

So Great Salvation

The Greatest Thing God Could Offer Redeemed Man

A Study about Christ and His
Co-Heirs One Day Ascending
the Throne Together

Arlen L. Chitwood

“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 in this manner 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 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 text, which comprises the first of five major warnings to Christians in this book — “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...?” — 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 which he was created to occupy 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.

So Great
Salvation

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“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?” (Heb. 2:3).

Cover Photograph: Sunrise on a Lake in Northern Michigan, Spring, 2010

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by
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By the Same Author —

RUTH
ESTHER
BY FAITH
RUN TO WIN
LET US GO ON
END OF THE DAYS
MOSES AND JOHN
IN THE LORD'S DAY
DISTANT HOOFBEATS
THE BRIDE IN GENESIS
GOD'S FIRSTBORN SONS
SEARCH FOR THE BRIDE
WE ARE ALMOST THERE
SIGNS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL
SALVATION OF THE SOUL
HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES
THE MOST HIGH RULETH
THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE
THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE
COMING IN HIS KINGDOM
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN
MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN
SEVEN, TEN GENERATIONS
REDEEMED FOR A PURPOSE
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST
THE RAPTURE AND BEYOND
FROM ACTS TO THE EPISTLES
MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM
PROPHECY ON MOUNT OLIVET
NEVER AGAIN! OR YES, AGAIN!
THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE
BROUGHT FORTH FROM ABOVE
ISRAEL — FROM DEATH TO LIFE
JUDE — ACTS OF THE APOSTATES
O SLEEPER! ARISE, CALL...! (JONAH)
THE TIME OF THE END (REVELATION)
MIDDLE EAST PEACE — HOW? WHEN?
SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH
MESSAGE IN THE GOSPELS, ACTS, EPISTLES
ISRAEL — WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

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FOREWORD

The writer of Hebrews began his epistle by very briefly calling attention to how God had spoken to His people both “in time past” and “in these last days.”

“In time past,” God spoke to the Jewish people in many, various ways by means of the Prophets; and “in these last days” God has spoken to the Jewish people, and then to Christians, by means of His Son (vv. 1, 2a).

Whether “in time past” or “in these last days,” *the SAME unchangeable Word, with the SAME unchangeable message, is in view.* And the heart, the center-point of this message has to do with God’s “appointed heir of all things” *awaiting that day when He will come into possession of His inheritance* (v. 2b).

The writer takes up this message in the epistle by showing the proper connection between Christ’s finished work at Calvary and His God-appointed position as “heir of all things”:

“...when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (v. 3b).

And *EXACTLY* the same thing seen in this verse (in conjunction with vv. 1, 2) is seen again in the opening part of chapter twelve:

“...for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (v. 2b).

Both verses have to do with Christ suffering the ignominy and shame of Calvary, with a view to the glory and exaltation which lay ahead. And both verses call attention to that which would follow Christ’s sufferings by referring to that seen in Psalm 110.

This Psalm, a Messianic Psalm — in the latter part of verse one, along with verse two — carries the reader forward into that coming day. Note these two verses:

“The Lord said unto my Lord [*i.e.*, the Father said to His Son], Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.”

The Son is today seated at His Father's right hand, and He is waiting for His Father to bring matters to pass in such a manner that *His enemies will be made His footstool, i.e., His enemies will be brought into complete subjection to the Son.*

And when this has been brought to pass, God's Son will then rule in the midst of His enemies. He, in that day, will realize the position which He presently occupies as His Father's "appointed heir of all things" as He realizes "the joy" placed before Him at Calvary — both referring to the same thing.

In that day, the SAME scenes which witnessed His sufferings and humiliation will witness His glory and exaltation.

This is the manner in which the Book of Hebrews opens in the first three verses. Then, "angels" are brought into the picture (vv. 4-7), contextually, for several reasons:

- 1) Angelic rule over the earth is about to end (2:5).
- 2) Angels minister during the present time for those about to inherit with the Son (1:14; cf. 1:9; 3:1, 14).
- 3) Angels will minister rather than rule in that coming day, in Christ's kingdom (1:6, 7).

And, in conjunction with angels being brought into the picture, the writer records seven Messianic passages from the Old Testament, concluding at the same place where he had ended before beginning these quotations — with that stated in Ps. 110:1 (vv 3b-13).

This, in brief form, is what the first chapter of Hebrews is about, *relating, at the outset, the subject matter of the book.*

The book has to do with the coming reign of Christ, with His co-heirs (introduced, as well, in the first chapter [vv. 9, 14]); and the five major warnings in the book, accordingly, have to do with this same thing.

"So great Salvation," seen in the first of these five warnings, is *the SAME salvation, deliverance, seen throughout ALL of the warnings.*

It is *realizing the greatest thing God has ever designed for redeemed man, — occupying A POSITION AS CO-HEIR with His Son in the coming kingdom.*

1

Heirs of Salvation

A Future Inheritance Awaiting Christians

“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 road to Emmaus and the eleven later in Jerusalem.

Christ, on the road to Emmaus and later in Jerusalem, called His disciples’ attention to certain things about Himself (His past sufferings, the reality of His resurrection in a literal, physical body of “flesh and bones,” and His future glory); 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 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 — *moves FROM past sufferings and present conditions TO future glory.*

Using the Old Testament Scriptures, the writer of Hebrews, after calling attention to things past and present about Christ, then moves on to *the GOAL toward which everything moves, Christ’s coming glory.*

And to accomplish this 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 which 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 that seen in Luke's gospel, there is a marked difference. The writer of this epistle begins by referring to Christ as *the appointed "heir of all things"* (v. 2) prior to recording anything about *His past sufferings or His present position at God's right hand* (v. 3).

And he then reflects back upon *Christ's heirship* which he had mentioned *FIRST* by focusing his readers' attention *ONLY* upon Old Testament Scriptures which have to do with *THAT day when Christ will come into possession of this inheritance* (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 Quotations

"The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified *seven times*" (Ps. 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 this first warning.

For this reason, the remainder of this part of the chapter will be taken up with two things:

- 1) *Showing the Messianic nature of the seven quotations in the first chapter.*
- 2) *Showing how these quotations logically lead into the first of the five warnings in the book, and thus the book at large.*

1) *Sonship, Heirship, Rulership*

The first two quotations in Hebrews, chapter one center around 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,” the Son Who, *by inheritance*, has

“obtained a more excellent name” than 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).

And 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 relative to angels. He has spoken after this fashion relative to His Son, Jesus, alone (vv. 5ff).

The Messianic nature of these two quotations *CANNOT be questioned, for BOTH appear in Messianic settings in the Old Testament.*

Verses on either side of Ps. 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; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (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 13:34b; cf. v. 33).

Note different things about the seven quotations from the Old Testament in the first chapter:

- 1) *They are introduced by Messianic statements (vv. 2-4).*
- 2) *They begin with Messianic verses (v. 5).*
- 3) *They continue with Messianic verses (vv. 6-13).*
- 4) *They lead into that which can only be Messianic in its fulfillment (vv. 14ff).*

2) Return of God's Firstborn Son

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]; Ps. 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 sons (Gk., *prototokos*).

The two Greek words are closely related, referring to two inseparable things — *position*, and *rights within that position*. And *NO angel* can come within the scope of either one. 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).

3) “And of the Angels”

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.* Ps. 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*.

4) "But unto the Son"

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. Ps. 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 [throughout the endless ages, 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.

But 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).

5) *The Same, Yesterday, Today, and Forever*

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. Ps. 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 Ps. 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 *The Creator* at the time the heavens and earth were brought into existence and *The 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).

6) “Sit on My Right Hand, Until...”

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.* Ps. 110:1).

The writer of Hebrews terminates his seven quotations from the Old Testament at the same point that the Apostle John terminates his seven overcomer’s 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 overcomer’s 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* that 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 overcomer’s 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. And *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 as *a companion* with God’s Son during the coming age (*cf.* Heb. 1:8, 9, 14; 3:14 Rev. 3:21).

(Note also that the warning passages in Hebrews and the overcomer’s 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, His companions*, holding the sceptre together during 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 all 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, the reference is to *men* (translated “messengers” when referring to *men* in James 2:25, KJV).

The writer repeatedly calling attention to “angels” in the opening two chapters of Hebrews is, in one respect, somewhat like his repeated 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; Ps. 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.

(A prominent use of *aggelos* [angel] is seen:

1) *In the gospel accounts* [when the Messianic King was present and the kingdom of the heavens was being offered to Israel].

2) *In the Book of Acts* [in the opening years of the present dispensation, following the departure of Israel's King back into the heavens, during the re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel].

3) *In the Book of Hebrews* [which has to do with teachings surrounding the coming reign of Christ, with Christians having a part as "companions" with Christ in this reign].

4) *In the Book of Revelation* [which has to do with the complete unveiling of the Son (in relation to all things appertaining thereunto), which includes the redemption of the inheritance (the earth), the bride being revealed and becoming the Lamb's wife (the bride for whom the Spirit, throughout an entire previous dispensation lasting 2,000 years, will have searched and procured), the restoration of all things, and the millennial reign].

Then, as previously seen, another peculiarity to the book has to do with the mention of Melchizedek nine times. Melchizedek was a king-priest in Jerusalem [Gen. 14:18; Heb. 7:1, 2; cf. Ps. 76:2].

The two Old Testament references to Melchizedek are BOTH *Messianic*. BOTH foreshadow activities surrounding Christ as the great King-Priest in Jerusalem during the coming age [both in the heavenly Jerusalem and the earthly Jerusalem (cf. Gen. 14:19)].

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 that which 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 (Ps. 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, as man, unlike God, 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. 18:20-22; 19:13, 24, 25; Dan. 4:17, 25-32).

A major problem ensued in God's government of the universe when one ruling angel moved outside the scope of God's established laws (Isa. 14:13, 14; Ezek. 28:14). He sought to *exalt his throne* (the position which he occupied by Divine decree) *above that* of "the stars of God" (*above all other ruling angels* [angels ruling other provinces in the universe, as Satan ruled the earth]). Satan sought to be *as God* in this respect and rule the entire universe rather than just the one province in the universe over which he had been placed.

This, of course, was the one we know today as Satan, the ruler over 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 creature with an old sin nature.*

Man holding the earth's sceptre *MUST* await the appearance (reappearance today) 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.

