

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:

1:1-10:18	The Superiority of the Christian Faith
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
10:19-13:25	Exhortation
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

Hebrews 1:1-4

"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.

Hebrews 1:1

Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς
λαλήσας τοῖς πατράσιν 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
λαλεῶ speak, talk

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

πατήρ, πατρός m father
προφήτης, ου m prophet

Hebrews 1:2

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

ἔσχατος, η, ον adj last, final

ἐπ' ἔσχατου τῶν ἡμερῶν echoes the LXX rendering of the Hebrew עֲשָׂרֵי יְרֵמִיָּהּ ב' 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

κληρονόμος, 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 βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰῶνων ...) In this aspect 'the King of the ages' is contrasted with 'the rulers of this age' (οἱ ἄρχοντες τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου)." Westcott.

Postscript to Hebrews 1:1-2

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 ἔσχατον 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 ἔσχατον, 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*.)

Hebrews 1:3

ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως, δι' αὐτοῦ καθαρισμόν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν 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.

υποστασις, 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.

φερω bring, carry, bear, lead

φερων "... 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.

ρημα, ατος n word, thing, matter

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

αυτου of the Son. Many MSS include δι' εαυτου before καθαρισμος. Metzger, writing concerning the UBS text says, "On the whole the Committee thought it more likely that δι' αυτου or δι' εαυτου was added in order to enhance the force of the middle voice of ποιησαμενος, than that the phrase was present originally and then omitted in good representatives of the Alexandrian text (κ A B 33 81) as well as in Western witnesses (it⁸¹ vg)."

καθαρισμος, ου m cleansing, purification

αμαρτια, ας f sin

ποιησαμενος Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom s

ποιεω

"The use of the middle suggests the thought which the late gloss δι' εαυτου 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)

καθιζω 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.

δεξις, α, ον right, δεξια right hand

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

μεγαλωσυνη, ης f majesty, greatness;

Majesty (name for God)

Expresses the idea of God in his greatness.

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

Hebrews 1:1-3 – 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.

Hebrews 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."

Hebrews 1:4

τοσοῦτω κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων ὅσω διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοὺς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα.

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

τοσοῦτω ... ὅσω (by) as much ... as

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

Properly the comparative of κραυς strong, but used chiefly as the comparative of ἀγαθος 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.

διαφορώτερος, 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.

ὄνομα, τος n 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.

Hebrews 1:5-14

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.

Hebrews 1:5

Τίτι γὰρ 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 γεννω
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 εἰμι

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.

Hebrews 1:6

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 εἰσαγω
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
προσκυνεω 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.

Hebrews 1:7-9

The Superior dignity of the Son as Anointed King

Hebrews 1:7

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

Hebrews 1:8

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

ῥαβδος, ου f stick, rod, sceptre
εὐθυτης, ητος f uprightness, justice

A word used only here in the NT.

Hebrews 1:9

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
χρῖω 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

Hebrews 1:10

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

Hebrews 1:11

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

παλαιω 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.

Hebrews 1:12

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

ὡσεὶ like, as
περιβολαιον, ου n cloak, covering
ἐλισσω roll up
ἀλλαγῆσονται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 pl
ἀλλάσσω change, alter
ἔτη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔτος, ους n year
ἐκλειπω fail, give out, cease, end

Hebrews 1:13

πρὸς τίνα δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἶρηκέν 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

εἶρηκέν 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, δεξια right hand
ἕως ἂν until
θῶ Verb, aor act subj, 1 s τιθημι place, set

Cf. 1 Cor 15:28

ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy
ὑποπόδιον, ου n footstool
πους, ποδος m foot

Hebrews 1:14

οὐχὶ πάντες εἰσὶν λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα εἰς
διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας
κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν;

οὐχι (emphatic form of οὐ) not, no; used in
questions expecting an affirmative answer.
λειτουργικός, η, ον ministering
διακονια, ας f ministry, service
ἀποστελλω 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.

Hebrews 2:1

Διὰ τοῦτο δεῖ περισσοτέρως προσέχειν ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσιν, μήποτε παραρῶμεν.

The δια τουτο grounds the following exhortation upon the argument that has preceded it. "At this point we come to the first of a number of admonitory passages which are interspersed throughout the epistle (cf. 3:12-4:3; 4:14-16; 5:11-6:8; 10:32-39; 12:3-13; 12:14-17; 12:25-29). These passages serve to demonstrate that the teaching of this epistle is not merely theoretical and unrelated to the realities of everyday life, but is intensely practical and therefore full of intense seriousness." Hughes.

δει impersonal verb it is necessary, should
περισσοτερωσ adv. (from περισσοτερος) all
the more, especially

The comparative probably here has superlative force.

προσεχω pay close attention to, hold on to
ἀκουσθεῖσιν Verb, aor pass ptc, m & n dat pl
ἀκουω

A greater revelation demands greater and more careful attention. "To spurn the hearing of the gospel is to disregard not only the preacher but also God who is the source of the saving message. In the speaking of God to us by his Son, the Word become flesh (Jn 1:14), word and action are perfectly united; and for the believer, who responds with faith and gratitude, this Word is not just a declaration heard with the outward ear, but an energy experienced in the very depth of his being, powerful in the transformation of his existence, and visible in his daily conduct. In view of the infinite grace of God manifested in the sending of his Son into the world to redeem fallen mankind we are indeed under a moral obligation to give the most careful heed to the proclamation of the gospel." Hughes.

μηποτε conj. lest, otherwise

παραρῶμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl
παραρρω drift away

Westcott says that παραρρειν is used "of things which slip away, as a ring from a finger, ... or take a wrong course, as a crumb of food passing into the windpipe." It is used in the LXX of Proverbs 3:21 and 4:21. "The idea is not that of forgetfulness but of being swept along past the sure anchorage which is within reach ... The image is singularly expressive. We are all continually exposed to the action of currents of opinion, habit, action, which tend to carry us away insensibly from the position we ought to maintain." Cf., by way of contrast, the picture of the anchor in 6:19.

Hebrews 2:2

εἰ γὰρ ὁ δι' ἀγγέλων λαληθεὶς λόγος ἐγένετο βέβαιος, καὶ πᾶσα παράβασις καὶ παρακοὴ ἔλαβεν ἔνδικον μισθαποδοσίαν,

λαληθεῖς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s λαλεω
speak

Cf. Gal 3:19; Acts 7:53 also Deut 33:2; Ps 68:17.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι
βεβαιος, α, ον reliable, firm, effective

ἐγενετο βεβαιος 'proved sure.' "The law, of course, was firm and valid precisely because it was spoken by God." Hughes.

παραβασις, εως f transgression, sin
παρακοη, ης f disobedience
ἔλαβεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s λαμβανω
ἐνδικος, ον just, deserved
μισθαποδοσια, ας f reward; punishment

"The word appears to emphasise the idea of an exact requital of good or evil by a sovereign judge." Westcott

Hebrews 2:3

πῶς ἡμεῖς ἐκφευξόμεθα τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας, ἥτις, ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀκουσάντων εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαιώθη,

ἐκφευξόμεθα Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 pl
ἐκφευγω escape, flee

τηλικουτος, αυτη, ουτο so great, so large
ἀμελήσαντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
ἀμελεω disregard, neglect, reject
σωτηρια, ας f salvation

"The superior authority of the Gospel is shewn in three points, in its original commencement, in its convincing proclamation, and in its manifold divine attestations to its truth." Westcott.

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι who, which
ἀρχη, ης f beginning

λαβοῦσα Verb, aor act ptc, f nom s λαμβανω
λαλεω see v.2

'having at first been spoken'

βεβαιω confirm, verify, strengthen

The wording suggests an interval between the reception of the message by those who first heard the Lord (i.e. the apostles) and its transmission to the writer and his readers. This tells against Pauline authorship.

