

Prayer

Rejoice—the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing and triumph evermore! Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Jesus the Savior reigns, the God of truth and love; when He had purged our stains He took His seat above: Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail—He rules o'er earth and heav'n; the keys of death and hell are to our Jesus giv'n: Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

He all His foes shall quell, shall all our sins destroy; and every bosom swell with pure seraphic joy: Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Rejoice in glorious hope! Our Lord the Judge shall come and take His servants up to their eternal home: Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Hebrews 1:1-5:

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

⁵ *For to which of the angels did He ever say,*

*“You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You”?*

And again,

*“I will be a Father to Him
And He shall be a Son to Me”?*

Hebrews 1:1-3: Christ is superior revelation

Hebrews 1:4-2:18: Christ is superior to angels

At least 8 quotations from the Old Testament in chapter 1 all but two are about Christ:

Angels

Jesus

	<p>Verse 5: “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? (Psalm 2:7)</p>
	<p>Verse 5: “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? (2Sam 7:14; Psalm 89:26-27)</p>
	<p>Verse 6: “Let all God’s angels worship him.” (Psalm 97:7)</p>
<p>Verse 7: “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” (Psalm 104:4)</p>	<p>Verses 8 and 9: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” (Psalm 45:6-7)</p>
	<p>Verses 10-12: “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; 11 they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, 12 like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.” (Psalm 102:25-27)</p>

	Verse 13 “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? (Psalm 110:1)
Verse 14: Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?	

Verse by verse analysis: observations, applications and inferences (an inference or application is signaled by→)

Verse 1:

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways

- in the past God spoke
- God spoke through many ways
 - The prophets did many strange things in order to communicate God’s message: Ezekiel used symbols like a vine (19:10-14), a boiling pot, dry bones (37:14); Hosea was called to be married to a prostitute and take her back after she was continually unfaithful. This was a comparison to Israel being unfaithful to the Lord.
 - Numbers 12:6 and 8; Joel 2:28: visions, dreams
 - All of the ways that God spoke included the prophets
- God spoke many times
- →Interesting the author starts out this way. He is identifying the readers or listeners by starting with the past; however, I believe he is about to move to the present and future in the next verse.
- The ESV translation says “long ago” as does the NASB. The NIV simply says “past.” The Greek word (πάλαι) is an adverb describing time in the past in antithesis (contrast) to the present. One of the definitions does mean “long ago.”
 - →Why does it matter if it means long ago or not? One major reason of importance is that the 400 years prior to Christ are often called the silent years. This is because during this time there were no prophets that we know of, at least not prophets like Jeremiah, Daniel, or Isaiah. So, since the writer is making a connection to the Old Testament he is not referencing long ago as 50 years but more likely over 400 years.

^w Cited from Ps. 110:1

- →notice this is contrast to the present time. Likely because he is about to make the New Testament connection. God speaks differently today.
- Since the writer says that God spoke to “our fathers” he may be Jewish as well.

Verse 2:

² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

- Now there is a transition and a contrast. In these last days, this is the antithesis to “long ago”
- The Greek adjective for “last” (ἔσχατος) means last, or final, latest, last of all, end or furthest point.
- →Does this mean the author of Hebrews thought they were in the end times? He could have, Paul did. I think it is also likely that they are the last days as this is the latest way that God has worked. God has now given us Jesus and this may be the last phase of God’s work on the earth until He comes again to reclaim His church and bring history to a close.
- God has spoken to us.
- →to Jewish non Christians this may be a major statement.
- God has spoken through Jesus
- →to Jewish non Christians this would even be more of a major statement.
- Son is modified
 - Whom He appointed the heir of all things
 - Through whom He also created the world
 - →This is some major theology or really Christology. Jesus is the Heir of all things. Jesus created the world (Col 1: 15-20; John 1:1ff)
 - →The One we put our faith in is worthy for us to place our faith in Him. If He created the worlds, He can save us! If He is the heir of all things, if He has all authority (Matt 28:18), then we can trust that He has the power.
 - →This is setting up the case that Christ’s revelation is greater than any other, greater than the angels.
- 1 Peter 1:20 is written about the last days and so is Joel 2:28
- Matt 28:18: Jesus said all the Kingdom’s of the earth have been given to me
- In Hebrews 2:3 the writer also writes about the revelation through the Son