(A complete panorama of events, depicting the preceding, is seen in the account of Saul and David in the Books of I, II Samuel.

Saul was anointed king over Israel; but Saul disqualified himself by refusing, as God had commanded, to destroy the Amalekites and all of their possessions [I Sam. 15:1ff], though Saul continued to reign. And Saul would continue to reign until the one whom God had chosen to replace him was not only on the scene but ready to ascend the throne.

Then note that which the type, thus far, foreshadows:

Satan was anointed king over the earth; but Satan disqualified himself through seeking to extend his rule beyond his God-appointed position [Isa. 14:13, 14; Ezek. 28:14], though Satan continued to reign. And Satan would continue to reign until the One Whom God had chosen to replace him was not only on the scene but ready to ascend the throne.

In the type, shortly after God rejected Saul as Israel's ruler, God had Samuel anoint David *king over Israel* [I Sam. 16:10-13]. There were then *two anointed kings in Israel*. But David didn't immediately ascend the throne. Rather, he eventually found himself in a place out in the hills, separated from Saul and his kingdom.

And, during this time, certain faithful men joined themselves to David and remained out in the hills with him.

The day came when David was ready to ascend the throne, possessing a contingent of faithful men ready to rule with him. Then, Saul was put down, his crown was taken and given to David, and David and his faithful men moved in and took over the government.

In the antitype, after God had rejected Satan as the earth's ruler, God anointed His Son *King over the earth* [Ps. 45:6, 7, 16; Heb. 1:8, 9].

There were then, and there are today, *two anointed Kings over the earth*. But God's Son, as David in the type, didn't immediately ascend the throne. Rather, as David, Christ finds Himself in *a place of exile, separated from the kingdom*. And, as in David's case, certain faithful individuals join themselves to Christ during this time, *remaining in the place of exile with Him*.

But the day is near at hand when *matters will continue EXACTLY as seen in the type*. Christ, in that day, as David in his day, will be ready to ascend the throne, possessing a contingent of faithful followers to rule with Him. Then, Satan, as Saul, will be put down, his crown will be taken and given to Christ, and Christ, with His faithful followers, will move in and take over the government.

A principle of Biblical government — seen in the type and, correspondingly, in the antitype as well — necessitates that an incumbent ruler, though disqualified to rule, continue holding the sceptre *UNTIL* the one who is to replace him on the throne is *NOT ONLY present but ready [prepared] to ascend the throne*.

This principle, seen in the type, will explain *WHY* God allows Satan to continue holding the sceptre, though God's Son [the One destined to take the sceptre and replace Satan on the throne] has been present for the past 2,000 years.

The simple truth of the matter is that *the Son, though present, is not yet ready to take the sceptre and ascend the throne*. The work of the Spirit, presently searching for a bride for God's Son, *has to be completed FIRST*.

The Son *CANNOT* reign apart from possessing a wife to sit alongside Him on the throne [another established Biblical principle relative to man fulfilling the purpose for his creation in the beginning; man can reign only as a *COMPLETE being*, requiring a husband-wife relationship to complete the man].

[For more information on this subject, refer to the author's books *The Bride in Genesis* (Ch. I) and *Search for the Bride* (most of the books fifteen chapters deal with this subject)].

The bride for whom the Spirit presently searches, removed from the Son's body in that coming day, will be presented back to Christ, completing the Son [Heb. 2:10], allowing Him to reign.

And, as well, the bride, also seen in that day as a *firstborn son* [Christians being individual firstborn sons], will form the rulers necessary to govern as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom.)

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).*
- 2) *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 Ps. 45:6, 7 (Heb. 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* (I 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 evidently 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

Ruling Angels, Ministering Angels, Man

“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 in that coming day, 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 [Gk., *metochoi*, ‘companions’]” (v. 9). Referring to the same group again, *metochoi* is translated “partakers” in Heb. 3:1, 14.

Immediately following the first two Messianic quotations from the Old Testament (v. 5), attention is called to God’s Son being the One in possession of the rights of primogeniture (v. 6); and these seven Messianic quotations close with a reference to God’s Son being seated at His Father’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 in that coming day as "those who [Christians during present time] are about to inherit salvation [at a future time]" (v. 14), with the subject matter then leading 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 opening chapter points to *ONE thing and ONE thing ONLY* — Christ and His companions one day taking the sceptre and exercising regal power and authority over the earth, *NECESSITATING* that the five subsequent warnings, beginning with the first warning in chapter two and concluding with the fifth warning in chapter twelve, 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 two 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 a future inheritance and a rule over that inheritance), *one should naturally expect a corresponding reference to "angels"* (pointing to a present rule over the earth), for the Son's future inheritance has to do with these angels' present 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 and regality through showing the Son's superiority to these 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, formed from the first two of the seven Messianic quotations, centers on the thought of *Sonship, with Sonship portending rulership*. And in this verse, in these two references from the Old Testament pointing to the One with the "more excellent name" than angels, God begins by stating: *"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,” relative to this heirship, God will *NEVER* say to any angel, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” (v. 5; cf. Ps. 2:7); *NOR* has He ever said to any angel, “Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool” (v. 13; cf. Ps. 110:1). *He will say/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 coming Messianic Era they, along with worshipping the Son (v. 6), will minister on behalf of the Son and undoubtedly His companions as well.

Who though are these angels? Can anything be said about them other than that they are just angels within the kingdom of God who have some type connection with God’s affairs in the government of the earth? They certainly cannot be looked upon as consisting of all the angels of God, for vast numbers of these angels have nothing to do with this earth and its government.

From a Scriptural standpoint, one would have to recognize the existence of what could only be myriads multiplied by myriads of angels in God’s universal kingdom who occupy regal positions as provincial rulers, or regal positions under these provincial rulers (separate from Satan, his angels, and their rule over one province in God’s universal kingdom, the earth); and, as well, one would have to recognize the existence of similar numbers of other angels occupying positions in other capacities in relation to these rulers and provinces.

(It is evident from Scripture that there are vast numbers of angels [which, as previously noted, could only be myriads multiplied by myriads in number] occupying positions under God over, or in relation to, provinces in the universe other than the earth.

And, because of the size of the physical universe — a size which can only stagger the imagination, consisting of evidently billions of provinces in the one galaxy in which we live alone, with the existence of billions of galaxies elsewhere in the universe — there can only be, not billions, but trillions of these provinces in the universe.

The positions held by angels elsewhere in the universe would be *regal, or in other related capacities*. And these angels, in this respect, would hold *regal positions [or other type related positions]* over or in relation to at least many of what could only be trillions of provinces in the billions of galaxies which comprise the physical universe.

God's revelation to man though concerns itself almost exclusively with *ONLY one of these provinces — the earth* — which, by comparison to that which exists in the whole of the physical universe in this respect, could be viewed as almost comparable to a grain of sand in the sea.

God's revelation has to do with the one province in His kingdom where the appointed provincial ruler stepped outside the Divinely fix laws under which he was to rule the province.

Doing this, he disqualified himself to continue holding the sceptre. His kingdom was reduced to a ruin [Gen. 1:2a], then later restored [Gen. 1:2b-25]; and, immediately following this restoration, *man was created to take the sceptre and rule the province in the stead of angels* [Gen. 1:26-28].

But, though God's revelation to man concerns itself almost exclusively with the earth and the government of the one province which he had been created to rule, God, in His Word, has seen fit to briefly move outside the bounds of this one province and give man a glimpse into the government of the whole of the universe.

In the opening two chapters of Job, Satan is seen appearing in the presence of God as *a son of God* among other *sons of God* (1:6-12; 2:1-7).

Satan appearing among them evidently appeared as an equal with them. Satan was *the appointed ruler over one province in God's universal kingdom*, and it appears quite evident that these other sons of God *could ONLY be appointed rulers over other provinces elsewhere in the universe*.

In this respect, these angels would be referred to by "the stars of God" in Isa. 14:13, 14 that *Satan sought to rule over rather than be equal with*.

Satan became dissatisfied with simply being one provincial ruler among possibly trillions of provincial rulers, and he sought to place his throne above that of all these other provincial rulers. He sought to "be like the most High," like God Himself. He sought to "sit also upon the mount of the congregation [*lit.*, 'the mount of the assembly'], in the sides of the north [*lit.*, 'the uttermost parts of the north']."

Satan's aspirations to sit on "the mount of the assembly" [Isa. 14:13b], textually, would not only be in relation to placing his throne above all other provincial rulers in the universe but would be in relation to placing himself in the position of the one before whom all these

other provincial rulers would appear. He would, in this respect, be *as God Himself, ruling over the entire universe.*

In the opening two chapters of Job, Satan, during Man's Day, appeared among these other provincial rulers at this meeting place, as an apparent equal with them. But his prior aspirations, preceding man's creation, had been to rule over these other provincial rulers from this place rather than meet with them at this place, as an equal with them.

Thus, *activities of the angels* in view in the Book of Hebrews and elsewhere in Scripture — aside from the several references to provincial rulers other than Satan — would have to do with *the earth and its government ALONE, NOT with God's governmental affairs elsewhere in the universe.*

For additional or related information on the preceding, refer to the author's book, *The Most High Ruleth.*)

With respect to the rulership of the earth, God's Son occupies an appointed position superior to angels (1:4-7, 13), and angels 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 (*i.e.*, on the one province in view — *the earth* — *NOT on other provinces in the universe*). 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 earth's 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 would follow (vv. 7-9), and the "many sons" Christ will bring unto glory with Him (v. 10) are ALL in view.*

Man was made "a little ['for a short time'] lower than the angels" at the time he was created (Heb. 2:6, 7). *He was created to possess dominion over the earth but did NOT hold the sceptre at the time of his creation. NOR did man hold the sceptre at any time before the fall.*

Angels (Satan and his angels) held the sceptre at this time, and they still hold it today.

Thus, in this respect, man during the present time still finds himself in *the SAME position* in which he found himself at the time of his creation — *created for a revealed purpose, but still NOT fulfilling that purpose — for a short time, occupying a position “lower than the angels.”*

Christ, as well, was made “a little [‘for a short time’] lower than the angels” when He appeared on this earth, apart from His glory, as the God-Man — occupying *the SAME regal position* in relation to angels and the government of the earth as fallen man (Heb. 2:9).

He appeared in this manner 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).

