

“The SECRET” [to *mustērion*]

Studies in the later epistles of the apostle Paul

(No. 2 Continued from page 16)

CHAPTER 2

WHICH THINGS THEN, regarding God or Christ, or pertaining to God, do the Scriptures then tell us are “...things that are **more excellent**...” (Philippians 1:10, Darby), or

- “things **most excellent**” (Tyndale);
- “**best**” (NIV);
- “**better things**” (Douay-Rheims);
- “**superior**” (Holman);
- “**differ**” (e.g. Young, Rotherham – namely therein that such things are “of more value” or “better than” other things).

As we look at these things – and initially do so with particular reference to the letter to the Hebrews – we will of necessity often digress in order to bring out a greater understanding of a range of matters pertaining especially to the Heavens.

Since Paul’s later epistles pertain in particular to the highest spheres in the Heavenly realms, we must necessarily lay the groundwork for understanding these revelations.

If the reader patiently stays with us on this journey of learning (for both writer and reader) and searching the Scriptures, we will, by the grace of our Heavenly Father, reach a much deeper understanding some of the most magnificent truths revealed by God to man.

Which things, then, do the Scriptures say are “...things that are **more excellent**...”

Only the word of God can inform us of this (although ‘eminent commentaries’ and religious establishments will tell us of many things in man’s tradition and man’s wisdom).

We are *never* disappointed when we ask thus, and then “search”. In the letter to the Hebrews we find several such “better things”.

“**BETTER**” THINGS PERTAINING TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND TO THE HEAVENS

“[The] SON...Who... sat down on the right hand of the Majesty ON HIGH; **Being made so much better than the angels**, as He hath **by inheritance** obtained a **more excellent Name** than they”. (Hebrews 1:4, KJV).

“By **so much** was Jesus made a **Surety of a better testament**”. (Hebrews 7:22, KJV).

“**BUT NOW** hath He obtained a **more excellent ministry**,
by **how much** also He is the **Mediator of a better covenant**,
which was established upon **better promises**”.
(Hebrews 8:6, KJV).

“And to Jesus the **Mediator** of the **new covenant**, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh **better things** than that of Abel”. (Hebrews 12:24, KJV).

“It was therefore necessary that **the patterns of things in the heavens** should be purified with these; but **the heavenly things themselves** with **better sacrifices** than these”.
(Hebrews 9:23, KJV).

“**BETTER**” THINGS PERTAINING TO THE HEBREWS

“But, beloved, we are persuaded **better things**

- of [*peri*: “concerning”] **you**, [and thus e.g. Darby, NASB, NKJV]
- and **things that accompany salvation...**” (Hebrews 6:9, KJV)

[“accompany”: *echō* meaning “to have, i.e. to hold, to have (hold) in the hand... to hold fast, keep, own, possess” (*Thayer* excerpted).

Vine: “KJV margin gives perhaps the better sense, “things that are near to salvation”. Hence e.g. ESV: “belong to”; Darby: “connected with”.

These “better things” are referred to further on in Hebrews 6, which is one long passage with several connected points pertaining to:

- the showing of “diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end” (v.11);
- being “followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (v. 12);
- considering Abraham: ...“after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise” (v. 15);

- "...God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath" (v.17);
- that "we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (v. 18);
- "a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain" (ESV) [i.e. within the Veil of the innermost Sanctuary in the Heavenly Temple], "whither as a Forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a High Priest for ever ["to the Age"] after the order of Melchizedek" (ASV, v. 19, 20)].

"For the law made nothing **perfect**, BUT the bringing in of **a better hope** did; **by the which** we draw **nigh unto God**". (Hebrews 7:19, KJV).

"For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, **knowing** in yourselves that ye have **in heaven a better and an enduring substance**". (Hebrews 10:34, KJV).

"BUT NOW they desire **a better country, that is, an heavenly:** WHEREFORE God is not ashamed to be called their God: FOR He hath prepared for them a city". (Hebrews 11:16, KJV).

"Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; THAT they might obtain **a better resurrection**". (Hebrews 11:35, KJV).

"GOD having provided **some better thing** for us, THAT they *without us* should not be made **perfect**". (Hebrews 11:40, KJV).

Paul commences chapter 11 by setting forth the immense witness pertaining to "BY FAITH":

**Now FAITH is the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things *not* seen.**

For by it the elders obtained a good report".
(Hebrews 11:1, KJV).

Paul ends chapter 11 with this unique statement:

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect". (Hebrews 11: 39:40, KJV)

Let us seek to understand this right. *Literally* (and with Rotherham's emphasis), the text says:

“And **these all** [heavy emphasis; *houtos*: demonstrative pronoun; *pas*: “all, every one”] having obtained witness through [*dia*] their faith, obtained not the promise [emphasis], **God** having foreseen concerning [*peri*] us some better thing, in order that [*hina*: indicating purpose] not without us should they be **perfected**’.

If we have eyes to see with, we cannot but be astonished by what the Holy Spirit here reveals to us:

THAT all the Old Testament saints, named and un-named, referred to in Hebrews 11, and who evidenced their *faith* in a manner given the greatest commendation by God, they did NOT obtain “the promise” THEN.

AND THE REASON FOR THAT?

The reason is “GOD having foreseen” [*problepō*] concerning US some “*better thing*” (“us” being the Hebrews to whom Paul writes, and at this point in time he includes himself).

And THAT “*better thing*” foreseen by God pertaining to that company of believers addressed by Paul, contained within it the purpose that *all* of these faithful Old Testament saints should NOT “*without (separate) from us*” be perfected!

But what does this mean?