- Hebrews 11:3 also is written about the Word of God creating the world

I like what the ESV Study Bible says about this verse:

*Since God has spoken finally and fully in the Son, and since the NT fully reports and interprets this supreme revelation once the NT is written, the canon of Scripture is complete. No new books are needed to explain what God has done through his Son. Now believers await his second coming (9:28) and the city to come (13:14). Jesus is **heir of all things** (i.e., what he “inherits” from his Father is all creation) by virtue of his dignity as Son (1:4). The preexistence, authority, power, and full deity of the Son are evident in his role in creating **the world**; cf. [John 1:3, 10](#); [Col. 1:16](#) (page 2361).*

The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary is very informative to the literature:

1:1–2. *These two verses represent some of the most articulate, Atticizing [a type of Greek literature] Greek prose in antiquity and include literary devices like alliteration (five Greek words beginning with p in v. 1). The author also appears to model some of his language on the opening of the prologue to Ecclesiasticus, a Jewish wisdom book in wide circulation by this period and almost certainly familiar to his readers (available to modern readers in what is usually called the Apocrypha).*

Christ is presented here as the ultimate Word of God; ancient Judaism identified God’s Word with his Wisdom. That God had created all things through Wisdom or his Word was noted in the Old Testament (e.g., Prov 8:30; Ps 33:6, alluding to Gen 1) and developed further in Judaism. As the fullness of the Word, Christ was superior to the authentic but partial revelation of God in the law.

“Last days” was Old Testament language for the time of the end (Is 2:2; Ezek 38:16; Hos 3:5; Mic 4:1; cf. Deut 4:30, 32; 8:16), now inaugurated in Christ. An “heir” held title to the property of the one who appointed him heir; cf. comment on “inherit” in verse 4.¹

Verse 3:

³ *And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

- Christ is still being modified from verse 2
- This is very much comparable to Col 1:15-20

Old Testament ***Old Testament.** The common modern term for the Hebrew Bible (including Aramaic portions) as defined by the Jewish and Protestant Christian canons; Jewish readers generally call this the Tenach.

Christ ***Christ.** The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew term for “Messiah.” Some Gentile readers, unfamiliar with the Jewish sense of the term, may have taken it merely as Jesus’ surname, a usage that became more common over time.

¹Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 1:1). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Wednesday Night Hebrews Bible study facilitated by Pastor Steve Rhodes

Hebrews 1:1-5

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- Jesus is the radiance of His glory
 - →Jesus is the radiance of God's glory
 - →As the sun's light is reflected in a prism or a piece of Jewelry, Jesus reflects and is God's glory
- Jesus is the exact representation of God's nature
- Jesus holds all creation together by His word of Power
 - →That is making a statement of the power of Jesus' words
 - →God created the world by His word Gen 1:3; John 1:1
 - →There is a neat passage in the Gospel of John 18:6, the people came to arrest Jesus and Jesus asked them who is it they want. They said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said, "I am He." They fell to the ground.
- Jesus made purification for our sins and then sat down at the right hand of God
 - →right hand side is symbolic of the side of power
- 2 Cor 4:4 Christ is the image of God
- Mark 16:19: He sat down at the right hand of God; also Luke 22:69
- →Again: to non Christian Jews or even new Christian Jews these are amazing statements about Christ

The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

1:3. *Jewish authors writing in Greek often said that divine Wisdom was the exact "image" (so KJV here) of God, the prototypical stamp by which he "imprinted" (cf. NRSV here) the seal of his image on the rest of creation (the way an image was stamped on coins). Sitting down at the right hand of the supreme king was an image of the ultimate honor and alludes to Psalm 110:1, cited explicitly in 1:13. "Purification" of sins was the work of priests; mention of it here anticipates a theme that appears later in the book.²*

N.T. Wright: *Hebrews for Everyone*

KJV King James Version

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

²Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 1:3). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

“Actually, the word used for ‘precise expression’ here is the Greek word character, the origin of our apparently identical English word. But this is an interesting word in both Greek and in English. When we talk about the ‘characters’ in a play, and when we talk about the ‘characters’ of an alphabet (the Hebrew ‘characters’, say or Japanese), what have the two got in common? Where does the idea begin?

