

EXPLANATION OF 58TH BIBLEBOOK HEBREWS 1 (A.D. 64)

OUTLINE

Theme of the book: THE FINAL REVELATION OF GOD IS IN JESUS CHRIST.

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Section 1. Hebrews 1:1 to 2:18. Christ completes God's revelation. (The finality of Christianity).

**During the Old Testament period God spoke through the prophets,
but in these last days (the beginning of the New Testament period) God spoke through Jesus Christ.**

HEBREWS 1

1:1-3. Jesus Christ is superior to the Old Testament prophets. He is God's final revelation to man.

Seven facts prove the superiority of Christ (1:1-3). And seven quotations from the Old Testament prove that Jesus Christ is superior to angels (He is God, is worshipped, reigns for ever,) and to creation (He created heavens and earth, he remains the same)(1:4-14).

1:1. God spoke formerly (in the past) through the prophets at several times and in various ways (NEB in fragmentary and varied fashion) ...¹

Divine revelation in the Bible is progressive.

Former revelations through the prophets had a fragmentary character. The book of Hebrews begins with 'the finality of the Christian Faith'². The theme of the book of Hebrews is, '*God's final revelation is in Jesus Christ: God spoke previously during the Old Testament period through the prophets, but in these last days, at the beginning of the New Testament period, he spoke through Jesus Christ. After the New Testament revelation, there is no more revelation!*' Adding so-called 'new revelation' to the Bible by cults and other religions is forbidden³.

God's special revelation was given in two stages: first to the forefathers in the Old Testament and then to Jesus and his apostles in the New Testament. *Divine revelation is thus progressive, not from less true to more true, but from promise to fulfilment and from shadow to reality.* The believers during the Old Testament period did not experience the fulfilment of the divine promise in which they had trusted, because with the believers of the New Testament in mind, God had made a better plan, so that *only in company with the New Testament believers, the Old Testament believers would reach their perfection* (11:13,39,40).

The Old Testament is the time of promise.

The earlier stage of revelation was given in a variety of ways: God spoke in his mighty works of mercy and judgement, and made known the meaning and purpose of these works through his servants, the prophets. They were admitted into his secret council and learned his plans in advance⁴. Priests (e.g. Moses), prophets (e.g. Isaiah), poets (e.g. David) and kings (e.g. Solomon) were in their several ways the spokesmen of God. *Yet all words of God and all his acts in the period before the first coming of Christ did not add up to the fullness of what God had to say and what God still had to do.* God's Word and acts in salvation history (revelation) was not completely spoken until the first coming of Christ⁵!

The New Testament is the time of fulfilment and the consummation of the ages.

But when Christ came, the word spoken through him was indeed God's final word. All the promises that God has ever made, including those to the first Gentile people groups in the world⁶ and later to Israel⁷, meet in Jesus Christ with the answer 'Yes!', which seals their fulfilment of being God's people and evokes from them the answer 'Amen!'⁸.

¹ 1:1. God (ο θεος)(n-nm-s) spoke (λαλησας>λαλεω)(vraanms) formerly (in the past) (παλαι)(adverb) through (εν)(prep. dative) the prophets (ο προφητης)(n-dm-p) at several times (πολυμερως)(adverb) and in various ways (πολυτροπως)(adverb).

² Hebrews 1-2

³ Revelation 22:18-19

⁴ Jeremiah 23:18,22; Amos 3:7

⁵ 2 Corinthians 3:14-18; Acts 20:27

⁶ Genesis 1-26, from Adam to Isaac, for example Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 22:17-18

⁷ Genesis 28:12-17 and Genesis 32:28

⁸ 2 Corinthians 1:20

1:2a. But in these⁹ last days he has *once for all* spoken to us by the Son¹⁰

'The last days' is the period between the first and the second coming of Christ.

The following events take place 'in the last days':

- The first coming of Christ. He was revealed "in these last times"¹¹.
- The final revelation of God. "In these last days" God spoke to us by his Son"¹²
- The sacrificial death of Christ. "Once at the end of the ages" he did away with sin¹³
- The outpouring of the Spirit. He was poured out "in the last days"¹⁴.
- The resurrection of the dead. I will raise him up "at the last day"¹⁵
- The final judgement. The words of Jesus Christ will condemn people that reject him "at the last day"¹⁶

The revelation of God stretches up to Jesus Christ, but there is no further progress of revelation beyond Jesus Christ!

God spoke through Jesus Christ "in the end of these days" ("in the latter end of the days" / "in the end-time" / "ultimately"), which is the Old Testament phrase that *denotes the period of time in which the words of the Old Testament prophets would be fulfilled*¹⁷. The plural 'ages' may point to 'the intersection of the two ages when Christ appeared', or generally to 'the climax of history'¹⁸. The phrase means that *the appearance of Jesus Christ "once for all at the end of the age" has inaugurated that time of fulfilment*. "The fullness of time had come"¹⁹. He appeared once for all "at the consummation of the ages" to speak God's final word, to fulfil God's promises and to complete God's work of salvation. It is not that Jesus Christ happened to come at the time of fulfilment, but that his coming made that time 'the time of fulfilment'! God's previous spokesmen, the prophets, were his servants. But for the proclamation of his last word to mankind God has chosen his Son.

Jesus Christ is God's final word to man.

Because God has no greater Messenger than his Son²⁰, *God has no further message beyond the gospel. God speaks his final word in and through Jesus Christ (1:1-2)! Jesus Christ is clearly the last and final Prophet* that God promised in the Old Testament²¹. He was sent to turn people from their wicked ways²²! He is One through whom God restores everything²³. He is the One through whom God blesses all peoples on earth²⁴. Anyone from every religious background that does not listen to Jesus Christ will be completely cut off from among God's people. Jesus says, "Whoever rejects me, rejects him who sent me"²⁵.

In Hebrews 1:2b-3, seven facts are stated about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which bring out his greatness and show why *the revelation given to him is the highest revelation that God can give*.

(1) Jesus Christ is the Heir of all things (1:2b).

1:2b. whom he *once for all time* appointed heir of all things²⁶

⁹ Note the difference between:

αυτος-αυτη-αυτο = pronoun = he/ himself ο αυτος-η αυτη-το αυτο = the same (verse 3)
ουτος-αυτη-τουτο = demonstrative pronoun used as adjective and substantive = this (verse 2)

¹⁰ **1:2a.** But in (επι)(pg) these (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(a-dgf-p) last (εσχατος-α-ον)(ap-gn-s) days (η ημερα)(n-gf-p) he has *once for all* spoken (ελαλησεν>λαλεω)(viaa-zs)(the aorist indicates that God has finished speaking) to us (ημιν)(npd-xp) by (εν)(pd) the Son (ο υιος)(n-dm-s)
viaa = word analysis: here: v=verb, i=indicative, i=imperfect, a=active.