[“foreseen”: from *pro* "before" and *blepo* "to see, perceive"; the *literal* meaning of the verb is "foreseen," – *Vine*. Thus translate e.g. Darby and several of the literal translations (e.g. Green's Literal Translation, Julia Smith, Emphatic Diaglott)

Most versions, however, translate “provided” (which originates from Latin *pro*: “beforehand” and *videre*: “to see”, but no longer carry this meaning in English). The Vulgata has “*providente*”].

[“perfected” is *teleioō*: “to make perfect, complete, to carry through completely, to finish, accomplish, bring to an end, to complete (perfect), add what is yet wanting in order to render a thing full, to bring to the end (goal) proposed” – *Strong/Thayer* (excerpted).

Vine: *teleioō* is “akin to the adjective *teleios*, "complete, perfect," and denotes "to bring to an end" in the sense of completing or perfecting, to bring to an end by completing or perfecting," is used

(I) of "accomplishing";

(II) of "bringing to completeness," including “of His saints”, *Vine* specifically citing Hebrews 11:40 regarding perfecting them for *resurrection glory*”;

teleioō derives ultimately from *telos* (which comes from a primary *tello* (“to set out for a definite point or goal”).

Thus *Bullinger* defines *telos* as “the fulfillment or completion of any thing i.e. its end or issue (not its cessation) It denotes strictly , not the ending of a departed state, but the arrival of a complete or perfect one”.

Strong/Thayer has (excerpted): *telos*: “termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be (always of the end of some act or state, but not of the end of a period of time); the end; the last in any succession or series; that by which a thing is finished, its close, issue; the end to which all things relate, the aim, purpose”.

Literally: "unto (the) end," (*Vine*). E.g.

“Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”
(James 5:11, KJV).

“The end [*telos*] of the Lord” in respect of Job was exactly to bring about that state of Job, *which would allow God to impart to Job God’s OWN righteousness*, i.e. making Job righteous – which can *only* be achieved through Christ Jesus becoming our righteousness from God].

The consideration here of *teleioō* in some detail is to bring out a very important point in the Scriptures’ usage of the word, which occurs 24 times altogether in the New Testament.

In the majority of occurrences, *teleioō* indeed refers to the perfecting of persons or things, i.e.

- our Lord Jesus Christ being “made perfect” on the ground of His sacrifice (e.g. Luke 13:32; Hebrews 2:10);
- faith being “made perfect” by works (James 2:22);
- the love of God being “made perfect” (1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17); and
- believers being “made perfect” (e.g. Philippians 3:12, Hebrews 10:14).

[Likewise the first occurrence of *teleioō* in the Septuagint (LXX), in Exodus 29:9 regarding the appointment of Aaron and his sons as priests of God: “...thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons”].

However: *teleioō* is also used by the Holy Spirit with the meaning “complete, fulfill (i.e. fill up to the full), to bring to an end”, as seen in e.g.

“And when they [our Lord’s parents] had fulfilled [*teleioō*] the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem...” (Luke 2:43, KJV; “had completed the days” – Darby)

Which of the two meanings then applies to *teleioō* used in our text in Hebrews 11:40?

With one voice all the dictionaries and commentaries we are aware of, all say that Hebrews 11:40 refers to all the saints being “made perfect”, i.e. perfected so as to *attain resurrection glory*.

But this creates a major difficulty - apparently not considered - namely this:

“*These all*” (heavy emphasis in the Greek), namely *all* the Old Testament saints mentioned in Hebrews 11, did not obtain “the promise”, because God “having foreseen concerning us” (i.e. the Hebrews written to by Paul) something “better”, FOR THE PURPOSE that the Old Testament saints should not be “perfected” separate from “us” (i.e. the Hebrews written to by Paul).

This cannot refer to the attaining of resurrection glory, because three of the Old Testament saints referred to * in Hebrews 11 *already* had so attained:

- “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death...” (Hebrews 11:5);
- “And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias who appeared in GLORY [*doxa*]...” (Luke 9:30-31)

* [Moses is mentioned in Hebrews 11:23-28; Elijah (Elias in Greek) is clearly included in the term “the prophets” in 11:32].

We know with complete certainty that the Holy Spirit is utterly *precise* as regards each and every word in the Scriptures.

Hence we investigated all 24 occurrences of *teleioō* and found as follows:

1. Hebrews 11:40 has *teleioō* in *aorist passive subjunctive*. Only one other passage has the word in the same tense.
2. Only two other passages have *teleioō* in aorist subjunctive (in the active voice).
3. Thus there are only 4 passages out of the 24 occurrences of *teleioō*, where the Divine Author employs the aorist subjunctive (and He is as precise with grammar, as He is with words).
4. The two passages in the *active* voice (where the subject is performing the action) are:

“Jesus saith unto them, My food is that I should do the will of Him that sent Me, and complete [*teleioō*] His Work” (John 4:34, Rotherham).

“for the works which the Father has given Me that I should complete [*teleioō*] them, the works themselves which I do, bear witness...” (John 5:36, Darby).

In both these passages, there can be no sense of being “made perfect”; the plain meaning is to complete something, in these cases “work” and a number of “works”, respectively.

5. The one passage, other than Hebrews 11:40, in the *passive voice* (where the subject is the recipient of the action) is:

“After this Jesus, knowing that already all things have been finished [*teleō*]* - that [*hina*; implying purpose] the Scripture might be fulfilled [*teleioō*] - saith “*I thirst*”.
(John 19:28, Rotherham).

Again, and in particular, there can be no sense of the Scripture being “made perfect”; the plain meaning is to fulfill - fill up to the full - something, in this case Scripture (as the subject being the recipient of the action).

* [*Vine* rightly notes, that *teleō*: “to bring to an end” (*telos*, “an end”) should here in verse 28 be translated by the verb “to finish”, namely the same word as in verse 30: “*It is finished*” [*teleō*].

