



The Book of Hebrews 2:16_ The Seed of Abraham!

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Holy Text: Hebrews 2:16

From chapter one, the author of Hebrews has been laying out the beginnings of an argument, or apologetic, for the superiority of Christ. In particular, He has been lowering his hearers view of angels and exalting his hearer's view of Christ.

Recall his opening Words:

***Hebrews 1:1-4 (KJV)** God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, **2** Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; **3** Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; **4** Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

As we learned, Theos (God), the Triune Creator, Adonai (LORD and Master), El Elyon (The Most High God), El Shaddai (Almighty God)¹, Who issues Sovereign, Providential Decrees², Who is Good, Merciful, and Loves us³, but Who is also Holy, and a God of Justice and coming Wrath⁴, hath In These Last Days⁵ spoken⁶ unto us by His Son⁷!

The flow of thought is intentional: to begin to declare both the divinity and humanity of Christ, and help the hearer cast down any other entity, that in their hearts might usurp the reign of their Messiah, Jesus Christ the LORD!

A significant part of his argument in chapter one was *the Son is So Much Better than the Angels*⁸. Here in verse 2:16, we see the finishing touches on that argument. Now, having exhorted his audience to:

1. Take the Word of God seriously (give the more earnest heed, 2:1)
2. Realize the lesser to greater ministry of angels in the administration of the Law (2:2)
3. Not neglect the great salvation offered, not by angels, but by Christ (2:3)
4. Follow the Holy Words of the apostles (2:4)
5. See the proper role of men (humanity) among the creation of God (2:5-8)
6. Be reminded of the Incarnation and Suffering of Christ for our sakes (2:9-10)
7. Note and understand the rightness of God's redemptive plan and His sovereign role in our salvation (2:10)
8. Know of Christ's sanctifying work among His "brethren!" (2:11)

¹ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2023/10/the-book-of-hebrews-11-the-revelation-and-names-of-god>

² <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2023/10/the-book-of-hebrews-11-the-sovereignty-providence-and-decrees-of-god>

³ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2023/10/the-book-of-hebrews-11-pt-3-the-goodness-mercy-and-love-of-god>

⁴ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2023/10/the-book-of-hebrews-11-pt-3-the-holiness-justice-and-wrath-of-god>

⁵ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2023/11/the-book-of-hebrews-12-these-last-days>

⁶ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2023/11/the-book-of-hebrews-11-2a-god-hath-spoken>

⁷ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2023/11/the-book-of-hebrews-12-3-the-attributes-of-the-son>

⁸ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2023/12/the-book-of-hebrews-14-14-the-sonso-much-better-than-the-angels>

9. And Christ's intimate connection with His "children," over whom He sings! (2:12-13)
10. Not fear death, for Christ has broken the power of the devil through His blood sacrifice and delivered His people! (2:14-15)

...he delivers yet another apologetic to reassure and equip his hearers: Christ is the Seed of Abraham.

The Seed of Abraham

Key to the author's argument is that Jesus is both God and Man, Creator of all things, ruler over the angelic hosts, but made "a little lower" than them for suffering and death. But He is something else, and this too is a major point of this book. Again, He is the Seed of Abraham.

Remember the likely spiritual condition of his hearers?

In a general way, Hebrews deals with the tremendous struggle involved in leaving one religious system for another. There is the violent wrenching of old ties, the stresses and tensions of alienation, and the formidable pressures exerted on the renegade to return.

But in this Epistle the problem was not just a question of leaving an old system for a new one of equal value. Rather it was a matter of leaving Judaism for Christ, and as the writer shows, this involved leaving shadows for the substance, ritual for reality, the prior for the ultimate, the temporary for the permanent—in short, the good for the best.

The problem also involved leaving the popular for the unpopular, the majority for the minority, and the oppressors for the oppressed. And this precipitated many serious problems.

The Letter was written to people of Jewish background. These Hebrews had heard the gospel preached by the apostles and others during the early days of the church, and had seen the mighty miracles of the Holy Spirit which confirmed the message. They had responded to the good news in one of three ways:

- Some believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and were genuinely converted.
- Some professed to become Christians, were baptized, and took their place in the local assemblies. However, they had never been born again by the Holy Spirit of God.
- Others flatly rejected the message of salvation.

Our Epistle deals with the first two classes—truly saved Hebrews and those who had nothing but an outward veneer of Christianity.

Now when a Jew left the faith of his forefathers, he was looked on as a turncoat and an apostate (meshummed), and was often punished with one or more of the following:

- Disinheritance by his family.

- Excommunication from the congregation of Israel.
- Loss of employment.
- Dispossession.
- Mental harassment and physical torture.
- Public mockery.
- Imprisonment.
- Martyrdom.

Of course, there was always the escape route. If he would renounce Christ and return to Judaism, he would be spared from further persecution. As we read between the lines of this Letter, we can detect some of the strong arguments used to persuade him to return to Judaism:

- The rich heritage of the prophets.
- The prominent ministry of angels in the history of God's ancient people.
- Association with the illustrious lawgiver Moses.
- National ties with the brilliant military commander Joshua.
- The glory of the Aaronic priesthood.
- The sacred sanctuary where God chose to dwell among His people.
- The covenant of the law given by God through Moses.
- The divinely appointed furniture in the sanctuary, and the magnificent veil.
- The services in the sanctuary, and especially the ritual on the great Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur, the most important day in the Jewish calendar).

