



WALKING ON WATER
BIBLE CHURCH

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Part 1

Authorship of Hebrews

The Problem of Authorship

- Ancient confusion: The early church was not unanimous about who wrote Hebrews.
- Modern scholarship: Many proposals exist, but most are speculative and cannot be proven.

Pauline Authorship Considered and Rejected by many

- **Lack of Paul's Self-Identification**
- Hebrews does not mention Paul's name.
- The only link is the superscription in later manuscripts, reflecting tradition rather than evidence.
- Paul always asserts his apostolic authority in his letters; Hebrews is completely anonymous.

Difference in Personal Experience

- Paul's letters regularly reflect his conversion experience; Hebrews does not.
- The writer of Hebrews shows no awareness of such an event.
- **Pauline themes absent:** Key Pauline motifs (e.g., justification by faith) are not central in Hebrews.
- Hebrews 2:3 implies the author received the gospel from eyewitnesses, unlike Paul who insisted on direct revelation from Christ.

Alternative Ancient Proposals

- Luke: Some stylistic similarities, but not strong enough for authorship.
- Clement of Rome: Unlikely—his writings differ theologically, and he seems to quote Hebrews rather than write it.
- Barnabas: Considered because he was a Levite from Cyprus, but Hebrews focuses on biblical (not temple) cultus.
- **Modern Proposals**
 - Apollos
 - Suggested by Martin Luther

Purpose and Structure of Hebrews 1:1–4

- Hebrews 1:1–4 serves as the book's introduction (exordium), designed to:
- Capture the reader's attention immediately.
- Introduce the main themes of the entire book.
- Ancient introductions needed to engage the audience quickly and present core topics.

Hebrews 1:1-4

- God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,
- ² has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through 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 at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
- ⁴ having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Hebrews 1:1-4 – Book Introduction

- The introduction in Greek is a single, beautifully crafted sentence (periodic style), praised for its literary artistry.
- **Alliteration:** Noted in the original Greek, giving the text an auditory impact.
 - **Πολυμερῶς** (polumerōs) – “in many parts,” suggesting fragmented, piecemeal revelation across time (law, prophets, history, poetry).
 - **καί** (kai) – “And” - “and, also, even, indeed”
 - **Πολυτρόπως** (polutropōs) – “in many ways” (visions, dreams, theophanies, symbols, types, prophetic speech).
 - **πάλαι** (palai) – “long ago,” pointing back to the Old Testament era.

Key Themes Introduced in Hebrews 1:1–4

- God as the one who speaks.
- The Son (Jesus) as the ultimate revelation.
- The Son's superiority and unique relationship with God the Father.
- The Son's lordship over all creation.
- The Son's sacrificial work for sin and his exaltation to God's right hand.
- The role of angels and the audience's (readers') inclusion in the addressed community.

Exegetical Breakdown

- **The passage divides into two movements:**
- 1:1–2a: God's revelation in two eras (past and present).
- 1:2b–4: The person, work, and status of the Son.

Contrast of Eras:

- In the past: God spoke through the prophets to the ancestors (Old Testament era, various ways).
- In the last days: God spoke to "us" by His Son (Messianic era, singular, focused revelation).
- The "last days" refer to the period initiated by the coming of the Messiah (Jesus), not necessarily an imminent end, but a new epoch in salvation history.

Role of Old Testament Revelation:

- Old Testament communication is foundational, leading to the climactic revelation in Christ.
- The participle "having spoken" (Old Testament) supports the main verb "God spoke" (in the Son), indicating continuity and fulfillment. What God spoke through the Prophets finds fulfillment in the Son.
- Throughout Hebrews, Old Testament references are used to show the foundation for the superior revelation in Christ.

Question:

- If Christ is eternal God, the One through whom all things were made (Heb 1:2b; John 1:3; Col 1:16), then how can He become or be appointed heir of something that always belonged to Him?

DEITY VS HUMANITY

- As the eternal Word (Logos), Christ already owns everything by right of creation.
 - John 1:3 – “All things were made through Him.”
 - Col 1:16 – “All things were created by Him and for Him.”
- In this sense, the Son is already the natural heir because He is the eternal Son of God.
 - Just as a son naturally inherits from a father, the eternal Son “inherits” by eternal relationship.
- So, ontologically, everything always belonged to Christ. He never “lacked” ownership.

- **Christ as Incarnate Son - Humanity (Appointed Heir)**
- The word “appointed” (ἔθηκεν, ethēken) in Hebrews 1:2 points to a redemptive-historical appointment, not a change in His essence.
- **In the incarnation**, Christ takes on true humanity. As the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45), He fulfills humanity’s original calling to inherit and rule over creation (Gen 1:26–28; Ps 8:4–6).
- Where Adam failed to exercise dominion, Christ succeeded.
Thus, as the representative Man, Jesus inherits all things on behalf of His redeemed people.
- Psalm 2:8 prophesies: “Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your inheritance, the ends of the earth Your possession.” This is covenantal inheritance granted to the Messiah.

The “Already–Not Yet” Fulfillment

- In eternity, the Son owned everything as Creator.
- In time, through His death, resurrection, and exaltation, He was publicly installed as heir.
 - Philippians 2:9 – “Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name.”
 - Hebrews 2:9 – “Crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death.”
- This is not because He lacked authority, but because as the obedient Mediator, He earned the right to reign and to share His inheritance with His people.