

## HEBREWS: JESUS CREATED MANY AGES

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Heb. 1:1 ¶ In many parts, and many ways, God of old having spoken to the fathers in the prophets, 1:2 in these last days did speak to us in a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He did make the *ages*;

The fact that Jesus is pre-existent before the ages points to His deity.

The fact that the plural word “ages” is used means that this Earth has passed through many ages. This will impact on the geology of the Earth.

Geology teaches me that there were other creations on this planet before the life forms that now exist on it. This “age” is only the last of “many ages” that have gone before and which have left their mark in the fossils and in the geology.

A new “age” began with the creation of Adam & Eve and the young creation that accompanied their introduction.

It is possible that Heb 1:2 could refer to “ages” or “times” that divide up chronological time between the creation of Adam and the first coming of the Lord Jesus (i.e., the time when the writer is writing Hebrews), which may be referred to in 1:8, “Your throne, O God, is to the age of the age.” This would then cut out any reference to previous creations on the surface of this planet.

Heb. 1:10 “and, ‘You, at the beginning, Lord, the earth did found, and a work of your hands are the heavens.” The word “beginning” is plural in the Greek (κατ’ ἀρχάς), and should read: “and, ‘You, at the beginnings [of what are now seen to be distinct heavenly bodies], Lord, the earth did found, and a work of your hands are the heavens.” It is not made explicit what “beginnings” refers to. It might mean “the beginnings” of God’s activity, which would mean that the Earth is the oldest of all His first works alongside the ‘heavens,’ which clearly includes the sun, moon, and stars. If God begins with ‘beginnings’ this could point to the simultaneous emergence of the whole planetary system. They all emerge at the same ‘beginning,’ but each has its own beginning. The writer mentions, and puts the focus on, the present Earth as being *founded* by God, because it is the centre of God’s attention, and the rest of the universe is viewed as supplementary and complementary to the Earth. He does not say it was *created* by God in its present final form, as we know it today. He was guided to say that it was ‘founded’ by God at the start of His work to create the planetary system as we can know it today. Whether we are entitled to make a distinction between ‘founded’ and ‘created’ is difficult to be certain.

Heb. 1:11 (LMF) “these [the works of God’s hands] shall perish, and You do remain, and all things, as a garment, they shall become old.” The reference is to the entire universe that constitutes all the galaxies. All that we can see will become old and be no more, because the analogy is that of a piece of clothing which becomes worn out and eventually breaks down and disintegrates and ceases to be what it once was.

You would imagine that when God creates things that they would be made to last forever. But it is obvious from this verse that He built obsolescence into the planetary system from the very beginning. They were designed ‘from the beginnings’ to disintegrate. This is the opposite to what we demand of God. We demand that He make things ‘perfect’ and to partake of His nature.

It may be that God did create a perfect planetary system, without a flaw, and destined to last forever, unlike the garment that is aging from the moment it is created, but that something happened after it was created, such as a battle with Lucifer, so that God changed its nature and destiny. But the fact that microbial life is present in the earliest rocks, and the death of animals is clearly seen in the earliest rocks, means that from its beginning the Earth had the nature and constitution that it has today. In other words, it was destined from its very

beginning to age and become old, and break down and disintegrate, as we see it progressing steadily toward its predestined catastrophic end. Whether we are entitled to probe into these hidden events may be debated by some, but I think it is inevitable that Christian men will ponder God's revelations, both through the natural sciences (geology and astronomy) and through the written Word. The combination of these two strands of revelation can open up a new vista on God's ways.

The fact that Hebrews attributes the present planetary system directly to God means that He is the architect of how it runs at present. How to account for the Heavy Bombardment of all the planets is beyond our reach, but we are compelled in fascination to stare at the craters on the moon and make an intelligent guess on how they came into being.

There is so much in astronomy and geology that seems to rule out a 'God of order' in what we observe. The entire geology of the Earth yells out 'disorder' and 'death' from its inception. At no stage in its formation do we see a deathless seam of rock. Everywhere we look we see 'death' and 'disorder' and that right down to the core of the Earth. This belies the idea that Hebrews has that all creation is "the work of Your hands."

Heb. 1:12 "and as a mantle You shall roll them together, and they shall be changed, and You are the same, and Your years shall not fail." ['fail' = God will not run out of years, but His creation will]

The 'mantle' is something you wrap yourself in. Paul used it to refer to the hair of the head that is wrapped about the skull (1 Cor 11:15). This 'wrap around garment' is 'rolled up' into a single entity. It seems that this applies to the entire planetary system: they will all be brought together into a single mass, as though they were drops of water that coalesced into a single, big blob of water. The OT pictures God as 'stretching out' the heavens as though they were set into a large curtain. The writer seems to envisage the entire planetary system collapsing in on itself, and then emerging out again in a new arrangement. Maybe there were previous 'collapses' before the present arrangement, and that the next 'collapse' will be the last one.