We can almost hear the first-century Jews presenting all these glories of their ancient, ritualistic religion, then asking with a sneer, “And what do you Christians have? We have all this. What do you have? Nothing but a simple upper room, a table, and some bread and wine on the table! Do you mean to say that you have left all this for that?”

The Epistle to the Hebrews is really an answer to the question, “What do you have?” In a word the answer is **Christ**. In Him we have:

- One who is greater than the prophets.
- One who is greater than the angels.
- One who is greater than Moses.
- One who is greater than Joshua.
- One whose priesthood is superior to that of Aaron.
- One who serves in a better sanctuary.
- One who has introduced a better covenant.
- One who is the antitype of the typical furniture and veil.

- One whose once-for-all offering of Himself for sin is superior to the repeated sacrifices of bulls and goats.

Just as the stars fade from view in the greater glory of the sun, so the types and shadows of Judaism pale into insignificance before the greater glory of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus.⁹

Indeed, from our Verse:

1. “Christ took on Himself...”

- This is another reference to the Incarnation of God the Son: taking upon Himself a human nature.

Philippians 2:5-11 (KJV) *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: **6** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: **7** But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: **8** And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. **9** Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: **10** That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; **11** And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

2. The “Seed”

- Jesus is both the physical and spiritual descendant of Abraham:

Matthew 1:1 (KJV) *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

Matthew 1:17 (KJV) *So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.*

Genesis 12:7 (KJV) *And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.*

Galatians 3:16 (KJV) *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*

3. “Of Abraham”

- Abraham is the spiritual father of all Jews and Christians. (Gen 17:5; Matt 3:9; Luke 1:73; John 8:39; 8:56)

Romans 4:15-17 (KJV) *Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. **16** Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all. **17** (As it is written, I have made thee a*

⁹ Bible Believer's Commentary, William MacDonald, 1995.

father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

- It was by God's calling to Abraham and through Abraham that Israel was established.

Genesis 12:1-3 (KJV) Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: **2** And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: **3** And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 17:1-7 (KJV) And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. **2** And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. **3** And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, **4** As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. **5** Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. **6** And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. **7** And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

- Christ being Abraham's Seed would, for the hearer:
 1. **Identify Christ as a Jew, lessoning their apprehension and bolstering their courage!**
 2. **Connect Christ with their lineage and past, again breaking down barriers of faith!**
 3. **Remind them of God's promise of a Messiah through Abraham, through Whom all families of the earth would be blessed!**

Quick Encouragement: It's amazing how relevant God's Word is to all, no matter their ethnicity, background, age, or status! Indeed:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV) All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **17** That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Hebrews 4:12 (KJV) For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Psalms 19:7-11 (KJV) The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. **8** The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. **9** The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. **10** More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. **11** Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Therefore we should heed this:

1 Peter 3:15 (KJV) *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

More on the Significance of Christ's Connection to Abraham

1. The Promises of God to Abraham would come through Christ!

Galatians 3:16-29 (NLT) *God gave the promises to Abraham and his child. And notice that the Scripture doesn't say "to his children," as if it meant many descendants. Rather, it says "to his child"—and that, of course, means Christ. 17 This is what I am trying to say: The agreement God made with Abraham could not be canceled 430 years later when God gave the law to Moses. God would be breaking his promise. 18 For if the inheritance could be received by keeping the law, then it would not be the result of accepting God's promise. But God graciously gave it to Abraham as a promise.*

19 *Why, then, was the law given? It was given alongside the promise to show people their sins. But the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised. God gave his law through angels to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people. 20 Now a mediator is helpful if more than one party must reach an agreement. But God, who is one, did not use a mediator when he gave his promise to Abraham. 21 Is there a conflict, then, between God's law and God's promises? Absolutely not! If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it. 22 But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin, so we receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ. 23 Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed. 24 Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. 25 And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.*

26 *For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. 28 There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.*

2. Our Friendship to Christ through faith and obedience models Abraham's!

Romans 4:13 (KJV) *For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

Romans 4:18-22 (KJV) *Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;*

21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Hebrews 11:17-19 (KJV) *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, **18** Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: **19** Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

James 2:20-23 (KJV) *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? **21** Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? **22** Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? **23** And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*

3. The Blessings of Abraham comes through Christ!

Galatians 3:10-14 (KJV) *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. **11** But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. **12** And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. **13** Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: **14** That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

4. True freedom would come through the spiritual lineage of Abraham: Christ!

Galatians 4:21-26 (KJV) *Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? **22** For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. **23** But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. **24** Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. **25** For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. **26** But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

5. We are “true Israel,” inheritors of the spiritual promises in Christ!

Romans 9:6-8 (KJV) *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: **7** Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. **8** That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

Galatians 4:28-31 (KJV) *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. **29** But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. **30** Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of*

*the freewoman. **31** So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*

What does all this mean for us?

Christ is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. The "blessing of Abraham" (Gal 3:14) points to the recreation of all things in Christ. Abraham would be "heir of the world" (kosmos in Greek, Rom 4:13)." God promised Abraham much more than the temporal blessings of reputation and land; He promised Him (and His Seed) a redeemed reality. His Descent, Jesus, would rule over all and bless all!

We are Abrahams "seed" in Christ (Gal 3:29). We are the inheritors of the promises in our "Elder Brother." (Heb 2:12)

What we see now is not all there is or will be. Who we are is incomplete for now. Much more is coming.

***2 Timothy 2:11-13 (KJV)** It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: **12** If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: **13** If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*

Therefore, as receivers of the promises by faith, we can rejoice:

***Romans 8:14-17 (KJV)** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. **15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. **16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: **17** And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Amen!