Hebrews 2:4

συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος τοῦ θεοῦ σημείοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ ποικίλαις δυνάμεσιν καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου μερισμοῖς κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ θέλησιν;

συνεπιμαρτυρεω add further testimony
σημειον, ου n miraculous sign, miracle
τε enclitic particle and; τε και and also
τερας, ατος n wonder, object of wonder
ποικιλος, η, ον various kinds of, diverse

"The testimony of the New Testament writings to the regularity with which these phenomena accompanied the preaching and receiving of the gospel in the early apostolic age is impressive in its range. The 'mighty works and wonders and signs' which marked the ministry of Jesus (Acts 2:22) continued to mark the ministry of the apostles from Pentecost onwards (Acts 2:43). They were associated particularly with the bestowal of the Spirit." Bruce.

"It is apparent, then, that, like the believers in Corinth, 'the Hebrews' to whom this letter is addressed had been enriched with spiritual gifts (1 Cor 1:5, 7). As with the Galatians, the supply of the Spirit and the working of miracles went together (Gal 3:5) and pointed to the fact that in this corroborative manner *God also bore witness* to the greatness of the salvation provided in Jesus Christ." Hughes.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy
μερισμος, ου m distribution, distributing
θελησις, εως f will

A word found here alone in the NT. Westcott says that it differs from θελημα in that "it describes the active exercise of the will."

Hebrews 2:5

Οὐ γὰρ ἀγγέλοις ὑπέταξεν τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν, περὶ ἧς λαλοῦμεν·

"The coming age, here called *the world to come*, is the age of the Messiah in which the messianic promises and prophecies of old find their fulfilment." Hughes.

"The future dispensation, which is, as has been already implied, the fulfilment of the Creator's will, was committed to man; and ... man's sovereignty has been gained for him, even after his failure, through the incarnation of Jesus 'the Son of Man'." Westcott.

ὑποτασσω subordinate, put in subjection

οἰκουμένη, ης f world, inhabited earth
μέλλουσαν Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s μέλλω
(before an infin) be going; (ptc. without
infin) coming, future
λαλεω speak, talk

Hebrews 2:6

διεμαρτύρατο δὲ πού τις λέγων· Τί ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος ὅτι μνησκήσκει αὐτοῦ, ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ὅτι ἐπισκέπτῃ αὐτόν;

διαμαρτυρομαι declare solemnly and emphatically

πού enclitic adv somewhere

Ps 8:5-7. The same rather general form of reference is found in other Greek writers (Philo). The Psalm, "as expressing the true destiny of man it finds its accomplishment in the Son of Man and only through Him in man. It offers the ideal (Gen 1:27-30) which was lost by Adam and then regained by Christ." Westcott.

Bruce observes that the author of Hebrews applies this psalm "not to the first Adam but to Christ as the last Adam, the head of the new creation and ruler of the world to come."

μνησκομαι remember, keep in mind, call to mind; be concerned about

ἢ or

ἐπισκεπτομαι visit, care for, be concerned about

Hebrews 2:7

ἡλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους, δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν,

ἐλάττω make lower

βραχυς, εια, υ little, short, small; βραχυ τι for a little while, a small amount

In its original context the reference is to degree rather than time.

παρα preposition with acc beside, rather than

ἀγγελους translates the Hebrew **אַלְהִים** Westcott suggests that it means 'a little lower than one who has a divine nature.' For other instances where the LXX translates *Elohim* as angels cf. Pss 97:7; 138:1; 82:1,6.

"The thought expressed in the original ... is that of the nobility of man's nature which falls but little short of the divine. The words on the contrary as applied to Christ describe a humiliation. This application is facilitated by the LXX reading, but does not depend upon it. The essential idea is that the true destiny of man described by the Psalmist, which experience teaches us that man himself has missed, was fulfilled otherwise than had been expected. Words which were used of man himself become first true of One Who being more than man took man's nature upon Him. In such a case the description of dignity was of necessity converted initially into a description of condescension." Westcott

δοξα, ης f glory

τιμη, ης f honour

στεφανωω crown; reward

Cf 2 Tim 2:5 The crown of a conqueror.

After ἐστεφανωσας αὐτου many MSS add και κατεστησας αὐτου ἐπι τα ἔργα των χειρων σου from Ps 8:6 LXX.

Hebrews 2:8

πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ· ἐν τῷ γὰρ ὑποτάξει τὰ πάντα οὐδὲν ἀφήκεν αὐτῷ ἀνυπότακτον. νῦν δὲ οὐπω ὀρθῶμεν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα·

ὑπέταξας Verb, aor act indic, 2 s ὑποτασσω see v.5

ὑποκατω prep with gen under, beneath
πους, ποδος m foot

"The motif of humiliation-redemption-glorification-sovereignty is a recurrent theme in this epistle (cf. 1:3f., 13; 2:7ff.; 4:14; 5:9f.; 7:27f.; 8:1; 9:12, 24; 10:12f.; 12:2)." Hughes.

ὑποτάξαι Verb, aor act infin ὑποτασσω
οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing
ἀφήκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀφιημι leave
ἀνυποτακτος, ον outside of one's control,
not made subject

νυν δε 'but at present, as the word is ...'

οὐπω not yet

ὀρω see, observe

ὑποτεταγμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc
pl ὑποτασσω

Hebrews 2:9

τὸν δὲ βραχὺ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἠλαττωμένον βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον, ὅπως χωρὶς θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσῃται θανάτου.

βραχυς, εια, υ see v.7

ἠλαττωμένον Verb, perf apss ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s ἔλαττω see v.7

βλεπω see

παθημα, τος n suffering
θανατος, ου m death

"Calvary was ... the road to glory: it is *because of the suffering of death* that Jesus is now 'crowned with glory and honour.'" Hughes.

ἐστεφανωμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc &
n nom/acc s στεφανωω see v.7

Cf. Phil 2:9 for parallel assertion that Christ's suffering and death are the ground or basis for his subsequent exaltation.

ὅπως (or ὅπως ἄν) that, in order that

The thought is that he has done all of this in our place, taking upon himself our humanity, and *so* his death was *for us*.

χάριτι Noun, dat s χαρις, ιτος f grace
γεύσῃται Verb, aor midd dep subj, 3 s
γευομαι taste, experience

Westcott makes the point that Christ in his sinlessness, perfectly realised the awfulness of death in a way that none other has or could.

Hebrews 2:10

Ἐπρεπεν γὰρ αὐτῷ, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα καὶ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα, πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν διὰ παθημάτων τελειῶσαι.

"The conjunction *For* indicates that our author is now explaining more fully what he has just said concerning the purpose of the incarnation of the Son, namely that 'by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.' To the unregenerate mind, for the divine Redeemer to be humbled by incarnation, and much more so by the shame of dying on a cross, seemed totally inappropriate: a crucified Messiah was a 'stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles' (1 Cor 1:23). The purpose of this and the following verses is to show how *fitting* this method of salvation is and, by implication, how totally inappropriate any other notion must be." Hughes.

πρεπει impers verb it is fitting, it is proper

Westcott says that suffering is part of the human condition and a necessary part of man's discipline. In this sense it was 'fitting' for Christ to suffer. These verses view Christ's sufferings and death primarily not from the perspective of substitutionary sin-bearing but from that of Christ's complete identification with the human condition.

δι ὃν ... δι οὗ for whom ... through whom

The subject here is God the Father rather than the Son.

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου
much, many

'Many sons' Christ has been called the Son, now those brought to glory are also called sons.

δοξα, ης f see v.7

ἀγαγόντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s ἄγω

Westcott suggests that the aorist is used here because of its connection with τελειωσαι – the same act accomplished both. Hughes calls it "a proleptic aorist which envisages the work of Christ and its consequences for mankind as a unity. As the glorification of the 'many sons,' though yet to be experienced, is inseparably bound up with the glorification of him who is uniquely the Son, which has already been realised, the bringing of the many sons to glory is more than assured, it is to all intents and purposes a reality now because of their union with him who is crowned with glory and honour."

ἀρχηγος, ου m leader, pioneer, originator

"The noun ἀρχηγος is difficult to translate satisfactorily. It signifies one who is both the source or initiator and the leader (ἀρχη plus ἄγω), one who first takes action and then brings those on whose behalf he has acted to the intended goal. The same designation is applied to Jesus in 12:2 below and also in Acts 3:15 and 5:31, where, as ἀρχηγος της ζωης, he is both the source and the means of life."

Hughes.

