

HEBREWS

Message 2

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Reading: Hebrews 1:1-7

INTRO: In the first message I introduced the letter to the Hebrews. Now I want to first introduce the first 2 chapters. Angels are the concern of the first two chapters. Angels are mentioned 12 times in this book, and 10 of those are in chapters 1-2. So the theme of angels dominates these two chapters. I have already hinted at why the writer deals with angels in these two chapters. A writer I quoted in the previous message said this:

"The contrast between Christ and the angels in Heb 1-2 has aroused the curiosity of many interpreters. 1 Were angels merely chosen as one among other OT mediators (e.g. Moses, Melchizedek, Levitical priesthood) to show the superiority of Christ as the ideal high priest? Or were there distorted teachings on angels among first-century readers that demanded correction? Some suggest the author's purpose was to refute an angel Christology, 2 while others see angelic veneration similar to that practised in Colossae (Col 2.18) in view. 3 Yet the book contains neither a prohibition against the 'worship of angels'"

<https://www.marquette.edu/maqom/GleasonAngels.pdf>

What he is saying is, why do the first 2 chapters of Hebrews deal so much with angels? Is it that the writer merely mentions angels to show the superiority of Jesus Christ as the ideal High Priest? Were there false teachings that had crept in among them about angels? Or was there an unhealthy veneration of angels such as is mentioned in Colossians 2:18? This verse says:

18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

My view, as the previous message indicated is that these Hebrew Christians were discouraged in their Christian faith and were now thinking of going back to Judaism. And among the Jews were those, like the Essenes, who spoke much of the sons of light and the sons of darkness, and the help angels would give the sons of light in the coming war.

From some OT passages and especially the book of Daniel, there was a view that God had set certain angels over the nation of

Israel. Let me continue the previous quote (Read italicised text only):

"Many have linked Heb 2.5 to the Jewish belief in national angels.⁴¹ This was based in part on the claim in Deut 32.8 that God had established boundaries for the nations 'according to the number of the sons of God' ('angels of God' - LXX).⁴² There may be traces of this idea in Deut 4.19 ('all the host of heaven . . . However, the notion of guardian angels set over nations is expressed most dramatically in the book of Daniel. It recounts how Daniel mourned for three weeks over the desolation of Jerusalem until an angelic messenger arrived with a message of encouragement for him (Dan 10.2-12). The angel explained that he was delayed by 'the Prince of Persia' for 21 days until Michael 'came to help' . . . To more fully understand the need for such a denial regarding angels we must now turn to the apocalyptic angelology that flourished within Second Temple Judaism. . . The theme of angels waging war against the enemies of Israel is also prominent within the apocalyptic literature of the same period. The book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1-33) begins by announcing that God is coming 'with ten million holy ones . . . to execute judgement' (1.7)."

Let me give yet a little more history. There were four distinct Jewish groups in Israel when Jesus came on the scene. They were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Zealots, and the Essenes. The Essenes had a large settlement at the northern tip of the Dead Sea, not too far from Masada. It is called Qumran. We looked at this some time ago. Somewhere during or before the Jewish revolt which lasted from AD 67 until AD 73, the Essenes at Qumran hid many scrolls in caves around Qumran. For almost 2,000 years, those writings, some in pottery jars, lay hidden in those caves.

I used to teach a course called General Bible Introduction. Let me quote from that course with regard to these scrolls.

"For many years there stood more than 1000 years between the oldest known MS to the latest writing of an OT book. Some NT MS were 6-700 years older than the oldest OT MS. Then, just before Israel became a nation (1948) a young shepherd boy. Geisler and Nix give the following account: "Ironically, and perhaps providentially, this great manuscript discovery was hit upon by chance when an Arab shepherd boy (Muhammad adh-Dhib) was pursuing a lost goat seven and one-half miles south of Jericho

and a mile west of the Dead Sea. Here in a cave he found some jars containing several leather scrolls." (p361)

"In this discovery a scroll of Isaiah was found that dates at approximately 100 B.C., over 1000 years older than any MS available of this book. The question comes, "How does it compare with our book of Isaiah?"