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 with a view to these Christians one day realizing an inheritance in a realm which angels presently occupy, an inheritance with the One Who has been appointed “heir of all things.” They are ministering with a view to 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 a heavenly land, possess that land, and rule over the earth from that land as co-heirs with Christ.*

And the land to which Christians 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 man moving into this heavenly land and exercising regal power and authority therein],” *would, of necessity, have to involve this present spiritual warfare.*

1) Two Opposing Sides

On one side of the conflict within this spiritual warfare there are *powerful angelic beings* (“world-rulers of this [present] darkness” [Eph. 6:12, literal rendering]) seeking to hold onto their regal positions and presently possessed territory. 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 Exodus chapter twelve 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), with a view to the nation being removed from Egypt and placed in the land of Canaan, “above all people,” as “a kingdom of priests, and a 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 God-given *priestly rights*, 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 of the land.

They were to accomplish this conquest in view of subsequently 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 Israelites 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, which has to do with carrying out regal and priestly activities 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 those occupying this land 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 this land and exercising the rights of the firstborn therein.

The battle today though, unlike the battle during Moses’ day, is completely *spiritual*. It is a battle against powerful spirit being in a heavenly land, which is why Eph. 6:12 states:

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places [*lit., ‘...against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places’*].”

The battle is against individuals who are far more powerful than man, located in a realm 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, from both the work of the Spirit and the work of angels* (the latter being a *like-spiritual-realm* to the one being combated [cf. Dan. 10:12, 13; Rev. 12:7-10]).

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 Chris-

tians 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 day and 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; Ps. 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 could only act under fixed laws, resulting in their actions being looked upon as actions of the Lord Himself.

(A case in point would be the observation of conditions in and the subsequent destruction of the cities of the Jordan plain during Abraham's day, in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen.

The Lord, accompanied by two angels, had come down to see for Himself the outcry which had come up to Him [apparently by angelic watchers, relating the depravity existing among those dwelling in Sodom and Gomorrah (18:1, 2, 20, 21; cf. Dan. 4:17, 23)].

But the Lord, after coming down, though on earth in the area where Abraham lived, didn't go on down into Sodom Himself. Rather, the Lord remained with Abraham out in the high country and sent the two angels down to observe conditions in Sodom; and, acting under fixed laws, their observation became the Lord's observation. [18:22].

Then, the same thing is seen in the destruction of four cities in the Jordan plain at this time [Deut. 29:23]. These two angels carried out the destruction of these cities under the Lord's command, continuing to act under fixed laws [19:13].

And, destroying the cities in this manner, their actions became the Lord's actions. Not only did these two angels destroy the cities in the plain but the Lord is also said to be the One Who destroyed these cities [19:24, 25, 29].)

The same thing is in view in Heb. 1:14. Angels are seen perform-

ing 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 engaged (since this angelic ministry 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 viewed as *an angelic conflict* (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, angels, and the Lord himself*—*Christians warring against angels and angels warring against angels, with the latter resulting in 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.*

Because of that which lies at the heart of the conflict — *governmental control over the earth* — angels involved in the present conflict, ministering on behalf of Christians, may very well involve those angels who ruled with Satan in the beginning but refused to go along with him in his attempt to be "like the most High." If so, this would present a rather unique situation existing during the present dispensation. These angels would be (and possibly are) helping Christians to acquire positions in the future government of the earth which they once occupied, along with helping Christians to one day possess and wear crowns which these angels presently still possess and wear.

Only one-third of the angels originally ruling with Satan followed him in his God-dishonoring act (Rev. 12:4). The other two-thirds separated themselves from Satan and, as previously stated, possibly form the "ministering spirits" in Heb. 1:14 during the present dispensation.

Satan's aspirations and sin caused this separation. Satan's aspira-

tions and sin caused a separation of rulers within his kingdom — two-thirds separating from one-third. And, as will be shown, this separation resulted in *an imperfection in the God-designed order for the government of the earth, an imperfection which exists to this day* (cf. Ezek. 28:15).

The present spiritual warfare is inseparably connected to a Divine work surrounding *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” (“elders,” Gk., *presbuteros*, referencing older individuals). And this would be 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*. They are seen as “older ones” *in relation to this government, which could ONLY refer to angels* (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 Christians representing “the Church” [by some expositors as both Christians and Jews representing both “the Church and Israel”].

However, neither could possibly be correct, and either would only serve to veil the entire line of teaching in view at this point in the Book of Revelation.)

a) Crowns

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 twelve*. “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 twelve, shows that they would have to be somehow connected with a facet of God’s government in the universe; and *the ONLY facet of government within the universe which can be 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* possibly be represented by these twenty-four elders, for Christians *will NOT* be seated on thrones and crowned at the time events in Revelation chapter four occur (which would be following the removal of Christians from the earth [Rev. 1:10; 4:1, 2], following events surrounding the judgment seat [Rev. 1:11ff], but preceding the beginning of the Tribulation [Rev. 6:1ff]).

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 these crowns before God's throne prior to this time.

The twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne, through this act, shows something *which could NOT possibly be true of Christians.* Such an act [particularly textually in Rev. 4] 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 segments 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 and overthrows Gentile world power, along with Satan and his angels.

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 (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, contextually, can only be identified with angels other than those actively ruling at that time in Satan's kingdom, 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.*

(Some Bible students, on the basis of the pronouns used in Rev. 5:9, 10 — “us” and “we” [KJV] — have understood the twenty-four elders to represent redeemed men, not angels. However, the majority of the better Greek manuscripts render the pronouns in v. 10 as “them” and “they” [ref. ASV, NASB, NIV, Wuest, Weymouth], giving rise to the thought that the pronoun “us” in v. 9 is probably a scribal insertion, being spurious [ref. Alford, Lenski].

But the matter is really not left to manuscript evidence alone. That the pronouns “them” and “they” are correct is evident from the context. Note that the song in vv. 9, 10 is apparently sung not only by the “twenty-four elders” but also by the “four beasts [‘living creatures’]” as well. Then, other angels join them in vv. 11ff, with all of the angels together voicing additional, related statements.

Aside from the preceding, it would make *absolutely NO sense whatsoever* to understand these twenty-four elders as referring to a segment of redeemed man. Man couldn’t possibly be crowned at the time of events in Rev. 4, 5, else he would be crowned before Christ is crowned [note that Christ is to wear the crown which Satan presently wears, which Satan will still be wearing at this time].

Also, man is to wear the crown he receives, not relinquish it before God’s throne as seen being done by the twenty-four elders.)

Then in view of man assuming the sceptre, those angels represented by the twenty-four elders (possibly among those 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 (ref. the author’s book, *Judgment Seat of Christ*, Chapter 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 (referred 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 after 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.*

b) Two, Three Sets of Twelve

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 twelve, one set short of “three,” the number of *Divine perfection*. That is, “three sets of twelve” would show *Divine perfection within a governmental structure*, which is *the ONLY way* God would have designed and established the government of this earth in the beginning; and, beyond that, viewing three sets of “twelve,” 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.

Those represented by the other *one-third*, the other set of “twelve,” remained with Satan (Rev. 12:4). “Two” is the number of *division* in Scripture. Those represented by the two sets of twelve separated themselves from Satan. “One” though is the number of *unity*. Those represented by the other set of twelve remained with Satan.

As a consequence of Satan's attempt to exlt his throne, Divine perfection ceased to exist in his kingdom in more ways than one. Not only was the domain over which he ruled reduced to a 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, with a view to 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 twelve, 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 only fitting 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.*"

(For additional information on the twenty-four elders in Revelation chapter four, refer to the Author's book, *The Rapture and Beyond*, Chapter IV, "Crowns Relinquished in the Lord's Day.")

Therefore...

Because of that which the Spirit of God reveals through the writer of Hebrews in chapter one, especially verse fourteen, a two-part state-

ment 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 necessity of action on the Christian's part, which the text goes on to explain.

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 do everything necessary in order to reach the desired goal.

And "so much the more" continues the thought, referring to the necessity of straining every muscle of one's being — an all-out effort (cf. I Cor. 9:24-27; I Tim. 5:12; Jude 3) — causing 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 are being compelled to excel in the race of the faith through God's revelation concerning that which lies at the end of the race; 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 are also His warnings concerning that which will occur should Christians choose to direct their attention elsewhere.

3

God Has Spoken *Finality of the Word*

“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 opening four verses in Hebrews chapter two record the first of the five major warnings in the Book.

This warning is introduced and based upon that seen in chapter one, and neither this warning nor any one of the other four warnings can be properly understood apart from this introductory material.

Any incorrect understanding of the central message in Hebrews — usually seen as having to do with eternal salvation, causing the warning passages to be incorrectly applied to the unsaved rather than correctly applied to the saved (a common misinterpretation of these passages and the book as a whole) — can invariably be traced back to a misunderstanding of chapter one and the connection which 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, aside from the manner in which the Book of Genesis and the Gospel of John open, Hebrews provides about 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).

These seven Old Testament quotations in the first chapter (vv. 5-13), from which most of the teaching in this introductory chapter is drawn, are all *Messianic* in their scope of fulfillment. And these quotations present *a complete, composite, Messianic portrait of Christ*, drawing from different things 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 (Christians) will 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, all five warning passages *can be understood ONLY one way*. They can ONLY be understood as warnings directed to Christians relative to the inheritance which lies out ahead.

Then, the very nature of the way that 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? *ONLY one thing can possibly be in view — 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*.

BUT, if 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, have become members of the family of God. They have become “children of God”; and because they are *new creations* “in Christ,” (II Cor. 5:17), they, as well, are seen as “sons of God” (Gal. 3:26; 4:6).

In fact, Christians are referred to as “Children” and “sons” about an equal number of times in the New Testament.

Because Christians are *new creations* “in Christ” and can presently be viewed as “sons” *because of creation*, they can one day be adopted into a firstborn standing. And, in this respect, they are in line to inherit the rights of the firstborn, the rights of primogeniture.

With these things in view, the first chapter in the Book of Hebrews is about *Christ, as God’s firstborn Son, one day coming into possession of His inheritance*; and the chapter, as well, is about *Christ’s “companions,” — Christians, following the adoption into a firstborn standing — coming into possession of this same inheritance as co-heirs with Him.*

(For additional information on Christians presently seen as both “children of God” and “sons of God,” with the adoption into a firstborn standing occurring yet future, refer to the author’s book, *God’s Firstborn Sons*, Chapter III, along with the appendix.)