This criticism is directed at the large number of versions which – shamefully and wholly unnecessarily – translate *teleō* in John 19:28 by e.g. “accomplished, performed or completed”, and then translate “finished” in verse 30, thereby depriving the reader of the clear connection between these two passages]

HENCE we conclude – and commend to the reader – that Hebrews 11:40 must be understood to mean, that “without us” they would not be *complete*, or filled up to the full, i.e. they would not reach their full complement.

In other words: that company of Old Testament saints would not be complete without others - namely “us”, which here means the New Testament Hebrew saints (to whom Paul writes) who similarly to the Old Testament saints would be walking in a similar faith, *if* they heeded the exhortations by Paul in the letter to the Hebrews (and compare Hebrews 6:12 “be...*followers* of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises”).

And this was “foreseen” by God, namely that in addition to the Old Testament saints, there would in future be others who would also part of *this* particular company of called out believers *, and therefore that particular company of believers would not be complete before all later members of this company had also been called out.

* [Elsewhere in Hebrews (12:23), this particular called out company of believers is called “*Ekklēsia of the Firstborn [ones]*”, from *ek*, “out of,” and *klesis*, “a calling” (*kaleō*, “to call”).

An “assembly or congregation” of “called out ones” is the meaning of the word *ekklēsia*, which is commonly translated with the word “church”; however, we seek to avoid that particular term *laden* with the meanings and traditions of men, who speak - without any distinctions whatsoever - about “The Church”, instead of asking who - in a

particular passage of the Scriptures - are the “called out ones” belonging to a particular *ekklēsia*].

Hence we read and understand Hebrews 11:40 as follows:

“And **these all** [the “called out” Old Testament saints referred to in chapter 11, also called *Ekklēsia of the Firstborn ones*]

having obtained witness through their faith, **obtained NOT the promise,**

God having **foreseen** concerning **US** [the New Testament Hebrews exhorted by Paul to walk in similar faith (cp. Hebr 6:12: “followers of them who through faith...”)]

some better thing,

in order that THEY [the *Ekklēsia of the Firstborn ones* comprising the Old Testament saints]

should NOT be completed or filled up to the full, separate from US [i.e. should not – without “us” - reach the full complement of those comprising the *Ekklēsia of the Firstborn ones*].

[And later we will consider what is exactly meant by this “BETTER thing”, which God has “foreseen”].

Summarizing, so we can see the force of some of this:

The Lord Jesus Christ:

- so much [*tosoutos*] better [*kreittōn*] than the angels;
- by inheritance - a more excellent [*diaphoros*, adjective of *diapherō*] Name;
- so much [*tosoutos*]...a Surety of a better [*kreittōn*] testament” [“covenant”: *diathēkē*];
- a more excellent [*diaphoros*, adjective of *diapherō*] ministry;
by how much [*hosos*, corresponding to *tosoutos*]...the Mediator of a better [*kreittōn*] covenant [*diathēkē*];
- established upon better [*kreittōn*] promises”;
- Mediator of a new covenant [*diathēkē*] and to blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things [*kreittōn*] than that of Abel.

Those addressed in Hebrews:

- better things [*kreittōn*] connected with [*echō*] salvation (inheritance, promises, hope);
- a better [*kreittōn*] hope, by [*dia*: “through”] which drawing nigh unto God;
- having [*echō*] in heaven a better [*kreittōn*] and an enduring substance;
- desiring a better [*kreittōn*] country, that is, an heavenly;
- obtaining a better [*kreittōn*] resurrection;
- some better [*kreittōn*] thing for [*peri*: “concerning”] us, provided by God.

Heavenly things themselves

- It was therefore necessary that **the patterns * of things in the heavens** should be purified with these; but **the heavenly things themselves** with **better** [*kreittōn*] sacrifices than these. (Hebrew 9:23, KJV).

* [“the patterns”: *hupodeigma* from *hupo*: "under", *deiknumi*: "to show", properly denotes "what is shown below or privately". It signifies:

(a) a sign suggestive of anything, the delineation or representation of a thing, and so, a figure, "copy";

(b) an example for imitation, (John 13:15; James 5:10); for warning, (Hebrews 4:11; 2 Peter 2:6). (*Vine*).

We note in particular that we have *hupodeigma* in the following deep and interesting text (which we will return to later) concerning our Lord Jesus Christ's High-Priestly service in the Heavens:

“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens; A minister of the Sanctuary, and of the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this Man have somewhat also to offer.

For if He were on earth, He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

Who serve unto the example [*hupodeigma*] and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle:

“FOR [*gar*], See”, saith He, “*that thou make all things according to the pattern [typos] shewed to thee in the mount*”.

(Hebrews 8:1-5, KJV)

We will examine all of these in detail as we progress.

For now, the important thing to note is, that Hebrews represented the *then* absolute peak of revealed truth, in particular as it pertained to the position and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to those of Israel who believed, and the Gentile believers grafted unto Israel's olive-tree thereby participating in Israel's blessings.

The glorious truths about our Lord as set forth in Hebrews, however, were *all* to be found in the Scriptures written prior to Hebrews, either directly revealed, or shown in prophecy or type, as we will also demonstrate further on.

Hence also the very large number of Scripture-references quoted throughout.

[Hebrews contains altogether 83 references to the Old Testament, in form of 29 direct quotes and 54 paraphrased references. Only Romans refers to the same large extent to the Old Testament, with 84 references].

In fact: Hebrews demonstrates *par excellence* what our Lord stated: “the Scriptures...testify of ME”.