"Gleason Archer writes in his book, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, that the two copies "proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95% of the text. The 5% of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling" (G&N p.367).

"Thus the oldest witness extant today is also the most recently discovered witness!

"I listened to CBC (Feb. 1992) to the religious professor from UBC talk of the DSS. He believed this to be the greatest find and was simply enraptured with it. The Dead Sea scrolls contain some 15,000 pieces (or more?). This speaker said that putting the data together was like mixing together 6 or 700 puzzles, then throwing away all but 10% of them and then try to piece together what is left. That gives some idea of the complexity of the problem of putting together the data of the DSS." End quote. By the way, you would find it interesting to read up on the Essenes and the Dead Sea scrolls on the internet.

Well, that discovery was one of the greatest modern day discoveries. And the Essenes of that day placed great hope in deliverance from the sons of Darkness, which was Rome. The angels would help the sons of Light, and these were the religious Essenes, and the kingdom would come.

I think it is most likely that through the teachings of the Essenes, the Hebrew Christians addressed in this book, were beginning to place their hope in angels.

Now let me say this about the first 2 chapters of Hebrews. I do not see any idea of angel worship, such as is found in the book of Colossians.

So with that rather long introduction we are now ready to look at verse 1. I have mentioned that this letter seems like something the Apostle Paul wrote. But what is very different is

that there is no salutation. For example, the letter to the Ephesians begins like this:

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The letter to the Hebrews leaves such a salutation out entirely and begins by jumping right into the first major subject. One does not know if the original might have had an introduction and if the Lord, for some unknown reason, did not want it to be part of the letter. The facts are it has no salutation at the beginning.

I. JESUS CHRIST: THE HOPE SUPERIOR TO ANGELS (1:1-2:18)

A. The Claim of Superiority

1. God's divine revelation in the past (1:1-2a)

We begin then by reading verses 1-4:

1 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.

It seems to me that the writer seeks to get the lesser of the two concerns of the letter out of the way first, and then spend his time on the major issue, which is Judaism. And the writer waits until the end of this sentence to make the claim that Jesus Christ is superior to angels. Our English translation begins with the word "God." In the original it begins like this: "In various times and

in various ways, God spoke in times past..." Let me give you an assignment. You have 10 seconds to do your assignment. Write out the main thought of verses 1-4. These verses are one, and I struggled to find the right word and couldn't so I will say it is one regal or majestic sentence. Now that you've had time to do your homework, let me give you the answer as to the main statement of verses 1-4: "God has spoken." All the rest of these four verses are modifiers. We could add a few modifiers, and it would be, "God has spoken to us by His in these last days Son."

Now if one gives credibility to God as being true, which these Hebrew believers did, then they will agree that God's opinion is of highest importance with regard to everything. And here is what these Hebrews would surely agree with, and that is that the OT is the inspired Word of God, and that is what verse 1 deals with.

Now verses 1-4 give us one thing that God did after He created the universe and man. The rest modifies this one thing. And what was this one thing? It is the most crucial thing: He spoke. If God Almighty truly spoke, how many of you would like to know what He said? Well, verse 1 refers to the entire OT.

And He spoke in the past at various times in various ways to the fathers by the prophets. They will not argue with that. They trust in the Hebrew Scriptures. When they considered going back to Judaism, they were not thinking of leaving God. They were thinking of leaving Christ!

Now these four verses may be divided up into two parts. The first part is God's divine revelation in the past and the second is God's divine revelation in the present. And the question is, what does God think of the Christian faith, this faith they were thinking of leaving? What does God think of His Son, Jesus Christ? The writer will tell us.

a. When He spoke

Well, we'll take the sentence in the order it is given in English. Verse 1 then answers these questions: the intervals in which He spoke, how He spoke, when He spoke, to whom He spoke, and through whom He spoke.

