

## Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 303 – October 30<sup>th</sup> – Hebrews 1:1-14

### Introduction to Hebrews

On page 1 of his introduction to Hebrews Hughes writes, "Its author is unknown, its occasion unstated, and its destination disputed. But these are matters at the periphery, not the heart of the book's importance. All are agreed on the intrinsic nobility of its doctrine. The writer's mastery of Greek is unmatched elsewhere in the New Testament and his powerfully argued development of fundamental theological themes indicates the exceptional quality of his intellect."

### Structure and Content

Guthrie says the Epistle is all about the fidelity and superiority of the Christian revelation which is the revelation of the New Covenant which has its focus in Christ. Guthrie provides the following analysis of this Epistle:

<b>1:1-10:18</b>	<b>The Superiority of the Christian Faith</b>
1:1-4	God's Revelation through the Son
1:5-2:18	The Superiority of the Son to Angels
3:1-19	The Superiority of Jesus to Moses
4:1-13	The Superiority of Jesus to Joshua
4:14-9:14	A Superior High Priest – superior to Aaron
9:15-10:18	The Mediator
<b>10:19-13:25</b>	<b>Exhortation</b>
10:19-39	The Believer's present position
11:1-40	Faith
12:1-29	Discipline and its benefits
13:1-25	Concluding advice

### Purpose of the Epistle

The purpose is well summed up by Hughes who states, "It is evident ... that the whole practical thrust of the epistle is to persuade those to whom it is addressed to resist the strong temptation to seek an easing of the hardships attendant on their Christian confession by accommodating it to the regime of the former covenant, which they had professed to leave behind when they were baptised in the name of him who is the Mediator of the new covenant, and which in any case has been rendered obsolete by the advent of Christ and the inauguration of the new and eternal order of priesthood. This practical purpose is pursued by demonstrating that the former system was inherently imperfect and therefore impermanent and that the period of forty years in the wilderness under Moses was no 'golden age' to be recovered or emulated, and by insisting on the absolute supremacy of Christ and the sole and complete sufficiency of the redemption that is ours through him. To compromise this unique gospel is to lose it; and losing this is to lose everything."

Spicq draws attention to the parallels between Stephen's defence in Acts 7 and the letter to the Hebrews. He suggests that Stephen's ministry resulted in the conversion of many Jewish priests in Jerusalem (Acts 6:7). Hebrews, he suggests, was addressed to such priests in the context of the persecution which broke out after Stephen's death – persecution which had forced them to flee Jerusalem and perhaps Palestine.

The epistle would seem to have been written before the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.

### Authorship

The authorship of this epistle has long been the subject of debate. Origen summed up best judgement in his own day when he stated, "Only God knows for certain who wrote it."

Calvin does not think that it came from the pen of Paul but he says, "I class it without hesitation among the apostolical writings; I do not doubt that it has been through the craft of Satan that any have been led to dispute its authority. There is indeed, no book in holy Scripture which speaks so clearly of the priesthood of Christ, which so highly exalts the virtue and dignity of that only true sacrifice which He offered by His death, which so abundantly deals with the use of ceremonies as well as their abrogation, and, in a word, so fully explains that Christ is the end of the Law. Let us therefore not allow the Church of God or ourselves to be deprived of so great a benefit, but firmly defend the possession of it."

Westcott comments on the peculiar language and style of this book. He draws attention to the large number of Greek words that are peculiar to this Epistle (168 in all). About half of these words are words also found in the LXX. The style, Westcott thinks to be "even more characteristic of the practised scholar than the vocabulary." He thinks it to be quite unlike "the impetuous eloquence of Paul."

Spicq and Montefiore, reflecting a suggestion proposed by Luther, argue that the epistle was written by Apollos.