Grammar of verbs: **Mood** (Indicative, Subjunctive, Optative iMperative, iNfinitive, Participle). **Tense** (Present, Imperfect, Future, Aorist, peRfect pLuperfect). **Voice** (Active, Middle, Passive). **Case** (Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Vocative). **Gender** (Masculine, Feminine, Neuter). **Person** (X=first, Y=second, Z=third). **Number** (Singular, Plural).

¹¹ φανερωθεντος δε επ εσχατου των χρονων. 1 Peter 1:20

¹² επ εσχατου των ημερων τουτων ελαλησεν ημιν εν υιω. Hebrews 1:2

¹³ απαξ επι συντελεια των αιωνιων ... αθετησιν της αμαρτιας) by the sacrifice of himself. Hebrews 9:26

¹⁴ εκχεω ... εν ταις εσχαταις ημεραις. Acts 2:17

¹⁵ και αναστησω αυτον εγω [εν] τη εσχατη ημερα. John 6:39,40

¹⁶ κρινει ... εν τη εσχατη ημερα. John 12:48

¹⁷ Genesis 49:1; Deuteronomy 4:30; Isaiah 2:2; Jeremiah 30:24; Ezekiel 38:16; Daniel 10:14; Hosea 3:5; Micah 4:1

¹⁸ 1 Peter 1:20

¹⁹ ηλθεν το πληρωμα του χρονου. Galatians 4:4

²⁰ cf. Matthew 22:33-44; Luke 2:34

²¹ Deuteronomy 18:18-19

²² Acts 3:23-26

²³ Acts 3:21

²⁴ Genesis 22:17-18

²⁵ Luke 10:16

²⁶ **1:2b.** whom (ον)(apram-s=adjective pronominal *Relative* accusative masculine singular) he appointed (εθηκεν>τιθημι)(viaa--zs) heir (ο κληρονομος)(n-am-s) of all things (πας)(ap-gn-p)

Christ's inheritance is not limited to the earth²⁷, but includes the whole universe²⁸ and particularly 'the world to come' (2:5), that is, the new world-order inaugurated by the enthronement of Christ²⁹. *From his throne in heaven Christ reigns over 'the world of realities', which fulfilled the preceding 'world of shadows' (8:5; 10:1).*

This world is not yet visibly present in all its fullness, for its consummation awaits the second coming of Christ, when he will bring his people into the final blessings of the salvation he procured for them (9:28)³⁰.

Christ's inheritance is not limited to the Promised Land, Canaan/Palestine. In the Old Testament, *the land* that God promised to Abraham stretched from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates³¹. In the New Testament, the inheritance of Christ and his people is extended to include 'the well-founded city' or 'the better country' (11:10,16).

The patriarchs did not regard the land Mesopotamia they left as their homeland. *Neither did they regard the land Canaan they came to as their homeland, but trekked through it "as strangers in a foreign country, living in tents".* Their pilgrim's progress through this world had as its goal a home elsewhere. The truth is that their true homeland was not on earth at all! The better country on which they had set their hopes was not the transient earthly Jerusalem and Canaan, nor the modern state of Israel, but the heavenly country (11:10-16) and after the second coming of Christ, *the whole new earth*³².

The earthly Canaan into which the first Joshua led the people of Israel, was not 'the true Rest of God' (4:8-9). *The earthly Jerusalem and earthly Canaan were but temporary object-lessons pointing to the everlasting Rest of all believers. They were 'the shadows' pointing towards 'the realities', the New Jerusalem and the new earth.* The earthly sojourn is still a pilgrim's journey for all believers³³.

Abraham kept his eyes fixed on the final manifestation of the Kingdom of God "in the time of fulfilment". For the writer of Hebrews that is 'the Heavenly Jerusalem' (12:22-24,28), the Kingdom of God in the spiritual and eternal order, which is now effectively made accessible by the completion of Christ's high priestly work and to which all believers in the Old Testament and in the New Testament come to be enrolled as citizens³⁴.

(2) Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things (1:2c).

1:2c. through whom he also made the universe.³⁵

God made the universe (literally: the ages) through Christ. He created the universe by his spoken word (11:3). Hence God is 'the King of the universe' (literally: the King of the ages)³⁶. *The whole created universe of energy (light), matter (elements), gravity, space and time was brought about by the agency of God's Son*³⁷. Christ, as the Word or Wisdom of God, is acknowledged as the Father's agent in the work of creation³⁸. This conception of Christ is based on the Old Testament³⁹ and on a very early Christian identification arising in all probability from the fact that Christ on occasion actually spoke in the role of Divine Wisdom, the Logos (Word)⁴⁰. Christ introduces himself as "the beginning of God's creation", that is, as the Source, Creator and Ruler of the whole creation⁴¹.

(3) Jesus Christ is the Radiance of God's glory (3a).

1:3a. Who being the radiance of God's glory⁴²

The word 'radiance'⁴³ includes both the active visible radiance shining forth from the source of light, which reveals God, but also the passive visible reflection, which is of the same substance (essential divine nature) as God. Just as the radiance of the sun reaches this earth, so in Christ the glorious light of God shines into the hearts of people⁴⁴. *Jesus Christ is the supreme (highest) and visible revelation of God, his nature, his thoughts, his words and his deeds*⁴⁵.

²⁷ Psalm 2:8

²⁸ Ephesians 1:10,20-23

²⁹ Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:5-14

³⁰ cf. Romans 8:18-22

³¹ Genesis 15:18

³² Romans 4:13; Revelation 21:1

³³ cf. 1 Peter 2:11

³⁴ Philippians 3:20

³⁵ 1:2c through whom (δι ου)(pg aprgm-s relative) also (και)(ab) he made (εποιησεν>ποιεω)(viaa--zs) the universe (ο αιων)(n-am-p)

³⁶ βασιλευς των αιωνων. 1 Timothy 1:17

³⁷ John 1:3; Colossians 1:16

³⁸ John 1:1-3

³⁹ Wisdom and love are eternal attributes of God. Proverbs 8:22-31

⁴⁰ John 1:1-18

⁴¹ Revelation 3:14

⁴² 1:3a. Who (ος)(apnm-s= adjective pronominal Relative nominative masculine singular) (the Son) being (ων)(vppamm-s)(the present tense refers to his timeless existence) the radiance (το απαυγασμα)(n-nm-s) of God's glory (η δοξη)(n-nm-s)

⁴³ απαυγασμα

⁴⁴ 2 Corinthians 4:6; John 1:4; John 14:9

⁴⁵ John 14:9; Colossians 1:15

(4) Jesus Christ is the Stamp or exact representation of God's being (3b)

1:3b and the exact embodiment of his being,⁴⁶

He is 'the very visible image of the divine substance'. The word 'character'⁴⁷ is used especially of the impression or stamp on coins and seals.

