

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

As we read through the book of Hebrews, it becomes clear that it was written to fortify Jewish Christians who were under fire from Jewish non-Christians. Not only were these Jewish believers being assailed with arguments designed to persuade them to revert to Judaism, they were also being intensely persecuted at times. They needed truth that would strengthen and encourage them, and this letter provided it.

No one knows who wrote this letter, but whoever it was, he was a close acquaintance of Timothy (13:23), and he was very knowledgeable of the Old Testament. Some say the author was Paul, while others suggest Apollos, Barnabas, Luke or even Priscilla (who is mentioned three times in Acts).

No one knows when this letter was written, and suggested dates vary from AD 60 to 100. So we are making an assumption by reading it at this point in our chronological journey through the New Testament.

The general theme of Hebrews is the superiority of Christ. Keep in mind that any knowledgeable Jew could convincingly argue for the truth that is found in Judaism since Judaism is founded upon divinely-given truth. We know, of course, that Christianity is built upon Judaism's foundation. The promised Messiah of Judaism is the Christ of Christianity. So the author begins this letter by showing the superiority of a revelation delivered by God's own Son over one that was revealed through prophets and angels (1:1-2; Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:28, 53; Heb. 2:2). Using Old Testament scriptures, he shows that Jesus, unlike any angel, is God's Son (1:5). Angels worship Jesus by God's command (1:6). He is heir of all things and will rule over His kingdom forever (1:8). He created the world (1:10). He is sitting at the right hand of God the Father (1:13). He's God (1:8)!

Angels, on the other hand, are simply "ministering spirits" who work on our behalf (1:14). Their ministry to us is invaluable, but they're still no comparison to Jesus our Lord and Savior. He created them, and they do His bidding. Jews could argue that the truth they clung to was sent to them via anointed prophets and angels; Christians can respond that the truth they cling to was sent to them via God's own Son!

It is interesting to take a closer look at the Old Testament scriptures which the author quotes that refer to Jesus. One is found in Psalm 2: "Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee" (1:5). Psalm 2 is a messianic Psalm that speaks of the time when the inhabitants of the earth will rebel near the end of Christ's (future) 1,000-year reign. In that light, we see that Jesus truly is "heir of all things" (1:2) because Psalm 2 informs us that God has given Him the nations as His inheritance (Ps. 2:8). You might want to read all of Psalm 2 if you have the time.

The author also quotes from 2 Samuel 7:14, where God, referring to one of David's descendants, promised, "I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me." God's promise to David was somewhat fulfilled in his son, Solomon, but ultimately it was fulfilled in Christ.

We have sure proof that Psalms 45, 102 and 110, all quoted by the author of Hebrews in 1:8-13, are at least partially messianic. It would be worth your while to read each of those psalms in their entirety as well, looking especially for the portions quoted in the first chapter of Hebrews.

Take note that Jesus is "the exact representation of [God's] nature" (1:3), which is another way of saying that if you know Jesus, you know the Father. Jesus spoke, acted, reacted, and so on, identically to how the Father would have, had He come to earth in human form instead of Jesus. That is nice to know. Jesus perfectly revealed God to us, because He is God. Anyone's conception of God that differs from Jesus is a wrong conception.