### Works frequently referenced in these notes on Hebrews

- Bruce, FF *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1964
- Guthrie, Donald *Hebrews* (Tyndale Commentary), IVP, Leicester, 1983
- Hughes, Philip Edgcumbe *A Commentary on The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1977
- Westcott, BF *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Macmillan, London, 1889

#### Verses 1-4

"The first paragraph of the Epistle gives a summary view of its main subject, the finality of the absolute Revelation in Christ as contrasted with the preparatory revelation under the Old Covenant... At the same time the two main divisions of the revelation are connected as forming one great whole: *God having spoken ... spake ...* (ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας ... ἐλάλησεν). It is not simply that the Author of the earlier revelation is affirmed to have been also the Author of the latter ... but the earlier revelation is treated as the preparation for, the foundation of the latter." Westcott.

"In this brief introductory section, God's revelation through his Son is seen to be not only superior but final. Bearing in mind that such a conclusive revelation requires a very special means, the writer introduces his readers to the superior nature of the Son and also links what he is with what he has done." Guthrie.

#### Verse 1

Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς  
λαλήσας τοῖς πατέρας ἐν τοῖς προφήταις

Though not opening in the traditional form for a letter the composition ends like one, concluding with, "some brief personal news and with greetings and a benediction. The work may be described, then, as both an epistle and a treatise, indeed the most extensively developed and logically sustained piece of theological argumentation in the whole of the New Testament." Hughes.

"The opening statement ... sets the tone and introduces the main theme of the whole epistle, namely, the uniqueness and supremacy of Christ in comparison with the transitory and incomplete character of all that preceded his coming." Hughes.

πολυμερῶς little by little, many times  
πολυτρόπως in many ways  
πάλαι adv long ago, formerly  
λάλω speak, talk

λαλήσας The aorist participle implies that the former revelations were preparatory to this final revelation. The addition of *τουτων* indicates that this long-expected messianic age has now arrived.

πατήρ, πατρός m father  
προφήτης, ου m prophet

**Verse 2**

ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν  
ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ, ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων,  
δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας·

ἐσχατος, η, ον adj last, final

ἐπ' ἐσχατου των ἡμερων echoes the LXX rendering of the Hebrew עֲשָׂרֵי יְרֵמִיָּהוּ 'in the latter days' (Gen 49:1, Num 24:14; Jer 23:20; Is 2:2; Dan 10:14) – generally used of the time of the Messiah.

"There is no further reason why we should be in any doubt whether to expect any new revelation. It was not a part of the Word that Christ brought, but the last, closing Word. It is in this sense that the apostles understood 'the last times' and 'the last days.' This too is what Paul understands when he writes that 'upon us the ends of the ages have come' (1 Cor 10:11). If God has now spoken His last Word, it is right to advance thus far, just as we must halt our step when we arrive at Him." Calvin.

"The past tense of the verb *spoke* indicates, further, that God's speaking is complete: this is true not only of the past era of the Old Testament but also of the present age of messianic fulfilment." Hughes.

ἐν υἱῷ The absence of the article fixes attention on the *nature* of the new revelation. "Thus Christ, the Son through whom God has spoken his ultimate word, and indeed who is himself that word, is the Prophet *par excellence*, whose coming is the culmination of all the prophecies and promises of the past (2 Cor 1:20)." Hughes

ἔθηκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s τιθημι place, set, appoint

κληρονομος, ου m heir, one who receives what is promised (by God)

"The word *heir* marks the original purpose of Creation. The dominion originally promised to Adam (Gen 1:28; compare Ps 8; 102:7) was gained by Christ. And so, in regard to the divine economy, the promise made to Abraham (compare Rom 4:13, Gal 3:27) and renewed to the divine King (Ps 2:8), which was symbolised in the 'inheritance' of Canaan (Ex 23:30) became absolutely fulfilled in Christ." Westcott.

"He declares also that no good can be found outside of Him, since He is Heir of all things... We begin to enjoy the good things of God by right only when Christ, who is Heir of all things, admits us into His fellowship. He is the Heir so that He may make us wealthy in His riches." Calvin. Cf. 3:21-23. Christ is God's only Son and Heir. Christians are heirs *in him*, Mt 3:17; 17:5; Rom 8:14-17; Gal 4:4-7; 1 Pet 1:3f.

αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order, eternity

Not creation simply in a static sense, but encompassing the whole of history and its processes.

"The difference between ὁ αἰων (the age) as part of the whole development, and οἱ αἰῶνες (the ages) the sum of all the parts, is well illustrated by the divine title 'The King of the ages' 1 Tim 1:17 (ὁ βασιλευς των αιωνων ...) In this aspect 'the King of the ages' is contrasted with 'the rulers of this age' (οἱ ἄρχοντες του αιωνος τουτου)." Westcott.

**Postscript on verses 1-2**

Jesus is at the centre of the purposes of God:

- i) The diversity of past revelation is now unified, focused and completed in Christ. Christ is the fulfilment, not abrogation of the redemptive revelation of the Old Testament – he is the ἐσχατον towards which the various revelations were directed.
- ii) The redemptive work of God in the future is the outworking and manifesting of what God has done in Christ. It never gets beyond God's work in Christ; he is the ἐσχατον, God's final word.

Christ is thus the centre, the focus, the meaning, the manifestation of God's redemptive purposes. He is the centre of history, the meaning of history, the end of history, the beginning of history. He is the beginning and end of the ways of God. The assertion that he is the heir and the one through whom all things were made is an amplification of this point. He is the beginning (creator) and end (heir) of the work of God. By virtue of his incarnation and redemptive work he restores the position of heir to mankind. In him, man becomes heir to heaven and earth. The position of son of God and heir to creation, lost by man at the fall is restored in Christ – as will be made perfectly manifest at the παρουσία. Jesus Christ is the eschatological act of God. (See Jean Danieou, *The Lord of History*.)

**Verse 3**

ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως, δι' αὐτοῦ καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς,

ὢν present participle expresses the essential nature of the Son – what he always was and is.

ἀπαύγασμα, τος n brightness, radiance

Emphasises the source of the Son's being and his unbroken connection with the Father. However, care must be taken to avoid any suggestion of inferiority of the Son to the Father.

δοξα, ης f glory, splendour, grandeur

δοξα here stands for the full manifestation of God's attributes as far as man's power of apprehending them – see Is 40:5, also 2 Cor 4:6. "This is nothing less than the essential glory of God himself, corresponding to the *shekinah* glory which in the Old Testament signified the very presence of God in the midst of his people. It was the radiant glory of Yahweh's presence which settled as a luminous cloud on Mount Sinai when Moses went up to meet with God (Ex 24:15ff.), and which was seen at the door of the tabernacle when Yahweh 'used to speak with Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend' (Ex 33:9ff.). It was, moreover, the glory manifested on the occasion of Christ's transfiguration, again accompanied by the resplendent cloud of the *shekinah* (Mk 9:2ff., par.), an event that demonstrated that this glory belongs to the Son and was not just a reflection of a glory not his own: the apostles who were present were witnesses for a brief while of the glory which the Son had with the Father before the world was made (Jn 17:5). The brilliant light, brighter than the midday sun, seen by Paul at his encounter with the Risen Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:13) was the same radiant glory of the divine presence." Hughes.

χαρακτωρ, ηρος m exact likeness, full expression

Used of the impress on a coin. "The principle idea is that of exact correspondence." Hughes. Cf. 2 Cor 4:4.

ὑποστασις, εως f nature

The essence of any being. Jesus is the expression of the essence of God. He makes God known to us (Jn 1:14 & 18). "When you hear that the Son is the glory of the Father's glory, bear in mind that the glory of the Father is invisible to you until it shines forth in Christ, and that he is called the very image of his substance because the majesty of the Father is hidden, until it shows itself as impressed on his image." Calvin.

φέρω bring, carry, bear, lead

φέρων "... is not to be understood simply of the passive support of a burden ... for the Son is not an Atlas sustaining the dead weight of the world. It rather expresses that 'bearing' which includes movement, progress towards an end." Westcott.

τε enclitic particle and, and so

The particle τε is used to introduce a new thought while και (alone) continues the same thought. τε does not usually occur on its own.

