

## Hebrews 1:1-6 – God Revealed in His Son

In early manuscripts, the book is titled “To the Hebrews”. With the many references to the Old Testament, it is natural to assume that Hebrews was written to people who had more than a passing familiarity with the Old Testament. Some Old Testament references are direct quotes. Others are general references to the priesthood, the sacrifices, the tabernacle and some famous people of the Old Testament. The readers were experiencing some suffering and persecution, but not “to the point of shedding your blood”. Suffering can make cowards of us. The writer warned and exhorted the readers to hold firmly onto their Christian faith. Jesus Christ is superior to Old Testament prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua, and the Aaronic high priests. Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant which is based on better promises.

### Read Hebrews 1:1-2.

Who wrote the book of Hebrews? Where was the book written? When was the book written? Who were the recipients of Hebrews? If you are having a hard time answering those questions, you are not alone.

Hebrews contains many contrasts and comparisons. The book starts out with a contrast. How did God communicate to “the fathers” long ago? ESV has “at many times and in many ways”. KJV has “at sundry times and in divers manners”. NASB has “in many portions and in many ways”. NIV has “at many times and in various ways”. What is the meaning of verse 1? (1:1)

In verse 2, “in these last days” is in contrast to “long ago”. “To us” is in contrast with “to the fathers”. How has God spoken to us in these last days? What time period is meant by “these last days”? Hebrews 2:3b says “It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard”. Generally, the readers did not hear Jesus directly. How was the Son described? What passages are similar to the end of verse 2? See John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:16. (1:2)

I wish I did not need to bring this up but I feel compelled to do so because so many commentators make the same point. They say something like “The Son is the final revelation of God”. What does that mean? First, the Son has always existed and always will. Are they talking about Christ’s incarnation to his ascension? If so, all the New Testament books were written after Christ’s ascension. Obviously we believe that the New Testament is God’s word, inspired and inerrant, even the parts that are not direct quotes from Jesus. Does this statement include Christ’s second coming which is yet to be revealed? Hebrews 1:1-2 does not use the word “revelation”. 1:1-2 says “God spoke” which is revelation. Won’t the final judgment be a revelation of God? Will God not speak to his people when we get to heaven? I find the phrase “final revelation of God” more confusing than helpful. Maybe it is just me. I will mention one more thing. Jesus was a superior messenger of God’s word compared to the Old Testament prophets. Was Jesus’ message superior? Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. What was a shadow in the Old Testament is clearly seen in the New Testament. One final question on this. Do the red letter Bibles have it right? Should we focus more on the direct quotes of Jesus?

### **Read Hebrews 1:3-6.**

Verse 3 makes two statements about who Christ is. Then the verse states three things that Christ has done. From verse 3, who is Jesus? What has Jesus done? ESV has “radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature”. KJV has “brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person”. NASB has “radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature”. NIV has “radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being”. John 1:14 says “we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father”. John 14:9 says “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father”. (1:3)

Christ upholds all things by his word of power. What other passage expresses this same idea? See Colossians 1:17.

Verse 4 says that Jesus is better than / superior to angels. Why do you think this needed to be stated? What misconceptions about Jesus might have been going around when Hebrews was written? Verse 5 explains how the name Jesus inherited is better than the angels. The word “name” can also include the idea of “title” or “position”. (1:4)

What did the Father say to the Son in the first half of verse 5? Where is this passage from? See Psalm 2:7. (1:5)

What did the Father say of the Son in the second half of verse 5? Where is this passage from? See 2 Samuel 7:14. (1:5)

Verse 6 is in the context of God bringing the “firstborn” into the world. We encountered the word “firstborn” in Colossians 1:15, 18. In Colossians the focus of the word was on having a superior position versus the timing of birth. What did God say when he brought Jesus into the world? Where is this passage from? See Deuteronomy 32:43 and Psalm 97:7. There is a Greek translation of Deut. 32:43 that matches the Greek New Testament passage word for word. It is on septuagint.bible which is a joint project between the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the Hellenic Bible Society. Rahlfs LXX has “sons of God” for “angels of God / God’s angels”.

What is the significance of Jesus being superior to angels? What is the significance of the Old Testament passages which were quoted in verses 5 and 6?