God does not destroy the heavens and the Earth. Rather, He *alters* them into something else. What this something is we are not told here. In v. 11 he wrote that these 'works' would 'perish,' which means become degraded to the point of disintegration and uselessness, but they do not cease to exist. They will continue to exist in another form, just as our bodies will be changed into new bodies. The writer envisages a transformation of the 'works' of God, and so a continuation of them in a new age, when a "new heavens and a new earth" will emerge out of the present 'works.'

Throughout 1:10-12 the writer is focussed on the contrast between the apparent agelessness of the planetary system with the eternity and unchangeableness of the Creator. He places God outside His works, and who is not to be identified with, or confused as, part of His creation, as some false religions would view Him, such as pantheism.

Throughout 1:10-12 the writer sets the all-powerful nature of God high above all things as the backdrop to what he will go on to teach. This backdrop was triggered by his reference to Jesus as pre-existing the present ages, and that it was this Jesus who was God's only Son whom He has honoured by giving to Him all authority in heaven and on earth to judge all men and consign them to their destiny. This honour God did not give to any pre-existing angel, all of whom were instructed by God to worship His Son. God's Son exhibited certain characteristics that pleased the Father and as a result He anointed Jesus as king of a kingdom.

Heb. 1:14 "are they not all spirits of service — for ministration being sent out because of those about to inherit salvation?"

The angels are not to be worshipped; only the Son. The function of the angels is clearly set out as being 'servants' of God to shepherd those about to inherit salvation. Note, the writer does

not commit himself to say 'those destined to inherit salvation,' but 'those about to' inherit salvation, because he knows that not all who are 'about to' will go on to inherit salvation. He is writing to a specific church, which he knows well, and may even be their pastor-at-large, such as Apollos or Paul would have been.

Heb. 2:1 "Because of this it behoves [us] more abundantly to take heed to the things heard, lest we may glide aside."

The word 'lest' (μήποτε) opens up the possibility that some Christians may fail to arrive at the proper destination, or predestined end that is set out for all believers to reach. The end is predestined, not the persons. That the writer is referring to Christians is clear from his use of 'we,' which must include his own confession and profession to be a Christian, and if he can 'glide aside' then so can other professing Christians. He does not exempt himself from the possibility that he could glide aside if he does not pay close attention to the words of salvation that Jesus spoke while He was on this Earth.

Heb. 2:3 "how shall we escape, having neglected so great salvation? which a beginning receiving — to be spoken through the Lord — by those having heard was confirmed to us." Here the writer appeals to the first preachers of what Jesus preached, who conveyed the words directly to his audience, and "which . . . was confirmed to us." The fact that the writer includes himself as having received first-hand from the first hearers of Jesus' 'salvation' strongly suggests that he does not make any claim to have had direct contact with Jesus, which Paul had, so I conclude that Paul was not the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The writer must have been a converted Jew (priest?) because of his familiarity with the Old Testament and the ways of the priests.

If Paul had been the writer he would have referred to his first-hand contact with Jesus and the revelations he received from Him. This shows that the Holy Spirit was not restricted to convey the truth through the Apostles, but that He could use a Jewish convert who was converted through the preaching of eye-witnesses. God bore joint-witness with these first-hand witnesses by displaying His miraculous powers through them and by distributing the gift of the Holy Spirit on them as He promised He would do.

At Heb 2:5 the writer begins a new topic. From v. 5 to v. 8 he is aware that a prophecy relating to man governing the world has not yet been fulfilled. Angels are not the future governors of the world, but Jesus is. Heb. 2:8 "all things You did put in subjection under his feet,' for in the subjecting to him the all things, nothing did He leave to him unsubjected, and now not yet do we see the all things subjected to him." The writer seems to see a direct reference to Jesus in the words "or the son of man" in his quotation from Psalm 8:4-6. He then applies the following words to the descent of Jesus to this Earth to carry out the job allocated to Him by His Father: "and him who was made some little less than angels we see — Jesus — because of the suffering of the death, with glory and honour having been crowned, that by the grace of God for every one he might taste of death" (Heb. 2:9). The words, "and him who was made a little less than angels," must, in the first place, refer to human men, and because Jesus became a man, then it can also refer to Him by extension.