The background of the slide features a photograph of ancient stone ruins. The structures are built from large, rectangular blocks of weathered stone, some of which are stacked in walls while others lie scattered on the ground. The sky is a clear, bright blue. A semi-transparent green rectangular overlay is positioned in the center of the image, containing the title and church information.

# Preparing to Teach the Book of Hebrews I

Grace Chinese Christian Church  
Skokie, IL

# People Learn By Doing So, Let's "Simulate" An Exercise

Scripture Reference	From Whom?	To Whom?
Romans 1:1-7		
1 Corinthians 1:1-2		
2 Corinthians 1:1-2		
Galatians 1:1-2		
Ephesians 1:1		
Philippians 1:1		
Colossians 1:1-2		
1 Thessalonians 1:1		
2 Thessalonians 1:1		
1 Timothy 1:1		
2 Timothy 1:1-2		
Titus 1:1-4		
Philemon 1-2		
Hebrews 1:1		
James 1:1		
1 Peter 1:1		
2 Peter 1:1		
1 John 1:1		
2 John 1		
3 John 1		
Jude 1		

- Give each student physically attending a sheet like this
- Cut up one of the sheets into "fortune cookie"-sized strips" with just the scripture references
- Have students draw one or more and look up the references to determine the sender (if stated) and the addressee (if stated)
- Go verse-by-verse and get answers

# What Is the First Difference Between Hebrews and the Letters in the Bible (and Ancient World)?

- Let's look at other letters in the Bible
- **From Paul** (Romans 1:1, 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Galatians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, 1 Timothy 1:1, 2 Timothy 1:1, Titus 1:1, Philemon 1) **From Paul and Timothy** (Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1)
- **From Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy** (1 and 2 Thessalonians 1:1@)
- **From James** (James 1:1)
- **From Peter** (1 Peter 1:1), From Simon Peter (2 Peter 1:1)
- **From the Elder** (2 John 1, 3 John 1)
- **From Jude** (Jude 1)

# And Another (Romans, Hebrews and Philemon)

- Romans 1:7 (all those in Rome)
- 1 and 2 Corinthians
- Galatians 1:1-2 (churches in Galatia)
- Ephesians 1:1 (faithful in Ephesus)
- Colossians 1:1-2 (faithful in Colossae)
- 1 and 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy 1:1 and 2 Timothy 1:1-2
- Philemon 1-2 (Philemon)

Scripture Reference	From Whom?	To Whom?
Romans 1:1-7	Paul	Those in Rome (v. 7)
1 Corinthians 1:1-2	Paul	Corinthian church+ (v. 2)
2 Corinthians 1:1-2	Paul	Corinthian church+ (v. 2)
Galatians 1:1-2	Paul	Churches in Galatia (v. 2)
Ephesians 1:1	Paul	Faithful in Ephesus
Philippians 1:1	Paul and Timothy	Believers in Philippi
Colossians 1:1-2	Paul and Timothy	Faithful in Colossae (v. 2)
1 Thessalonians 1:1	Paul, Silas, Timothy	Thessalonian church
2 Thessalonians 1:1	Paul, Silas, Timothy	Thessalonian church
1 Timothy 1:1	Paul	Timothy
2 Timothy 1:1-2	Paul	Timothy (v. 2)
Titus 1:1-4	Paul	Titus (v. 4)
Philemon 1-2	Paul	Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, church
Hebrews 1:1	NO ONE	NO ONE
James 1:1	James	12 scattered tribes
1 Peter 1:1	Peter	Strangers scattered
2 Peter 1:1	Simon Peter	Those of equal faith
1 John 1:1	NO ONE	NO ONE
2 John 1	Elder	Chosen noblewoman and her children
3 John 1	Elder	Gaius
Jude 1	Jude	All believers

# Between

(more)

1:1 (believers in Philippi)

us 1:1-4 (Titus)

the church)

# What Difference Does It Make?

- A letter has a more personal touch than a sermon because there is already a relationship or the sender and receiver know each other
- Even letters written to groups of people are touched on personal concerns: announcements (weddings, funerals), apologies, news, plans, requests, etc.
- Sermons or speeches are intended to influence those the speaker (or speaker's audience) may not know personally
- Sermons or speeches are designed to address issues and convince
- Sermons or speeches use rhetorical style and sound

