Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Hebrews (Chapter 1)

**Hebrews 1 (NKJV)**

*“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 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; 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, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 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’? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’ And of the angels He says: ‘Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.’ But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.’ And: ‘You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.’ But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”*

**God**

As mentioned in the introduction, debates about the authorship of the Book of Hebrews continue. However, the arguments are futile. Had God wanted us to know the author, He would have included it in the text. Therefore, we begin with the proper focus: God Himself.

**The History of God’s Revelation**

The author begins by reminding the Hebrews that God communicated His plan of redemption from the beginning: *“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets…”* (vs. 1).

It is no challenge to see that beginning in Genesis and all the way through to the book of Malachi God has been making Himself—and His plan—known to man. He provided detailed insights throughout the whole of Scripture. The plan and His desire to communicate it were intended from the beginning. Salvation was not a plan “B” or afterthought. Therefore, He declared His purposes and plans to man in order to make Himself known and provide an everlasting hope to all who believe. *“Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?”* (Amos 3:7-8).

**To The Fathers**

The inclusion of *“the fathers”* (vs. 1) gives focus to the Hebrew people. God spoke to *“the fathers”* of Israel. In this case, the author is thinking of Abraham, his son Isaac, Isaac’s son Jacob, all of Jacob’s sons, and their descendants.

When God called Abraham He told him that He would make of him a great nation. He said, *“I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”* (Genesis 12:2–3). This nation is Israel. The descendants of Abraham are referred to as Hebrews.

Abraham was the first person to be called a Hebrew. The name comes from “Eber,” a great grandson of Shem, the son of Noah. Thus, the expression “Hebrew” developed to indicate one who is of “Eber.” The designations are also said to indicate “one who is on the other side,” possibly meaning the other side of the faith systems of the world. Abraham was monotheistic—he believed in one God—rather than polytheistic (belief in many gods) as the rest of the people groups of reference at that time. It may also indicate that Abraham was from “the other side” of the river, as Abraham was from Ur of the Chaldeans (modern day Iraq). He was not from Canaan. “Hebrew” seems to indicate an ethnicity rather than nationality.

**By the Prophets, In His Word, by His Word, through His Acts, for His People, and by His People**

God spoke to and through Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and John the Baptist—to name just a few. His person, plans, and purposes have been revealed through His words and His actions. He not only revealed Himself by direct and personal contact, but also in types and models. He used such things as the sacrificial system, the tabernacle, and the temple. Prior to the Birth of Jesus, the Messiah, God revealed Himself through persons such as Melchizedek, Joseph, Moses, and David.

**By His Son**

God, having made Himself known *by* the prophets, *in* His Word, *by* His Word, *through* His Acts, *for* His People, and *by* His People, now, in the most perfect way, reveals Himself by His Son “*who [is] the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person”* (vs. 3). *“For in Him* [Jesus] *dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”* (Colossians 2:9). *“He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist”* (Colossians 1:15–17).

The incarnation of Jesus was so much more than God becoming man in order to live among us and/or to suffer vicariously in our place on the cross. Jesus’ incarnation made known to us in a very personal way His nature, His character, and His temperament. Jesus’ incarnation identified for us how He is to be understood in gender—masculine. Jesus’ incarnation provided Him the physical ability to interact with men in personal and social environments and thus allowing Him to visibly perform miracles, communicate truth, challenge error, etc. Jesus’ incarnation provided us the absolute representation of God—in the flesh.

Bible prophecy declared that God would come to earth as man. In Isaiah we read, *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel”* (Isaiah 7:14) and, *“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”* (Isaiah 9:6). Matthew adds the fact that the name Immanuel means *“God with us”* (see Matthew 1:23).

Jesus, as the Son of God, is God the Son. This fact is a confusion to many. However, the Scriptures communicate this fact. Our human weakness and limitation must never disallow our faith and trust in the truths communicated therein.

**The Hypostatic Union**

In addition to being the Son of God/God the Son, in His incarnation Jesus is also referred to as the “Son of Man” (see Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 9:6). This refers to His incarnational humanity as the prophetically promised Messiah (see Isaiah 7:14; 9:6 above). The fully God/fully man nature of Jesus is called “The Hypostatic Union.” Many mistakenly attribute to Jesus a half man/half God nature. This is not the case. Jesus became man while retaining all the deity and nature of God. *“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”* (John 1:14).

**The Virgin Birth and Federal Headship**

As the “Son of Man,” Jesus was born of a virgin, not through the means of a natural father. If Jesus had been born of a natural father and not by virgin birth, He would have been born with a sinful nature and therefore would have been a sinner Himself. This falls under the “The Law of Federal Headship.” For this reason, among others, Jesus was conceived by the supernatural impregnation of Mary through the person of the Holy Spirit.

If Jesus were born of a natural father, He would have been incapable of dying for the sins of the world, and would have died only for His own sin. However, Jesus was not born of man; He was born without sin, never personally sinned, and was without a sinful or fallen nature. It can be said that Jesus was born under The Law of Federal Headship—but not of sinful man! He was begotten of God the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. *“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him…”* (Hebrews 7:25a NKJV). In this case, “The Law of Federal Headship carries forward a “righteousness” extended to all who trust Christ for salvation. Believers, through spiritual re-birth, *“pass from death unto life”* (1 John 3:14 KJV). Believers are *“perfected forever”* through the perfect life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (see Hebrews 7:28 and 10:14).

**Notes**

**Questions:**

1. **True or False:** The author begins by developing the reasons for God having to develop a plan “B” of sorts because the Old Covenant Law did not work.
2. **True or False:**  The Book of Hebrews is all about Jesus—the Jewish Messiah.
3. **True or False:** Israel is the nation God promised Abraham through his son Isaac and grandson Jacob.
4. **True or False:** The sacrificial system contained in the Old Covenant pointed to Jesus as Redeemer.
5. **True or False:** The name Immanuel means “God with us.”
6. **True or False:** Jesus is the “Son of God,” but He is not “God the Son.”
7. **True or False:** The fully God/fully man nature of Jesus is called “The Hypostatic Union.” Many mistakenly attribute to Jesus a half man/half God nature. This is not the case!
8. **True or False:** As the “Son of Man,” Jesus was born of a virgin, not through the means of a natural father.
9. **True or False:** If Jesus had been born of a natural father and not by virgin birth, He would have been born with a sinful nature and therefore would have been a sinner Himself. This falls under the “The Law of Federal Headship.”
10. **True or False:** In Jesus, “The Law of Federal Headship” carries forward a “righteousness” extended to all who trust Christ for salvation.