Now notice that our verse in our translation tells us when God spoke. Our verse says that God spoke at various times. But literally it could be translated, "God spoke in various parts." I lean to that understanding. The meaning then is that in one part He spoke in this way, and in another in that way. Albert Barnes comments like this: The word rendered "at sundry times" (KJV) – πολυμερως – means, *in many parts*. It refers here to the fact, that the former revelation had been given in various parts. It had not all been given at once. It (had) been communicated from time to time, as the exigencies of the people required, and as God chose to communicate it. At one time it was by history, then by prophecy, by poetry, by proverbs, by some solemn and special message, etc. The ancient revelation was a *collection* of various writings, on different subjects, and given at different times."

What is amazing is that there are many different kinds of literature in the Bible. There are many kinds of figures of speech. E.W. Bullinger says there are over 250. Then there are a number of different kinds of prophecy. Then there is history and poetry. And then you can go through all that and come up with doctrines of almost any kind important to man. In doctrine you go through all the material and put together that which deals with a certain topic, and there you have a doctrine. For example, in the book of Hebrews angels are important in the first two chapters. Well, you can go through the Bible and get a whole doctrine on angels and you will see them in an entirely different light than if you just read through.

So from the fact that God spoke in various parts we note further that God spoke more than once. Throughout history past, God spoke from time to time. The OT was written over a period of 1500 years. Time and again God spoke. And then some 400 years before Christ was born, God stopped speaking. The OT was finished.

Let me mention here a question which has troubled Bible scholars. How do we know which books should be in the Bible? For example, should the Song of Solomon be in the Bible? I would like to write a book on this book. I have never preached on it but I have studied it carefully. Let me give you my view of the purpose of this book: Find the woman you love. Marry her and never look at another woman with interest again.

You see, a man with hundreds of wives wrote this book. And when he had many wives, one day when he went to check on one of the vineyards he had rented out to sharecroppers, there he met a woman, and among all the women of title he had, this young lady with dirt on her hands stole his heart. He had never ever met a woman like this before. It is a romance story. Here is a word for our young people from that book: Do not stir up love until it pleases.

But as to the question, how do we know which books should be in the Bible, or which ones shouldn't, it is my view that God supernaturally saw to it that we have every book in the Bible we should have. You can study this and it is a big subject, but in the end the one satisfying answer to me is that God saw to the putting together of the Bible just like He saw to which words should be in it.

The Bible is a divine book. There is no other divine book on earth. One of, if not the greatest privilege you will ever have is to have in your possession the entire Word of God. We have nothing on earth from heaven, except the words of this book.

You see, God spoke. God spoke to man in human language. Words are simply incredible things. Speech is amazing. It is so simple to us because we use it all the time, but it is amazing. The original word for "speech" here is *laleo*. We learn to speak, *la*, *la-ing* and from that we get *laleo*. And then from simple to complex we grow in speech. You can think only as far as you have words. And so we expand our vocabulary and begin to think bigger and bigger.

And one of the things I respect almost above all others is the words we got from God. Listen to these words that for me almost take my breath away. It is Psalm 138:2:

2 I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.

If this verse stands as it is translated here, it is a most phenomenal verse. There are many names for God, but there is no name greater than the name Jehovah. According to this verse God has exalted His Word above that. Try to fathom that.

Psalm 119 has 176 verses and almost everyone refers to the Word of God in some way. Listen to verse 89:

89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.

It is my view, and I have no proof for it, but that we will study this Word for all eternity. When you study the Bible it grows. And the more you study, the more it grows. And the more it grows the more you have to study. And when you study that which has grown, it grows even more.

God spoke. The Eternal spoke, and we have His Word. So God spoke in times past, or He spoke in various parts in various ways and from that we have the entire OT.

b. How God spoke

How did God speak? Well, He spoke in various ways. One time the Lord opened the mouth of a donkey and spoke to Balaam, and the poor man hardly caught in spite of that. One day Moses saw a bush that did not burn and he turned aside to see this what this was and God spoke to him through the burning bush. Some Scripture was given through dreams, others in visions and so on. Oh there is a long list of ways in which God spoke to man, but we won't take more time on that here. But in the end, what we have is the OT.

c. To whom He spoke

Then our text says that God spoke to the fathers. Who is that? That is the forefathers of the Jews. The Hebrews will not argue with all the writer has said up to here and he is getting them ready for what he really wants to say.