Just as the image on a coin exactly corresponds to the device on the die, so the Son of God bears 'the very stamp of God the Father's nature'. It expresses this truth more emphatically than the word 'image' (likeness, form, appearance)⁴⁸, which is used to denote Christ as "the image" of God⁴⁹.

Just as the glorious divine attributes are really in the radiance, so 'the substance'⁵⁰ of God is really in Christ⁵¹. Jesus Christ is the 'impress' or 'the exact representation and embodiment' of God's being. *What God essentially is, is made manifest in Christ. To see Christ is to see what God the Father is like*⁵²!

(5) Jesus Christ is the Upholder (Sustainer) of all things by his powerful or enabling word (1:3c).

1:3c carrying all things (**the created universe**) forward (*on their appointed course*) by his Word of power.⁵³

He carries the creation forward on its appointed course, keeps it standing and moving by means of his spoken word (11:3). He not only created the universe by his spoken word, but also maintains the universe by his spoken word.⁵⁴. Every breath and every movement of life is because he speaks the word. He upholds the universe, not like Atlas supporting a dead weight on his shoulders, but as *One who carries all things forward on their appointed course*.

(6) Jesus Christ the Saviour of sins (1:3d).

1:3d *After* he had provided purification for sins,⁵⁵

Christ 'made purification for sins'. The writer passes from the cosmic functions of Jesus Christ (Creator and Sustainer) to his personal relations with mankind (High Priest), which is elaborated further on in the book of Hebrews. The fact that Christ created and still maintains the universe may cause awesome wonder in us.

But the fact that his grace provided a remedy for the defilement of sin by freely offering himself up to God on our behalf calls forth a sense of personal indebtedness which the contemplation of divine activity on the cosmic scale could never evoke. The underlying emphasis is here that *Christ accomplished something incapable of achievement by anyone else*.

Note the difference between the Greek original text (Christ once for all completed the purification of sins) and the Latin translation (Christ continues to make purification for sins) in Hebrews 1:3 and Hebrews 10:11-12. Here lies the origin of a great difference in theology between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches.

- The Greek text (the original text before 64 A.D.). The Greek **aorist** participle '**having once for all offered**' (προσενεγκας>προσφερω)(participle aorist active)(10:12) stands in sharp contrast to the **present** participle 'offering' (προσφερων)(10:11).
- The Latin text (a translation commissioned by pope Damasus and made by Jerome between 390-405 A.D.). Latin has no perfect participle active (except in deponent verbs) and therefore **used the present participle 'offerens'** as the rendering of both these Greek forms. The Latin Vulgate translates Hebrews 10:12: "**Christ offers continually his one sacrifice on behalf of sins**" instead of "Christ having offered for ever one sacrifice on behalf of sins. This becomes the theological basis for **the daily 'mass' / eucharist**."

The Latin Vulgate makes the same mistake in Hebrews 1:3: "**He continually makes purification of sins**" (purgationem peccatorum faciens)(**present** participle) instead of the Greek text: "**he once for all made purification of sins**" (καθαρισμον των αμαρτιων ποιησαμενος)(participle **aorist** middle). This translation facilitated the Roman Catholic view that during his present heavenly session Christ **continues to make purification for sins**.

(7) Jesus Christ is the Ruler of the universe (1:3e).

1:3e he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in the high place.⁵⁶

⁴⁶ **1:3b** and (και)(cc) the exact representation (embodiment)(ο χαρακτηρ)(from the verb χαρασσω in the sense 'to engrave')(n-nm-s) of his (αυτος-η-ον)(npgmzs) being (η υποστασις)(n-gf-s),

⁴⁷ χαρακτηρ

⁴⁸ εικων

⁴⁹ 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15

⁵⁰ υποστασις

⁵¹ Colossians 1:19; Colossians 2:9

⁵² John 14:9

⁵³ **1:3c** carrying forward (φερων>φερω)(vppanm-s) (on their appointed course) all things (τα παντα)(ap-an-p) by his (αυτος-η-ον)(npgmzs) Word (το ρημα)(n-dn-s) of power (η δυναμις)(n-gf-s).

⁵⁴ Colossians 1:17

⁵⁵ **1:3d** *After* he had provided (made)(ποιησαμενος>ποιεω)(vpanmm-s)(the **aorist** points to the completed action) purification (ο καθαρισμος) (n-am-s) for sins (η αμαρτια)(n-gf-p),

⁵⁶ **1:3e** He sat down (εκαθισεν>καθιζω)(viaa-zs) at (εν)(pd) the right hand (δεξιος-α-ον)(ap-df-s) of the Majesty (η μεγαλωσυνη) (n-gf-s) in (εν)(pd) the high place (heaven) (υψηλος-η-ον)(ap-dm-p).

Christ “sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven”. ‘The majesty in heaven’ is an expression for God the Father⁵⁷. Psalm 110:1 promised that Christ would sit at the right hand of God. This promise went into fulfilment after his death on the cross⁵⁸ in the resurrection, ascension and enthronement of Christ. No literal location is intended. *God has no physical right hand or a material throne where the ascended Christ sits beside him*. This phrase denotes the exaltation and supremacy of Christ⁵⁹. *Christ as seated High Priest is contrasted with the priests of the Old Testament, who remained standing because their sacrificial service never came to an end*.

Psalm 110:1 was addressed to a prince of the house of David, who evidently had the prerogative to be seated in the divine presence⁶⁰. Christ’s exaltation to the right hand of God in itself marks Christ out as being superior to the angels.

1:4-14. Jesus Christ as God is superior to angels.

In Hebrews 1:4-14, seven quotations from the Old Testament (which is important for Jews) corroborate that Jesus Christ is superior to angels. Jesus Christ has a position and name in heaven as ‘Son of God’ that is far superior to that of the angels (1:4-5).

1:4. He became by so much more superior to the angels as the name he has inherited (is) more excellent to theirs.⁶¹ In Hebrews 1-2, Jesus Christ is compared to the angels. *His superior name is ‘Son’ of God, which he had in his humiliation*⁶² as well as from eternity⁶³. He inherited the name ‘Son of God’ (God the Son) as he inherits all things, by the eternal appointment of God the Father.

The comparative word ‘superior or better’⁶⁴ is found 13 times in Hebrews. It contrast Christ and his new order (the New Testament) with what went before his incarnation and exaltation (the Old Testament): a better name (1:4); better things (6:9); the better or greater person (7:7); a better hope (7:19); a better covenant (7:22; 8:6); better promises (8:6); better sacrifices (9:23); a better possession (10:34); a better country (11:16); a better resurrection (11:35); a better foresight or plan (11:40); a better word (12:24).