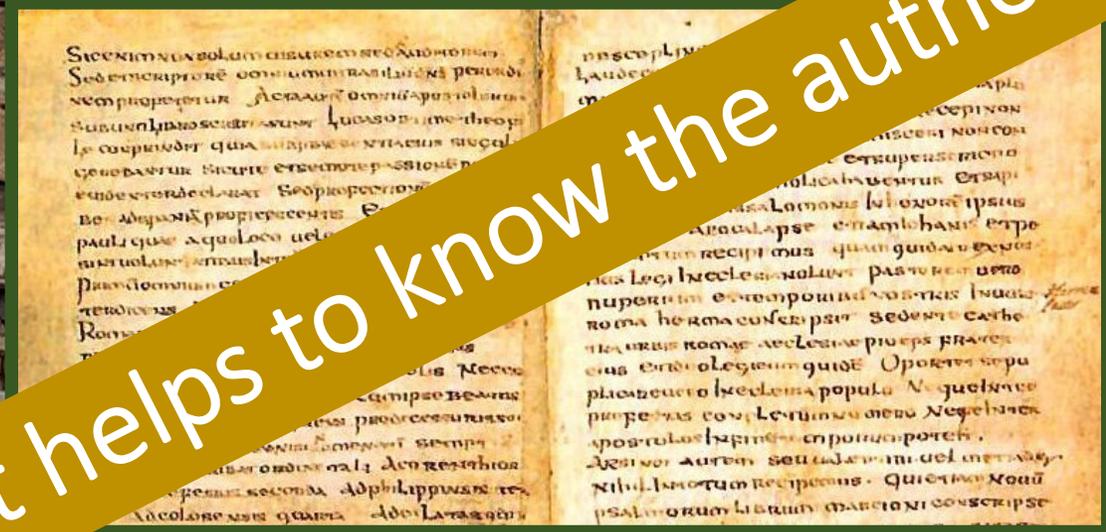


Hebrews only features a farewell typical of a letter

Hebrews does sound a lot like a sermon

# Does Authorship Matter?

It helps to know the author to assert credibility



“Doubts about Hebrews’ canonicity in the West were overcome when they were convinced it was the work of the apostle Paul.”

(Geisler, Norman. *A Popular Survey of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), p. 253)

- Origen (3<sup>rd</sup> century) said the book sounded apostolic, but the Greek style too eloquent for Paul

# Pantaenus of Alexandria – A.D. 180



# Historical Suggestions of Authorship

- ❖ Clement of Alexandria, following Pantaenus his teacher, suggested Paul wrote in Hebrew (or Aramaic) and Luke translated to Greek
- ❖ Tertullian (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century) believed that Barnabas wrote it
- ❖ Irenaeus and Hippolytus (2<sup>nd</sup> century) and Origen (3<sup>rd</sup>) knew the book but denied that Paul wrote it
- ❖ Eusebius (4<sup>th</sup> century) said some thought Clement of Rome and some thought Luke
- ❖ Of Reformation leaders: Erasmus claimed Clement of Rome, Luther claimed Apollos, Calvin claimed Luke



# But Do We Trust the Holy Spirit?

## Why Paul not the likely author

- Hebrews 13:22 “word of exhortation” used for sermon in Acts 13:15
- 20 titles for Jesus used without “in Christ” typical of Paul
- Emphasis on priesthood here but no mention in Pauline work
- Paul focuses on risen Christ
- No emphasis on justification by faith

## Paul as Author?

- Hebrews appears as part of manuscript of 14 letters of Paul in late 4<sup>th</sup> century
- Concluding verses 13:19-25 similar to Paul
- Familiarity with Hebrew scriptures and building on them to glorify Jesus as Son of God
- Desire to come and see the listeners personally

# Who Was It Written To?

- We don't know for sure
- "To The Hebrews" was added later because of all the details on the Jewish law and the OT
- It could have been written to Gentiles who didn't know anything about the Jewish faith and OT
- It could have been written to Jewish Christians thinking of returning to the "safer" Jewish faith because of persecution
- Locations suggested: Samaria, Jerusalem, Antioch, Caesarea, Colossae, Ephesus, Alexandria, Qumran