ῥημα, ατος n word, thing, matter

For a poetic illustration of this, see Isaiah 40:26. Note also Col. 1:17.

αὐτου of the Son. Many MSS include δι' ἑαυτου before καθαρισμος. Metzger, writing concerning the UBS text says, "On the whole the Committee thought it more likely that δι' αὐτου or δι' ἑαυτου was added in order to enhance the force of the middle voice of ποιησάμενος, than that the phrase was present originally and then omitted in good representatives of the Alexandrian text (Ⲙ A B 33 81) as well as in Western witnesses (it<sup>81</sup> vg)."

καθαρισμος, ου m cleansing, purification  
ἀμαρτια, ας f sin  
ποιησάμενος Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom s  
ποιεω

"The use of the middle suggests the thought which the late gloss δι' ἑαυτου made more distinct. Christ himself, in his own person made the purification: he did not make it as something distinct from himself, simply provided by his power." (Westcott)

καθίζω sit down, sit, take one's seat

When used intransitively means to take the seat of authority, not merely to sit down. "To picture Christ as seated in glory is not of course to suggest that he is now inactive. The work of purification which was the purpose of his coming to earth is completed, but otherwise the heavenly existence of the exalted Saviour may be described as one of ceaseless activity. He is active, as the present verse has reminded us, constantly sustaining the universe by his dynamic word. He is active as, enthroned on high, he rules over history until every enemy has been subdued (1 Cor 15:25). He is active on behalf of his chosen people as he dispenses mercy, grace, and help to them in the hour of their testing (Heb 2:18; 4:14-16; cf. Acts 7:55f.) and as in heaven, whither he 'has gone as a forerunner on our behalf' (Heb 6:20), 'he always lives to make intercession for them' (7:25), where, too, he is preparing a place for them (Jn 14:2f)." Hughes.

δεξιός, α, ον right, δεξιά right hand

At the right hand – signifies dignity and authority, not location.

μεγαλῶσυνη, ης f majesty, greatness;  
Majesty (name for God)

Expresses the idea of God in his greatness.

ὑψηλός, η, ον high, exalted; ἐν υ. in heaven

### Verses 1-3 – Postscript

"Finally, it has well been observed that in these opening verses of the epistle we have the Son set before us in the threefold character of his messianic office: (1) as the *Prophet* through whom God's final word has been spoken to us; (2) as the *Priest* who made purification for our sins; and (3) as the *King* who is enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Hughes.

### 1:4-2:18 Christ superior to angels

Hughes suggests that the author spends time in demonstrating the Son's superiority to the angels, "not because it might be a matter of general interest, but because the situation he is addressing demands it. The question is one of special relevance and urgency. It is important that the supremacy of Christ in this as in all other connections should be unequivocally established. It follows, then, that those to whom this letter was sent were entertaining, or being encouraged to entertain, teaching which elevated angels, or particular angels, to a position which rivalled that of Christ himself." Hughes considers the suggestion that the situation addressed was the same as in the letter to the Colossians but rejects the suggestion: Hebrews addresses a Jewish situation rather than proto-gnostic. He concludes, "It is far more satisfactory to suppose that the author's concern to establish, on biblical grounds, the superiority of the Son to angels was prompted by a tendency on the part of these 'Hebrew' Christians to view with favour teachings similar to those held by the Dead Sea Sect at that time. The eschatological perspective of the latter envisaged the introduction of a hierarchical structure with two messianic figures, of whom the kingly would be subordinate to the priestly messiah, and both of whom would be subordinate to the archangel Michael, thus assigning supremacy to an angelic being in the expected kingdom. Against such a background the necessity for our author to affirm and demonstrate the supremacy of Christ over all angelic beings is obvious, and his insistence that 'it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come' (2:5) becomes full of meaning."

### Verse 4

τοσοῦτῳ κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων  
ὅσῳ διαφορότερον παρ' αὐτοῦς  
κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα.