The seven Old Testament quotations firstly shows that the final message of God, which was *communicated by God the Son*, is safeguarded by even more majestic sanctions than those that attended the law, which was *communicated by angels* (2:2). And secondly it shows that the new world over which the Son reigns as Mediator far surpasses the old world in which various nations were assigned to angels for administration (2:5)⁶⁵. This emphasis of Christ’s superiority to angels was probably given to avoid the Hebrews from being carried away by all kinds of strange teachings (13:9). Remember, a false doctrine of worshipping angels had also been introduced among the Colossian Christians⁶⁶.

(1) While angels are called ‘sons of God’, Jesus Christ is ‘*the Son of God*’.

The first quotation is from Psalm 2:7.

1:5a. For to which of the angels did he (God) ever say, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you (I have become your Father)’.⁶⁷

Christ receives the title (name)⁶⁸ ‘Son of God’.⁶⁹ Though angels may collectively be called ‘sons of God’⁷⁰, no one of them is ever called “*the Son of God*” in terms like these, which singles the person addressed out and give him a status apart.

The divine decree of Psalm 2:7b-9 may have preserved the text of a coronation liturgy used by the Davidic dynasty, but later it was believed that these words would be most fully realised in the Messiah of David’s line who would rise up in

⁵⁷ cf. “the Mighty One” in Isaiah 9:5 or “the power of God” in Mark 14:62

⁵⁸ Luke 22:69; CF. Revelation 5:1-14

⁵⁹ Ephesians 4:10; Philippians 2:9

⁶⁰ 2 Samuel 7:18; cf. Ezekiel’s vision of the new commonwealth or kingdom, Ezekiel 44:3

⁶¹ **1:4.** He became (γενομενος>γινομαι)(vpadnm-s) by so much more (τισουτος-η-ον)(apddn-s= adjective pronominal *Demonstrative*, dative neuter singular) superior (κρειττων<comparative of κρατος)(a-mnm-s= adjective pronominal *coMparative* nominative masculine singular) to the angels (ο αγγελος)(n-gm-p) as (οσος-η-ον)(aprndn-s=adjective pronominal *Relative* dative neuter singular)(correlative with τισουτος) the name (το ονομα)(n-an-s) he has inherited (κεκληρονομηκεν>κληρονομηω)(vira-zs) (is) more excellent (διαφορωτερος)(a-man-s *coMparative*) (comparative of διαφορος) to (παρα)(pa) theirs.

⁶² Hebrews 5:8; Matthew 3:17. “This is my Son” = Son of God

⁶³ “his Son”= Son of God

⁶⁴ κρειττων

⁶⁵ cf. Daniel 10:13,20,21; Daniel 12:1

⁶⁶ Colossians 2:18

⁶⁷ **1:5a.** For (γαρ)(cs) to which (anyone/thing) (τις, τινος)(aptdm-s=adjective pronominal *interrogative* dative masculine singular) of the angels (ο αγγελος)(n-gm-p) did he (God) ever (ποτε)(ab=adverb) say (ειπεν>λεγω)(viaa-zs), ‘You (συ)(nprn-ys) are (ει>ειμι)(vira-ys) my (μου)(npg-xs)

Son (υιος)(nprn-ys); today (σημερον)(ab) I have begotten you (become your Father) (γεγεννηκα>γεννωω)(vira--xs)’ (the perfect tense marks the completion and the acceptance of his salvation work) (Psalm 2:7; Matthew 3:17).

⁶⁸ Greek: το ονομα

⁶⁹ 2 Samuel 7:14

⁷⁰ Hebrew: bene ha-Elohim. Genesis 6:2 (υιοι του θεου); Job 1:6; Job 2:1

the time of fulfilment⁷¹. Nevertheless, in Psalm 2 itself the Lord's Anointed (the Messiah) cites these words as the ground of his confidence in the face of the plotting of his enemies. At the annunciation of the birth of Christ, the angel Gabriel said to Mary, "He will be great and will be called 'the Son of the Most High'"⁷². Most important, at the baptism of Christ, the voice of God from heaven said, "You are my Son whom I love; with you I am well pleased"⁷³. The New Testament clearly views Psalm 2 as a messianic Psalm⁷⁴.

The context shows that *the word 'today' refers to the exaltation and enthronement of Christ (1:13)*⁷⁵. That *was the occasion when Jesus Christ was vested with his royal dignity as 'Son of God'*. Romans 1:4 teaches that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was the occasion when the Holy Spirit instated Christ in the position of sovereignty and invested him with all power in heaven and on earth, something that far surpassed everything that could be said of Christ during his incarnate state⁷⁶. The eternity of Christ's Sonship is not brought into question by this view. *Although Jesus Christ was the Son of God from everlasting, he in time first emptied himself taking the very nature of a servant and then entered into the full exercise of his sovereign power after he proved his complete obedience by his death.*

(2) While angels are servants of God, Jesus Christ relates to God as 'Father' and 'Son'.

The second quotation is from 2 Samuel 7:14.

1:5b Or again, 'I will be to him as a Father and he will be to me as a Son'.⁷⁷__

Jesus is the Son of God. Although David's immediate successor, Solomon, built a temple for God, God's promises to David with regard to his son and heir were not exhausted in Solomon. While the author of 2 Samuel 7:12-16 speaks of 'David's son', the author of 1 Chronicles 17:11-14 clearly understood these promises to be fulfilled in "one of David's sons", namely, Jesus Christ. The words of the angel Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:32-33 surely fulfil these promises: "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his Kingdom will never end." Also Romans 1:3 teaches that the Son of God according to his weak human nature⁷⁸ was a descendant of David.

See addendum at the end of this chapter: "Jesus Christ is the Son of God".

(3) While angels must worship God/Jesus, Jesus Christ is worshipped.

The third quotation is from the Greek Old Testament translation of Deuteronomy 32:43.

1:6. And again, when he (God) brings his firstborn into the world, he says, 'And all God's angels *must* worship (fall on their knees before) him'.⁷⁹

While in the Old Testament the angels are called to worship God (the LORD, Hebrew: JaHWeH), in the New Testament they are called to worship Jesus Christ! They are called to do this from the time of his introduction to the world as 'the Son of God', that is, at his exaltation and enthronement as Sovereign Ruler of the inhabited universe (2:5)⁸⁰.

Jesus Christ is called 'the firstborn over all creation'⁸¹ because:

- he exists before all things
- he created all things
- he is the first of the new humanity, those who do not bow down to idols
- he is the first of God's New Testament community, the believers in Christ
- he holds all things together⁸²
- he is the goal and significance of all things.

