). The distinction between Christ as a Firstborn Son and the angels is continued in the next 2 verses with the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quotations - Heb 1:6 *But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."* 7 *And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire."*

a). V6 once again brings us to the context of the Millennial Kingdom. When God brought Christ into the inhabited world the first time we will remember that He came 'a little lower than the angels', but when He comes into the inhabited world again then the angels of God will worship Him. At His first advent He came to pay the price for sin in a role subordinate to the angels, when He comes again the situation is entirely different - Heb 9:27 *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

b). His second appearance is not as the sinless sacrifice, our Passover Lamb, but as the King of kings and the Lord of lords - Php 2:9 *Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

c). So here we have it – the sons of God, angels, will worship the Firstborn Son of God after He has come into possession of the rights of the firstborn - and as only God is to be worshipped - Mt 4:10 *Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

We once again come to Christ's deity within a Messianic context, something that becomes even clearer as we view our verse within its OT setting – Ps 97:1 ¶ *The LORD reigns; Let the earth rejoice; Let the multitude of isles be glad! 2 Clouds and darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. 3 A fire goes before Him, And burns up His enemies round about. 4 His lightnings light the world; The earth sees and trembles. 5 The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. 6 The heavens declare His righteousness, And all the peoples see His glory. 7 Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, Who boast of idols. **Worship Him, all you gods.**[angels]8 ¶ *Zion hears and is glad, And the daughters of Judah rejoice Because of Your judgments, O LORD. 9 For You, LORD, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods.*[angels]*

d). Our 4<sup>th</sup> quotation contained in v7 continues the thought of angelic ministry, and given its context, following on from the Firstborn again being

brought into the world, we would have to see this ministry by the angels as ministry surrounding the Son during the Millennial Kingdom - 7 *And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.*

e). Our quotation comes from Psalm 104, so let's place it within its context in the opening verses of this Psalm - Ps 104:1 ¶ *Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, 2 Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain. 3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, Who makes the clouds His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind, 4 **Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.** 5 You who laid the foundations of the earth, So that it should not be moved forever,*

f). The scope of Psalm 104 takes us from the creation of the earth in the beginning as we see in v5 all the way to the Messianic era which we see at the end of the Psalm - Ps 104:31 ¶ *May the glory of the LORD endure forever; May the LORD rejoice in His works. 32 He looks on the earth, and it trembles; He touches the hills, and they smoke. 33 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. 34 May my meditation be sweet to Him; I will be glad in the LORD. 35 May sinners be consumed from the earth, And the wicked be no more. Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!*

g). This being so, the angelic ministry referenced here could be ministry occurring in the past, the present or the future.

h). In - Lu 2:9 *And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.*

We see angelic ministry surrounding Christ's birth, placing such ministry in the past.

i). In - Heb 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*

We see angelic ministry surrounding Christians in the world today making their ministry in the present.

j). And then in our verse from Hebrews 1:7 *And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire."*

As we have seen, their ministry is yet future.

k). What we would conclude then is that angelic ministry is always with respect to the fulfillment of God's plans and purposes and is ministry that has its ultimate focus in the Millennial Kingdom when Christ and His joint heirs, who were made for a little while lower and the angels, will then be positions superior to angels, with these same angels now ministering on behalf of Christ and His joint heirs in the administration of the Kingdom. In one sense angelic ministry has

always been about the bringing forth of the many sons to glory with a view to replacing them as rulers over the earth.

7). This is where we shall stop for this week. And next week, if the Lord is willing we will look at the final 3 OT quotations which lead us into the first of the 5 warnings in our Book.