

## Hebrews 1A

- Welcome to a study of the most famous Jewish epistle
  - Because of its Jewish underpinnings, this book is enigmatic
  - It relies on a large number of proof texts from the OT to establish its points,
    - Leaving Gentile readers at a loss to understand the writer's point
  - The book contains five warnings that often confuse the readers for what they imply may happen to us when we sin
  - Even the author of the book remains a mystery,
    - The only text of the NT and one of only a handful of books in the Bible that have no known author
- Let's start with the title
  - Hebrews
    - The word Hebrew comes from Gen 14:13 in describing Abram, a descendent of Eber, which means "region beyond"
      - The word Hebrew is a derivative of the word Eber
      - It aptly describes the nature of the Hebrew people as wanders from a region beyond
  - The reason the name was given to the book is simply enough
    - The audience were Jewish Christians
      - The early church was a Jewish church largely, and this letter addresses unique Jewish issues found in that church
- What do we know of the author
  - It's a long standing debate
    - As early as 255AD church leaders declared the author of the book to be unknown

- But then from 400-1600 AD, the letter was known as the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews
- There are some good reasons to think it may have been Paul
  - Strong theological basis for Christian faith
  - In depth understanding of the Jewish culture, sacrificial system, law, prophets, OT
  - The closing of the letter sounds a little like Paul and mentions traveling with Timothy
  - Not much more...
- Many reasons for it not to be Paul
  - Style is very different
    - Large number of words found no where else in Greek scriptures (including Paul's letters)
    - Many of Paul's characteristic phrases were missing
      - Kathos ge grap tai – "As it is written..."
    - No intro, prayer, benediction,
    - No sense of a personal encounter with the Lord (2:3)
  - None of this is proof, and the author remains unknown
- Finally, the audience of this letter were likely Hellenistic Jews
  - Two kinds of Jewish believers
    - Palestinian Jews living in Palestine
      - Poor (Rom 15; 1Cor 16)
      - More traditional – used the Hebrew scriptures rather than the Septuagint
    - Hellenistic Jews
      - Scattered in the diaspora
      - More liberal, integrated into the Greek culture

- Used the Septuagint
  - The writer quotes from that text
- When written?
  - Clues
    - Second generation Christians
      - Both readers and writer (2:3-4)
      - Many died in the faith 13:7
    - References to the Temple conspicuously fail to mention its destruction in AD70
      - Date the letter prior to the fall of the temple
    - Timothy is in prison
    - Church is undergoing persecution
      - That started in AD 64
    - So letter falls between AD 64 and AD 70
  - At this time, there was also a rise of Jewish nationalism
    - Pressure to rejoin the Jewish culture
- The style is an exhortation
  - Amazing Greek rhetorical technique
    - Uses a structured method
      - Expository teaching
      - Followed by exhortation
    - First chapter is exposition
      - Beginning of Chapter 2 is an exhortation based on 1

- The author's principle arguments are
  - The supremacy of Christ over all that has come before
  - And the danger of apostasy
    - The falling away from the truth
      - Apostasia
        - Apo – against
        - Histemi – to make a stand
      - To cease participating is something you once participated in or to repudiate something you once professed to be true
  - Apostasy doesn't require that you truly accepted what you once held
    - Example of a pastor that declares only Aggies were saved
    - Or that baptism was necessary for salvation
  - When I leave in protest, I am by definition an apostate
    - But I never actually held to that belief
    - Likewise, the author is concerned about the behavior of these Jewish believers
      - On the one hand, immature spiritually stunted believers who are vulnerable to the influence of the nationalistic culture
      - Secondly, those in the church who are leaving because they never actually believed
- Uses examples taken from:
  - Jewish history, Torah, Patriarchs and heroes, angels and temple practice
  - The prominent use of a call to action
    - Thirteen times: Let us fear, let us be diligent, let us hold fast...