Let me give a reminder here to us as Gentiles. We are indebted to the Jew for both the written Word and the Living Word, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ Himself said that salvation is of the Jews.

Some years ago when I thought of this I wrote a poem I called:

THANK YOU FATHER FOR THE JEW

From German Gentile to the Jew,

I'm indebted to you Jews
For the One who brought good news.
If it were not for you folk,
I would die without a hope.

Yes, and...

I'm indebted to you too,
For the Testaments Old and New.

If it were not for God's Word;
I could ne'er have known my Lord.

So...

I'm indebted to the Jew,
For my Savior, and this too;
If it were not for this nation;
Stranger I'd be to God's salvation.

Yes!

I'm indebted to this race
For salvation by God's grace;
If it were not for the Jew,
O my God, what would I do?

Thank you Father for the Jew!

Let me mention here that all through the OT they had the Gospel. I find the account of the Rich Man and Lazarus a fascinating story. Turn to Luke 16.

19 *"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.*

20 *"But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,*

21 *"desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.*

22 *"So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.*

23 *"And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

25 "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.'

26 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

27 "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,

28 'for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'

29 "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

30 "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

The first point is that this man knew all his life what he should have done. Nobody taught him in hell that he needed to repent. He knew this all along. Hebrews 4:2 says, "For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them," referring to the OT people. It is one thing to know about repentance, it is another to do it. And there comes a time when it is too late.

Second point, verse 31:

31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

This is a reference to the OT. This man's brothers, just like this man in his life-time, have Moses and the prophets. They have the Word of God.

d. When God spoke

Well, the writer further speaks about when God spoke. It was in times past. He spoke at various parts in various ways, in times past. Here we have the whole of the OT in view.

When you read the Bible through, it begins with creation. But when you read the last two verses of the OT, it is like coming to the end of a book and it is missing the last chapter. Malachi 4:5-6 the last two verses of the OT say this:

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

6 And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

Now to end the OT like that, is like ending a book without the last chapter. You see, you could read the OT to Malachi 4:6, skip over the whole NT and begin reading at Revelation 6 and you would have the completed book. In Revelation 6 the great and dreadful day of the Lord begins. It then describes the 7 most horrible years this earth will ever experience. And then when you read the last 3 chapters of the book of Revelation you will see you are truly at the end of the book. The Bible begins with creation and closes with the new creation and glory for eternity.

What then is that big section in between Malachi 4:6 and Revelation 6? It is the Church age. It is that which entered because the Jew rejected the Messiah. Study Ephesians 3 and you

will understand what Matthew 1:1-Revelation 5 is all about. It is the Church. The Church has been God's greatest work on earth for the last 2,000 years.

Now Malachi 4:5-6 is a most interesting prophecy. I told you a while ago about the tin cans of meat we would take to work for sandwiches many years ago. It was a can with a little tool and to open the can you used this little tool. Prophecy is like that. There are various kinds of prophecy and each has its own tool to understand it.

Malachi 4:5-6 has what I call a far and near fulfillment. It's nearer fulfillment was in John the Baptist, and its farther fulfillment will soon come and it will take place when Elijah comes to Jerusalem. Every Passover, the Jew still sets a chair for Elijah. They are waiting for him.

When this prophecy reached its nearer fulfillment, it happened in John the Baptist. He spoke just a few short years before the 70th week of Daniel was to be fulfilled. When the Jews rejected the Messiah, Daniel's 70 week was put on hold. All of what he prophesied in the first 69 weeks has been fulfilled. The 70th week has never yet been fulfilled. When it begins, this world will walk right into the 70th week and it begins in Revelation 6, and that is the time Malachi 4:5-6 talks about.