⁷¹ Jeremiah 23:5-6; Ezekiel 37:24-28

⁷² Luke 1:32-33 υιος υψιστος

⁷³ Mark 1:11 ο υιος μου

⁷⁴ Acts 4:25-26; 13:33

⁷⁵ cf. Psalm 110:4

⁷⁶ cf. Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-22

⁷⁷ **1:5b** Or (και)(cc) again (παλιν)(ab), 'I will be (εσομαι>ειμι)(vifd--xs) to him (αυτος-η-ον)(npdmzs) as (εις)(pa) a Father (ο πατηρ)(n-am-s) and he will be (εσται>ειμι)(vifd-zs) to me (μοι)(npd-xs) as (εις)(pa) a Son (ο υιος)(n-am-s).

⁷⁸ Greek: κατα σαρκα

⁷⁹ **1:6.** And (δε)(cc) again (παλιν)(ab), when he (God) brings (εισαγαγη>εισαγω)(vsaa-zs) his firstborn (ο πρωτοτοκος)(ap-am-s) into (εις)(pa) the world (η οικουμενη)(n-af-s), he says (λεγει>λεγω)(vipa-zs), 'And all (πας) God's (θεου)(n-gm-s) angels (ο αγγελος) (n-nm-p) *must* worship (fall on their knees before)(προσκυνησατωσαν>προσκυνω) (vmaa-zp) him (αυτω)(npdmzs)'.

⁸⁰ Ephesians 1:20-22; 1 Peter 3:22; Revelation 5:6-14

⁸¹ Colossians 1:15; cf. Romans 8:22

⁸² Colossians 1:16-17

Christ is the One to whom belongs the right and dignity of the Firstborn in relation to every creature⁸³. All must honour the Son as they honour the Father⁸⁴. This also means that the Son himself cannot be a creature, the first in a very long line of creatures. Christ is before every creature, distinct from every creature and highly exalted above every creature!

Christ is also called ‘the firstborn from among the dead’⁸⁵, because:

- he is the first to be resurrected from the dead, never to die again
- through his resurrection he is the path-breaker, who holds the keys of Death and Hades⁸⁶.

The sentence, “When God brings his firstborn into the world” does not refer to the first coming of Christ (the incarnation) and also not to his second coming. It refers to Christ being brought or introduced into the world as ‘the Son of God’, thus to his exaltation and enthronement as Sovereign Lord over ‘the inhabited universe’. This is the new world order!

Hebrews 2:5 says, “God has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking, not to angels,” but to Christ. Hebrews 2:5 refers back to Hebrews 1:6.

*Before the first coming of Christ, God subjected the world to the government of angels*⁸⁷. By the exaltation and enthronement of Christ at his right hand, God inaugurated the new world-order⁸⁸. “The world to come” (2:5) is practically synonymous with “the coming age” (6:5).

(4) While angels are only servants, Jesus Christ is addressed as ‘God’.

The fourth quotation is from Psalm 104:4.

1:7 And with reference to the angels he says ‘Who makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire’.⁸⁹

In Hebrews 1:7-8 we read that angels, although they have a high place in the divine administration of the universe, are far inferior to the supreme position given to Jesus Christ.

While in the Old Testament⁹⁰, the natural elements: wind and fire, are God’s servants and fulfil the commands of God, in the New Testament the angels execute God’s commands with the swiftness of wind and the strength of fire.

(5) While angels remain servants, Jesus Christ is the everlasting God, the King on the throne.

The fifth quotation is from Psalm 45:6-7.

1:8. But with reference to the Son (he says), ‘Your throne, O God, (will last) for ever and ever, and the sceptre of uprightness (righteousness) (will be) the sceptre of your kingdom.’⁹¹

1:9. You (Christ) have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; because of this, God, your God has anointed you with the oil of joy above your partners (comrades).⁹²

The word ‘but’ shows that the fifth quotation (about Jesus Christ) is set in contrast to the fourth quotation (about angels).

Psalm 45 celebrates a royal wedding and the poet first addresses the bridegroom (verse 1-9) and then the bride (verse 10-17). The bridegroom was probably a king of the house of David. The author of Hebrews applies Psalm 45 to the Davidic Messiah. *The marginal alternative, “Your throne is God” is quite unconvincing, because Christ never sits on God, but always at God’s right hand*, that is, Christ is the visible One (the visible Image of the invisible God) on the throne! The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX), and the author of Hebrews twice regard the word ‘God’ to be vocative. The king is not simply addressed in the hyperbolic language characteristic of oriental courts, but the king of the house of David is regarded as the vice-regent of the God of Israel. The king belongs to a dynasty to

⁸³ cf. Psalm 89:27

⁸⁴ John 5:23

⁸⁵ Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5

⁸⁶ Revelation 1:17-18

⁸⁷ Deuteronomy 32:8 LXX, Daniel 10:20-21

⁸⁸ cf. Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-22

⁸⁹ **1:7.** And with reference to (προς)(pa) the angels (ο αγγελος)(n-am-p) he says (λεγει>λεγω)(vipa-zs), ‘Who (ο) (apnm-s / dnms relative) makes

(ποιων>ποιεω)(vppanm-s) his (αυτου)(npgmzs) angels (ο αγγελος)(n-am-p) winds (το πνευμα)(n-an-p), his (αυτου)(npgmzs) servants (ο λειτουργος)(n-am-p) flames (το πυρ)(n-gn-s) of fire (η φλοξ)(n-af-s)’

⁹⁰ Psalm 104:4; cf. Psalm 148:8

⁹¹ **1:8.** But (δε)(ch) with reference to (προς)(pa) the Son (ο υιος)(n-am-s) (he says), ‘Your (σου)(npg-ys) throne (ο θρονος)(n-nm-s), O God (ο)(dvms) (θεος)(n-nm-s / n-vms)(vocative: the article with the vocative is due to Semitic influence), (will last) for (εις)(pa) ever and ever (τον αιωνα του αιωνος)(n-am-s), and the sceptre (η ραβδος)(n-nf-s) of uprightness (righteousness)(η ευθυτης)(n-gf-s) (will be) the sceptre of your kingdom (η βασιλεια)(n-gf-s).