# So, Why is it in our Bibles?

- A. It focuses on the superiority of God over all other options**
- B. It emphasizes relationship with God over ritual and doctrine**
- C. It deals with complacency regarding growing in God's Truth**
- D. It emphasizes "hanging in there" despite persecution and the apparent delay in Christ's coming**
- E. It warns against "religious drift" and complacency**
- F. It should be a spur to evangelism**

# Ways to Introduce the Book

1. What are some wrong ways that people think about Jesus?
2. Why do some people make fun of the idea that Jesus is coming again?
3. What are some ways that Christians have a disadvantage in worldly/secular society?
4. What are some reasons people leave the church, quit serving in the church, or even claim to no longer believe in God?
5. What does Hebrews say about learning Bible and Theology?
6. What can we look at to encourage us in tough times?

# But What's It All About?

## Here Are Some Ways to Look At It

- Allegro – (1:1-4:13) vibrant, reasonably fast movement to capture attention and point to the rest / powerful first four verses, corrective to angelology, emphasis on salvation, emphasis on “hanging in there”
- Andante – (4:14-6:12) slower pace with emotion / Jesus as great high priest, warning against immaturity and apostasy
- Scherzo – (6:13-10:39) faster, but repetitive majestic pace / emphasis on God's promises, Christ's priestly role, warning vs. turning back
- Presto – (11:1-13:19) dance-like reiteration of themes / roll call of faith/trust/faithfulness, applications of those examples
- Coda – (13:20-25) Closing remarks with a challenge as stinger

# Pheme Perkins (Boston College)

- Prologue: God has spoken most eloquently in Son (1:1-4)
- The Son's superiority over the angels (1:5-14)
- Exhortation: Don't drift away from such a salvation (2:1-4)
- Jesus' suffering brings humanity to salvation (2:5-18)
- Jesus is greater than Moses (3:1-6)
- Exhortation: Don't fall away like Israel in wilderness (3:7-4:13)
- Jesus is the sympathetic high priest (4:4-5:10)
- Exhortation: Do not be immature in faith (5:11-6:12)

# Pheme Perkins' Exhortation Outline (cont.)

- God's promises are confirmed by an oath (6:13-20)
- Jesus is a high priest in the order of Melchizedek (7:1-10:18)
  - a) Melchizedek represents higher than Levitical priests (7:1-28)
  - b) Christ's heavenly sanctuary is better covenant (8:1-13)
  - c) Christ's sacrifice makes all sacrifices redundant (9:1-22)
  - d) Christ's sacrifice has once-for-all effect (9:23-10:18)
- Exhortation: Hold fast to your faith because there is no sacrifice for turning away from Christ (10:19-39)
- Heroes of faith grasp the reality of heavenly things (11:1-40)
- Exhortation: Persevere following Christ and others (12:1-13:19)
- Letter-like closing (13:20-25)

# George Guthrie (Union University)

**The Son Superior to the Angels  
(1:5-14)**



**The Son Became Lower than the Angels  
(i.e., Among Men) to Deliver  
*Men from Sin*  
(2:10-18)**



**The Son, on the Basis of His Identification  
with Men, is Taken from Among Men  
and Appointed High Priest  
(5:1-7:28)**

