

God God has spoken! Praise Him! Without His speaking, God is mysterious. But He has revealed Himself in His speaking. He is no longer mysterious. Now He is the revealed God. The emphasis of this book is that God, not man, has spoken. Therefore, it does not identify its writer, nor in any of its quotations from the Old Testament does it mention the speaker's name. According to the concept of this book, the entire Scripture is the speaking of God. Hence, in referring to the Old Testament, this book always says that it is the Holy Spirit's speaking (3:7; 9:8; 10:15-17).

In the Old Testament, God spoke to the people not once for all and in only one way but in many portions and in many ways: in one portion to the Patriarchs in one way, in another portion through Moses in another way; in one portion through David in one way, in other portions through a number of prophets in several different ways. It is most fitting and meaningful that this book, a book of God's speaking, is entitled *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. The first Hebrew was Abraham (Gen. 14:13), the father of all those who contact God by faith (Rom. 4:11-12). Therefore, God is called "the God of the Hebrews" (Exo. 9:1, 13). The root of the word Hebrew means to pass over. It can mean specifically to pass over a river, that is, to pass over from this side of the river to the other side, to pass over from one side to another. Therefore, a Hebrew is a river crosser. Abraham was such a one. From

Chaldea, the land of idolatry, which was on the other side of the great river Euphrates, he crossed over to Canaan, the land of the worship of God, which was on this side of the Euphrates (Josh. 24:2-3). The intention of God's speaking in this book was that the Jews who believed in the Lord but still lingered in Judaism would leave the law and cross over to grace (4:16; 7:18-19; 12:28; 13:9), that they would leave the old covenant and cross over to the new covenant (8:6-7, 13), and that they would leave the ritualistic service of the Old Testament and cross over to the spiritual reality of the New Testament (8:5; 9:9-14); that is, that they would leave Judaism and cross over to the church (13:13; 10:25), that they would leave the earthly things and cross over to the heavenly things (12:18-24), that they would leave the outer court, where the altar is, and cross over to the Holiest of all, where God is (13:9-10; 10:19-20), that they would leave the soul and cross over to the spirit (4:12), and that they would leave the beginning of truth and life and cross over to the maturity of life in the truth (5:11 — 6:1). Not only the Jews who believed in the Lord but all who contact God by faith should be such river crossers. This is the purpose of God's speaking in this book. In the Old Testament, God spoke in the prophets, in men borne by His Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). In the New Testament, He speaks in the Son, in the person of the Son. The Son is God Himself (v. 8), God expressed. God the Father is hidden; God the Son is expressed. No one has

ever seen God; the Son, as the Word of God (John 1:1; Rev. 19:13) and the speaking of God, has declared Him with a full expression, explanation, and definition of Him (John 1:18). The Son is the center, the focus, of this book. In the Godhead He is the effulgence of God's glory and the impress of God's substance. In creation He is (1) the means through which the universe was made (v. 2); (2) the power that upholds and bears all things (v. 3); and (3) the Heir appointed to inherit all things. In redemption He accomplished the purification of man's sins and is now sitting on the right hand of God in the heavens (v. 3). This book reveals to us the contrast between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was of the law in letters and forms, of man, earthly, temporary, and by sight and issued in a religion called Judaism. The New Testament is of life, spiritual, heavenly, permanent, and by faith and is focused in a person, who is the Son of God.

This book, having the concept that all positive things are heavenly, points us to the very Christ who is in the heavens. In the Gospels is the Christ who lived on the earth and died on the cross for the accomplishing of redemption. In the Acts is the resurrected and ascended Christ propagated and ministered to men. In Romans is the Christ who is our righteousness for justification and our life for sanctification, transformation, conformation, glorification, and building up. In Galatians is the Christ who

enables us to live a life that is versus the law, religion, tradition, and forms. In Philippians is the Christ who is lived out of His members. In Ephesians and Colossians is the Christ who is the life, the content, and the Head of the Body, the church. In 1 and 2 Corinthians is the Christ who is everything in the practical church life. In 1 and 2 Thessalonians is the Christ who is our holiness for His coming back. In 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus is the Christ who is God's economy, enabling us to know how to conduct ourselves in the house of God. In the Epistles of Peter is the Christ who enables us to take God's governmental dealings administered through sufferings. In the Epistles of John is the Christ who is the life and fellowship of the children of God in God's family. In Revelation is the Christ who is walking among the churches in this age, ruling over the world in the kingdom in the coming age, and expressing God in full glory in the new heaven and new earth for eternity. In this book is the present Christ, who is now in the heavens as our Minister (8:2) and our High Priest (4:14-15; 7:26), ministering to us the heavenly life, grace, authority, and power and sustaining us to live a heavenly life on earth. He is the Christ now, the Christ today, and the Christ on the throne in the heavens, who is our daily salvation and moment-by-moment supply.

This more distinguished name is "the Son," a name that is fully defined in the succeeding verses. This day refers to

the day of resurrection (Acts 13:33). This chapter gives us an account of Christ from eternity past to eternity future. He was the very God in eternity past (v. 8); He was the Creator of the earth and the heavens (vv. 10, 2); He is the Upholder of all things and the One who bears all things (v. 3); He is the Heir of all things (v. 2); He was incarnated to accomplish redemption by being crucified (v. 3); He was begotten as the Son of God in resurrection for the imparting of life to the many sons of God (v. 5); He is the firstborn Son of God who will come again (v. 6); He will be the King on the throne with the scepter in the kingdom (vv. 8-9); and He will remain forever and ever in eternity future (vv. 11-12)

The Son is the appointed Heir of all things (v. 2). We, His believers, are His partners (v. 9). Thus, we are His joint heirs (Rom. 8:17), not only inheriting salvation but also inheriting all things with Him (1 Cor. 3:21-22). Hence, we with Him are joint owners of the universe, while the angels are merely our servants, inferior not only to Him but also to us. The Son was appointed to be the Heir. We are saved to be His joint heirs, sharing in His inheritance. The "so great a salvation" mentioned in 2:3 is able to save us to such an extent that it brings us into partnership with Him in His appointment. Thus we share in whatever He inherits. As the partners of the Son, we are the house of God, the real Bethel, the gate of heaven, where the Son is the heavenly ladder, joining

earth to heaven and bringing heaven to earth. On this ladder the angels of God are ascending and descending (Gen. 28:12, 16-19; John 1:51) as the ministering spirits to serve us, those who inherit so great a salvation. What is spoken of in this book is like the gate of heaven. Here we enjoy Christ as the heavenly One who joins us to heaven and brings heaven to us that we may be a heavenly people, living a heavenly life on earth and inheriting all the heavenly things. How could the Hebrew believers withdraw from this and return to their old religion and boast in the angels? The angels are simply our ministering servants.