⁹² **1:9.** You (Christ) have loved (ηγαπησας>αγαπαω)(viaa--ys) righteousness (η δικαιοσυνη)(n-af-s) and hated (εμισησας>μισεω)(viaa--ys) (the aorist tense could apply to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ on earth) wickedness (η ανομια)(n-af-s); because of (δια)(pa) this (τουτου)(apdan-s demonstrative), God (ο θεος)(n-nm-s / n-vm-s)(vocative), your God (ο θεος σου) has anointed (εχρισεν>χριω)(viaa--zs) you (σε)(npa-ys)(Christ) with the oil (το ελαιον)(n-an-s) of joy (η αγαλλιασις)(n-gf-s) (genitive of description: the oil is used in occasions of gladness) above (παρα)(pa)(more than, comparison) your partners (comrades) (ο μετοχος)(ap-am-p)(not the angels, but Christians who will share his reign in the age to come).

which God has made special promises bound up with the accomplishment of his purpose in the world. What was partially true of king David or of any of the historic kings in David's line *would be realised in its fullness in the King of the theocracy, the Messiah, in whom all the promises and ideals associated with David's dynasty would be embodied.*

Now this Messiah had come and he may be addressed, not only as 'the Son of God', as the Messiah in king David's line, but as 'God', as the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's being!

Already in the Old Testament, in Isaiah 9:6, the Messiah is called 'Mighty God'⁹³, the same as the LORD, the Almighty God⁹⁴ is called in Isaiah 10:20-23. Also in the New Testament the apostles Paul and John call Jesus Christ 'God'⁹⁵.

All things created are subject to time, change and decay. Angels are subject to time. But the throne of the Son of God endures for ever and ever⁹⁶. The righteousness and justice which are the foundation of God's throne⁹⁷ are equally the foundation of the Messiah's throne⁹⁸.

"The anointing with the oil of joy" refers not so much to Christ's inauguration as the Messiah when God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power at the beginning of his ministry⁹⁹ as to "the joy set before him" (12:2)¹⁰⁰, the joy with which God blessed him at his exaltation and enthronement. God had accepted Christ's completed work of salvation and gave him the important scroll at his enthronement¹⁰¹. This is the acknowledgment of Christ's vindication of divine justice.

In Psalm 45, 'the companions'¹⁰² of the king in David's line may be the kings of neighbouring nations, or members of his own family and court.

But in Hebrews 1 the term has special meaning and most likely refers to 'the many sons'¹⁰³ that Christ saved (2:10)¹⁰⁴, made holy and called them 'brothers' (2:11). In Hebrews 3:14 they "have become sharers in Christ". The joy of Christians is great, but the joy of Christ is even greater¹⁰⁵!

**(6) While the created world (including angels) will pass away,
Jesus is the agent of creation and will remain the same for ever.**

The sixth quotation is from Psalm 102:25-27.

1:10. Also "At the beginning, you O Lord, lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands."¹⁰⁶

1:11. They will perish, but you remain; and they all will *certainly* grow old like a garment.¹⁰⁷

1:12. Like a robe you will roll them up; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."¹⁰⁸

The words, 'Also¹⁰⁹ (he says)' refer to the words "With regard to the Son" (1:8)¹¹⁰. Compare the words, "With regard to the angels" (1:7)¹¹¹. The author of Hebrews makes God say the words in Hebrews 1:10-12 of the Son. The author had already said that God made the universe through the Son (1:2). The angels were created before the world and when the

⁹³ Hebrew: El Gibbor

⁹⁴ Hebrew: JaHWeH

⁹⁵ John 10:30,38; John 14:9-10; Romans 9:5; 1 John 5:20

⁹⁶ cf. Isaiah 9:7

⁹⁷ Psalm 89:14

⁹⁸ cf. Isaiah 9:7; cf. Isaiah 11:5

⁹⁹ Acts 10:38

¹⁰⁰ cf. John 17:5

¹⁰¹ Revelation 5:1-14

¹⁰² μετοχοι

¹⁰³ (υιοι, HSV: kinderen)

¹⁰⁴ cf. Ephesians 4:8

¹⁰⁵ Luke 15:7

¹⁰⁶ **1:10.** Also (και)(cc) (he says), "At (κατα)(pa) the beginning (η αρχη)(n-af-p), you (συ)(nprn-ys) O Lord (ο κυριος)(n-vm-s), lay the foundation

(εθεμελιωσα>θεμελιω)(via--ys) of the earth (η γη)(n-af-s), and the heavens (ο ουρανος)(n-nm-p) are (εισιν>ειμι)(vipa-zp) the work (το εργος)(n-nn-p) of your hands (η χειρ)(n-gf-p)

¹⁰⁷ **1:11.** They (αυτος-η-ον)(nprnmzp) will perish (απολουνται>απολλυμι)(vifm-zp), but (δε)(ch) you (συ)(nprn-ys) remain (continue)(διαμενεις>διαμενω)(vipa--ys); and (και)(cc) they all (πας, παντες)(ap-nm-p) will *certainly* grow old (παλαιωθησονται>παλαιω)(vifp--zp) like (ως)(cs) a garment (το υματιον)(n-an-s)

¹⁰⁸ **1:12.** Like (ωσει)(cs) a robe (το περιβολειον)(n-an-s) you will roll (ελιξεις>ελισσω)(vifa--ys) them up; like (ως)(cs) a garment (το υματιον) (n-an-s) they will be changed (exchanged of clothes) (αλλαγησονται>αλλασσω)(vifp--zp). But (δε)(ch) you (συ)(nprn-ys) remain (are)

(ει>ειμι) (vipa-ys) the same (ο αυτος-η αυτη-το αυτο)(ap-nm-s), and your (σου)(pronoun genitive 2nd singular) years (το ετος)(n-nn-p) will never end (fail) (εκλειψουσιν>εκλειπω)(vifa--zp)

¹⁰⁹ και

¹¹⁰ προς τον υιον

¹¹¹ προς τους αγγελους

world was created, they were but worshipping *spectators*¹¹². But Jesus as Son was the Father's *agent of creation*. In contrast to the temporariness of angels, the divine rule of Jesus Christ will last forever.

The author of the Psalm is very much aware of the brevity of his own life, with which he contrasts the eternal being of God. In comparison with his own life, the existence of heaven and earth is immense; and yet the created heaven (universe) and (planet) earth must also pass away! They had their beginning when God created them, and they will grow old and disappear one day; but the God who created them existed before they did, and he will survive their disappearance. As a man changes his clothes, so God will change the material universe (he will renew the present creation to become the new universe and new earth), but he himself remains eternal and unchanging.

The words of Psalm 102 are in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament (LXX) addressed by God to 'the Lord'. The Old Testament Greek translation (LXX) translates the Hebrew word 'LORD' (Hebrew: *JaHWeH*) with 'Lord' (Greek: ο κυριος) and understands by that name "the name that is above every name"¹¹³.

The New Testament does the same¹¹⁴. *The author of Hebrews is not the only New Testament writer to ascribe to Christ the highest divine names, or to apply Old Testament Scriptures which in their primary context refer to JaHWeH (the LORD) to Christ! Philippians 2:10-11 applies Isaiah 45:23 to Christ and 1 Peter 3:15 applies Isaiah 8:13 to him.*

(7) While angels stand before Jesus, he sits in the most exalted position.