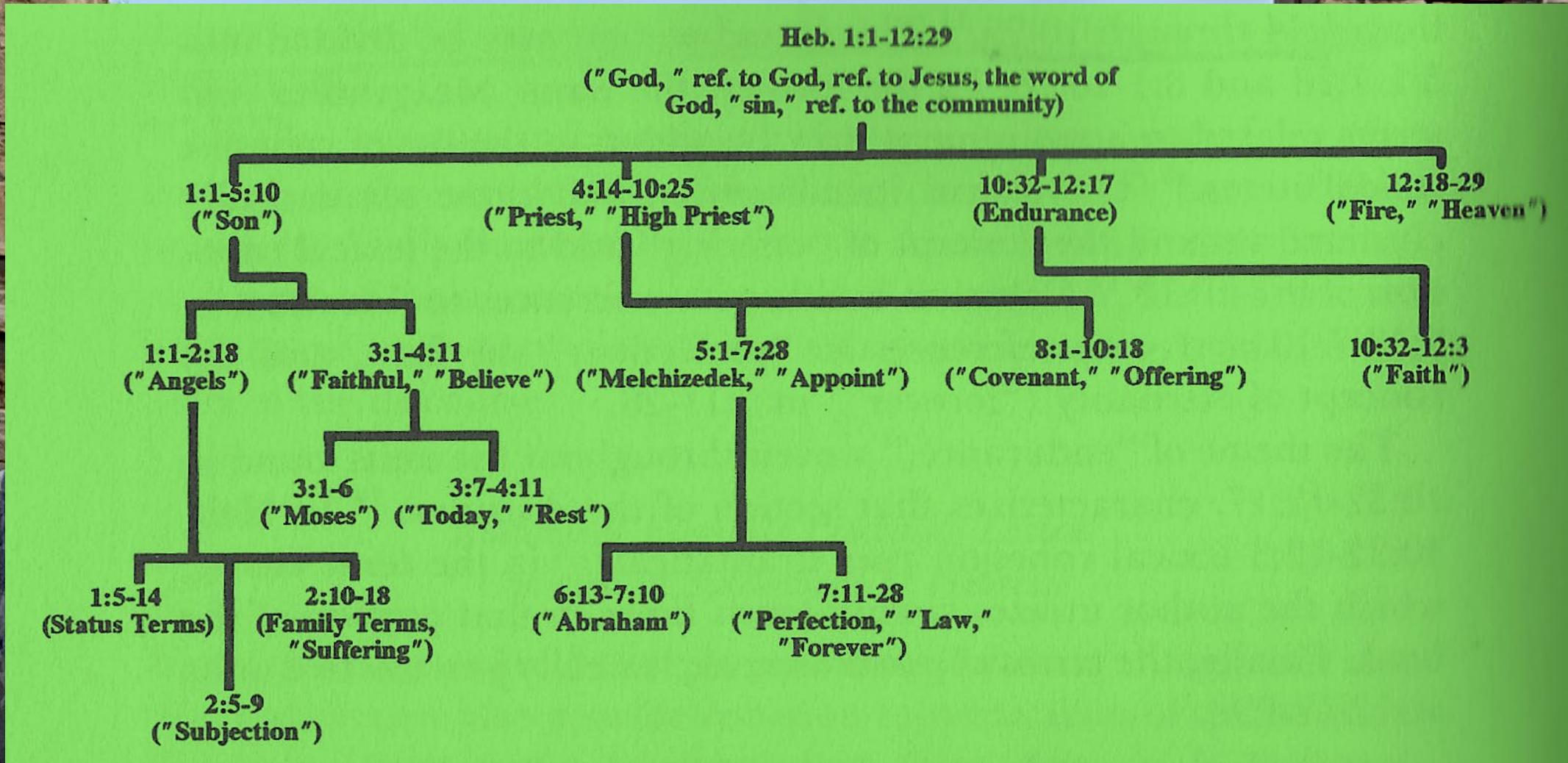


**Because of His Appointment, He is Able to  
Offer a Superior Offering in Heaven  
(8:3-10:18)**

# Rafael Gyllenberg (Abo University, Finland)

I. Christ as Our Guide to Salvation	1,1-2,18
A The Definitive Revealer	1,1-4
B The Enthronement of the Revealer	1,1-14
C <i>Invitation to Receive the Revelation</i>	2,1-4
D Incarnation and Conquest of the Revealer	2,5-18
II. The Wandering People of God	3,1-4,16
A <i>Christ Superior to Moses</i>	3,1-6
B <i>The Imitation of Christ</i>	3,7-4,13
C <i>The Confidence to Achieve Salvation</i>	4,14-16
III. Christ as Our High Priest	5,1-10,18
A Christ as Our High Priest According to the Old System	5,1-10
B <i>The Spiritual Backwardness of the Reader</i>	5,11-6,20
C Christ as Our High Priest According to the Order of Melchizedek	7,1-28
D Christ as the Heavenly High Priest	8,1-10,18
IV. The Church's Way of Faith	10,19-12,29
A <i>The Trip of the Heavenly Glory Approaches</i>	10,19-39
B <i>The Faith and Its Witnesses</i>	11,1-40
C <i>The Continual Trip in Persistent Faith</i>	12,1-29
V. Final Exhortation and Conclusion	13,1-25