τοσοῦτος, αὐτῆ, οὐτον correlative adj so  
much, so great, so large

τοσοῦτῳ ... ὅσῳ (by) as much ... as

κρείττων and κρείσσω, ον gen ονος  
better; greater, superior

Properly the comparative of κραυς strong, but used chiefly as the comparative of ἀγαθός good – though here bearing the sense of superiority of power or position rather than goodness.

This is a characteristic word in Hebrews, being used 13 times.

γενόμενος Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γινομαι

Can only be referred to Christ's human nature. By virtue of the resurrection and exultation of the divine *man* he has become superior to the angels.

διαφορωτερος, α, ον superior, far superior  
(comp. of διαφορος)  
κληρονομεω receive, gain possession of,  
inherit

The perfect lays stress on the present possession of the name.

ονομα, τος η name, title, person, authority,  
reputation

Probably not meant of any one name given to the Son but a term for all that Christ is to his people – Son, Sovereign, Creator, Lord ...  
"Those who seek for some specific designation to be attached to Christ betray a misconception of what is intended here. In Revelation 19:11-16, for example, the conquering Redeemer is identified by three 'names': 'Faithful and True,' 'The Word of God,' 'King of kings and Lord of lords,' which describe the character of his person and position." Hughes. Cf. Phil 2:9f. However, it is the term 'Son' which is the focus of the following verses.

#### Verses 5-14

Verses 5-14 consists of Scripture proof (from the OT) of what has been stated in v4 concerning the superiority of the Son. This is an example to us of ensuring that every thought is made captive to the word of God.

#### Verse 5

Τίνι γάρ εἶπέν ποτε τῶν ἀγγέλων· Υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε, καὶ πάλιν· Ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν;

ποτέ enclitic particle once, formerly, at one time, at any time  
σημερον today

Indicates a particular crisis or event – the inauguration of the Messianic King – applied by Paul to the resurrection (Acts 13:33 cf. Rom 1:4)

γεγέννηκά Verb, perf act indic, 1 s γενναω  
be father of, bear, give birth to

"The term marks the communication of a new and abiding life, represented in the case of the earthly king by royal dignity, and in the case of Christ by the divine sovereignty established by the resurrection and ascension." Westcott. But Hughes points out, "The authoritative attestation of Jesus as the divine Son applies to the earthly sojourn of the incarnate Son in its entirety and at every moment of that entirety. Thus at his conception the annunciation is made to the Virgin Mary that the child to be born of her would be called 'the Son of the Most High' (Lk 1:32); at his baptism, signalling the inauguration of his ministry, the voice from heaven proclaims, 'Thou art my Son' (Mk 1:11 NEB); at his transfiguration the utterance from the cloud declares, 'This is my Son' (Lk 9:35; cf. Mt 17:5); and at his resurrection he is 'designated the Son of God in power' (Rom 1:4). The perfection of his life and the innocence of his death mark him out as truly the Son of God and the Redeemer of mankind." Though he admits that "in the apostolic perspective the day of the resurrection of Jesus is the chief focal point in the interpretation of the Psalmist's words, 'Today I have begotten thee.' It is by that event, as already mentioned above, that Jesus was 'designated the Son of God in power' (Rom 1:4)... To sum up, we may say that at every moment of his earthly mission the incarnate Messiah is the Son beloved and accepted by the Father, but that the 'day' spoken of here, on which he is said to have been begotten by God, is the day of his glorious victory and vindication, the day also which, for the purposes of our author's argument here, establishes for all to see his absolute superiority to all angels. This 'day' belongs, in the first place, to the event of the resurrection, but it extends also to the ascension of Christ and his glorification at the right hand of the divine majesty. In other words, resurrection, ascension, and glorification should be viewed as forming a unity, each one contributing to the exaltation of the Son to transcendental heights of power and dignity."

This first quotation is from Ps 2:7. It is identical to the LXX which also agrees with the Hebrew text. Compare also Acts 4:25ff. The quotation represents Christ as triumphant Lord.

παλιν again, once more  
ἔσομαι Verb, fut indic, 1 s εἶμι

The second quotation is from 2 Sam 7:14 and again is identical to the LXX.