The seventh quotation is from Psalm 110:1.

1:13. "With reference to which of the angels did he (God) ever say 'You *must* sit at my right hand until I make enemies a footstool for your feet?' "¹¹⁵

Like the words in Hebrews 1:5, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father", the words in Hebrews 1:13 refer to the King's enthronement and carries with it the promise of victory over all his enemies.

Jesus Christ himself applied these words to himself in Mark 12:36, when he argued that he was not only David's son, but also David's Lord.

Jesus Christ himself said at his trial, "You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One"¹¹⁶. And the apostles preached that after his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ was "exalted to the right hand of God"¹¹⁷!

The most exalted angels are those whose privilege it is "to *stand* in the presence of God"¹¹⁸ in order to promptly and swiftly execute God's commands. But no angel has ever been invited "to *sit* at God's right hand"! 'The right hand' is the place of unique honour.

These angels are different beings from 'the world-rulers and elemental spirits'¹¹⁹, because the influence of these last mentioned angels over the lives of people who have died with Christ has been broken¹²⁰!

1:14. Are not all (angels) ministering spirits sent out in order to serve because of those who are about to inherit salvation?¹²¹

Although angels are higher than people in the order of creation, they are lower than people in the order of grace, because they serve the heirs of salvation. *The service of angels is especially performed for the benefit of Christians, especially at the second coming of Christ*¹²².

¹¹² Job 38:4-7

¹¹³ Philippians 2:9. The name that is above every name = KURIOS

¹¹⁴ Mark 1:3

¹¹⁵ **1:13.** "With reference to (προς)(pa) which (τινα)(aptam-s=adjective pronominal *inTerrogative* accusative masculine singular) of the angels (ο αγγελος)(n-gm-p) did he (God) ever (ποτε)(ab=adverb indefinite) say (ειρηκεν>λεγω)(vira-zs), 'You *must* sit (καθου>καθιζω) (vmpn-ys)(imperative) at (εκ)(pg=preposition genitive) my (μου)(npg-xs) right hand (δεξιως-α-ον)(ap-gn-p) until (εως)(cs) I make (θω>τιθημι)(vsaa--xs) your (σου)(npg-ys) enemies (those who hate and are hostile) (ο εχθρος)(ap-am-p) a footstool (το υποποδιον)(n-an-s) for your (σου)(npg-ys) feet (ο πους, ποδος)(n-gm-p)?"

¹¹⁶ Mark 14:62

¹¹⁷ Acts 2:33; cf. Acts 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20-22; Colossians 3:1; 1 Peter 3:22; Revelation 3:21

¹¹⁸ Daniel 7:10; Luke 1:19; Revelation 8:2

¹¹⁹ Romans 8:38; 1 Corinthians 2:8; Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:8,15,20

¹²⁰ Colossians 1:13; Colossians 2:15

¹²¹ **1:14.** Are not (ουχι=ου)(qt=interrogative particle in questions expecting an affirmative answer) all (angels) ministering (engaged in holy service)(λειτουργικος-η-ον)(a--nn-p) spirits (το πνευμα)(n-nn-p) sent out (as an authoritative representative) (αποστελλομενα>αποστελλω) (vppnn-p) in order to (εις)(pa) serve (η διακονια)(n-af-s) because of (for the sake of)(δια+accusative) those who are about to (μελλοντας>μελλω)(vppaam-p+) inherit (κληρονομειν>κληρονομεω) (+vnpa) salvation (η σωτηρια)(n-af-s)?

¹²² Matthew 24:31; Matthew 25:31

The 'salvation' here refers to *the final salvation*: the salvation from pain, sickness, troubles and death at the resurrection¹²³ and the salvation from a degenerate world at the renewal of all things¹²⁴. It is "the salvation that is nearer now than when we first believed"¹²⁵ and "the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time"¹²⁶. *Salvation is not a single act, but a process that begins at the regeneration and continues until it is completed at the resurrection.*

Summary.

1. Hebrews chapter 1 asserts *the ascendancy of the Son of God over angels and shows that the Old Testament (quotations) confirms this testimony.*
2. *Because God has no greater messenger than his Son, he has no further message beyond the gospel!*

ADDENDUM: JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD.

1. God's divine nature is unfathomable.

Christians believe in the God of the Bible (i.e. the God who revealed himself in the Bible) and in no other god¹²⁷. The God of the Bible is exalted above everyone and everything, sovereign and majestic. The God of the Bible is *Spirit* (not *flesh* of man)¹²⁸ and as such invisible, but nevertheless omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent.

a. *The God of the Bible is unfathomable.*

Therefore no human being can know him or even grasp his divine being¹²⁹. Yet the God of the Bible can be known, but only to the extent that he has revealed himself to us.

b. *The God of the Bible is Spirit and therefore invisible to the human eyes*¹³⁰.

Yet, the God of the Bible can be seen in Jesus Christ. Besides his invisible divine nature, the God of the Bible also took on the visible human nature and entered his creation and human history in Jesus Christ¹³¹. Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God¹³². Colossians 2:9 teaches that the fullness of the divine nature dwells in the body of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father"¹³³.

c. *The God of the Bible lives in an unapproachable light.*

No human being can climb up to God by way of keeping the law or by way of a devote religious life. The God of the Bible is so highly exalted that no human being can approach him¹³⁴. Yet, he took on the human nature in Jesus Christ and came down to dwell among us people on earth¹³⁵.

Thus, although the God of the Bible is unfathomable, people can know him to the extent that he has revealed himself in the Bible and in Jesus Christ. And although the God of the Bible is invisible, people can see who he is and what he is like in Jesus Christ. And although the God of the Bible cannot be approached by any human means, people can have a personal relationship with him, because he approached people on earth and in history through Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Jesus Christ now lives in Christians¹³⁶.

2. Christ is the Son of God in metaphysical, ontological, trinitarian and eternal sense.

a. *The God of the Bible is the Father of Jesus Christ in an ontological sense.*

God the Father and God the Son have the same divine nature. God the Father is not the physical father of Jesus Christ as some enemies falsely allege. The God of the Bible is the spiritual Father of Jesus Christ in the sense that God himself took on the human nature in Jesus Christ. The Bible clearly calls the God of the Bible "the God and Father of our Lord

¹²³ Revelation 21:4

¹²⁴ Romans 8:19-21

¹²⁵ Romans 13:11

¹²⁶ 1 Peter 1:5

¹²⁷ Isaiah 43:10-11

¹²⁸ John 4:24

¹²⁹ Job 11:7-8

¹³⁰ John 4:24; John 1:18

¹³¹ John 1:1,14,18

¹³² Colossians 1:15

¹³³ John 14:9

¹³⁴ 1 Timothy 6:16

¹³⁵ John 1:14

¹³⁶ Romans 8:9-10

Jesus Christ¹³⁷ in the sense that God took on the human nature in Jesus Christ and revealed himself to people in Jesus Christ.