# Guthrie's Catchword Connections



# Better Than κρεῖσσον 20x in New Testament 13x Here!

- 1:4 = Jesus better than the angels
- 6:9 = Faithful better than the apostate
- 7:7 = One blessing better than the one being blessed
- 7:19 = God has offered a better hope than the Law
- 7:22 = Jesus' covenant better than the old
- 8:6 = Jesus' ministry better than Levitical priests
- 8:6 = Jesus' covenant better than theirs
- 9:23 = Heavenly matters require sacrifices better than the old

# Better Than (continued)

κρεῖσσον 20x in New Testament 13x Here!

- 10:34 = Believers possessions better and more lasting than Israel's
- 11:16 = Heaven is a better country than Israel
- 11:35 = Resurrection is better than earthly life
- 11:40 = God's plan is better than OT faith (for our benefit)
- 12:24 = Blood of Jesus is more eloquent [better than] the blood of Abel

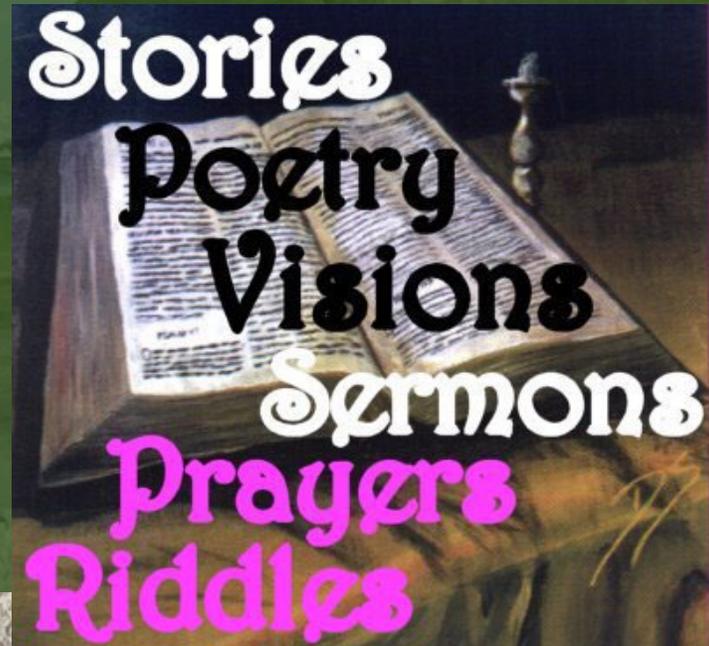
# God's Many Efforts

- Πολυμερως = “pah-lee-meh-ROHS” and is the word from which we get the English word “polymer”
- Polymers have many components (as in tire compounds)



# God's Many Styles

- Πολυτροπως = “poh-lee-TROH-pohs” and combines the prefix for “many” with the word from which we get the English word “trope”
- A trope is one way of saying, « figure of speech »



# Activity for Chapter 1

- Give each student a blank paper and pen
- Say that this is going to be a “race”
- Ask them to list all of the Old Testament characters they can think of to whom God talked (visions/dreams are okay)
- Perhaps: Adam, Eve, Cain, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.

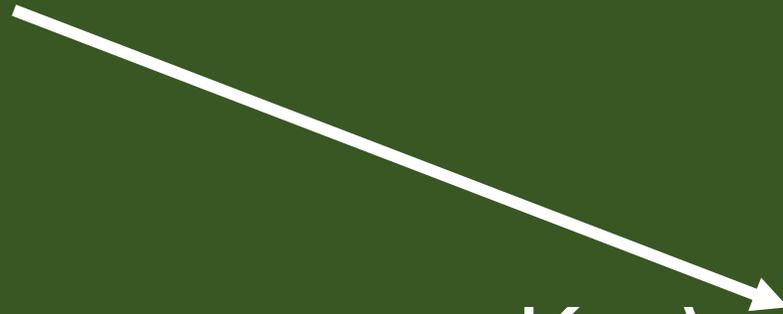
# Find the Old Testament Citations [Prophets?]