At the bottom of it all, in the ancient world, lies the idea of engraving, or of stamping soft or hot metal with a pattern which the metal will then continue to bear. Though the ancient world didn’t have printing presses such as we have had since William Caxton in the fifteenth century, it had early equivalents that were used, particularly, for making coins. The emperor would employ an engraver who carved the royal portrait, and suitable words or abbreviations, on a stamp, or a die, made of hard metal. The engraver used the stamp to make a coin, so that the coin gave the exact impression, or indeed expression, of what was on the stamp.

The word character in ancient Greek was widely used to mean just that: the accurate impression left by the stamp on the coin.... Yes, the writer: God had for a long time been sending advance sketches of Himself to His people, but now He’s given us His exact portrait.” (pages 2-3)

Verse 4:

⁴ having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

- The theme now comes through that Jesus is superior to angels.
- Interesting the text states that the name He inherited is more excellent than theirs
- Eph 1:21 and Phil 2:9 both have to do with the preeminence of Christ
- → names were very important back then and usually referred to essence and being. “Christ” anointed one. ESV study note below:

Heb. 1:4 The main theme of [chs. 1 and 2](#) is announced: Jesus is **superior to angels**. Angels were objects of much speculation in first-century Judaism. Certainly they were known to appear in human form, to minister before the very throne of God, to guide and protect humans, and to have revealed the Mosaic law (see [1:7](#); [2:2](#); [12:22](#); [13:2](#)). Yet Jesus is deemed superior to them, in part because his **name** (i.e., his essence) is “Son” ([1:5](#)), which points to a more intimate relationship and which speaks of a better family inheritance (all that belongs to the Father belongs to his unique Son) (page 2361).

The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

1:4. *Some Diaspora Jewish writers attributed to the angels a role in creation, but early Christian writers routinely denied them such a role (Col 1:16), as did many Jewish teachers. Here Jesus’ exaltation grants him a title that entitles him to much more status than the angels: **Son** (1:5).*

Diaspora ***Diaspora**. The Jewish dispersion outside Palestine. The technical term “Diaspora Judaism” is thus used interchangeably with “non-Palestinian Judaism” in this commentary.

(Although some Jewish teachers said that God honored Israel more than the angels by giving Israel the law, something greater than comparison with Israel is in view here, because Jesus himself is identified with the divine Word in 1:1–3, and is “son” in a sense in which the angels are not; the title is applied to angels generally, e.g., Job 1:6, but Jesus is distinguished as the Son. Those original readers who wished to compromise their divine view of Jesus but to retain him as superhuman may also have wished to identify him as an angel, as some second-century Jewish Christians did, but if this is the case, the writer rejects this compromise as inadequate—2:5–18.)³

Verse 5:

⁵ *For to which of the angels did He ever say,*

*“You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You”?*

And again,

*“I will be a Father to Him
And He shall be a Son to Me”?*

- Now the writer begins this contrast between Christ and angels using a litany of Old Testament Bible passages. This is displayed in the chart above.
- Psalm 2:7; Psalm 89:26-29; 2Sam 7:14 are quoted. The two latter passages concern the same passage.
- An ESV Study Note will be helpful to explain these first passages:

*this speaks of entering into a new phase of that Father-Son relationship and **should not be pressed to suggest that the Son once did not exist** (he has begotten the already living Son “today”). Similar words of divine sonship are spoken at Jesus' baptism ([Mark 1:11](#); [Luke 3:22](#); cf. [Matt. 3:17](#)) and his transfiguration ([Matt. 17:5](#); [Mark 9:7](#); [Luke 9:35](#)); see also [Acts 13:33](#); [Heb. 5:5](#). **he shall be to me a son**. This proclamation ([2 Sam. 7:14](#); also [1 Chron. 17:13](#)) is declared to King David concerning his covenant heir, whom God will designate God's own “Son.” In the context of Samuel, the reader might assume this refers to David's son Solomon, but Solomon failed to follow the law and was not “established forever” ([2 Sam. 7:16](#)); **hence, the promise can only be fulfilled by the Davidic Messiah**. [Psalm 2](#) and [2 Samuel 7](#) are linked by the special designation “Son,” and by their messianic theology (a link also assumed in NT-era Judaism, e.g., 4QFlorilegium in the Dead Sea Scrolls) (pages 2361-2362).*

³Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 1:4). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.