The relationship between God the Father and God the Son is never a physical relationship, as some enemies allege, but is always a very special relationship! Every god of every religion that is not the Father of Jesus Christ is not the God of the Bible! The Old Testament prophets called Jesus Christ ‘the Mighty God’ and ‘the Everlasting Father’¹³⁸. And the New Testament apostle says that God the Father and God the Son are one¹³⁹. The Christian Church believes in ONE God, in one divine nature, who revealed himself to people within creation and within human history as God the Father, as God the Son and as God the Holy Spirit. As God the Father, he is the Eternal One, the Creator/Origin and the Goal/Destination of everything¹⁴⁰. As God the Son, he took on the human nature, revealed himself visibly to people and made atonement for sins. And as God the Holy Spirit, he dwells in the hearts and lives of Christians in order to give them new life.

b. The God of the Bible is the spiritual Father of Christians (thus, not in ontological sense).

Christians are never ‘God’ and never become ‘God’, but are always the creatures of God. Before people believe in Jesus Christ, they are the enemies of the God of the Bible¹⁴¹. But after they believe in Jesus Christ, they become the spiritual sons and daughters of God or the spiritual children of God¹⁴². And as the spiritual children of God they are transformed by more and more acquiring the same spiritual characteristics as the God of the Bible, like love, holiness and righteousness¹⁴³. This one God and Father of the Bible exercises control from heaven over all these Christians, works out his plan for all Christians *through* Jesus Christ and dwells *in* all Christians through the Holy Spirit¹⁴⁴. The unity of the Christian Church arises from the unity of the God of the Bible. The unity of the Christian Church is demonstrated by Christians all over the world, because they worship the same God of the Bible, they have the same Saviour of their sins, they have the same Holy Spirit, who dwells in them, and they have the same faith, the same love and the same hope!

3. Christ is not the physical, spiritual or symbolic Son of God.

a. The expression ‘Son of God’.

The term ‘Son of God’ NEVER refers to a physical (biological) son of God, but to the fact that the eternal and invisible God entered his own creation and human history by taking on the human nature in Jesus Christ. The Bible speaks of three kinds of ‘sons’.

b. The term ‘son’ sometimes refers to a physical (biological) son or descendant.

John 3:6 says, “Flesh gives birth to flesh.” It refers to a physical child that is born from physical parents (a father and a mother). Since the fall into sin by the first human being, all people in history are born out of the flesh, i.e., out of a sinful father and a sinful mother. All people are born with a sinful nature¹⁴⁵.

But Jesus Christ is not a physical (biological) son of God! Although Jesus Christ according to his human nature was born as a physical person out of a physical mother, *the virgin Mary*, his physical nature is not derived from a physical father! Jesus was not begotten (fathered) in any physical way, because God the Father has no physical body. The physical body of Jesus Christ is not the body of God. The Holy Spirit created the physical body of Jesus Christ out of the dust (the elements of the earth) by means of the virgin Mary¹⁴⁶.

*Jesus Christ is from all eternity ‘God’¹⁴⁷ who in time took on the human nature and entered the creation and human history¹⁴⁸. Jesus Christ, who possesses *the divine nature* from all eternity, also took on *the weak human nature* susceptible to all human temptations. Yet he remained absolutely without sin¹⁴⁹!*

“As to his *human nature*, Jesus Christ is born out of the house of David, but as to the Spirit he is declared to be the Son of God (the divine nature) by his resurrection from the dead”. Romans 1:3-4 describes *the weak and mortal human nature* of ‘the Son of God’ after his birth (it was weak and mortal) and then his *immortal and glorious human nature* after his resurrection.

c. The expression ‘son’ sometimes refers to a spiritual son.

¹³⁷ 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3

¹³⁸ Isaiah 9:6

¹³⁹ John 10:30

¹⁴⁰ The Alpha and the Omega.

¹⁴¹ Romans 5:10

¹⁴² Ephesians 1:5

¹⁴³ Ephesians 4:24; 2 Peter 1:4

¹⁴⁴ Ephesians 4:6

¹⁴⁵ Job 15:14,16; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-19

¹⁴⁶ Luke 1:35

¹⁴⁷ John 1:1,18

¹⁴⁸ John 1:14

¹⁴⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:17-18; Hebrews 4:15

John 3:6 also says: “The Spirit gives birth to spirit.” The Bible clearly distinguished between a physical son and a spiritual son. All people who believe in Jesus Christ, i.e. who have accepted Jesus Christ into their heart and life are called children of God. They ‘are born out of God’, i.e., are born-again from above by the Spirit of God¹⁵⁰. Through their regeneration they “participate in the divine nature”¹⁵¹ in the sense that they participate in love, holiness and righteousness of God through the work of the Holy Spirit in them¹⁵².

But Jesus Christ is also not a born-again spiritual son of God. Jesus Christ did not become God’s Son by for example how good he lived, but possesses from all eternity the essential divine nature of God. He is the visible radiance of Gods glory and the exact representation (stamp) of God’s being (1:3). He is the visible Image of the invisible God¹⁵³. “In Christ all the fulness of the Deity lives in bodily form”¹⁵⁴. He possesses from all eternity the divine being with all the divine attributes as for example love, holiness, righteousness (and omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence).

d. The expression ‘son’ sometimes refers to a symbolical son.

Luke 16:8 calls Christians ‘sons of the light’¹⁵⁵, meaning that their essential hallmark is ‘light’ and not ‘darkness’. They walk as children of the Light (Jesus Christ)¹⁵⁶. And just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, likewise Christians reflect the Light (Jesus Christ) to the world¹⁵⁷.

But Jesus Christ is not simply a symbolic son of God. He is the Son of God because he radiates the essential divine characteristics (attributes) of God. Jesus Christ is ‘the Light himself’, ‘the Sun of righteousness’¹⁵⁸! He is the visible Image of the invisible God¹⁵⁹ and the visible radiance of the invisible being of God (1:3).

Conclusion: The expression ‘Son of God’ expresses that the invisible God revealed himself in the visible Jesus Christ by taking on, besides his divine nature the human nature within creation and human history.

¹⁵⁰ John 1:12-13; John 3:3-7

¹⁵¹ 2 Peter 1:4

¹⁵² Romans 5:5; Ephesians 4:24

¹⁵³ Colossians 1:15

¹⁵⁴ Colossians 2:9

¹⁵⁵ NIV: people of light

¹⁵⁶ John 8:12

¹⁵⁷ Matthew 5:14

¹⁵⁸ Malachi 4:2

¹⁵⁹ John 14:9; Colossians 1:15