- Verse 2 = Psalm 2:8
- Verse 3 = Psalm 110:1
- Verse 5 = Psalm 2:7
- Verse 6 = Deuteronomy 32:43
- Verse 7 = Psalm 104:4
- Verses 8-9 = Psalm 45:6-7
- Verses 10-12 = Psalm 102:25-27
- Verse 13 = Psalm 110:1
- Verse 14 = Psalm 34:7, 91:11

# The Great Inheritance

- Heir to Everything (v. 2)

Κληρονομον



Κεκληρονομηκεν

- More Excellent Name He Inherited (v. 4)

# The Author of Reality

αιωνας = “eye-OH-nahs” or “ee-OH-nahs”



In other words, there is nothing we can experience that our Lord doesn't have a hand in!

From which we get the English word « eon »  
Which could mean either « ages » or  
« demigods » in Gnostic philosophy

# Divine Luminance

Just as humanity cannot look directly at the “face of God” and live...

...we cannot **usually** look directly into the source of our light without having some consequence.

We usually know light by means of refraction and reflection (as in a telescope).

Jesus **illuminates** the essence of God in such a way that we can SEE God and yet LIVE!



# The “Plan” of God’s Essence

χαρακτηρ = “kah-rahk-TEER”

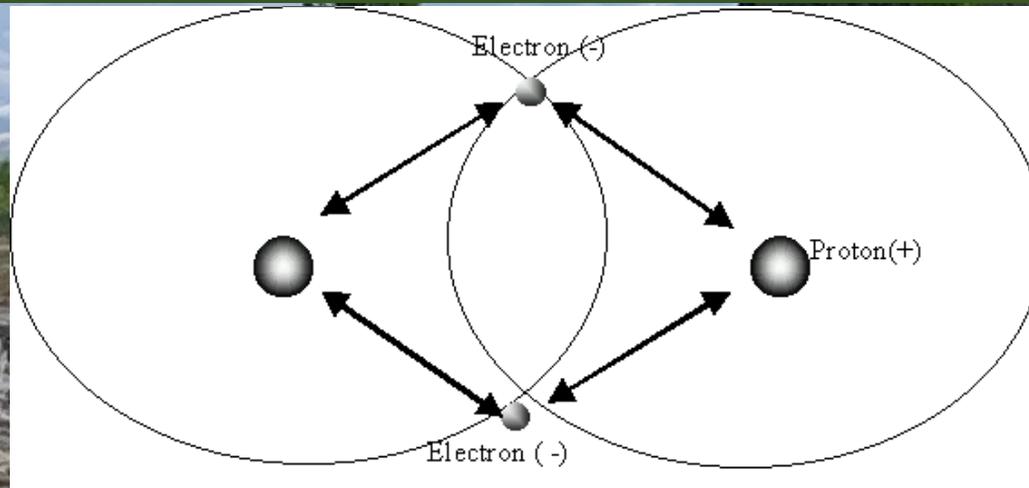


In other words, Jesus is the model or **template** showing how to be like God!

From which we get the English word « character » and means either verifiable likeness or model prototype

# Bond of Being

- He is the “bearer” of everything
- [holding things together]
- By means of His commands of Power



His instructions or commands hold all of existence together tighter than a covalent bond.

# God's Purifying Agent

- **Καθαρισμον** = “kah-thah-rees-MOHN” or “kah-tha-rihs-mahn”
- Root of English word **«catharization»**
- **«Catharization»** is the act of clearing alien matter from an organic surface
- A **cardiac catharization** uses a dye inserted through a leg vein and a radiograph to find where the biggest blockages are. A tiny cutting saw and a little vacuum remove the plaque and take it out of the body.
- Sin is the **«plaque»** to be removed from our lives
- Jesus is the **«saw and vacuum»**

# Strong Right Hand

- Right side was considered to be the favored side because
- The left side was considered “sinister” (as witnessed by the Latin word)
- So, the right side was a place of honor, trust, and confidence
- **As a result, we see that the Father has ultimate confidence in the Son**

# Why Better Than the Angels? “Sons of God?”



Uriel = God is my light  
Raphael = God heals  
Raguel = friend of God  
Michael = Who is like God?  
Saraqael = God is my Leader  
Gabriel = God is strong  
Remiel = God raises