[It is often forgotten, that when our Lord said this, He referred to the *Old Testament*. There were no ‘New Testament’ Scriptures then.

In man’s tradition, the Scriptures are often read and quoted as if God’s revealed truths contain neither context nor time-elements, or as if whatever God says, is about us.

It is blessedly true, that all Scripture is for us; but not all Scripture is about us.

Miles Coverdale, in the famous foreword to his 1536 Coverdale Bible, expressed it well:

"It shall greatly help thee to understand Scripture, if thou mark, not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth after"]

It is equally and often forgotten - and if not forgotten, then wholly ignored - that our Lord Jesus Christ issued a solemn warning *which* goes to the heart of much teaching today, which *dissociates* the New Testament from the Old – even elevating one part of Scripture to be more “important” than another, or imparting to the words spoken by “Jesus Himself” a higher degree of “authority” than other words spoken by Almighty God, or relegating the Old Testament to mere ‘myths’ and ‘fables’ of a small Hebrew tribe thousands of years ago, on the basis that “*we* believe in *Jesus*”, and the Old Testament is “for the Jews”.

This way of handling God’s word is wholly unscriptural and part of *the* Falsehood which the great deceiver and father of all lies, even Satan, malignantly uses to deceive unsuspecting believers and the world alike.

Our Lord squarely emphasizes this:

“IF you believed Moses, you WOULD believe ME, FOR he wrote **about ME**”
(John 5:46, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*)

[“FOR” *gar*: particle of affirmation and conclusion denoting “truly therefore, verily as the case stands” – *Thayer*].

THEN the Pharisees read Moses – and if they had *believed* what Moses said, they would *also* have believed what the Lord Jesus Christ said, because Moses wrote about HIM.

TODAY the second part of our Lord’s statement is particularly relevant:

“But SINCE you do NOT believe what he [Moses] wrote, HOW are you going to believe **what I say?**”
(John 5:47, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*)

[*literally*: “but IF his [Moses] writings ye believe not, HOW shall ye believe MY sayings?” – *Young*; similarly e.g. KJV, ASV, ESV, NASB, Rotherham, Darby, Webster;

The Greek translated “since” or “but if” is *ei* (“if”: a primary particle of conditionality) and *de* (“but”: a contrasting particle) here connected with “not” (*ou*): *ei de...ou* thereby expressing (by this connection to *ou*) that the *verb* (here: “to believe”) is denied emphatically (*Thayer*) and is antithetic to the thought which follows (as also *Thayer* notes, citing this particular passage).

Hence Rotherham’s translation is particularly fine:

“But if in his [Moses’] writings ye are *not* believing, *how* in My sayings will you believe?”

– the implied answer being: “you *can not*”, it being clearly denied in the Greek, that we can believe our Lord’s sayings and at the same time *reject* believing Moses’ writings].

If we therefore – today – do *not* believe what Moses wrote in the Old Testament, how can we *then* believe what our Lord is saying in the New Testament?

Emphatically, our Lord Jesus Christ tells us here that we cannot.

We may think – in our foolishness and own thoughts – that we *can* believe in the Person and words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament – and willfully remain ignorant or even reject, what the Scriptures says about our Lord and God in the Old Testament.

Moses wrote “*about ME*” (emphatically).

The Old Testament is *all* about the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we want to *know* HIM, we must know *both* the Scriptures *and* the power of God.

Let us not be accused by our Lord of being slow of heart “*to believe*” ALL “*that the Prophets have spoken!*”

Or even worse – being even slower of heart to not even *know* about “*all that the Prophets have spoken*” because we have relegated Moses (The Law), as well as the Prophets and the Psalms, - the very Scriptures our Lord says testify of HIM - to being the “Old” Testament (and thus of “less” or no “real” importance or relevancy, or “for the Jews”) in complete contradiction to the attitude of the very Lord and Saviour we profess to believe.

Thus the letter to the Hebrews – based on a wealth of passages in the Old Testament - sets forth in glorious details the inheritance, the promises, the hope, the new covenant and the standing of the believing Jew (and the Gentiles participating through their in-grafting unto Israel’s olive tree), ALL of which things rests upon and is accomplished by: “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus” (Hebrews 3:1, ASV).

But our Lord Jesus Christ is no ordinary High Priest.

Not only does Hebrews represent the absolute peak of the *then* revealed truth regarding the believing so-called “Remnant” of Israel (namely that part of Israel which believed, in stark contrast to the Nation at large which rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah) and the in-grafted Gentiles, BUT Hebrews also reveals our risen Lord in His full glory as the Priest-King upon His throne, as stated by Zechariah:

“...He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a **priest upon His throne...**”
(Zechariah 6:13, KJV).

This exalted office and title of our Lord is of a particular kind, namely:

“Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec”
(Hebrews 7:21, KJV).

Our Lord being “a Priest upon His Throne” is an office involving a number of other and Divine attributes, in particular as revealed in Hebrews.

Therefore, and as we shall see: NO higher office or title of our Lord Jesus Christ than His High-Priestly glory after the order of Melchizedec was ever revealed in the Scriptures, *before* the apostle Paul *subsequently* revealed an *even* higher, *more* exalted, *more* powerful and *more* glorious office, in particular in the letters to Ephesians and Colossians.

Once we appreciate our Lord’s position as the Heavenly High Priest, we will have laid the foundation for then also to understand the truly magnificent and extraordinary later revelations about our exalted and risen Saviour.

Then we will also be able to see that which is even “more excellent”.

Hence we turn our “search” to our Lord as High Priest and “examine the Scriptures”, whether those things are so.

Then – and we believe the reader will later agree with this - some amazing truths appear before our eyes. Because, verily,

“...the Scriptures...**they** are they which testify of ME”.