And at the heart of all five of the warning passages, reflecting back on material in chapter one, each passage clearly reveals 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, exhorting and warning 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. Drawing from the way that the Greek text is worded, 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 as:

1) 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 (Matt. 25:20-23)].”

2) The One Who is presently seated at God’s right hand, anticipating that future day when “the joy that was set before him” 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 Christians not keeping their eyes fixed on the goal in either passage (Heb. 2:1; 12:2) is the same. It would have to be, for the race of the faith in chapter twelve is simply another picture of the same thing seen in chapter two, with the goal at any point throughout the book where a goal is in view having previously been established and made known in the opening chapter.

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). Then, because of this improper direction in the course of one’s life — an improper navigation in one’s life — *because of this drifting along in life, in a direction NOT moving toward the revealed destination, a Christian can fail to realize the goal of his calling.*

In Heb. 2:1, attention is to be fixed upon “the things which we have heard,” which centers on *the coming inheritance of Christ and His co-heirs*.

And in Heb. 12:2, attention is to be fixed upon Jesus, Who, as seen in the very opening statement concerning Him in Hebrews, is the “heir of all things” (1:2).

And by fixing our attention upon Him, as Heir, our attention will also be fixed upon *the coming inheritance of the saints as well*. From a proper Scriptural perspective, *our attention really CANNOT be fixed upon one apart from the other, for they are inseparably related, one to the other*.

The same inseparable relationship can be seen between Christ’s finished work at Calvary and His coming reign with His co-heirs. 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, Chapter III*]). Thus, within the scope of the inheritance given to Him by the Father, *Christ CANNOT be separated from His co-heirs, for BOTH are to exercise the rights of primogeniture TOGETHER*.

There is *NO such thing* as viewing the events surrounding Calvary in their proper perspective apart from viewing Christ’s future inheritance in connection with these events. And, as well, 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, made possible because of His finished work at Calvary.

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 direction in the course 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."
- 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; Ps. 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 (Ps. 12:6); that given through Moses, and later through other Jewish prophets, 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, which could be good or bad, positive or negative.*

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, 6a).

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..." (Lev. 26:3, 4a).

Or, on the other hand,

"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..." (Lev. 26:14-16a; *cf.* Deut. 28:1ff, 15ff).

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.”

A present household servant will, in that day, receive *payment EXACTLY commensurate with services rendered in the house, whether good or bad, whether comparable to “gold, silver, precious stones” or to “wood, hay, stubble”* (I Cor. 3:12ff; II Cor. 5:10, 11).

To view matters after any other fashion would reflect negatively on God’s perfect justice and righteousness.

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.*

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 with His people.

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; cf. Jude 5).

God spoke to the Israelites "at sundry times and in divers manners... in time past... by [in the person of] the prophets," and He has spoken unto Christians "in these last days... by [in the person of] his Son" (Heb. 1:1, 2).

The Word which was spoken, in either instance, is the same. It was the written Word, which was God, which became flesh in the person of God's Son. And the Three are inseparable, for any One of the Three (the Word, God, His Son) is simply a different manifestation of the other Two.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God...

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." (John 1:1, 2, 14a).

That which was given to man by means of the Son (the Word made flesh) "in these last days" is no different than that which had previously been given to man through Jewish prophets. No matter the form, it is still the unchangeable Word — whether the unchangeable God, the unchangeable written Word, or the unchangeable Word which was made flesh.

The unchangeable written Word "was [always has been, always will be] God." This unchangeable Word is that which has forever been settled in heaven (Ps. 119:89) — as settled as the Father and His Son, for this Word is seen as both, and they are both seen as this Word.

(The word “was” appearing four times in John 1:1, 2 is a translation of a form of *eimi* in the Greek text, which is a verb of being, without reference to a beginning or an ending. Thus, the Word always has been and always will be God, Who became flesh in the person of His Son.

The same verb [*eimi*] is used in John 18:5-8 where Jesus identified Himself to “a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees,” led by Judas, when He simply said “I am,” causing them to fall backward upon the ground.

[The translation “I am He” in the KJV, NASB, NIV is incorrect. The translation should be, “I Am.” This is the manner in which the same identifying expression is set forth in the Old Testament, and, of necessity, it must be the same in the New Testament.

Eimi, as in John 18:5-8, is the verb used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) in Exodus 3:14, where God identified Himself in Moses’ presence as “I am that I am,” translating (as in the English text) a double use of a verb of being from the Hebrew text].

Also note that the Spirit, part of the Triune Godhead, can be seen in this same light with respect to the Word in another manner. The Spirit, Who gave this Word through Jewish prophets, as well, cannot be separated from this Word. The Spirit possesses exactly the same relationship to the Word as does the Father and the Son. The Spirit would have to possess this same relationship relative to the Word, for He is part of an inseparable trinity.

Comparing Eph. 6:18, 19 with the counterpart to this passage in Col. 3:16, the command to “be filled with the Spirit” in Ephesians is revealed in Colossians to be carried out by allowing “the word of Christ” to dwell in a person “richly in all wisdom.” *The Spirit and the Word* — as *God and the Word*, or as *Jesus and the Word* — are the SAME, manifested in two different forms.

And the preceding is why a Christian can eat Christ’s flesh and drink His blood [John 6:48-58] ONLY one way — by allowing “the word of Christ” to dwell in him “richly in all wisdom.” And by so doing, the Christian will progressively become filled with the Spirit at the same time.

Thus, a progressive infilling with the Word is part and parcel with a progressive infilling with the Spirit. And this is the only manner in which a filling with the Spirit can occur in a Christian’s life.

God simply does NOT act apart from His Word. To do so, in a respect, God would be acting apart from Himself, His Son, and His Spirit — an impossibility.)

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 accountable generation of Israelites which left Egypt (twenty years old and above [Num. 14:29]), 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 (entering into the land of Canaan and exercising the rights of the firstborn through God placing them "above all people" as a "kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" [Ex. 19:5, 6]).

An entire accountable generation, forming part of a nation recognized as God's firstborn son (Ex. 4:22, 23), forfeited the rights of the firstborn. And this entire accountable generation was, accordingly (having received a just recompense of reward), denied these rights.

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 Greek word translated "examples" is also *tupoi*). That which happened to Israel happened as types for us.

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

The Christians’ present experiences form the antitype of Israel’s past experiences, which is *EXACTLY* what is referred to in Heb. 2:2, 3:

“For 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 neglect so great salvation... [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 why *we CAN’T* escape if we, relative to our heavenly calling, follow a parallel course of action to that which the entire accountable generation of Israelites, save Caleb and Joshua, 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 entire accountable 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 (eternally saved) but on the wrong side of the goal of their calling (failing to realize the inheritance which they had been called to possess), so will like-minded Christians be overthrown on the right side of the blood (eternally saved) but on the wrong side of the goal of their calling (fail to realize the inheritance which they have been called to possess).

The Israelites forfeited and were denied the rights of the firstborn during Moses' day; and numerous Christians are presently forfeiting and will, during the days of the One greater than Moses, 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 little to 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.

1) In Matt. 22:5, certain individuals "made light of," they "disregarded" an invitation to the festivities surrounding a royal wedding.

2) In I Tim. 4:14, Timothy is warned to not "neglect," "disregard" the gift given to him.

3) 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.

4) 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 the preceding passages will suffice to show exactly how this word is also used 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 festival.

The first group was invited on two different occasions. The first time that the invitation was extended, Scripture states that they simply "would not come" (v. 3); and the second time that 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, had 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 that the invitation was extended had to do with God's servants sent to the Israelites, along with the Israelites' response. This parable is an extension of 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 had 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 that 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, with the man knowing that he was present at these festivities improperly clothed, *the man "was speechless."* There was nothing that 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 little to 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 today escape a just recompense of reward.

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. Rather, we *MUST* 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 the kingdom of the heavens to Israel (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 during the offer and the re-offer of the kingdom [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.”

(Signs, wonders, and miracles in relation to “so great salvation,” as seen in Heb. 2:3b, 4, is dealt with in the next chapter in this book.)

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:

“And 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 [Gk., *seismos*, “a shaking,” has to

do, contextually, with a complete collapse and disarray in the earth's government under Antichrist, not with an earthquake] will occur in connection with the termination of God's judgments during and immediately following the Tribulation.

The seventh vial, poured out in the preceding verse (v. 17), will complete God's judgments upon the earth-dwellers at the time of His Son's return.

(For information on how the Greek word *seismos* is used in the New Testament [fourteen times — seven times in the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts, and seven more times in the Book of Revelation], refer to the author's book, *The Time of the End*, Chapter XV, "The Great Seismos.")

The words, "It is done," at the end of Rev. 16:17 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 ['so mighty a shaking,' 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 has ever designed 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

Which At the First...

In the Gospels, Then in Acts and the Epistles

“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).

According to Heb. 2:3, 4, the message having to do with “so great salvation,” which is the central message to be proclaimed to Christians throughout the present dispensation, is *the SAME message* proclaimed to Israel in time past.

This is the message proclaimed by John, Jesus, the Twelve, and later the Seventy, to Israel during the time of Christ’s earthly ministry; this is the message proclaimed to Israel for about three decades following Christ’s ascension, as seen throughout the Book of Acts; and this, as well, is the message proclaimed to Christians by those who had heard Christ during the same period of time covered by the gospels and the Book of Acts (Heb. 2:3).

This message has to do with that which was offered to Israel in time past, offered during Christ’s earthly ministry, and attended by signs, wonders, and miracles (*cf.* Matt. 4:23-25; 8:14, 15; 9:18-30; 10:7, 8; 11:2-5; 12:15ff).

And this is *ALSO* the message rejected by and subsequently taken from Israel, with *the new creation* “in Christ” then called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected, *though NOT attended by signs, wonders, and miracles.*

It is *the creation in Jacob which requires a sign* (Isa. 43:1, 7; I Cor. 1:22), *NOT the new creation* “in Christ” (cf. Matt. 21:33-45; Acts 2:1ff; IPeter 2:9-11).

And, though there was a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel during the Acts period (from 33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.), the nation, as before, rejected the offer. This re-offer of the kingdom to Israel was made at the same time that the kingdom began to be offered to *the new creation* “in Christ,” *the one new man* (cf. II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:15).