God spoke in times past, but the book is not finished. There is more to come, and these Hebrews need to know about that.

e. By whom He spoke

So that brings us to this question: How did God speak to the Fathers? Well, He spoke to them through the prophets of old. Who is the first writer in the Bible? Some say it might have been Job, but generally it is given as Moses. He wrote what we have as the first five books.

They were written some 1500 years before Christ, or some 2500 years after creation, and they begin with Creation. Have you ever wondered how Moses got the information about what happened on the first six days of creation? Have you wondered how he knew about the fall of man and what took place in the Garden of Eden?

The answer is this, God, in one way or another, divinely revealed this to him. The Bible is a divine revelation. How did God reveal how creation and the fall of man took place to Moses? We do not know. However God did that, Moses had to have that information God saw to it that it was accurate for it is divine revelation. Did God tell Adam, and Adam passed it down and it went from generation to generation? Did God speak to Moses directly? We don't know. What we know is God spoke in times past in various ways and made known His revelation to the prophets of the past.

Let me add one word of caution here. Never toy with the question whether there should be more or less books in the Bible. I know a man who got into kind of a charismatic church and he said, "There is more to Jesus than is on the written page." That is a dangerous truth if it is left at that. The Apostle John agreed with that statement. He said if everything had been written the world couldn't contain the books. That is a figure of speech, but it means there is more than is on the written page. Here is the part that needs to be added to the truth that there is more to Jesus than is found on the written page. The truth is that nobody knows what that "more" is. And secondly, the Holy Spirit will never reveal to you or me what that "more" is. God's Word is finished! It is complete! It is done.

Back to our verse, when God spoke, He did not speak to or through just anyone. He spoke to

prophets. Prophets were men chosen by God. 2 Peter 1:19-21 says this:

19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

When Scripture was written it was written by holy men of God. And these men were moved by the Holy Spirit. And Paul says all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Every word is God breathed. Let me just mention that we do not worship a book, we worship the One revealed in the book.

The readers of this epistle would have been familiar with what the writer says in verse 1, and would have whole heartedly agreed. He would have agreed that God spoke at various times in various ways. He would have agreed that God spoke to the fathers in times past. The fathers are the Jewish people.

Well, these Hebrew believers would also have known is that some 400 years ago, God fell silent. He gave no further revelation to any prophet. If these Hebrews leave Christ, they will leave the final revelation of God to man. They will have an incomplete Bible. So the writer will now make transition from how God spoke in the past to how He spoke in the present. He says that God has in these last days spoken to us by His Son. Here is the heart of his concern.

Now consider verses 1-2a. What does this part of this passage say that God did? He did one thing. What was it? He spoke! He spoke in the

past, and He spoke in the present. But the main thing is that He spoke! Let me give you an assignment for the next message. Write down everything that Jesus Christ did as given in this passage.

Now from the word *Son* in 2b, everything else in verses 2-4 modifies the Son! Here is the central theme of this book, Jesus Christ, God's Son. Here is the central theme of the Bible. Jesus Christ is superior to angels and He is superior to Judaism, and He is superior to anything else man thinks is more important.

Some time ago these Hebrews have given their heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ. But discouragement has set in and now they are considering going back. And they will now be given a description of Jesus Christ that will certainly cause them to think again. It is a passage as majestic as Philippians 2:5-11. And it is a transition to the One whom this book will describe as the One who is superior to angels and Judaism.

Now let me note something here. At this time, as far as we know, there were no books of the NT recognized as Scripture and if some books were recognized, it was by very few. Not even all the books of the NT had been written by this time. Depending on when Hebrews was written, only very few books might have begun circulation in the churches. All they had was the OT and that which was orally passed down to them about Jesus by their preachers and teachers.

But the writer assures them that the Messiah has come and He has spoken. His life works and words have spoken. And what the writer will now do is show them who this One was that spoke to them in these last days.