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

παθημα, τος n see v.9

τελειωω make perfect, complete

"It is fitting that our Redeemer should have been *made perfect through suffering*: first, because his completely victorious suffering of temptation of every kind (Heb 4:15) was essential to his achievement of that perfection which qualified him to offer himself on the cross as the spotless Lamb of God in the place of sinners (1 Pet 1:18f.; 3:18); second, because his suffering and death at Calvary annulled the power of Satan and set free the 'many sons' who were destined for glory (vv. 14f. below); and, third, because his own experience of human suffering in the body he assumed has enabled him as a compassionate high priest to aid and strengthen at all times those who are afflicted with trials and temptations (vv. 17f. below; see also the commentary below on 4:15f. and 5:8)..."

"A serious problem with the recipients of this epistle was that, though they had at first gladly entered into suffering, now their zeal was flagging and they were in need of endurance (10:32ff.; 12:12f.). They are urged to look to him who is both the pioneer and the perfecter of their faith (12:2) and who has by his suffering and exaltation opened up the way for them to that glorious realm where he even now is enthroned (10:19ff.)." Hughes

Hebrews 2:11

ὁ τε γὰρ ἀγιάζων καὶ οἱ ἀγιαζόμενοι ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντες· δι' ἣν αἰτίαν οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοὺς καλεῖν,

τε enclitic particle and; τε ... και both ...

and

ἀγιάζω sanctify, make holy

"The Christian's consecration to God is achieved solely by the reconciling act of Christ at Calvary." Hughes.

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

I.e. share in one humanity. It is conceivable, particularly in the light of v.16, that the reference here may be to Abraham.

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

αἰτια, ας f reason, cause

ἐπαισχυνομαι be ashamed

Hebrews 2:12

λέγων· Ἀπαγγελῶ τὸ ὄνομά σου τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου, ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας ὑμνήσω σε·

The quotation is from Ps 22:22. This Psalm is Messianic and speaks of Christ's triumph consequent upon his suffering. These texts are cited with intelligent reference to their context. As F.F. Bruce notes, we have here, "a good example of C.H. Dodd's thesis that the principal Old Testament quotations are not isolated proof-texts, but carry their contexts with them by implication."

ἀπαγγελῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s ἀπαγγελλω
announce, proclaim

ὄνομα, τος n name

μεσος, η, ον middle; ἐν μ. in the middle,
among

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

ὑμνεω sing praises to

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

Hebrews 2:13

καὶ πάλιν· Ἐγὼ ἔσομαι πεποιθὼς ἐπ' αὐτῷ· καὶ πάλιν· Ἴδου ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ παιδιά ἃ μοι ἔδωκεν ὁ θεός.

παλιν again, once more

Cf. Is 8:17; 12:2; 2 Sam 22:3. "The reference is certainly, as it appears to Is 8:17, where the words immediately precede the following quotation. The two sentences of Isaiah are separated because they represent two aspects of the typical prophet in his relation to Christ. In the first the prophet declares his personal faith in God in the midst of judgements. In the second he stands forth with his children as representing 'the remnant,' the seed of the Church in Israel." Westcott

ἔσομαι Verb, fut indic, 1 s εἰμι
 πεποιθώς Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s πειθω
 persuade; perf trust, rely on, have confidence
 παιδιον, ου n child

Cf. Is 8:18.

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι

"Within this setting [Is 8] ... Isaiah declares: 'Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts.' Applied to the Christian situation, these words speak of a world under the cloud of God's judgment, but of a world also for whom God has provided a Redeemer; and of a Redeemer to whom God has given *children*, the children, that is, of God, who as Christ's brethren constitute the elect people of God. These are *given* to the Son by the Father; hence the certainty with which Christ affirmed: 'All that the Father gives me will come to me' (Jn 6:37; cf. Jn 6:39; 10:29; 17:2, 6, 9, 24; 18:9)." Hughes.

Hebrews 2:14

Ἐπει οὖν τὰ παιδιά κεκοινωνήκεν αἵματος καὶ σαρκός, καὶ αὐτὸς παραπλησίως μετέσχεν τῶν αὐτῶν, ἵνα διὰ τοῦ θανάτου καταργήσῃ τὸν τὸ κράτος ἔχοντα τοῦ θανάτου, τοῦτ' ἔστι τὸν διάβολον,

ἐπει since, because, for
 παιδιον, ου n child
 κεκοινωνηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s
 κοινωνεω share, take part
 αἷμα, ατος f blood
 σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
 human nature

'blood and flesh', cf. Eph 6:12, = 'human nature.'

παραπλησίως likewise

The word occurs here only in the New Testament.

μετέσχεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s μετεχω
 share in

Spells the death of any form of docetism.

θανατος, ου m see v.9
 καταργεω render ineffective, do away with

"Christ by the offering of Himself ... made perfect atonement for sin and so brought to nought the power of the devil." Westcott.
 Death is the devil's realm.

κρατος, ους n power, dominion
 διαβολος, ου m the devil

"Christ assumed mortality that he might by death conquer the prince of death and set men free from his tyranny." Westcott
 "At the cross, the place of death, the decisive encounter between God and Satan occurred... There is no question or possibility of an insoluble dilemma involving a cosmic dualism of God and Satan, as though they were equally opposed to each other as two equal and ultimate realities. The power of death wielded by the devil is not an absolute power; indeed, death is the sentence of God pronounced against man who sinfully has transferred his allegiance from his Creator to the creature (Gen 3:1ff.; Ezek 18:4; Rom 3:23) and who in doing so has turned his back on God's realm of life in favour of Satan's realm of death. It is in this sense that the devil is said to hold the power of death. But the power which he presently wields is also the power by which he is destroyed (1 Jn 3:8; Rev 20:10)." Hughes.

Hebrews 2:15

καὶ ἀπαλλάξῃ τούτους, ὅσοι φόβῳ θανάτου διὰ παντὸς τοῦ ζῆν ἔνοχοι ἦσαν δουλείας.

ἀπαλλάξῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἀπαλλασσω
 set free

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;
 pl. as many as, all

φοβος, ου m fear

ζω live, be alive

ἐνοχος, ον liable, answerable

δουλεια, ας f slavery

"The death that man fears, moreover, is not just the physical death that he faces; it is the 'second death,' the fact that after death there is judgment (Rev 2:11; 20:6; 21:8; Heb 9:27). But now, on the cross, Christ has endured that judgment and liberated us from the fear of death and its bondage. By his death he has removed the sting of death, which is sin, and has turned our defeat into victory (1 Cor 15:56f.)... Nothing in this whole universe, not even death, has the power to separate the Christian believer from the love of God, the living God, which is in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:38f.). Truly, for the man of faith death has been swallowed up in victory (1 Cor 15:54)! This truth should have a profound effect on the Christian's attitude not only to his own death but also to the death of friends and loved ones who 'fall asleep in the Lord' see 1 Thess 4:13ff)." Hughes.

Hebrews 2:16

οὐ γὰρ δέητον ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται, ἀλλὰ σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ ἐπιλαμβάνεται.

δηλον it is clear, of course

"That he preferred us to angels is not owing to our excellency but to our misery." Calvin

ἐπιλαμβανομαι take hold of, help

"He lays hold of 'a faithful seed' to support and guide them to the end which he himself has reached." Westcott.

Hughes follows Spicq in favouring the 'classical' interpretation of ἐπιλαμβάνεται, namely a reference to Christ 'taking on [the nature of ...]' I.e. Christ did not take on angelic nature but human nature.

σπερμα, τος η seed, offspring

"The mention of Abrahamic ancestry here ... denotes something more than Christ was a Jew by birth. In 'taking to himself; the 'seed of Abraham' he shows not only that he belongs to but also that he is the fulfilment of the line of the covenant. The covenant established by God with Abraham is brought to a head and finds its consummation in Christ... Thus in saying that Christ took to himself the seed of Abraham our author places the incarnation within the perspective of the covenant, of which the incarnate Son is the focal point. He is the covenantal seed of Abraham, and his people are one with him by spiritual incorporation into that same seed, without respect to race or culture. In him they are the 'many sons' who are being brought to glory (v. 10), whom he is not ashamed to call 'brethren' (v. 11), 'the children' God has given him (v. 13), delivered by him from bondage and death (v. 15) – those, namely, who, having received him and believed in his name, he has given the power to become children of God (Jn 1:12)." Hughes.