Since Israel, at this time, was still in view relative to the proffered kingdom, *signs, wonders, and miracles, of necessity, continued in evidence as well.* This is the reason that they are seen throughout the period covered by the Book of Acts, which covers the complete time of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel — *FROM the Apostles dealing with the Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2:4ff, TO Paul dealing with the Jewish religious leaders in Rome almost thirty years later, in Acts 28:17-29.*

And this complete period — beginning in the gospels, concluding in Acts — is the time in view through a mention of signs, wonders, and miracles in connection with “so great salvation” in Heb. 2:4.

With that in mind, the remainder of this chapter will be taken up with an overview of *signs, wonders, and miracles* as seen throughout Scripture. This will allow Heb. 2:3, 4 to be understood within a proper Scriptural framework relative to the message surrounding “so great salvation,” proclaimed to Israel during past time and to be proclaimed to Christians throughout the present dispensation (though, again, *NOT* proclaimed to Christians in connection with signs, wonders, and miracles).

History of Signs, Wonders, and Miracles

(Defining “signs, wonders, and miracles” [e.g., Acts 2:22], the “sign” is *centrally* in view; and the words “wonder” and “miracle” describe the “sign.”

That is, the “sign” [Gk., *semeion*] is both a “wonder” [Gk., *teras*, *something out of the ordinary*] and a “miracle” [Gk., *dunamis*, meaning “power,” referring to the supernatural power necessary to bring the sign to pass.]

In line with the preceding, the manifestation of *signs, wonders,* and *miracles* in Scripture is inseparably connected with two things:

- 1) *The Nation of Israel.*
- 2) *The Kingdom.*

Both *ISRAEL* and *the KINGDOM MUST* be in view at the *SAME* time for signs, wonders and miracles to exist. If there is an absence of either one (either *Israel*, or *the kingdom*), a manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles, as seen throughout the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts, *CANNOT* exist (for it would be *out of line* with the reason for their appearance in Scripture for them to exist).

And, in order to properly understand this manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles during time covered by the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts, a person *MUST* have a correct foundation upon which to build. A person *MUST* begin in the Old Testament and trace the history of this supernatural work into the New Testament.

ONLY THEN is he in a position to understand various, necessary things about this supernatural phenomenon.

1) *Signs, Wonders, and Miracles in the Old Testament*

Signs, wonders, and miracles, performed *through individuals*, were manifested *ONLY on two occasions in all of the Old Testament.*

They were manifested by Moses and Aaron surrounding Israel's deliverance from Egypt, with a view to the nation's entrance into the land of Canaan; and they were manifested by Moses' successor, Joshua, surrounding Israel's subsequent entrance into the land of Canaan (Ex. 4:29-31; 7:10ff; Deut. 6:22, 23; Joshua 3:7ff; 10:12-14).

That was the first occasion.

The second was a manifestation by Elijah and his successor Elisha, some five hundred years later (I Kings 17:1ff; II Kings 2:13ff).

Outside of these two occasions there is *NOT a single reference* to an individual being empowered to perform signs, wonders, and miracles throughout all of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Numerous miracles are recorded in these Scriptures (*e.g.*, the burning bush which was not consumed [Ex. 3:2], the sun being moved back ten degrees on the dial [Isa. 38:7, 8], the three Israelites being protected in the fiery furnace [Dan. 3:19-25], or Jonah being delivered

from the place of death in the sea [Jonah 1:17-2:10]).

But these were miraculous works *performed directly by God, NOT by individuals whom God had empowered to perform them.*

Note that the manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles during the days of Moses, Aaron, and Joshua was in relation to *ISRAEL* and *the KINGDOM*. Supernatural manifestations of power occurred *relative to Israel being removed from Egypt and being established in the land of Canaan, within a theocracy.*

Thus, a *first-mention principle* was set forth at this point in Scripture, establishing an unchangeable pattern. Any future manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles of the nature seen at the time of the Exodus *MUST be brought to pass with ISRAEL in view, and they MUST have to do with the KINGDOM.*

During the days of Elijah and Elisha the people of Israel had been established in the land, within a theocracy, for about five hundred years. But, because of continued disobedience on the part of the people, the theocracy never came even close to reaching the heights which God had intended. The theocracy reached its greatest heights during the days of David and his son Solomon (though far from the heights which God had intended). But after that, following the division of the kingdom, things began to go in another direction entirely, moving even farther away from that which God had commanded.

And it was during these days that Elijah was called forth (with Elisha finishing his ministry) to call the nation to repentance. The manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles accompanying their ministry pertained to *ISRAEL* and *the KINGDOM*.

They had to, for a *first-mention principle* had previously been established; and any future manifestation had to be *EXACTLY in accord with the way matters were set forth at the beginning.*

These signs, wonders, and miracles were simply *the credentials* of those manifesting them in Israel's presence, with the signs themselves, by their very nature, setting forth a message (like the sign of Jonah, foreshadowing a miraculous deliverance of God's two firstborn Sons — Christ and Israel — from the place of death [*cf.* Matt. 12:38-40]).

Through a manifestation of supernatural powers accompanying the message, Israel was to recognize that the Messenger had been sent from God; and, accordingly, the people were to heed both the

message set forth by the manifested signs and proclaimed by the Messenger (Ex. 4:1-9, 29-31).

The people of Israel though failed to heed the message; the nation didn't repent. And the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities followed (722 B.C. and 605 B.C. respectively).

"The times of the Gentiles" began with the Babylonian captivity, has lasted to the present day, and will last until the end of the Tribulation. This is simply a prolonged, uninterrupted period of time — lasting about 2,600 years — *during which Israel MUST dwell apart from a theocracy and remain scattered among the Gentile nations.*

And the Gentiles, among whom Israel dwells, will hold the sceptre throughout this time.

(The remnant of Jews in the land forming the present nation of Israel — some 6,000,000 strong — *is NOT there to stay.* This remnant has returned under a Zionistic movement, through man's efforts, apart from repentance, before it is time for the nation to return. And, from a Biblical standpoint, *a continued, indefinite presence of the Jewish people in the land is NOT possible.*

In past history, because of Israel's continued disobedience over centuries of time, God eventually uprooted the Jewish people from their land and drove them out among the Gentile nations. And among these nations is where God has deemed that they will remain until they repent. As well, this is the place where God has decreed that He will deal with His people relative to repentance, *NOT in the land.*

The remnant presently in the land is going to be uprooted in the middle of the coming Tribulation and be driven back out among the nations [Matt. 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24]. God dealt with Jonah in *the sea* in the type, and that which the sea typifies [*the Gentile nations*] is where God has decreed that He will deal with the one whom Jonah typifies — the nation of Israel [Jonah 1:15-2:10].

The type has been set, and the antitype MUST follow the type in EXACT detail.

For additional information on this whole overall subject, refer to the author's books, *O Sleeper! Arise, Call!* and *Never Again! or Yes, Again!*

2) Signs, Wonders, and Miracles in the New Testament

After moving through almost 1,500 years of Jewish history and

seeing signs, wonders, and miracles manifested during only two different periods by only five different men within these periods (by Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha), things suddenly changed.

Israel's Messiah (following the ministry of His forerunner, John the Baptist) appeared to Israel with a message pertaining to the kingdom of the heavens; and *this message was accompanied by numerous signs, wonders, and miracles* (Matt. 4:17-25; 8:1ff).

Then, in conjunction with and very early in His ministry, Christ called *twelve disciples* to help carry this message; and *they were empowered to perform signs, wonders, and miracles in connection with their ministry as well* (Matt. 10:5-8).

(Also, Christ later "appointed" *seventy others* to go "before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come" — though very little is said about them in the gospel accounts — and *He empowered them to perform signs, wonders, and miracles as well* [Luke 10:1-19].

Thus, at this time, there was a manifestation of supernatural signs in the camp of Israel *UNLIKE anything heretofore seen in the history of the nation.*)

Christ had been sent *ONLY* to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24), and Christ sent the disciples whom He had called to Israel *ALONE* (Matt. 10:6). Both Christ and His disciples went to Israel with *the SAME* message and *the SAME accompanying manifestation of supernatural powers*. It was a message surrounding *the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the nation, attended by a manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles of an UNPRECEDENTED nature*.

Whether it was Jesus or His disciples proclaiming the proffered kingdom, signs, wonders, and miracles accompanied their ministry and formed the credentials of those carrying the message.

These manifestations of power were *supernatural events which, by their very nature, set forth a message themselves; and these signs, as well, authenticated the message being proclaimed by the Messenger as being true and from God* (John 3:1, 2; Acts 2:22; cf. Ex. 4:1-9).

The religious leaders in Israel were to see these signs, wonders, and miracles and understand not only the message set forth by the signs but that the Messengers were God-sent, carrying God's message for His people. Then, believing and understanding the message

which they had both seen (through the signs) and heard (from the Messengers), they were responsible for carrying this message to the people of Israel (*cf.* Ex. 4:29-31; Num. 13:1-26).

However, exactly the opposite occurred. The religious leaders *refused to believe* the message, *rejecting both the signs and the Messengers*; and they, in their unbelief, then sought to *subvert the message and discredit the signs and the Messengers in the presence of the Jewish people* (Matt. 12:14-32).

(This is why Christ, near the end of His earthly ministry, in no uncertain terms, condemned the actions of the Scribes and Pharisees — the fundamental religious leaders of that day [Matt. 23:1ff]. They had seen the signs and heard the Messengers; but they *had rejected* the message and had sought to do away with the accompanying supernatural powers, mainly through attacking the central Messenger, through attacking Christ.

The Scribes and Pharisees *had rejected the signs and had sought to discredit Christ in the eyes of the people, bringing about reproach on the Messenger and casting doubt on His message* [e.g., Matt. 9:27-34; 12:22-24; *cf.* John 12:10, 11]. And, whether by word or deed, this resulted in their bearing a *false witness* to the people of Israel.)

The Scribes and Pharisees, the main body of religious leaders in Israel, controlled, more than any other group (by their very numbers), the religious life of the nation. And these religious leaders had “shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men [*lit.*, ‘...in the presence of men’ — *i.e.*, among those in Israel]” (Matt. 23:13). These religious leaders had no interest in entering the kingdom, and they were doing everything within their power to prevent others from entering as well.