CONCL: To conclude, I tried to find some way of describing the first sentence of this book. I came to this word, majestic! It is an amazing sentence. The writer is going to correct these

Hebrews but he does it oh so gently. He will seek to correct them on their view of angels, but in this majestic sentence he does not get to angels until the very last part of the whole sentence. And in the end he says that Jesus Christ has become so much better than angels.

We looked at how the writer starts out with that which the readers will wholeheartedly agree with and that is that God spoke in various times or portions, and in various ways in times past to the fathers by the prophets. If the readers are thinking of going back to Judaism, they will certainly agree with this.

But if you take this sentence apart, the main sentence would read like this: "God has spoken in these last days to us by His Son." And all the rest of what is said is attached to the Son. He is preeminent. But in the wording the writer starts with what they will certainly agree with, and eases them into the point he wants to make.

In verse 1 we end with the whole OT. Many years ago I came across four readings and I edited them and put them together as a tribute to the Bible. So this reading includes both the Old and the New. It seeks to give us a picture of the whole Bible. Let me read that for you:

I am the Bible.

I am God's wonderful library.

I am always -- and above all -- the truth.

To the weary pilgrim, I am a good strong Staff.

To the one who sits in black gloom, I am the glorious Light.

To those who stoop beneath heavy burdens, I am sweet Rest.

To him who has lost his way, I am a safe Guide.

To those who have been hurt by sin, I am healing Balm.

To the discouraged, I whisper a glad message of Hope.

To those who are distressed by the storms of life, I am an anchor sure and steadfast.

To those who suffer in lonely solitude, I am as a cool, soft Hand resting upon a fevered

brow.

O child of man, to best defend me, just use me!

I am --

The charter of all true liberty.

The forerunner of civilization.

The mold of institutions and governments.

The fashioner of law.
The secret of national progress.
The guide of history.
The ornament and mainspring of literature.
The friend of science.
The inspiration of philosophies.
The textbook of ethics.
The light of intellect.
The answer to the deepest human heart hungering's.
The soul of all strong heart life.
The illuminator of darkness.
The foe of oppression.
The up rooter of sin.
The regulator of all high and worthy standards.
The comfort in sorrow.
The strength in weakness.
The pathway in perplexity.
The escape from temptation.
The steadier in the day of power.
The embodiment of all lofty ideals.
The begetter of life.
The promise of the future.
The star of death's night.
The revealer of God.

And what more shall we say of the Bible?

Generation follows generation -- yet it lives.
Nations rise and nations fall -- yet it lives.
Kings, dictators, presidents come and go -- yet it lives.
Hated, despised, cursed, -- yet it lives.
Doubted, suspected, criticized -- yet it lives.
Condemned by atheists -- yet it lives.
Scoffed at by scorners -- yet it lives.
Exaggerated by fanatics -- yet it lives.
Misconstrued and misstated -- yet it lives.
Ranted and raved about -- yet it lives.
Yet it lives -- as a lamp to our feet.
Yet it lives -- as a light to our path.
Yet it lives -- as the gate to Heaven.
It lives -- as a standard for childhood.
It lives -- as a guide for youth.
It lives -- as an inspiration for the mature.
-- as a comfort for the aged.

-- as food for the hungry.
-- as water for the thirsty.
-- as rest for the weary.
-- as light for the heathen.
-- as salvation for the sinner,
and -- as grace for the Christian.

Oh, but for words to adequately describe the Bible for you.

To know it is to love it.
To love it is to accept it.
To accept it means life eternal.

The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of the believer. Yes, it contains light to direct you, food to sustain you, and comfort to cheer you.

It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter.

It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure.

Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its decisions are immutable.

Christ is its grand subject, our good is its design, the glory of God, its end.

Read it to be wise; believe it to be safe; practice it to be holy.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully.

It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

It is given you in life; it will be opened at the Judgement, and be remembered forever more.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour, and condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents.

It is "the Word of God which shall stand forever."

My dear believer friend, will you READ it? Will you HEED it? And will you SEED it? For the child of God is to KNOW it in his head, STOW it in his heart, SHOW it in his life, And SOW it in the world.

Amen, and amen.