We concentrate in the first instance more on the several exalted aspects of our Lord’s office and position, rather than the several and immense purposes of God He thereby accomplished, which will all emerge as we progress our studies.

The first thing to note is, that our Lord and God, even our risen Saviour Jesus Christ, that HE is also KING.

“But unto the Son [He – GOD (v. 1) - saith] *“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom”*. (Hebrews 1:8, KJV).

[*Literally*: “...and unto the Son: *Thy throne, O God, [is] to the age of the age; a scepter of righteousness [is] the scepter of Thy reign”* – Young.
Paul is quoting from Psalm 45:6 from the Septuagint (LXX)].

It is blessedly true that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah of Israel, and is “the King of the Jews”; to Him belongs also the throne of David.

But – and evidently – here is a special Heavenly and Divine Kingdom, and a Heavenly ages-abiding Throne in view, pertaining to the Lord Jesus Christ as God, therein that He is the SON.

Our Lord is also God’s appointed HEIR of all things.

“SON...WHOM He appointed HEIR [*klēronomos*] of all things” (Hebrews 1: 1:2, KJV).

[“appointed” is *tithēmi*, with the same meaning as in English: “to put” (or “set”, or “place”) and is used of appointment to any form of service or position;

“heir”: *klēronomos* is an important word in our studies and – according to *Thayer* - derives from *kleros* (“a lot”) and *nomos*: “law” (and so *nomos* is translated by the KJV in all 197 occurrences), which in turn is from a primary word *nemo*: “to parcel out”, in its original sense of partitioning, i.e. [reflexively] getting by apportionment according to anything established, anything received by usage, a custom, a law, a command.

Thayer notes the word in *Messianic usage* as: “One Who receives His allotted possession by right of Sonship”.

Vine has this note on *klēronomos* (with our edit and emphasis):

“Heir”: *literally* denotes “one who obtains a lot or portion” (*kleros*, “a lot,” *nemomai*, “to possess”), especially of an inheritance. The NT usage may be analyzed as under:

(a) the person to whom property is to pass on the death of the owner; (Matthew 21:38; Mark 12:7; Luke 20:14; Galatians 4:1);

(b) one to whom something has been assigned by God, on possession of which, however, he has not yet entered, as

- Abraham, (Romans 4:13, 14; Hebrews 6:17);
- Christ, (Hebrews 1:2);
- the poor saints, (James 2:5);

(c) believers, inasmuch as they share in the new order of things to be ushered in at the return of Christ (Romans 8:17; Galatians 3:29, 4:7; Titus 3:7);

(d) one who receives something other than by merit, as Noah (Hebrews 11:7)*
* From “Notes on Galatians”, by Hogg and Vine, pp. 177, 178”.

In his “Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament” Dr Bullinger has this note (with our edit and emphasis):

“an heir, one who has a *kleros* (a lot) (not one to whom a *kleros* is allotted because it is derived from the active), but he who has the inheritance, the stress being laid on the possession.”

Spoken emphatically of Christ

- Who as *the Son of Adam* is the heir to universal dominion (Genesis 1:26,28; Psalm 8:4-8; Hebrews 2:6-8);
- Who as *Son of Abraham* is heir of the land (Genesis 22:16-18; Hebrews 2:16; Romans 4:13);
- Who as *Son of David* is the heir to the throne (Matthew 1:1,6; Luke 1:30-33);
- Who as *Son of God* is the heir of all (Hebrews 1:1, 2; Acts 10:36)” (*Bullinger*).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on High.

“**Who...sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high** [*en hupsēlos*]” (Hebrews 1:3)

He “*sat down on the right hand*” is a reference to David’s Psalm 110:1:

“The LORD said unto my Lord, “**Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool**”.

The Hebrew *yashab*: “to sit” is – according to *Gesenius* – specially used of e.g. judges where they sit to give judgment (Psalm 9:5), and kings sitting on their thrones (Psalm 9:8; 55:20).

[*Gesenius* also observes that the Hebrew phrase “to stand on the right hand” of any one, often is the same as to aid him. Those on whom special honour is conferred are said “to sit on the right hand” of [e.g.] a king.

Gesenius further notes that “No one who believes in the divine authority of the New Testament can doubt the application of Psalm 110:1 to Him as risen from the dead and ascended into the Father’s Presence “from henceforth expecting till His enemies shall be made His footstool”].

The place where Hebrews states our Lord is sitting is “on the right hand of the Majesty on HIGH” [*en hupsēlos*; here in plural; *literally*: “in high (places)”].

[“on HIGH”; *hupsēlos* is an adjective meaning “high, lofty” and hence “exalted, eminent” (*Thayer*) deriving from *hupsos*: “height”, used (a) of measurement, (b) of place, heaven, and (3) of rank or high station.

We have *hupsos* in the following important context, namely the Father’s promise referred to by our Lord in Acts 1:4-8:

“And, being assembled together with them, [He] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but **wait for the promise of the Father, which** “*ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but **ye shall be baptized with holy spirit** [pneuma hagion; no definite article] not many days hence”.*

Then, at Pentecost, the disciples were enabled by the Holy Spirit in this way:

“...suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all **filled with holy spirit** [pneuma hagion; no definite article – this is what the Holy Spirit filled them *with*, namely: *pneuma hagion*: i.e. holy spirit]

And began to speak with other tongues, AS the Spirit [to *pneuma*, the Holy Spirit Himself] gave them utterance”.

Our risen Lord Jesus Christ *also* referred to this promise of the Father in Luke 24:49:

“And, behold, I send **the promise of my Father upon you**: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, **until ye be endued with power from ON HIGH** [*dunamis ek hupsous*]”.