This is part of God's promise to David concerning his son (seed). While applying firstly to the earthly kings who succeeded David, the promises pointed beyond anything that was or could have been true of them to David's Greater Son who alone perfectly fulfils the promises made to David. Cf. Lk 1:32f., 68ff.

### Verse 6

ὅταν δὲ πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην, λέγει· Καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ.

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as

παλιν can here be understood either as:

- i) simply introducing another quotation;
- ii) connected with εἰσαγαγή – i.e. referring to the Second coming of Christ (so Westcott).

εἰσαγάγῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s εἰσαγῶ  
bring into, lead into

Westcott treats ὅταν ... εἰς. as a prophetic aorist, referring to a single future event whose time is not yet determined.

πρωτοτοκος, ον first-born, first

The word is used absolutely of Christ here only (compare Ps 89:27) but is qualified in Rom 8:29; Col 1:15; Rev 1:5; Col 1:18. It represents the Son's relationship, not primarily to the Father, but to the whole family or order (οἰκουμένη) that is united with him: He is Lord and Head over all. It is linked with the theme of Christ as heir – he has the right of the first-born.

οἰκουμένη, ης f world, inhabited earth  
προσκυνησάτωσαν Verb, aor act imperat, 3 pl  
προσκυνεῶ worship, fall down and  
worship, fall at another's feet

This quotation is more difficult to identify. Identical words are found in the LXX of Deut 32:43 (and equivalent in the Dead Sea Scrolls), but they are not found in the Hebrew Masoretic Text. A similar phrase occurs in Ps 97:7

Westcott thinks the words are taken from the LXX of Deut 32 and comments: "Dt 32 ... gives a prophetic history of the course of Israel, issuing in the final and decisive revelation of Jehovah in judgement. When this revelation is made, all powers shall recognise His dominion, exercised, as the writer of the Epistle explains, through Christ. The coming of Christ is thus identified with the coming of Jehovah. Compare Lk 1:76; Acts 2:20,21 ... It may be added that the thought, both in Deuteronomy and in the Psalm, is essentially the same. The hymn and the Psalm both look forward to the time when the subordinate spiritual powers idolised by the nations, shall recognise the absolute sovereignty of Jehovah."

"It should be noted that in Deuteronomy 32:43 the pronoun 'him' refers to the Lord God (Yahweh); there is no mention of any other person to whom worship is to be given. But when transferred to our present context the one ('him') whom God's angels are to worship is clearly the first-born Son. This consideration demonstrates, once again, that in the apostolic faith the fulness of deity is inherent in the Son, with the consequence that there is no hesitation in assigning to him what in the Old Testament is assigned to Yahweh." Hughes.

### Verses 7-9

The Superior dignity of the Son as Anointed King

### Verse 7

καὶ πρὸς μὲν τοὺς ἀγγέλους λέγει· Ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα, καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πυρὸς φλόγα·

προς μεν introducing the first half of the contrast (cf v8 προς δε ...) emphasising the difference between the Son and angels

λειτουργος, ου m servant, minister

πνευματα here = winds, not spirits.

πυρ, ος n fire

φλοξ, φλογος f flame

This quotation is from Ps 104:4 and agrees verbally with the Alexandrian text of the LXX and with the Hebrew.

The Psalm is a Psalm of creation. "The thought is that where man at first sees only material objects and forces of nature, there God is present, fulfilling his will through his servants under the form of elemental action.... The reference to the 'winds' and 'flame of fire' could not fail to suggest to the Hebrew reader the accompaniments of the giving of the Law (cf 12:18ff)" Westcott

Delitzsch comments that Ps 104:4 "may either affirm that God makes wind and fire serviceable to Him for special missions (cf. 148:8), or that He gives wind and fire to his angels as the material of their manifestation and, as it were, their assumption of a corporeal form, for the purpose of His activity within the world, which is mediated by means of them."