And all of this had its end result in Israel’s *rejection* of both the message and the Messenger, *the removal* of the kingdom of the heavens from Israel, *the crucifixion* of Israel’s Messiah, and *God bringing into existence* a separate and distinct entity to be the recipient of that which had been offered to and rejected by Israel. Israel had failed to bring forth fruit in relation to the kingdom of the heavens, and *the one new man* “in Christ” was called into existence to be accorded the opportunity to bring forth fruit in this realm (Matt. 21:18, 19, 33-43; *cf.* I Peter 2:9-11).

But, though the kingdom was taken from Israel and the Church was called into existence to be the recipient of this offer, there was a *re-offer* of the kingdom to Israel, beginning at the time of the inception

of the Church (Acts 2:1ff). And, if for no other reason, this is evident because of *the continuance of signs, wonders, and miracles*.

That would be to say, if God had terminated His dealings with Israel relative to the kingdom of the heavens at or before the time that the Church was called into existence, *signs, wonders, and miracles would have ceased to exist*. These supernatural manifestations of power *had NOTHING to do with the one new man "in Christ"* (who is "neither Jew nor Greek" [Gal. 3:28]). They had to do with *Israel ALONE* (I Cor. 1:22), and they had to do with *ISRAEL in relation to the KINGDOM*.

These were *supernatural works, manifested through empowered individuals as they carried the message to Israel* (Acts 2:4; 3:1ff; 4:29-33; 5:12ff; 6:8ff). Then, when Gentiles began to be added to the body of Christ, they were manifested within Churches comprised of saved Gentiles, such as the Church in Corinth (chs. 12-14). And a manifestation of supernatural works in the Church after this fashion could only have been centered around the thought of *provoking Israel "to jealousy"* (Rom. 10:19; 11:11, 14). That is, God was using those whom Israel considered *Gentile dogs* to manifest supernatural powers which naturally belonged to Israel *in order to provoke the nation to jealousy*.

And, between a segment of *the one new man "in Christ"* (et al.) carrying the message to Israel and another segment seeking to provoke the nation to jealousy — all being done through a manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles — the Jewish people were dealt with in what might be considered *a maximum manner*.

In one respect, God pulled out all stops (*cf.* Luke 10:13-24; 11:29-32); but the religious leaders in Israel would still have nothing to do with the message. Thus, the nation continued in unbelief.

Purpose for Signs, Wonders, and Miracles

Most of the manifestations of supernatural power during the ministry of Christ and the apostles (during the periods covered by both the gospel accounts and by the Book of Acts) centered around *bodily healings*. This was the manner in which they were introduced during Christ's ministry (Matt. 4:23-25), and this was the manner in which they were brought to a close about three decades later during Paul's ministry (Acts 28:7-9).

(And along with bodily healings, *death* was no longer irreversible [Mark 5:35-43; John 11:1-47; Acts 9:36-42; 20:7-12], *material needs* were miraculously supplied [food, drink, etc. (John 2:1-11; 6:1-14; Acts 5:19-23; 16:26)], there was *deliverance from demonic spirits* [Matt. 12:22; Acts 5:16], and *angelic ministry* was abundantly available [Matt. 4:11; Acts 12:7, 8, 23].)

The signs, centering around bodily healings (though including other related things), reflected on and had to do with a dual aspect of one thing: *the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel*.

- 1) The signs showed *an existing condition (sickness, seen prior to the healings)*.
- 2) The signs also showed *another condition which COULD exist (restoration, seen following the healings)*.

And *deliverance for the nation* after the fashion set forth by the signs was *contingent on national repentance, followed by baptism* (cf. Matt. 3:1-11; 4:17, 23-25; 10:5-8; Acts 2:37, 38; 3:19-21).

These *signs, wonders, and miracles*, along with being the credentials of the Messengers of the gospel of the kingdom, were manifestations of supernatural powers (powers necessary to bring the signs to pass) depicting *Israel's present spiritual condition and showing how this condition could change, if...* These same manifestations of supernatural powers could and would — *contingent on Israel's repentance* — bring to pass that of which the signs spoke, *i.e., Israel's supernatural healing, accompanied by God's supernatural provision for the nation in all areas of life, dealt with in all the other various signs*.

1) *Israel's Present Spiritual Condition*

Israel's spiritual condition prior to God's miraculous healing is revealed numerous places in Scripture. But note Isaiah's description of the nation in this respect:

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Why should ye be stricken anymore? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (1:4-6).

This was the way Isaiah introduced Israel at the very beginning of his prophecy; but he didn't remain at this point, *depicting Israel's spiritual condition during his day (a condition which has continued to the present day)*. Isaiah then went on to relate the main subject matter of his prophecy.

Israel was sick, but Israel COULD and one day WOULD be cured of this sickness. And the latter is what Isaiah went on to also relate. Israel's condition was NOT permanent. *The nation WOULD one day be healed.*

But this would occur *ONLY after God's conditions had been met: "If ye be willing and obedient..."* (1:19a; cf. v. 18). *ONLY THEN* would the Lord turn His hand, purge the nation, and restore her rulers (1:25, 26). *ONLY THEN* would redemption occur, and *ONLY THEN* would the kingdom with all its glory be restored to Israel (1:27-2:5).

2) *Israel's Future Supernatural Restoration*

But when will Israel repent, allowing *healing* to occur? The answer is provided numerous places in Scripture, but note Hosea's prophecy where the matter is dealt with in so many words.

"When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound ['Ephraim' and 'Judah' referring to *Israel*], then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb ['Jareb,' a figurative title of *the Assyrian*]: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; and I will take away, and none shall rescue him.

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight" (Hosea 5:13-6:2).

In these verses from Hosea, Israel is pictured as *sick*, having a *wound* (near the end of Israel's time of sickness, during the coming Tribulation), with the Assyrian (Antichrist) being unable to provide a cure (5:13). Help though is available, but it *MUST* come from the same source which Isaiah or any of the other prophets foretold. *It MUST come from the Lord* (5:14-6:1).

Israel's sickness was brought about by the Lord because of the nation's refusal to obey that which the Lord had commanded.

And *the SAME One* Who brought about Israel's condition is also *the ONLY One* Who can effect a change in Israel's condition.

And *a reversal of the nation's condition* after this fashion is dependent on *a reversal of the nation's attitude and action* regarding the Lord's commandments (*cf.* Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7-12; 4:19, 20).

Israel being positioned in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the head of the nations, within a theocracy, is *conditional*. It was *conditional* in history and *remains so* today. It was / is *conditioned on Israel obeying the Lord's commandments*.

Once the Israelites had been delivered from Egypt and were at Sinai, about to receive the Law [the Magna Charta for the kingdom, the rules and regulations governing the people within the kingdom], the Lord made one thing very clear — *the necessity and importance of the people obeying His commandments*.

“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. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel” (Ex. 19:5, 6; *cf.* Lev. 26:1-13; Deut. 28:1-14).

(Note that *obedience to the Lord's commandments follows repentance [a change of mind]* in both the type and the antitype.

In the type, *the Israelites changed their minds and received the one whom they had previously rejected [Moses]*.

In the antitype, *the Israelites will change their minds and receive the One Whom they previously rejected [the One greater than Moses, the nation's Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (Zech. 12:10-14; 13:6)]*.

It is *ONLY* after this, in the type or the antitype, that subsequent

events leading up to the reception of the Lord's commandments governing the Jewish people in the kingdom occur [in the type, following the Passover, the Exodus from Egypt...; in the antitype, following that foreshadowed by these events].

In the type, the Lord's commandments had to do with the old covenant, the Law received at Sinai; in the antitype these commandments will have to do the new covenant, the Law placed "in their inward parts," written "in their hearts" [Jer. 31:31-33].

And the new covenant may very well be made with Israel at the same place that the old covenant was made with the nation — at Sinai — we're not told.)

And it was later clearly revealed *EXACTLY* what would occur if Israel refused to obey the Lord's commandments (Lev. 26:14ff; Deut. 28:15ff). The nation would be punished "seven times [a number signifying *the completeness* of that which was in view, *i.e.*, *a complete punishment at the Lord's hands*]," all types of curses would befall the people, they would be removed from their land and scattered among the nations, and they would find themselves in subjection to the Gentile nations where they had been scattered.

They would find themselves at the tail of the nations rather than at the head, and their lot in this position would be that of curses rather than blessings.

And, though remnants of those scattered would, at times, leave the Gentile nations and return to their own land (a remnant was present 2,000 years ago, and another is present today), the nation — *the whole nation, including any remnant in the land* (Isa. 1:5-7) — would remain in the same spiritually sick condition, with its land desolate.

ONLY the Lord could bring about healing, but in His time.

And that's what Hosea 5:13-6:2 is about — Israel's present condition and that future time when the nation will repent, resulting in the nation being healed.

Note again Hosea 6:1, 2 relative to Israel's repentance and healing:

"Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

After two days [after 2,000 years] will he revive us: in the third day [the third 1,000-year period] he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

Then, note the two things revealed immediately before this, in Hosea 5:15, which introduce Israel's future repentance:

1) The two days (6:2) cover *the entire 2,000-year Jewish dispensation — beginning with Abraham and ending with the Tribulation, concluding Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy* (Dan. 9:24-27) — with Israeli disobedience seen throughout the dispensation, climaxed by Israel's crucifixion of the nation's Messiah at the end of the sixty-ninth week and Israel's harlotry brought to an apex in the kingdom of Antichrist during the seventieth and last week.

2) The two days (the 2,000 years) come to a close with the Jewish people brought into such dire straits during Daniel's seventieth week (the coming Tribulation) that they will be left without a choice other than to seek the Lord's face toward the end of these final seven years of the Jewish dispensation, receiving the Lord when He returns and reveals Himself to them.

Both the time of the Tribulation and the time when Israel will seek the Lord's face will be two days (2,000 years) beyond the birth of Abraham (counting time during *the Jewish dispensation alone*, for it is the Jewish people being dealt with in the prophecy, *with the dispensation in which God deals with Christians unseen in the prophecy* (i.e., with Israel set aside, the present two days, 2,000 years, are NOT seen in the prophecy).

Thus, healing for the nation will occur *after two days, on the third day* (viewing matters from the standpoint of the prophecy and the Jewish dispensation), or *after six days, on the seventh day* (counting from Adam and viewing matters from the standpoint of all three 2,000-year dispensations comprising Man's Day. [Ref. Ch. V, "Ages and Dispensations" in the author's book, *The Study of Scripture*]).