And this – indisputably and conclusively - defines for us *how* the disciples were enabled: by being baptized with holy spirit, *which is defined as POWER from ON HIGH*, namely the Holy Spirit Himself enduing them with this power, i.e. holy spirit [*pneuma hagion*].

Our Lord Jesus Christ became SO much greater than the angels, therein that He inherited a NAME (emphasized) so much more excellent than the angels.

The contrast to and comparison with the angels is, in the Greek, based upon our Lord having inherited a Name which is so much more excellent [*diaphoros*] than they – the angels – have.

Godbey’s literal translation brings this out well:

“Who...being so much greater [*kreittōn*: “better”] than the angels, [inasmuch] that He has inherited [*klēronomeō*] a **Name** so much more excellent than they”.

(Hebrews 1:4, Godbey New Testament; *emphasis Rotherham*).

[“name”: *onoma* from *gnō*, a presumed derivative of the base of *ginōskō* (“to know”) (*Thayer*) is used – according to *Vine* (our excerpt and emphasis) – as follows:

(I) in general of the "name" by which a person or thing is called, e.g., Mark 3:16, 17, "(He) surnamed," literally: "(He added) the name;" Mark 14:32, literally "(of which) the name (was)".

...The "name" is put for the reality in Revelation 3:1.

In Philippians 2:9, the "Name" represents "the title and dignity" of the Lord, as in Ephesians 1:21; Hebrews 1:4;

(II) for all that a "name" implies, of authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc., of everything that the "name" covers:

(a) of the "Name" of God as expressing His attributes (e.g., Matthew 6:9; Luke 1:49; John 12:28; 17:6, 26; Romans 15:9; 1 Timothy 6:1; Hebrews 13:15; Revelation 13:6);

(b) of the "Name" of Christ (e.g., Matthew 10:22; 19:29; John 1:12; 2:23; 3:18; Acts 26:9; Romans 1:5; James 2:7; 1 John 3:23; 3 John 1:7; Revelation 2:13; 3:8).

Also the phrases rendered "in the name"; these may be analyzed as follows:

(1) representing the authority of Christ, e.g., Matthew 18:5 (with *epi*, "on the ground of My authority"); so Matthew 24:5 (falsely) and parallel passages; as substantiated by the Father, John 14:26; 16:23 (last clause), RV;

(2) in the power of (with *en*, "in"), e.g., Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 3:6; 4:10; 16:18; James 5:14

(3) in acknowledgement or confession of, e.g., Acts 4:12; 8:16; 9:27, 28;

(4) in recognition of the authority of (sometimes combined with the thought of relying or resting on), Matthew 18:20; cp. 28:19; Acts 8:16; 9:2 (*eis*, "into"); John 14:13; 15:16; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17;

(5) owing to the fact that one is called by Christ's "Name" or is identified with Him, e.g.

with *en*, "in", 1 Peter 4:14;

with *heneken*, "for the sake of", e.g., Matthew 19:29;

with *dia*, "on account of", Matthew 10:22; 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17; John 15:21; 1 John 2:12; Revelation 2:3

(for 1 Peter 4:16, see Note below);

(III) as standing, by metonymy, for "persons," Acts 1:15; Revelation 3:4; 11:13 (RV, "persons").

Note: In Mark 9:41, the use of the phrase *en* with the dative case of *onoma* (as in the best mss.) suggests the idea of "by reason of" or "on the ground of" (i.e., "because ye are My disciples"); 1 Peter 4:16, RV, "in this Name" (AV, "on this behalf"), may be taken in the same way" (*Vine*)

Names – because of what a name *represents* – are hugely important in the Scriptures, and the Divine Author absolutely *delights* in utilizing language to the full! – in particular in the Hebrew, where significant lessons and truths can be expressed by just a slightly different pointing.

This applies to virtually all names, including the way in which the Holy Spirit, consistently and precisely, apply the various Names of God Himself to a particular context, e.g. covenant, creation, praise, wrath, judgment, redemption, war etc.

Two simple examples are:

“And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be **a father of many nations**.

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” (Genesis 17:3-5, KJV).

“Abram”: a shortened form of 'Abiyram with the meaning of "my father is exalted" or "(the) Exalted One is (my) father". “Abraham”: "father of a multitude".

“And God said unto Abraham, “As for **Sarai** thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but **Sarah** shall her name be.

And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her” (Genesis 17:16-17, KJV).

“Sarai”: i.e. “princely”, from *sar*: “leader, commander, prince” (cfr. czar, Caesar)
“Sarah” i.e. “princess”; (as suggested by *the Companion Bible*, noting that the difference is only the addition of the 5th letter “H” in the Hebrew (the number of *Grace*), as in also the case of Abraham and Joshua (Numbers 13:16).

Incidentally: God indeed – as God said twice - blessed Sarah; she was then 90 years old. However she both conceived, and then nursed Isaac – which means that God blessed her both with a son, and – evidently - by *rejuvenating* her body.

God obviously also rejuvenated Abraham, who was then 99 years old, and 100 years old when Isaac was born.

Sarah died when Isaac was about 40 years old. 10 years later (when he was 150 years old) Abraham married Keturah and had 6 children by her - and died 25 years later at 175 years of age, "in a good old age, old and full of days" (Genesis 25:8, Darby)].

Note that the actual NAME which our Lord is said here in Hebrews to have inherited and which is stated to be so much more excellent than the angels, is not here identified and disclosed.

This Name inherited by our Lord, is not revealed before we come to Paul’s epistles written later, when he also reveals *that* secret which had been “hid IN God” from the Beginning (or “from the ages”).

There is a very good reason why that is the case, which we will not pre-empt here, but will return to in due course.