- Thirteen “Bettters”
- Five warnings & Five encouragements
  - We will observe and analyze them as we encounter them along the way

[Heb. 1:1](#) ¶ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

[Heb. 1:2](#) in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

- The writer immediately reveals his approach to teaching
  - The book is all about contrasts and comparisons
    - Contrast = difference
    - Comparison = similarities
  - Begins up front establishing the supremacy of Christ
    - There is a pattern hidden in plain sight within the first 4 verses...look for it
- Verse 1 vs 2
  - Contrast
    - God (Father) spoke long ago
      - God speaks now
    - To the fathers (Jewish ancestors, patriarchs, prophets)
      - God is speaking to us
    - Through the prophets
      - Through His Son
    - Many portions and ways (amount and method)
      - One way, entire portion
  - Jesus completes and confirms the revelation of the OT

- Not replacement, but completion
- Meaning what was given before was not complete
  - But yet without it, Jesus' revelation wouldn't be complete either
  - The Old was necessary to recognize and understand the New
    - The OT is the NT Predicted
    - The NT is the OT fulfilled
- Now He speaks to us "in" or by Christ
  - What He said (directly) and what He did (indirectly)
    - And what He says through the Spirit
- In other words, we have in the New all that the Old intended we would have, so the Old now gives way to the New
- Then the writer begins to describe the authority of this man Jesus
  - The heir of all things

[Psa. 2:8](#) 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,  
And the *very* ends of the earth as Your possession.

- Through Christ, God made the world
  - Christ was the agent of the Trinity to actually speak the world into existence
    - He is the Word,
  - Here the word for world is aiones
    - Means ages, as in time, space, matter & history

[Heb. 1:3](#) And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

- He's continues to establish the supremacy of Christ
  - Radiance of God's glory
    - How do I know the sun has risen?
      - The beams of light
      - The radiance of the sun is how I perceive the sun
    - Likewise the Son
      - Radiance means the light emitting from the Father
      - We perceive the Father by seeing what comes from Him
  - Exact representation of this nature
    - Exact representation = character
      - This is the stamp used to create impression on a coin
      - And exact duplicate

[John 14:9](#) Jesus \*said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

- Upholds things by the word of His power
  - Uphold is pheron, which means carries forward
    - Not holding it up like a rock
    - But moving it forward on an appointed course
  - The world is completely under His control and has an appointed end

[Col. 1:16](#) For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

[Col. 1:17](#) He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

- Made purification for sins
  - Katharismos – catharsis
  - A release from sin, in the sense of being out from under the weight of sin
  - The Jewish people had long ago adopted a very pagan view of sacrifice
    - It was a self-cleansing ritual
    - They saw participation in the sacrificial system as a self-cleansing
      - They did a work, went home, and felt better, at least until the next week
  - Sin is a common issue in the letter, but not in the way it appears elsewhere
    - A simple approach to the discussion
    - Sin of unbelief, sin of immaturity, sin of disobedience
- Seated at the right hand

[Luke 22:69](#) "But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD."

- This implies there is unique authority and majesty that belongs to Christ
- What has the writer established in verse 1-3?
  - Creator
  - Prophet
  - Priest
  - King

[Heb. 1:4](#) having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

- Now he launches his first proof
  - He will draw his text from the OT
    - But first he states that Christ has a more excellent name than angels?
  - Where did angels come from?
    - Who mentioned angels?
    - What was the purpose of an angel?
      - Word means messenger
        - They were God's messenger
      - How important were angels to the Jewish people?
        - Let's take a quiz...
      - History of Angels in Judiasm
- They were very important
  - The writer will use the importance of angels to give weight to his argument
    - Since they respected angels so highly, if the author can show proof from scripture that the Messiah would have even greater authority, then it means his message would be a greater message
  - Christ had a better name
    - What name? Son
    - Patriarchal tradition makes son all important
      - None higher to the father
    - Angels are called sons (plural) in Job
      - But Jesus had the singular term before creation

- Then we have the writers first proof text (Exhibit A)
  - Begins with inclusio – v. 5 – v. 13
    - Then Psalm 2:7 – God called Christ Son
      - Taken from 2Sam 7: 12-14 (double reference)
  - Then in verse 6, he quotes from the Septuagint in Deut 32:43 that all the angels worship Him
    - What does “again” mean?
      - Really it should read He again says,
    - So if He alone is called Son and the angels worship the Lord, then the Lord is superior to angels
  - Moving on, he says that angels are called ministers of flame
    - From Psa 104
    - Minister literally means servant
    - So angels are servants
  - But of the Son in ver 8-9 = Ps 45:3-7
    - V. 10-12 = 102:25-27
  - Verse 13 = Psa 110:1