Hebrews 2:17

ὅθεν ὄφειλεν κατὰ πάντα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ὁμοιωθῆναι, ἵνα ἐλεήμων γένηται καὶ πιστὸς ἀρχιερεὺς τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, εἰς τὸ ἰλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ·

ὅθεν therefore, for which reason

This word, which is not found in Paul's epistles, is comparatively frequent in this epistle.

ὄφειλω ought, must, be bound

κατα παντα 'in every respect.'

ὁμοιωθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin ὁμοιοῦ
make like; pass resemble, be like

ἐλεημων, ον gen ονος merciful
γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι
πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy

Our High-priest is 'merciful' in considering the needs of each sinful man and 'faithful' ('one in whom the believer can trust') in applying the means which he administers." Westcott

ἀρχιερευς, εως η high priest

"The writer introduces quite abruptly this title which is the key-word of his teaching, and which is applied to the Lord in this Epistle only among the writings of the NT." Westcott. "The Son could not have represented men before God, offering, as their high priest, the sacrifice of himself on their behalf and in their place, had he not first become their fellow man." Hughes.

τα προς τον θεον 'in the things that pertain to God.'

ἵλασκομαι bring about forgiveness for,
propitiate

For a discussion of the meaning of this verb and its cognates see Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, chs. 4 & 5. "God displayed his love by sending his Son for the precise purpose that he might be the propitiation for our sins (1 Jn 4:10; Rom 5:6, 8, 10). It was by propitiation that love acted; and all along it was God who was acting. To procure our restoration, God himself has met the demands of his own holiness. He has, so to speak, propitiated himself in our place, thereby achieving the reconciliation to himself of mankind, who otherwise were hopelessly alienated and under condemnation because of sin." Hughes.

ἁμαρτία, ας f sin
λαός, ου m people, a people

Hebrews 2:18

ἐν ᾧ γὰρ πέπονθεν αὐτὸς πειρασθεὶς, δύναται τοῖς πειραζομένοις βοηθῆσαι.

πέπονθεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s πασχω
suffer

πειρασθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
πειραζω test, put to the test, tempt

δυναμαι can, be able to

βοηθῆσαι Verb, aor act infin βοηθεω help

Christ not only secures forgiveness by his death, he supplies powerful help in the face of sin and temptation by virtue of his risen life and power.

"The power of sympathy lies not in the mere capacity for feeling, but in the lessons of experience. And again, sympathy with the sinner in his trial does not depend on the experience of sin but on the experience of the strength of temptation to sin which only the sinless can know in its full intensity. He who falls yields before the last strain." Westcott. Westcott also points to the way in which the author lays great stress on the historic details of Jesus life.

Hebrews 3

"The writer shows that Moses' status as a servant was greatly inferior to Jesus' status as son. Moreover, in spite of his greatness, Moses never achieved his aim of leading the Israelites into the promised land; this too is in strong contrast to the completed work of Christ which is strongly stressed later in the epistle." Guthrie

Hebrews 3:1

Ὅθεν, ἀδελφοὶ ἅγιοι, κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι, κατανοήσατε τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν,

ὅθεν see 2:17

"The term *brethren* which the author uses to address the recipients of the letter shows that, though they are in need of correction and admonition, he has not ceased to regard them as his fellow Christians and companions in the faith." Hughes.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy
κλήσις, εως f call, calling
ἐπουράνιος, ον heavenly, celestial

Our calling is heavenly both in its origin and in its end.

μετοχος, ου m one who shares in, partner
κατανοεω consider, think of

"In Christ the functions of Moses and Aaron are combined, each in an infinitely loftier form." Westcott.

The designation of Christ as 'apostle' is unparalleled in the NT – though John speaks of Jesus having been 'sent' by the Father even as he is sending the apostles into the world (Jn 20:21 cf. 17:18).

ὁμολογία, ας f confession, profession

Hebrews 3:2

πιστὸν ὄντα τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτὸν ὡς καὶ Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ.

πιστος, η, ον see 2:17

ποιήσαντι Verb, aor act ptc, m dat s ποιεω

The sense here is 'appointed' – "who invested him with his office" Westcott. For this use of ποιεω cf. Mk 3:14. Christ came only to do the Father's will, cf. 10:7,9.

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all

Of the reading ὄλω Metzger, on behalf of the UBS Committee writes, "Both external evidence and transcriptional probabilities are singularly difficult to evaluate. On the one hand, ὄλω is read by a wide variety of text-types, but is suspect as having been conformed to the text of v.5 and/or Numb 12:17. On the other hand, several early and excellent witnesses lack ὄλω, but the omission may be a deliberate (Alexandrian?) emendation, introduced to render the OT quotation more appropriate to the argument (in v.2 'whole' disturbs the parallelism between Moses and Jesus)."

οἶκος, ου m house, household, family

The allusion is to Numb 12:7.

Hebrews 3:3

πλείονος γὰρ οὗτος δόξης παρὰ Μωϋσῆν
ἠξιώται καθ' ὅσον πλείονα τιμὴν ἔχει τοῦ
οἴκου ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτόν·

πλειων, πλειον οἱ πλεον more
δοξα, ης f glory, splendour
ἠξιώται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s ἀξιοῶ
consider worthy, make worthy
ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as,
καθ ὅσον to the degree that
τιμη, ης f honour
κατασκευάσας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
κατασκευαζῶ prepare, build, furnish

"The concept of Christ as the builder of the house is probably based on the messianic prophecy of Zechariah 6:12f., which declares: 'Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall grow up in his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord, and shall bear royal honour, and shall sit and rule upon his throne.' It also rests on God's promise to David that he would raise up for him a son who will build a house for God and whose throne would be established forever (1 Chr 17:11f.). As Mediator, Redeemer, and Lord, Jesus Christ is the builder of the house, the *ecclesia*, of God's people, who as 'living stones' are 'built into a spiritual house' (1 Pet 2:5) and 'a holy temple' (Eph 2:21). Moses, a truly great figure, was nonetheless a member of the household and indeed a servant in it (v.5)." Hughes.

Hebrews 3:4

πᾶς γὰρ οἶκος κατασκευάζεται ὑπὸ τινος, ὁ δὲ
πάντα κατασκευάσας θεός.

κατασκευάσας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
κατασκευαζῶ

Treated parenthetically in many translations.

Hebrews 3:5

καὶ Μωϋσῆς μὲν πιστὸς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ
ὡς θεράπων εἰς μαρτύριον τῶν
λαληθησομένων,

The contrast suggested by μὲν ... δε is between
ἐν ... τῷ οἴκῳ and ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον and also
between θεραπων and υἱος.

πιστος, η, ον see 2:17
ὅλος, η, ον whole, all
θεραπων, οντος m servant

This word occurs here only in the NT.

μαρτυριον, ου n testimony, witness,
evidence
λαληθησομένων Verb, fut pass ptc, gen pl
λαλεω speak, talk

"By God through the prophets and finally
through Christ (1:1)." Westcott.

"That is to say, an important element of Moses' stewardship was that of witness, not to himself as though he were the end and fulfilment of God's purposes, but to realities which were still future and would come to expression in the incomparably greater person of Christ." Hughes. Cf. Jn 5:46.

Hebrews 3:6

Χριστὸς δὲ ὡς υἱὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ· ὃς
οἶκός ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς, ἐὰν τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ
καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος κατάσχωμεν.

Christians now, rather than Jews, are the house
of God. Cf. Gal 6:10; Eph 2:19; 1 Peter 4:17.

ἐὰν if, even if
παρρησια, ας f boldness, assurance
καύχημα, τος n boasting, pride

Cf. Rom 5:2.

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope

"The conception of 'hope' occupies an important place in the Epistle... Hope is related to Faith as the energetic activity of life is related to life. Through hope the power of faith is seen in regard to the future. Hope gives distinctness to the objects of faith." Westcott. The readers of this letter are to boast in their hope rather than being ashamed of it.

κατάσχωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl κατεχω
hold fast

Cf. Jn 8:31. Bruce remarks on the "repeated insistence" in Hebrews "on the fact that continuance in the Christian life is the test of reality."

"It must not be imagined that our author is speaking only theoretically rather than addressing himself to the realities of the situation. His perception of the perilous state of this particular community was what impelled him to undertake the writing of this epistle. His readers, he discerns, are in danger of wavering under the influence of strange ideas and hostile pressures. Like Christians in every age, they are face to face with perplexities and temptations. They are exhorted accordingly not to weaken and retire from the struggle, and reminded that only if they *hold fast* are they God's 'house.' Nor does an admonition of this kind conflict with the dominical and apostolic teaching that the Christian's eternal security is dependent not upon himself but on Christ and his merits alone (cf. Jn 5:24; 6:37; 10:27-29; Acts 2:47; Rom 11:6f.; 1 Cor 1:26ff.; 2 Cor 5:18ff.; Eph 2:8-10). But it does mean that a man whose profession of faith is contradicted by the quality of his life should examine himself and see whether he is a Christian at all (2 Cor 13:5). Security in Christ does not absolve one from personal responsibility: quite the contrary, for the regenerate man is under total obligation to God. Seriousness in believing should manifest itself in seriousness concerning doctrine and conduct. And this is applicable to communities as well as individuals; hence the incitements to the seven churches of the Apocalypse to overcome, to be faithful unto death, and to hold fast until Christ comes (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 25f.; 3:5, 11f., 21)." Hughes.

Hebrews 3:7-11

"The comparison of Christ with Moses leads naturally to a comparison of those who respectively received their teaching." Westcott

Hebrews 3:7

Διό, καθὼς λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον· Σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε,

διό therefore, for this reason

Cf. Ps 95. Hughes comments, "Plainly, the wilderness setting of this quotation would have had particular appropriateness for a group or community whose expectations were to a greater or lesser degree coloured by teachings similar to those of the Dead Sea Sect, for the adherents of the latter had withdrawn themselves to the wilderness with the express intention of reconstructing the exodus situation of their forefathers under Moses, there by discipline and faithfulness to prepare themselves for the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness.

"This formula *as the Holy Spirit says* which introduces the quotation has the effect of demanding the serious attention of the readers and emphasising the extreme seriousness of the warning conveyed in the quotation: it is none other than the Holy Spirit who is admonishing them through this passage of Scripture. While it is doubtless true that the author is not primarily concerned here with the doctrine of biblical inspiration, yet these few words disclose in a manner which is quite unforced the attitude with which he regards Scripture."

Hughes goes on to comment on the author's conviction that what was spoken by God long ago remains of relevance; "He regards Scripture not as a dead letter of a bygone period but as fully existential in its significance, so that what was spoken or written in the wilderness situation centuries before continues to have a dynamic applicability to the people of God in his own day."

σήμερον today

Hebrews 3:8

μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ, κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ,

σκληρυνω make stubborn

παραπικρασμος, ου m rebellion (during the time of Israel's wandering in the wilderness)

πειρασμος, ου m period or process of testing, trial, temptation

The original has the proper names Meribah and Massah. The LXX may have intended Παραπικρασμος and Πειρασμος as proper names. The incidents concerned span the whole period of the forty years (Num 20:1ff; Ex 17:1ff; cf. Deut 33:8).

ἐρημος, ου f deserted place, desert

Hebrews 3:9

οὗ ἐπείρασαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου

οὗ adv where

ἐκπειραζω put to the test, tempt

Westcott suggests that the absence of a direct object suggests that they tested not God but his works. However, it is probably better to understand the object of the testing to be implied and to be God himself.

πατηρ, πατρος m father

δοκιμασια, ας f test, testing

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὁραω see

Hebrews 3:10

τεσσεράκοντα ἔτη· διὸ προσώχθισα τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ καὶ εἶπον· Ἄει πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ· αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδοὺς μου·

τεσσερακοντα forty

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

In the original these words go with the following clause.

Westcott suggests that "The period had a significant coincidence with the interval which had elapsed since the Passion at the time when the Epistle was written."

διο see v.7

προσοχθίζω be angry

The original, τῇ suggests loathing.

γενεα, ας f generation

εἶπον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl λεγω

ἀει always, constantly

πλαναω lead astray, mislead, deceive

ἔγνωσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl γινωσκω

ὁδος, ου f way, path

Hebrews 3:11

ὡς ὄμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου· εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου.

ὄμοσα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s ὀμνω swear, vow, make an oath

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

εἰσελεύσονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

The phrase εἰ εἰς. means "They shall by no means enter ..." Cf. Mk 8:12 and Gen 14:23; Num 14:30; 1 Sam 3:17.

καταπαυσις, εως f place of rest, rest

"At the first the occupation of the promised land was treated as being ideally the fulfilment of the highest destiny of Israel in perfect fellowship with God (Lev 26:11f). But the partial outward accomplishment of the national hope necessarily fixed attention upon the spiritual realities with which the imperfect earthly blessings corresponded. The unsatisfying character of the temporal inheritance quickened aspirations after a truer inheritance which the prophets cherished and deepened." Westcott

Hebrews 3:12

βλέπετε, ἀδελφοί, μήποτε ἔσται ἐν τινὶ ὑμῶν καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος,

βλεπω see

Note the ἀδελφοί "thus indicating that, while he finds it necessary to rebuke them sternly, he does not despair of there being true faith, and faithfulness, among them." Hughes.

μηποτε lest, otherwise

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 3 s εἶμι

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

ἀπιστια, ας f unbelief

ἀποστῆναι Verb, aor act infin ἀφισταμαι

(verb dep in all forms but aorist) leave, go

away, desert, commit apostasy

ζωω live, be alive

"In old times the glory of Israel was the knowledge of 'the living God'; but now to fall back from Christianity to Judaism was really to revolt from him (comp, 6:5ff), for as God is living so the revelation He gives of Himself is progressive." Westcott. On the evil of apostasy, cf. 2 Peter 2:15, 20f.

Hebrews 3:13

ἀλλὰ παρακαλεῖτε ἑαυτοὺς καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν, ἄχρις οὗ τὸ Σήμερον καλεῖται, ἵνα μὴ σκληρυνθῇ τις ἐξ ὑμῶν ἀπάτη τῆς ἀμαρτίας·

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun,

himself, herself, itself

Here equivalent to ἀλληλους (one another), cf. Eph 4:32; Col 3:13. "An important means for withstanding the enticement to apostasy is that of mutual exhortation or admonition. Christians have a corporate as well as an individual responsibility." Hughes.

ἐκαστος, η, ον each, every

καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν day by day. "How different might have been the story of the Israelites in the wilderness if only they had daily fostered among themselves a constant faith in God instead of mutually inciting a spirit of rebellion and unbelief!" Hughes.

ἄχρι (and ἄχρις) prep with gen until; ἄχρι οὗ until, as long as

σημερον see v.7

I.e. "as long as the present day of God's grace endures." Hughes.

σκληρυνθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 2 s

σκληρυνω make stubborn; pass be stubborn, be hardened

ἀπατη, ης f deception

ἀμαρτια, ας f sin

Westcott says that "Sin is represented as an active, aggressive power." Cf. 12:4.

Hebrews 3:14

μέτοχοι γὰρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγόναμεν, ἐάνπερ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατάσχωμεν.

μετοχος, ου m see v.1

γεγόναμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl γινομαι

Westcott draws attention to the article ὁ Χριστος, "the Christ, the hope of our fathers."

ἐάν if; ἐάνπερ if only

ἀρχη, ης f beginning, first principle
 ὑποστασις, εως f confidence, assurance,
 conviction

Expresses "that resolute confidence which opposes a strong resistance to all assaults. It is used in late Greek writers for firmness of endurance under torture." Westcott.

την ἀρχην της ὑποστασεως the confidence we had at the beginning, i.e. when we first became Christians. Cf. 6:10.

μεχρι and μεχρις conj until

τελος, ους n end

βεβαιος, α, ον reliable, firm

On βεβαιος cf. 2:2; 6:19. What God has spoken is sure, firm and unshakeable, therefore we may lay hold of it with unshakable confidence.

κατάσχωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl κατεχω see v.6

Cf. also 10:23. 'if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence unto the end.' It is only continuance in the Christian faith that demonstrates a genuine participation in Christ – that we truly belong to him and have a share in his kingdom.

Hebrews 3:15

ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι· Σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, Μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ.

Repeats the quotation from vv 7 & 8, for which see vocabulary.

Many prefer to link v.15 with the verses that follow rather than those which precede. The repetition of this verse recalls the entire passage cited in vv 7-11.

Hebrews 3:16

τίνες γὰρ ἀκούσαντες παρεπίκραναν; ἀλλ' οὐ πάντες οἱ ἐξεληθόντες ἐξ Αἰγύπτου διὰ Μωϋσέως;

παρεπίκραναν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl
 παραπικραίνω rebel

Westcott draws attention to the sequence of thought in verses 16-19. The very people whom God had rescued were those who rebelled against him and so were rejected. The phrases are all introduced with interrogative pronouns, τινες ... τισιν ... Who? ... With whom?

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

The faith of Joshua and Caleb does not invalidate this generalisation. "The point is that this generation, which had first-hand experience of the goodness of God in bringing them from slavery to freedom, comprised the very last group of persons one would have expected to rebel against their Saviour God." Hughes.

ἐξεληθόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m pl nom
 ἐξερχομαι

Hebrews 3:17

τίσιν δὲ προσώχθισεν τεσσεράκοντα ἔτη; οὐχὶ τοῖς ἀμαρτήσασιν, ὧν τὰ κῶλα ἔπεσεν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ;

προσώχθίζω see v.10

τεσσερακοντα see v.10

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

ἀμαρτήσασιν Verb, aor act ptc, dat pl

ἀμαρτανῶ sin, commit sin

κῶλον, ου n dead body, corpse

ἔπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πίπτω fall

ἐρημος, ου f see v.8

Hebrews 3:18

τίσιν δὲ ὤμοσεν μὴ εἰσελεύσεσθαι εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἀπειθήσασιν;

ὤμοσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ὀμνῶ see v.11

εἰσελεύσεσθαι Verb, fut midd dep infin

εἰσερχομαι see v.11

καταπαυσις, εως f see v.11

ἀπειθήσασιν Verb, aor act ptc, dat pl

ἀπειθεῶ disobey, be an unbeliever

'to them that were disobedient'

Hebrews 3:19

καὶ βλέπομεν ὅτι οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν εἰσελθεῖν δι' ἀπιστίαν.

βλέπω see v.12

Introducing a general conclusion.

ἠδυνήθησαν Verb, aor indic, 3 pl δυναμαι

can, be able to

ἀπιστία, ας f see v.12

"The failure of the first generation of redeemed Jews, who corresponded in position with the first generation of Christians, is traced back to its source. The faith which they had at the beginning failed them. They fell into unbelief." Westcott.

"It is what happened when man fell first from God; it was repeated in the wilderness; and the same disastrous sequence was now threatening the community to whom this letter was sent. The rest from which Adam and Eve were excluded was that of fellowship with God in Eden; the rest forfeited by the rebellious Israelites was that of the promised land; and the rest denied to apostates from the Christian faith is that of the eternal Sabbath of the new heaven and new earth (Rev 2:6; 22:1ff)... True rest is the enjoyment by the creature of perfect harmony with his Creator, and it can therefore only be *rest in God*. As such, it is totally incompatible with unbelief and disobedience toward God." Hughes.

Hebrews 4:1-13

"Since Moses was unable to lead the Israelites into Canaan, the writer reflects on the position of Joshua, who did lead them in. But he shows that even Joshua did not secure for the people true rest. Joshua failed for the same reasons as Moses, that is, through the people's unbelief. This leads the writer to exhort his readers to seek that superior rest; which he goes on to imply is found in Christ." Guthrie

Hebrews 4:1

Φοβηθῶμεν οὐδὲν μήποτε καταλειπομένης ἐπαγγελίας εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ δοκῆ τις ἐξ ὑμῶν ὑστερηκέναι·

φοβηθῶμεν Verb, aor pass dep subj, 1 pl
φοβεομαι trans fear, be afraid (of)
μήποτε lest, otherwise
καταλείπω leave, leave behind

"The promise was left because no purpose of God can fall to the ground; and this was unfulfilled in the case of those to whom it was first given ... The writer takes for granted throughout that whatever God in his love has ever destined for man is brought within man's reach by Christ 'the heir of all things,' the fulfilment of human destiny." Westcott.
"In the language of Psalm 95, it is still 'today' as far as God's promise is concerned; and this indicates both opportunity in that we live in God's day of grace, and responsibility on our part not to despise or turn away from this privilege." Hughes.

ἐπαγγελία, ας f promise
εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in
καταπαυσις, εως f see 3:11
δοκῆ Verb, pres act subj, 3 s δοκεω think
ὑστερηκέναι Verb, perf act infin ὑστερεω
lack, fall short of

Hebrews 4:2

καὶ γὰρ ἔσμεν εὐηγγελισμένοι καθάπερ κάκεινοι, ἀλλ' οὐκ ὠφέλησεν ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς ἐκείνους, μὴ συγκεκρασμένους τῇ πίστει τοῖς ἀκούσασιν.

εὐηγγελισμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the
good news
καθάπερ as, just as
κάκεινος, η, ο contraction of και ἐκεινος
and that one, he also, they also
ὠφέλεω gain, profit, benefit
ἀκοῆς Noun, gen s ἀκοη, ης f hearing
συγκεκρασμένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc
pl συγκεραννυμι unite, put together

There are a 'bewildering variety of readings preserved in the manuscripts' (Metzger). Westcott suggests that this may reflect a primitive error. He suggests that if συγκεκρασμένους is adopted the sense is, "they were not united by faith with those that truly heard" i.e. with Moses, Joshua and Caleb. If συγκεκρασμενος is accepted (the reading of s and preferred by Hughes), it means "it was not incorporated by faith in them that heard."

πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις, εως f faith
ἀκούσασιν Verb, aor act ptc, dat pl ἀκουω

Hebrews 4:3

εἰσερχόμεθα γὰρ εἰς κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες, καθὼς εἶρηκεν· Ὡς ὄμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου, εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου, καίτοι τῶν ἔργων ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου γενηθέντων,

εἰσερχομαι see v.1
πιστεῦω believe (in), have faith (in)

I.e. Christians.

εἶρηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s λεγω

"Christ has brought this rest within the reach of His people." Westcott

ὄμοσα see 3:11

καίτοι yet, and yet, although
καταβολη, ης f beginning, creation
γενηθέντων Verb, aor pass dep ptc, gen pl
γίνομαι

'the works (of God) were finished from the creation of the world.' "God Himself had entered into it, though it still remained that His people should share it according to His purpose." Westcott.
"The futurity relates not to God's rest as such but to the enjoyment of it by his creatures." Hughes.

Hebrews 4:4

εἶρηκεν γάρ που περι τῆς ἑβδόμης οὕτως· Καὶ κατέπαυσεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ,

εἶρηκεν see v.3

πού enclitic adv somewhere

Cf. 2:6. Probably means 'as we know' or 'to quote familiar words.'

ἑβδομος, η, ον seventh
οὕτως thus, in this way
καταπαύω rest, cease

Hebrews 4:5

καὶ ἐν τούτῳ πάλιν· Εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου.

παλιν again, once more

The emphasis is upon entering *God's* rest.

Hebrews 4:6

ἐπεὶ οὖν ἀπολείπεται τινὰς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς αὐτήν, καὶ οἱ πρότερον εὐαγγελισθέντες οὐκ εἰσηλθόν δι' ἀπειθειαν,

ἐπει since, because

ἀπολείπω leave behind; pass. remain
(impers it remains)

πρότερον adv προτερον before, first of all, originally

εὐαγγελισθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
εὐαγγελίζω see v.2

ἀπειθεια, ας f disobedience

"Unbelief is manifested in disobedience (contrast 3:19). The two are placed in close connexion, Rom 11:20ff, 30ff; comp John 3:36." Westcott. See also John 15:1ff.