As God worked six days to restore a ruined creation in the beginning and then rested the seventh day (Gen. 1:1-2:3), so is He presently working six more days (6,000 years) to restore a subsequent ruined creation, with a view to resting the seventh day (the seventh 1,000-year period). And all subsequent sections of Scripture, such as Hosea 6:1, 2, merely rest upon and provide additional light for the foundational framework — showing the septenary structure of Scripture — set forth at the very beginning.

Then, with all of the preceding in mind, note Isaiah chapter fifty-three. This chapter outlines Israel's confession in that coming seventh day, *following the healing of the nation*:

"Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes *we are healed...*" (vv. 1, 4, 5).

It was this future condition of Israel which Isaiah (along with the other prophets) dealt with so extensively. And it was this future condition of Israel to which the miraculous signs throughout Scripture pointed, whether during Moses and Joshua's day, during Elijah and Elisha's day, or during the days of Christ and the Apostles (both preceding and following the events of Calvary).

The central thought when the Spirit of God closed the Old Testament Canon pertained to *Israel being healed* [Mal. 4:2, 3], and this was likewise *the central thought* when the heavens were once again opened over four centuries later in the New Testament [Matt. 3:1, 2; 4:17, 23-25].

The New is simply a continuation and unveiling of that which has lain in the Old *from the beginning*.

Do you want to understand the New? *Then study the Old*. Do you want to see Israel and the Christ of the New? *Then view Israel and the nation's Messiah in the eyes of the Old*.

Cessation of Signs, Wonders, and Miracles

Signs, wonders, and miracles, manifested during time covered by the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts, were inseparably connected with the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel (both in the original offer and in the re-offer).

In the gospel accounts (in the original offer), these manifestations of supernatural power *were more evident* prior to Israel's climactic rejection of the message and Christ's departure from the house (Matt. 12:22-32; 13:1), though *seen throughout this period*.

And in Acts (in the subsequent re-offer), these manifestations of supernatural power *were more evident* prior to Israel's climactic rejection once again and the introduction of Paul to carry the message to the Gentiles (Acts 7:51-58; 9:1-15), though, as in the original offer, *they were seen throughout this period.*

There was a definite, revealed reason for the particular type manifestations of supernatural power — something which would not be true at all beyond that time when the offer was removed from Israel and the nation set aside, awaiting “the fulness of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:25). These signs, wonders, and miracles were not only inseparably connected with the offer of the kingdom to Israel (a connection established in the Old Testament Scriptures) but they spoke volumes in and of themselves. These manifestations of supernatural power reflected directly *on Israel's spiritual condition, past, present, and future* — something dealt with throughout the Old Testament.

In this respect, before Israel's climactic rejection in both the original offer and the re-offer, it was only natural for these signs, wonders, and miracles *to be VERY prevalent.*

However, in each instance, once these climactic points had been reached it was also only natural for the signs, wonders, and miracles *to become LESS prevalent*, though still in evidence because the offer/re-offer of the kingdom remained open to Israel.

Then, once the re-offer had been withdrawn (about 62 A.D.), it was not only natural but absolutely necessary that the signs, wonders, and miracles *CEASE altogether.*

They *HAD TO CEASE* at this time. They would have been *COMPLETELY out of place* beyond this point. And this can be seen from a Scriptural standpoint entirely apart from referencing I Corinthians chapter thirteen — a section of Scripture in which Paul stated that they would cease, giving both *the TIME* and *the REASON.*

1) I Corinthians 13:8-10

Paul's reference to this matter in his first letter to those in Corinth was made necessary because the Church in Corinth was a Gentile Church in which signs, wonders, and miracles were being manifested, which could only have been with a view to provoking Israel to jealousy (Rom. 10:19; 11:11-14; *cf.* Acts 13:44, 45). And Paul, viewing that

which was occurring in the light of the Old Testament Scriptures, called their attention to *the TIME* when and *the REASON* why these manifestations of supernatural power would cease.

In I Cor. 13:8-10, Paul called attention to the fact that the spiritual sign-gifts being manifested in the Church in Corinth were only temporary, for a revealed reason. And it is evident that the whole panorama of spiritual sign-gifts (ch. 12) would be alluded to by the three which Paul singled out — *prophecies, tongues, and knowledge*.

All of the spiritual sign-gifts would have to be looked upon together — as a unit, comprised of different parts — simply because of *their interrelated purpose*. *ALL existed for EXACTLY the SAME purpose*.

And when the Lord saw fit to bring His purpose surrounding these gifts to a close, they (all of them together, delineated by the three in I Cor. 13:8) *would NO longer exist*.

Actually, from a Scriptural standpoint, *they could NO longer exist*. Any existence of these gifts beyond this time *would be contrary to the revealed Word of God and, thus, impossible*.

Prior to this time, Paul had the power to effect bodily healings (portending Israel's healing), for the offer of the kingdom was still open to Israel (Acts 19:6, 11, 12; 28:8, 9). But after this time, when the offer of the kingdom was no longer open to the nation — when healing for Israel was set aside with the nation, with the corresponding cessation of signs, wonders, and miracles — Paul no longer possessed this power.

After this time, Paul instructed Timothy, "...use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (I Tim. 5:23); and he later left Trophimus "at Miletum sick" (II Tim. 4:20).

In I Cor. 13:8-10, two expressions relative to these sign-gifts are used in opposite senses — "in part," and "perfect":

"Charity [‘Love’] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

In these verses, "in part" has to do with *incompleteness* (from *ek*

meros), meaning “out of a part [plural in the Greek text of vv. 9, 10, ‘out of parts’],” and “perfect” has to do with *completeness* (from *teleios*, meaning “complete,” “bringing to an end”) Thus, *ek meros* and *teleios* are used in antithetical senses.

And both expressions, since they have to do with either *the continuance* or *the end* of the manifestation of supernatural signs, are inseparably connected with either *the continuance* or *the end* of the offer of the kingdom to Israel. This is a connection which *MUST be recognized* in order to properly understand that which is being stated in I Cor. 13:8-10.

In this respect, *incompleteness* (shown by *ek meros*) has to do with that time *prior* to God finishing His work pertaining to the offer of the kingdom to Israel (with signs, wonders, and miracles still in evidence); and *completeness* (shown by *teleios*) has to do with that time *following* God finishing His work pertaining to the offer of the kingdom to Israel (with signs, wonders, and miracles no longer in evidence).

Thus, the thought set forth by Paul in I Cor. 13:9, 10, contextually, is *something quite easy to see and understand* as long as the proper connection with the manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles is made.

But remove this key, and the whole matter becomes impossible to properly see and understand.

Verse nine teaches that Paul and others were exercising *supernatural spiritual gifts*. And they were exercising these gifts during a time of “incompleteness,” *i.e.*, they were exercising these gifts during the period *prior to the time* God would “complete” His work with Israel relative to the proffered kingdom.

Verse ten then goes on to state that the time was coming when God would “complete” His work surrounding the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel. Then, the things being done during the time of “incompleteness” (during the time when the offer of the kingdom remained open to Israel, *prior to God completing His work in this respect*) — things pertaining to *Israel and the kingdom* — would “be done away” with.

2) Acts 28:28

This is *EXACTLY* what occurred when the offer of the kingdom was withdrawn from Israel, with a view to God removing from the Gentiles “a people for his name.”

The manifested signs, wonders, and miracles CEASED.

And this was *in complete keeping* with their usage in the Old Testament (pertaining to Israel and the kingdom), *in complete keeping* with their usage during the time covered by both the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts (again, pertaining to Israel and the kingdom), and *in complete keeping* with that which they portended (Israel's spiritual condition, both present and future).

In Acts 28:28, Paul told the Jews for the third and last time that he was going to the Gentiles with the message which they had rejected.

“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

And when he had said these words, the Jews departed...” (vv. 28, 29a; cf. Acts 13:46; 18:6).

At this time, God set Israel aside for the remainder of the dispensation, and, correspondingly, *signs, wonders, and miracles CEASED*.

With God's termination of His dealings with Israel in relation to the kingdom, *signs, wonders, and miracles HAD TO CEASE!*

For sign-gifts to continue beyond this point *would have been out of line with Scripture*. And, *remaining in line with Scripture*, these sign-gifts *CANNOT again be in evidence UNTIL that future time when God resumes His national dealings with Israel in relation to the kingdom*.

This is a truth drawn from the Old Testament, the gospel accounts, and the Book of Acts *which, from a Biblical standpoint, CANNOT be denied*.

And that's where we are today — living during a time in which Israel has been set aside awaiting “the fulness of the Gentiles” being brought to pass (Rom. 11:25). We're living during a time when *signs, wonders, and miracles can have NO part within the framework of God's plans and purposes*.

And this can be easily understood, for any present manifestation of supernatural powers of this nature would portend God dealing with *Israel* in relation to the nation's spiritual condition and *the theocracy* during the present time; and this is *something which God is NOT doing*.

Thus, such a manifestation of supernatural powers during the present time, from a Scriptural standpoint, *can ONLY be COMPLETELY out of place*.

5

The World to Come

The Sceptre About to Change Hands

“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 major warning in Hebrews *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 major 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 that 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 which he was created to occupy 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 where Scripture is worded in a quite simple and clear manner,

completely in line with that seen on the subject in the Old Testament (cf. Gen. 3:21; 22:2ff; Ex. 12:3ff; John 1:29; 3:16; Acts 16:30, 31).

2) Using texts which have no relationship to the subject being taught will close the door to that which actually is being taught in these texts

Relative to the Word of the Kingdom, Scripture, in Matt. 13:33, records a woman placing leaven in three measures of meal, which would work in the meal UNTIL the whole had been leavened, UNTIL the whole had been corrupted.

This leavening process could ONLY have begun very early in the dispensation, with the results seen today, after centuries of time, when the whole has been almost completely leavened, if not completely leavened.

And this leavening process can be seen as the primary reason that the Word of the Kingdom (the message concerning *the salvation of the soul, inheriting as companions with Christ, realizing so great salvation*) is not being proclaimed from the pulpits of Churches throughout the land today.

Over the years, because of the working of the leaven, 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.

(Note that the working of the leaven has to do with a particular Biblical doctrine — *the Word of the Kingdom* — NOT Biblical doctrine in general — *the SAME as contending for the faith in Jude 3.*

And this would account for *the acceptance of and adherence to numerous Biblical doctrines throughout so-called fundamental Christianity today, while, at the same time, exhibiting an aversion to anything having to do with the Word of the Kingdom.*

This is how COMPLETE the leaven has done its work [cf. Rev. 3:14ff].