[At that stage we will also specifically examine the strong contrasts the apostle Paul makes in Hebrews, between our Lord and the angels, and then examine the Holy Spirit’s very precise use of the terms “begotten”, “first-begotten” and “only-begotten”,

as well as examining what Scripture says about the Heavenly and angelic powers and the Heavenly aristocracy.

For now we are setting forth our Lord's titles, position and offices in Hebrews].

It is UNTO our Lord Jesus Christ (and not angels) that "the world to come" has been put in subjection.

And God also did set HIM over the works of God's hands, and thus God has put all things in subjection under the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ – and in doing this, namely that God put *all* in subjection under our Lord, God left *nothing* not put under Him.

"...For unto the angels hath He [God] *not* put in subjection the world [*oikoumenē*] to come..." (Hebrews 2:5, KJV)

"Thou [God]...*didst set Him* [the Lord Jesus Christ] *over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet* [quoting from Psalm 8], **For in that He [God] put all in subjection under Him [the Lord Jesus Christ], **He left nothing that is not put under Him...**" (Hebrews 2:7, KJV).**

It is unfortunate that most translations miserably fail to distinguish in particular between three Greek words, which they mostly translate by the one word "*world*", thereby depriving the reader of immensely important and deep teachings by the Holy Spirit.

The word in Hebrews 2:5 is *oikoumenē*, i.e. the inhabitable or inhabited world, which we – mankind – occupy.

["The inhabitable world": *oikoumenē* is a present participle (used as a noun, implying the added word *gē* with the meaning "earth"), of the verb *oikeō* "to dwell", which in turn – as noted by Vine – is from *oikos*, "a house"; hence: "to inhabit as one's abode"; *oikeō* occurs only 9 times in the New Testament and is used:

- (a) of God as "dwelling" in light (1 Timothy 6:16);
- (b) of the "indwelling" of the Spirit of God in the believer (Romans 8:9, 11), or in a church (1 Corinthians 3:16);
- (c) of the "indwelling" of sin (Romans 7:20);
- (d) of the absence of any good thing in the flesh of the believer, (Romans 7:18);
- (e) of the "dwelling" together of those who are married (1 Corinthians 7:12, 13).

Of the 14 other occurrences we will here note in particular the following texts:

1. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached [*kērussō*] in all the world [*oikoumenē*] for a witness unto all nations; and THEN [*tote*: demonstrative adverb of time] shall the end [*telos*] come" (Matthew 24:14, KJV).

[Note that it is THIS [*touto*: demonstrative pronoun] "gospel of the Kingdom", namely that particular gospel regarding the "Kingdom of [from] the Heavens" THEN proclaimed [*kērussō*: "heralded", from *kerux*: "a herald"], which will *again* in future be proclaimed to ALL nations – and THEN shall the end come].

2. God "...hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world [*oikoumenē*] in righteousness" by our risen Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31).

3. "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth [*oikoumenē*]: **FOR the powers of heaven** [*literally*: "[the] powers of the Heavens"] *shall be shaken* [quoting Isaiah 34:4]

And **THEN** [*tote*: demonstrative adverb of time] shall they see the **Son of man coming in a cloud** [quoting Daniel 7:13] with power and great glory" (Luke 21:26, 27 KJV).

[Note the word "FOR", which is *gar* (particle of affirmation and conclusion denoting "truly therefore, verily as the case stands" – *Thayer*) providing the reason and informing us about *which* powers and events are influencing our world, namely the shaking of the powers [*dunamis*] of *the Heavens*, i.e. the angelic and Heavenly powers].

4. "**And there was war in heaven**: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world [*oikoumenē*] he was cast out into the earth [*gē*], and his angels were cast out with him. ..." (Revelation 12:7-9, KJV).

* ["war" and "fought" is respectively *polemos*: "war, battle" and *polemeō*: "to war, to carry on war, to fight" (*Thayer*).

The Greek, interestingly, indicates the following:

- that it was Michael and his angels, who went forth to war against Satan and his angels, i.e. attacked Satan and his forces;
- that Satan and his angels fought back hard, with all their power;
- that Satan and his forces were not strong enough - and thus NASB: "they were not strong enough", translating *ischuō* ["to be strong, to wield power or have strength to overcome" (*Thayer*); and *Vine* notes regarding *ischuō*: "to be strong, to prevail," that it indicates a more forceful strength or ability than *dunamai*, e.g. James 5:16 where it is rendered "availeth much" (i.e. "prevails greatly")].

5. "...they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world [*oikoumenē*], to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty" (Revelation 16:14, ASV).

6. "And again, when He bringeth in the Firstbegotten into the world [*oikoumenē*], He saith, "**And let all the angels of God worship Him**". (Hebrews 1:6, KJV)

[Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:43, which in the Hebrew is: "*Rejoice, O ye Nations, with His people*".

Paul quotes from the Greek Septuagint (LXX) which (*literally*) has; “*Be glad* (or: “rejoice”) *O Heavens together with Him, and do obeisance to* (or: “worship”) *Him all angels of God; Be glad, O Nations with His people*”.

This is one of the many instances, where the Divine Author, by quoting the LXX in whole or part, acts as His *own* interpreter and thereby *later* (namely here in Hebrews) reveals the deeper meaning of the original Hebrew.

Here we are *now* allowed to understand, that “nations” in that particular Hebrew passage, was then used *all-inclusively* by the Holy Spirit, and *included* the Heavens as well as earth, anticipating and applying to the birth of the Lord.

This was not revealed to Moses *then*, but is now revealed to us *today*].