Hebrews 4:7

πάλιν τινὰ ὀρίζει ἡμέραν, Σήμερον, ἐν Δαυὶδ λέγων μετὰ τοσοῦτον χρόνον, καθὼς προεῖρηται, Σήμερον ἔαν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν·

παλιν see v.5

ὀρίζω decide, determine, designate
σημερον see 3:7

ἐν Δαυὶδ Westcott takes to mean 'in the person of David' rather than 'in the book of David.' "The fact that *long afterward*, centuries after Moses' day, God *through David* demarcates a *certain day* as '*Today*' indicates, further, that the promised rest was still remaining, unentered, when Psalm 95 was composed." Hughes.

τοσοῦτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative adj so
much, so great, so large

χρονος, ου m time, period of time

προεῖρηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s

προλεγω say beforehand, warn in advance

See 3:7 and 8.

Hebrews 4:8

εἰ γὰρ αὐτοὺς Ἰησοῦς κατέπαυσεν, οὐκ ἂν περι ἄλλης ἐλάλει μετὰ ταῦτα ἡμέρας.

Ἰησοῦς is here 'Joshua.'

καταπαύω cause to rest; intrans rest,
cease

ἂν particle indicating contingency

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

λαλεω speak, talk

"What our author is saying is that God's promise of rest did not and does not have a merely earthly fulfilment, but is rather eschatological in purport, and therefore still awaits the people of God in all its fulness. And this accords perfectly with the insistence later in this epistle (11:13-16, 35; 12:18ff.) that the expectation of God's people has never been tied to material or earthly objects, 'for here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come' (13:14). Hence the propriety of the manner in which our author here, many centuries again after the Psalmist's day, continues to treat the promised rest, in its consummating fulness, as future and as a constant hope and incentive for the Christian pilgrim." Hughes.

Hebrews 4:9

ἄρα ἀπολείπεται σαββατισμὸς τῷ λαῷ τοῦ θεοῦ·

"This unclassical use of ἄρα in the first place of a sentence as defining a conclusion from the previous words is found in the Synoptists (Matt 12:28; Lk 11:48) and in St Paul (Rom 10:17; 1 Cor 15:18 etc), especially in the form ἄρα οὖν (Rom 5:18 etc.), but it is not found in St John or in the Catholic Epistles." Westcott

ἀπολείπω leave behind

σαββατισμος, ου m a Sabbath's day's rest

"Not an isolated sabbath but a sabbath life" Westcott – the eternal sabbath. "The final rest of man answers to the idea of Creation, realised after the Fall by Redemption."

λαος, ου m people, a people

"Israel was the type of the divine commonwealth." Westcott

Hebrews 4:10

ὁ γὰρ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ ὥσπερ ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων ὁ θεός.

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

καταπαυσις, εως f see 3:11

The αὐτοῦ refers to God – 'whoever has entered into His rest.' Cf. Rev 7:9ff; 14:13.

καταπαύω see v.8

ὡσπερ as, even as, just as

ἰδίου, α, ον one's own

Hebrews 4:11

σπουδάσωμεν οὖν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν κατάπαυσιν, ἵνα μὴ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τις ὑποδείγματι πέση τῆς ἀπειθείας.

σπουδαζω do one's best, work hard at, be eager

The thought is of active exertion, eager and earnest endeavour. It expresses the paradox of a resting from our own works the entrance into which requires earnest endeavour – it is not 'let go and let God.'

Note the first person plural: the author associates himself with his hearers.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that

ὑπόδειγμα, τος n example

πέση Verb, aor act subj, 3 s πιπῶ fall

Westcott says there are two ways of understanding this phrase, 'falling *into* the same type of disobedience' or 'falling *after* the same type ...'. He thinks the latter the more likely meaning.

ἀπειθεια, ας f disobedience

Hebrews 4:12

Ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐνεργῆς καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον καὶ διϊκνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος, ἄρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν, καὶ κριτικὸς ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας·

The word here is not Christ himself but what God has spoken (1:1-2) which now has its focus and end in Christ. It is the word that proceeds from his mouth (see Rev. 1:16). Nevertheless, by this token, the action of the word in the heart is the activity of Christ.

"The main thought in the description of 'the word of God' is not that of punishment ... but of its essential nature as it enters into, permeates, transforms every element of man... The five successive epithets (ζῶν ... ἐνεργῆς ... τομώτερος ... διικνούμενος ... κριτικὸς ...) applied to 'the word' mark with increasing clearness its power to deal with the individual soul. There is a passage step by step from that which is more general to that which is more personal. Life is characterised by activity: the activity takes the special form of an internal examination, which reaches to the very foundations of our organisation; and this is not physical only but inspired by a moral force, all-pervading, all discovering, for it is indeed the force of God." Westcott.

ζῶ live, be alive

Living in its energies and actions, it reflects the character of God himself. Cf. Is 55:11.

ἐνεργῆς, ες active, effective

τομώτερος, α, ον sharper; comparative of τομος

μάχαιρα, ης f sword

δίστομος, ον double-edged

There is no blunt side to it.

"As the instrument of God's mighty acts it is more powerful and penetrating than the keenest instrument devised by man. Paul simply calls the word of God the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17), again placing it in a category distinct from and far above any merely human weapon." Hughes.

διϊκνεομαι go all the way through, penetrate

ἄχρι (and ἄχρις) prep with gen until, as far as

μερισμος, ου m division, separation

ψυχη, ης f inmost being, life, 'soul'

The list that follows is simply illustrative of every aspect of man's being. The word of God "penetrates to the innermost depth of man's being." Hughes. Or as Calvin expresses it, "There is nothing so hard or firm in man, nothing so deeply hidden that the efficacy of the word does not penetrate through to it."

ἄρμος, ου m joint (of the body)

τε enclitic particle and; τε και and also

μυελος, ου m marrow (of bones)

κριτικος, η, ον able to judge

ἐνθυμησις, εως f (inmost) thought, idea, imagination

ἐννοια, ας f attitude, thought, purpose

"Nothing could be more inaccessible and intangible, humanly speaking, than the notions and motives concealed in the furthest depths of man's mind... Only God's word can pierce through to this intangible realm, and it does so in a manner that is both dynamic and critical." Hughes.

Hebrews 4:13

καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανῆς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, πάντα δὲ γυμνὰ καὶ τετραηλισμένα τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ, πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος.

"The fact that the word of God penetrates, like a sharp sword, to the innermost centre of man's selfhood means that every single detail and aspect of the human person is fully and inexorably open to the gaze of God." Hughes.

κτίσις, εως f creation, what is created
ἀφανῆς, ες hidden, able to be hidden
ἐνώπιον before, in the presence of
γυμνος, η, ον naked, bare
τετραηλισμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n
nom/acc pl τραηλιζομαι be laid bare,
be exposed

πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος 'To whom we must render account. "The man who acknowledges that he is now and that he will be hereafter 'naked and exposed to the eyes of the One with whom we have to reckon' (NEB), and that the discernment of God is always without error and his judgment righteous and equitable (Isa 11:3f), is a man who is standing on the threshold of divine grace; for it is against the background of human guilt and powerlessness that the grace of God which, in Christ, brings forgiveness and victory is most particularly displayed; and it is to this theme that our author now turns." Hughes.

Hebrews 4:14-9:14 A Superior High Priest

"The Law of Moses had recognized and made provision for a high priest who could mediate between God and man. But the priesthood of Aaron had several weaknesses and the writer shows that the high-priesthood of Christ is of a superior kind... Closely linked with this theme is that of the New Covenant which is shown to be superior to the Old." Guthrie

Hebrews 4:14

ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας·

ἀρχιερεὺς, εως m see 2:17
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
διεληλυθότα Verb, perf act ptc, m acc s
διερχομαι pass through, go through

"That is to say, in contrast to the high priest of the levitical order who once a year passed from the sight of the people as he took the blood of atonement into the earthly sanctuary, Jesus, our great high priest, at his ascension passed from the sight of the watching apostles as he entered once for all into the heavenly sanctuary, there to appear on our behalf (Acts 1:9; cf. Heb 8:1ff.; 9:11ff. and 24ff., where the theme is developed more fully)." Hughes.
He has entered into his rest.