"The contrast is ... between, on the one hand, the status of angels, which is that of *servants* (see the comparison between Moses as servant and Christ as son in 3:5f. below), and their function, which is effective but intermittent as are the elements of wind and fire through which their activities may be displayed, and, on the other hand, the status and authority of Christ, which are resident in the abiding glory and supremacy of his royal and eternal Sonship – as the next quotation shows. It is, in short, the contrast between him who is the Son and Heir and them who are the servants under his command in the royal household of God's kingdom." Hughes.

**Verses 8-9** The angels are subject to constant change, the Son has dominion for ever and ever.

The quotation from Ps 45:6-7 agrees with the LXX with only minor deviations

### Verse 8

πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν· Ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου.

θρονος, ου m throne

Westcott argues that these words mean "Your throne, namely God, is for ever ..." and that the emphasis is on the unchangeable kingship of the Son in contrast with the nature of angels. FF Bruce considers this reading of ὁ θεός "quite unconvincing," and, along with most exegetes understands it as a vocative. Hughes comments, "To address the royal messianic personage as God is not without parallel in the Old Testament. Isaiah, for example, proclaims that the coming one who will rule on the throne of David will be called 'Mighty God' (Isa 9:6), a designation used elsewhere of the Most High (cf. Dt 10:17; Neh 9:32; Ps 24:8; Jer 32:18); and Jeremiah prophecies that the 'righteous Branch' who is to be raised up for David, who will reign as king, and who will execute justice and righteousness, will be called by the name 'The Lord [Yahweh] is our righteousness' (Jer 23:5f.)." And concludes concerning Jesus, "In him, as the incarnate Son, the divine and the human meet and the Davidic kingdom becomes truly the kingdom of God."

ῥάβδος, ου f stick, rod, sceptre

εὐθύτης, ητος f uprightness, justice

A word used only here in the NT.

### Verse 9

ἠγάπησας δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν· διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέν σε ὁ θεός, ὁ θεός σου, ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου· ἀγαπαω love, show love for

The aorist looks back to the life and ministry of the incarnate Son on earth.

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

μισεω hate, despise

ἀνομια, ας f wickedness, lawlessness

χρω anoint

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

ἔλαιον, ου n olive oil, oil

ἀγαλλιασις, εως f great joy

"The thought is of the consummation of the royal glory of the Ascended Son of man." Westcott. Hughes links this also to Pentecost saying, "The achievement of eternal redemption for mankind and the world is the cause of gladness and rejoicing in the presence of God. The anointing with the oil of gladness which he then received is also the anointing with the oil of gladness which he thereafter bestows in the transforming experience of Pentecost when, in words taken from the passage in Isaiah already cited, he grants 'the oil of gladness instead of mourning' (Is 61:3). As Peter explains on the day of Pentecost, the utterance of Psalm 16:11, 'thou wilt make me full of gladness with thy presence,' found its fulfilment in the resurrection and glorification of Jesus, as the victorious Saviour rejoices to receive from the Father the gift of the Holy Spirit promised long ago through the prophet Joel – a gift which he exultantly pours upon all flesh. This is the oil of gladness. 'Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God,' Peter declares, 'and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear' (Acts 2:33; cf. 1:4f., 8; 2:1ff., 16ff.)."

παρα preposition with acc beside, rather than, contrary to  
μετοχος, ου m one who shares in, partner, companion

"Above all who share the privilege of ministering to the fulfilment of God's will." Westcott

### Verse 10

καί· Σὺ κατ' ἀρχάς, κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας, καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου εἰσιν οἱ οὐρανοί·

This quotation from Ps 102:25-27 shows the superior dignity of the Son as Creator in contrast with creation. The words of the psalm were addressed to Yahweh but are here applied to Christ, affirming his deity. Cf. vv 2-3.

ἀρχη, ης f beginning  
γη, γης f earth  
θεμελιωω found; establish firmly  
χειρ, χειρος f hand  
οὐρανός, ου m heaven

### Verse 11

αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται, σὺ δὲ διαμένεις· καὶ πάντες ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσονται,

ἀπολλυμι destroy; midd perish

The idea is that of change not annihilation.