For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's book, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, Chapter VI, "Parable of the Leaven.")

The Word

“The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (Ps. 12:6).

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 what is stated*; 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 also meant EXACTLY what is stated*; and when He spoke about Christ’s companions entering into this inheritance in synonymous terms with their inheriting “salvation” (1:14), their realizing “so great salvation” (2:3), *He meant EXACTLY what is stated in these passages as well.*

And for man to begin ignoring that which God has clearly stated, reading into various texts things which God didn’t state or mean at all, is one of the tragedies of the times in which we live.

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 these 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 and taught 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.* Ps. 12:6; II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:19-21).

That which God gave through man for man is, *it can ONLY be, the very Word of God, spoken by God Himself. This revelation can ONLY be as perfect as the Word which became flesh, for both are simply two manifestations of the SAME thing — the living Word, which is God, whether revealed in written form or revealed in flesh (cf. John 1:1, 2, 14; Heb. 1:2).*

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. He *MUST* accept and believe that which God has stated about a matter, *EXACTLY* as it is recorded in His Word.

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 — *to rule 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 respect.

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. Christ is God's "appointed heir of all things." And numerous individuals, redeemed through the finished work of *the second Man, the last Adam*, are to ascend the throne with Him as "companions," "co-heirs," in that coming 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 [‘the inhabited world’] to come, whereof we speak [‘concerning which we are speaking’]” (2:5).

The government of the existing inhabited world is *under angelic rule and 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. The present inhabited world is in an unsettled state of affairs. But, in the inhabited world to come, things will be quite different. The present imperfection existing in the government will not exist in that coming day.)

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 almost nothing 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 ages ago (along with one-third of the angels ruling with him, who had followed him).

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 there has been *NO change* as well in the government at any point in the universe since the time of its institution.

Man has NEVER held the sceptre; it has NEVER been relinquished by Satan.

(A principle of Biblical government necessitates that an incumbent ruler hold the sceptre *UNTIL his successor is NOT ONLY on the scene but READY to ascend the throne.*

Note the account of Saul and David in I, II Samuel, typifying Satan and Christ past, present, and yet future.

Saul, though disqualified, continued to reign UNTIL... Satan, though disqualified, will continue to reign UNTIL...

BUT, in the type, the day CAME WHEN... AND, in the antitype, the day WILL COME WHEN...)

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 could *ONLY* have 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 had sought to exalt his throne and occupy the place which God Himself occupied. He had become 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 though 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, as previously seen, *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, as previously seen, 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.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to Chapter II in this book, "Because of the Angels.")

Man taking the sceptre and ascending the throne in the stead of Satan and his angels is what the appearance of "the second man," "the last Adam," 2,000 years ago was all about. He appeared in order to redeem that which "the first man Adam," almost 4,000 years prior to His appearance, forfeited in the fall.

And, as God's newly appointed Federal Head, He provided a means, through His redemptive work at Calvary, whereby He and redeemed man could one day take the sceptre and rule the earth 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* (orderly arrangement) where *a chaos* (disorderly arrangement) previously existed (I Cor. 15:24-28). And they are to rule after this fashion on the Son's throne from the heavens 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 elevate 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 descendants of Adam (redeemed man), and around the earth (the new earth). Thus, 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 the presently existing angelic rule — a rule which will evidently continue in that coming day.

God will have numerous individuals, created in His Own image, after His likeness, exercising power with Him from His throne. And such individuals will possibly occupy positions of some type under God but above Messianic angels ruling over 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.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book, *The Time of the End*, Chapters XXXV, XXXVI, “From Time to Eternity,” and “The Eternal Ages.”)

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 that 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 left whatsoever (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).

(Thus, Christians are to bide their time, as David's faithful men did during his time of exile. David's men *DIDN'T* go into Saul's kingdom and seek to straighten out existing conditions. Rather, they *REMAINED* out in the hills with David, awaiting that day when Saul would be put down and David would take the sceptre.

Christians, in like manner, are *NOT* to go out into the world, into Satan's present kingdom, and seek to straighten out existing conditions. Rather, they are to *REMAIN* in the place of rejection by the world with Christ, awaiting that day when Satan will be put down and Christ will take the sceptre.

Christ clearly stated that His kingdom was "not of this world" [the present system under Satan]. Had it been, His servants would have done something about existing conditions. But His servants really couldn't have, unless they defiled their high calling through this process, for they, as Christ, were *NOT* of the world either [John 17:16; 18:36].

This is why Christians, in I John 2:15, are commanded, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world..." The complete present system under Satan is going to one day pass out of existence [I John 2:17]. And Christ's servants [Christians during the present dispensation, who are *NOT* of this world], are to *KEEP* their eyes fixed upon the coming kingdom of Christ, which will never pass out of existence.

For additional information on this present world system, its end, and that which will follow, refer to the author's book, *The Time of the End*, Chapters XXXI, XXXII, XXXIII, "Christ's Return," "The Great Supper of God," and "The Millennial Reign.")

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.*

This books sets forth 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.

A Christian 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. *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 occupying her rightful place at the head of the nations.

This coming rule over the earth 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, along with believing Jews from the Gospel and Acts period [*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 (note that Christians, aside from the twelve Apostles, have never been promised power over Israel, only over the Gentile nations [Rev. 2:26, 27]).

These are the ones who will rule and reign with Christ in that coming day.

Not all of these rulers though will form the bride of Christ, for the bride will be comprised only of saved individuals from the present dispensation, *i.e.*, only of Christians, forming the body of Christ (for the bride is to be taken *from His body*).

In brief form, the preceding is the picture which Scripture presents of Christ's kingdom in that coming day.

(Note in Matt. 19:28, the Twelve have been promised that they will occupy individual thrones in the kingdom, though power would, of necessity, have to emanate from one central throne. This feature of Christ's future kingdom though can be easily understood from that which is revealed in Scripture about the past and present kingdom under Satan, for this is the kingdom which Christ will take.

The twenty-four elders in Rev. 4:4 are seen seated 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, though crowned and seated on thrones.

They, at one time, exercised power in conjunction with Satan's throne, though seated upon separate thrones [*ref.* Chapter II in this

book]. 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 the only manner in which the governmental structure of the universe could possibly exist [provincial rulers (angels) throughout the universe seated on thrones but exercising power from God's throne, with the coming kingdom of Christ to be structured after this same fashion].

Note also the coming kingdom of Antichrist, immediately preceding that time when Christ takes the kingdom, in which Satan will give this man, his Christ, "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 do so 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 wills (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

"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. 2:10).

“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; Ps. 89:6).

Christians, heirs of the future kingdom, are presented in Scripture as both “children of God” and “sons of God” during the present time (Rom. 8:14-17).

And, in the position of a “son” (because of *creation* [*new creations* “in Christ”]), Christians are awaiting “the adoption” into a *firstborn standing*, being placed as *firstborn sons* (Rom. 8:23).

Angels, presently ruling, occupy their positions simply as sons of God (“sons” because of creation [all angels are special, individual creations of God]). There is no such thing as *adoption* or *firstborn sons* in the angelic realm.

But regal positions in the human realm are different. There are “sons,” and there are “firstborn sons” [Ex. 4:22, 23; Heb. 12:23]. And in the human realm, *ONLY firstborn sons can rule in the kingdom*.

(For more information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book, *God’s Firstborn Sons*.)

Thus, Christians are *NOT* presently in a position to rule, for *NO Christian is presently a firstborn son; the adoption MUST occur first*.

And the entire creation awaits “the manifestation” of Christians as *firstborn 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, 23, 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 firstborn 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 God*, with the future adoption in view, when *firstborn sons will ascend the throne with God's firstborn Son 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 seen 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 completion." And here it is *Christ being made complete* in connection with "sufferings" and "bringing many sons unto glory."

The sufferings in view would have to be seen in two realms:

- 1) Christ's past sufferings at Calvary, making that seen in Heb. 2:10 possible.
- 2) Christians suffering during present time, making that seen in Heb. 2:10 possible as well.

Christ suffered, with a view to “the joy” that had been placed before Him (the day when he, with His co-heirs, would rule and reign (Matt. 25:19-23]). Christ, at Calvary, kept His eyes fixed on the goal — the day when He would bring “many sons unto glory.” He would be “the captain of their salvation,” and He, through them, would be made complete.

Christ has left Christians “an example,” that they “should follow his steps” (I Peter 2:21). Christ’s sufferings are mentioned in the verses immediately following (vv. 23, 24), and Christians suffering with respect to the same thing seen in Christ’s sufferings, looking out ahead to the same “joy” to which Christ looked, are seen relative to the saving of the soul in the previous chapter (1:5-11).

Note how this is seen in I Peter 1:9-11:

“Receiving the end of your faith [‘the goal of the faith’], even the salvation of your souls.

Of which salvation [the salvation of the soul] the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.

Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ [*lit.*, ‘sufferings with respect to Christ,’ *i.e.*, Christians suffering, following the example which Christ has set, with a view to the salvation of their souls (vv. 9, 10)], and the glory that should follow.”

And Christ being made complete in Heb. 2:10 through Christians suffering in the manner seen in I Peter 1:11 can be easily seen from Christ’s position in relation to Adam, as *the second Man, the last Adam*.

The first man, the first Adam, was put to sleep, his side opened, and a rib was taken from this opened side which God used to form a helpmate, a bride for Adam.

Adam, apart from his bride, was incomplete, for she had been formed from a part of his very being; she was *bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh* (Gen. 2:23). And, in this respect, *after God had formed the woman and presented her to the man, the man was then complete once again*.

The second Man, the last Adam, as well, was put to sleep and His side opened. A Roman soldier pierced Christ’s side shortly after His death, while He still hung on the cross.

And out of His opened side flowed *blood* and *water*, the two elements necessary to bring into existence the bride (John 19:33, 34).

The bride of Christ, which will be taken from Christ's body in complete accord with the type, is part of Christ's body in the same sense that Eve was part of Adam's body — *bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh* (Eph. 5:30-32).

And, exactly as in the type, when the bride has been formed and presented back to Christ, *the bride will complete Christ*, as seen in Heb. 2:10.

(For additional information on the preceding — the blood and the water, the bride removed from the body — refer to the author's book, *The Bride in Genesis*, Chapter I, "Adam and Eve.")

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