From the above we learn *inter alia* that:

- there is an End [*telos*] connected – as regards TIME - with the prior, future worldwide proclamation of that particular gospel called “the gospel of the Kingdom of (or from) the Heavens” (i.e. the same gospel previously proclaimed by John the Baptist, our Lord Jesus Christ, and again proclaimed by the apostles after the Lord's resurrection).
- there is a future “Day” appointed – again as regards TIME – for God’s judgment of the inhabited world in righteousness by our risen Lord;
- there is a future specific moment in TIME, when “they” (men in the inhabited world) shall see the Son of Man, even our Lord Jesus Christ, “coming in a cloud with [*meta*: here with genitive, i.e. “together with, in company with”] power [*dunamis*] and great glory”;
- there is prior to that Coming, a shaking of the powers [*dunamis*] of *the Heavens*;
- there is a future specific moment in TIME when there is a *war* in Heaven, as a consequence of which Satan – defined as him who is deceiving the *whole* inhabited world – is cast down to earth and his angels with him;
- there is a future specific “*war* of the Great Day of God the Almighty [*Theos pantokratōr*]” for which war all the kings of the *whole* inhabited world will have been gathered by demonic spirits.

The world inhabited by men [*oikoumenē*] – our world, our planet Earth – is part of, and in fact the centre of and central to, an immense and Ages-long battle between Almighty God and Satan which involves all the forces and sentient created beings both on Earth, and in the Heavenly realms.

It is a deadly serious, and a very profound matter, when our Lord says:

“He that is not WITH ME is AGAINST ME...”

(Matthew 12:30, KJV).

BECAUSE: the Lord God Jesus Christ, HE regarding *Whom* the Scriptures testify, is THE central person in that immense and universal conflict, and everything – whether pertaining to man or angel, sentient created beings in the Heavens or on Earth or below Earth, life or death, the past or the future – is centered in and determined by one thing only:

WITH *HIM* – OR AGAINST *HIM*.

This devastating and simple dividing line set forth by our Lord Jesus Christ: “WITH *ME*”, or “AGAINST *ME*”, strongly divides, as a sword cleaving through soul and spirit, both mankind on Earth and the angelic and Heavenly powers in the Heavenly realms, into two different camps: those “*of God*” and those “*of Satan*”.

[And note the wholly uncompromising nature of our Lord’s statement: if not (positively and actually) WITH Him, then this is reckoned as being against].

Hence our Lord also stated: “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division”. (Luke 12:51, KJV)]

Thus we find that also *angels* are divided, which also and incidentally demonstrates that Heavenly spiritual and angelic beings make personal *decisions* and – similarly to the race of *adam* - have free will e.g.:

- The angel coming to Daniel was delayed because “*the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days*” (i.e. this angel-prince decided to oppose the angel sent by God to Daniel); eventually Michael the Archangel “*came to help*” (Daniel 10:13);
- There are “his angels”, namely those of the Dragon, even Satan (“and the dragon fought and his angels”, and there is “Michael and his angels”. (Revelation 12:7);
- And there are:

God’s angels (e.g. “But he that denieth ME before men shall be denied before the angels of God”, (Luke 12:9);

My Father’s angels (e.g. “...My Father and before His angels” (Revelation 3:5);

The Son of Man’s angels (“The Son of Man shall send forth His angels”, (Matthew 13:41).

- There are “evil angels”, as it is written regarding Pharaoh and the Egyptians, when they refused God’s command to let Israel go:

“He [God] cast upon them the fierceness of His anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them” (Psalm 78:49, KJV).

[Though this text may be understood to mean either “[already] evil angels” which God “lets loose” (as the root word of “send” may indicate is the better meaning) to inflict evil, or a company of angels ordered by God on the mission to wreck evil and destruction upon Egypt]

- There are spiritual powers or angelic beings, who would seek – as set forth in Romans 8:38-39, “...*to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*”.

As can be seen from the above, spiritual powers and angelic beings all take a strong interest in and are heavily involved – *with* God, or *against* God - in matters pertaining to the *adamic* race and matters pertaining to earth.

[Let us briefly note – and we will expand further on this later in our studies - that it appears that angelic beings who are *with* God, are generally designated as “holy” – akin to the way men, who are *with* God, are also called “holy”.

“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, WHEN He cometh in the glory of His Father with [*meta*] the holy angels” *literally*: “the angels the holy” (*tōn aggelōn tōn hagiōn*); (Mark 8:38, KJV);

[“holy”: *hagios* from the same root as *hagnos* (found in *hazō*, “to venerate”) fundamentally signifies “separated”, and hence, in Scripture in its moral and spiritual significance, separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God, sacred” – *Vine*]

We have a similar – but not identical - expression in Luke 9:26:

“For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels”, KJV; [*literally*: “the glory...of the holy angels” (*tōn hagiōn aggelōn*)”

Cornelius, the God-fearing Centurion to whom the apostle Peter was sent, was spoken to “by...a holy angel” (*hupo aggelou hagiou*) (Acts 10:22); and Revelation 14:10 refers to “the holy angels” (*tōn aggelōn hagiōn*).

From which we would gather, that whereas angels *with* God are generally described as “holy angels” – there may be a particular company of angels referred to by the use of the double definite article: “the angels the holy”, particularly connected with the Father, or “the Holy One”].

Future events revealed in the Scriptures, which include things taking place both in the Heavens and on earth, are AS real and must be understood AS literally, as it was *then*, when all in the Heavens, and just a few on earth, witnessed the most significant and momentous event in the Ages of Ages more than 2000 years ago

“WHEN He bringeth in the Firstbegotten into the world” [*oikoumenē*];

And when:

“He saith, “*And let all the angels of God worship Him*”.
(Hebrews 1:6, KJV).

[And note that it was not “all” angels, but “all [the] angels of God [*aggeloi Theou*], who worshipped].

(Continued in our next)