διαμενω stay, remain, continue  
πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας  
ἱματιον, ου n garment, clothing, cloak

παλαιωω make or declare old; pass  
become old, wear out

"The force of this passage is enhanced by the consideration that the Psalmist had evidently witnessed the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, which so many Jews had mistakenly imagined to be inviolable, and had suffered the desolating experience of bondage and exile." Hughes.

### Verse 12

καὶ ὡσεὶ περιβόλαιον ἐλίξεις αὐτούς, ὡς ἱμάτιον καὶ ἀλλαγῆσονται· σὺ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ, καὶ τὰ ἔτη σου οὐκ ἐκλείψουσιν.

ὡσει like, as

περιβολαιον, ου n cloak, covering

ἐλισσω roll up

ἀλλαγῆσονται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 pl

ἀλλασσω change, alter

ἔτη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔτος, ους n year

ἐκλειπω fail, give out, cease, end

### Verse 13

πρὸς τίνα δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἰρηκέν ποτε· Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου;

Verses 13,14 focus on the superior dignity of the Son as seated in Royal Majesty and his assured triumph. The Son "serenely waits for a sure and absolute victory while they [angels] are busied with ministerial offices." Westcott

εἰρηκέν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s λεγω

ποτέ enclitic particle once, at any time,  
ever

κάθου Verb, pres midd/pass dep imperat, 2 s

καθημαι sit, sit down

Ps 110:1. "The recognition of the messianic significance of this psalm in the apostolic church is amply attested by the frequency with which its authority is invoked in the pages of the New Testament. Citations, either direct or implied, are to be found in the following places: Mark 12:35ff. (= Mt 22:43ff.; Lk 20:41ff.), Mark 14:62 (= Mt 26:64; Lk 22:69), [Mark 16:19], Acts 2:34f., Romans 8:34, 1 Corinthians 15:25, Ephesians 1:20, Colossians 3:1, and 1 Peter 3:22. And not least in the Epistle to the Hebrews Psalm 110 plays an important part, providing scriptural authentication of the uniqueness and supremacy of Christ, not only as Son and Lord but also as High Priest and Redeemer. In addition to the quotation before us, the psalm is cited or echoed some dozen times (1:3; 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:3, 11, 17, 21; 8:1; 10:12, 13; 12:2). Indeed, the central doctrinal section, chapters 7-10, is an extended development of the nature of the Son's high priesthood portended by this psalm.

"It is evident, then, that psalm 110:1 was seen by the apostolic authors and teachers as an Old Testament pillar supporting the doctrine of the exalted session and rule of Christ. That this psalm's messianic tenor was accepted by the Jews in the time of Christ is indicated by the encounter narrated in Mark 12:35ff., where Jesus cites this verse in a discussion in the temple concerning the identity of the Messiah, as well as by evidence from other sources. Later rabbinical denials of the psalm's messianic character are to be explained as a reaction to the apostolic teaching that its predictions were fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus." Hughes.

δεξιός, α, ον right, δεξιά right hand

έως άν until

θώ Verb, aor act subj, 1 s τιθημι place, set

Cf. 1 Cor 15:28

έχθρος, α, ον enemy

ύποποδιον, ου n footstool

πους, ποδος m foot

#### Verse 14

οχι πάντες εισιν λειτουργικά πνεύματα εις διακονίαν άποστελλόμενα δια τούς μέλλοντας κληρονομείν σωτηρίαν;

οχι (emphatic form of ου) not, no; used in questions expecting an affirmative answer.

λειτουργικός, η, ον ministering

διακονια, ας f ministry, service

άποστελλω send, send out

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be destined

κληρονομεω receive, gain possession of, inherit

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

Salvation is both present and future.

"The service of the angels, then, is honourable and glorious. But the honour and glory of their service is not to be compared with the honour and glory of the Son's rule. They are but instruments of his kingship and their ministry is but an expression of his sovereignty." Hughes.