κρατεω hold, hold fast, seize

Seems to imply a need to seize and retain hold.

ὁμολογια, ας f see 3:1

Hebrews 4:15

οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθεῖσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν, πεπειρασμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας.

δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of
συμπαθεῖσαι Verb, aor act infin συμπασχω
suffer together, share the same
suffering

'be touched with the feeling of'.

ἀσθενεια, ας f weakness, illness

"Such weaknesses can be characterised by the circumstances of the Lord's life, natural weaknesses, disappointments, the feeling of desertion, shrinking from pain ... From temptations through such weaknesses the Hebrew Christians were suffering." Westcott.
"It was precisely our weaknesses that he embraced and made his own when he took our nature upon himself." Hughes.

πεπειρασμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc &
n nom/acc s πειραζω test, tempt
ὁμοιοτης, ητος f likeness; κατα παντα καθ
ὁ. in everything the same way (we are)
χωρις without, apart from
ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

"We may represent the truth to ourselves best by saying that Christ assumed humanity under the conditions of life belonging to man fallen, though not with sinful promptings from within." Westcott.

"The sinlessness of Jesus does not consist in an absence of human weakness, but in an ever renewed victory over temptations." Hering.

"His sinlessness meant that the temptations came to him with a sharpness far greater than is known to us whose minds and wills have become dull through frequent failures. This sinlessness, it should be stressed, is not something passive, a mere state of being, but the achievement of Christ's active conquest of temptation. Indeed, it is entirely synonymous with the complete *obedience* learned by him through all he endured, by which his *perfection* was won and established, and which fitted him to become the source of our eternal salvation (Heb 2:10; 5:8f.; 7:26; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 Jn 2:1; 3:3,5)." Hughes.

Hebrews 4:16

προσερχόμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεος καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν.

προσερχομαι come or go to, approach

Cf 7:25; 10:1,22; 11:6.

"In the levitical system that had prevailed up till the time of Christ's advent only the high priest was permitted to approach into the sanctuary of God's presence, and then only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, when he passed from sight into the holy of holies. The people, however, were excluded from the divine presence because of their sinfulness and prohibited from drawing near. But the atonement effected by Christ's sacrifice of himself on the cross opened the way that had hitherto been closed. This was dramatically symbolised by the rending of the temple curtain from top to bottom at the time of the crucifixion, indicating that through an act of divine grace access into the holiest place was now available to all the people of God (Mk 15:38; Mt 27:51; Heb 10:20). The reality corresponding to this symbolic event is pressed home by our author here. Sinners are no longer commanded to keep their distance in fear and trembling, but, on the contrary, are now invited to *draw near*, and to do so *with confidence*." Hughes.

παρρησια, ας f boldness, assurance

"Only Christianity can give sinful creatures the boldness to present themselves before God." Spicq.

θρονος, ου m throne

Cf 8:1; Matt 19:28; Prov 12:23. "The genitive in each case seems to express that which is shewn in a position of sovereign power. Thus the 'throne of grace' is that revelation of God's Presence in which His grace is shewn in royal majesty. Of this revelation the glory over the mercy-seat was a faint symbol." Westcott.

λάβωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl λαμβανω

ἔλεος, ους n mercy, compassion

εὐρωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl εὐρισκω

"Man needs mercy for past failure and grace for present and future work." Westcott

εὐκαιρος, ου suitable, timely

βοηθεια, ας f help

Hebrews 5:1-10

Starting from the Levitical priesthood, the author establishes three necessary qualifications for the office, humanity, compassion and divine appointment (vv.1-4). He then proves that Jesus was a high priest by showing that he had these three qualifications, taking them in reverse order (vv.5-10).

Hebrews 5:1

Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων

λαμβανόμενος ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν,

"A High-priest being himself man can act for men." Westcott

καθίσταται Verb, pres pass indic, 3 s

καθιστημι and καθιστανω put in charge, appoint

Cf. vv. 4-6.

τα προς τον θεον cf. 2:17.

προσφερω offer, present

δωρον, ου n gift, offering

τε, τε και see 4:12

θυσια, ας f sacrifice

"The same offerings could be called, under different aspects, a 'gift' and a 'sacrifice'. But when 'gifts' and 'sacrifices' are distinguished the former mark the 'meal-offerings' and the latter the bloody offerings." Westcott

ἁμαρτια, ας f see 4:15

"Particularly important is the purpose of these gifts and sacrifices: they were offered, our author states, *for sins*. In saying this there is little doubt that he has especially in mind all that was done by the high priest on the Day of Atonement, specifically related as it was to the expiation of the sins of all the people (Lev 16)." Hughes.

Hebrews 5:2

μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσι καὶ

πλανωμένοις ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περικείται

ἀσθένειαν,

μετριοπαθεω be gentle (with), have feeling (for)

δυναμαι see 4:15

ἀγνοεω not know, be ignorant, fail to understand

πλαναω lead astray, deceive

Refers to those who sin unwittingly as opposed to those who sin 'with a high hand'. Cf. Num 15:22-31.

ἐπει since, because, for
περικειμαι be surrounded, be beset with
ἀσθενεια, ας f see 4:15

Westcott says, "It may ... be noticed that Christ, as High-priest, has no weakness, though he sympathises with weakness (7:28; 4:15)." Hughes, on the contrary, says that Christ did know *weakness*, including "the ultimate weakness of death," but that he did not know sin.

Hebrews 5:3

καὶ δι' αὐτὴν ὀφείλει, καθὼς περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, οὕτως καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ προσφέρειν περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν.

δι αὐτὴν 'for this reason' i.e. because of his own weakness.

ὀφείλω ought, must, be bound
λαος, ου m people, a people
οὕτως thus, in this way
προσφερω see v.1

Cf. 7:27 where it is declared that this was unnecessary for Christ. The writer seems particularly to have the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement in mind (see Lev. 16:6).

Hebrews 5:4

καὶ οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν, ἀλλὰ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καθὼς περ καὶ Ἀαρῶν.

ἑαυτος, εαυτη, εαυτον him/her/itself
τιμη, ης f honour

I.e. the office. "It is not a human institution but a divine vocation." Hughes.

καθωσπερ as, just as

See by way of illustration, the incident with Korah and his companions recorded in Num 16:32f.

Hebrews 5:5

Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γενηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα, ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν· Υἱὸς μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε·

The first quotation is from Ps 2:7. "Our author has to establish in connection with Jesus' high priesthood, that he is Son of God, for only a high priest who is Son of God can have his rightful place at God's right hand. Only the Son can fittingly minister in the heavenly sanctuary, and only the intercession of the Son can have full efficacy with God." Montifiore.

οὕτως see v.3

The definite article, 'the Christ' focuses on office.

δοξαζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt
γενηθῆναι Verb, aor pass dep infin γινομαι
λαλεω speak, talk
σημερον today

This Psalm is also quoted in 1:5. Bruce says that in the mind of the writer 'this day' is the day of Christ's enthronement, "the day when the Most High gave public notice that he had exalted the crucified Jesus as 'both Lord and Christ' (Acts 2:36)."

γεγέννηκά Verb, perf act indic, 1 s γεννω
be father of, bear
σε Pronoun, acc s συ

Hebrews 5:6

καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει· Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ,

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

Psalm 110:4. Westcott points out the similarities between the LXX translations of Ps 110:3 and the quotation from Ps 2 above. Psalm 110 "describes the Divine Saviour under three aspects as: King (1-3); Priest (4); Conqueror (5-7)." Westcott. "The royal and the sacerdotal offices are united in him. The author of our epistle is, in effect, emphasising the truth that there is but *one Messiah*, unique both in his sonship and in his priesthood. By contrast, the adherents of the Dead Sea Sect looked for the coming of *two* messianic figures, a lay, royal (Davidic) personage and a priestly (Aaronic) personage... Of course, under the Qumran scheme a descendant of David, who belonged to the tribe of Judah, and a descendant of Aaron, who belonged to the tribe of Levi, could hardly be expected to coincide in one person. It is especially significant, then, that in the one person and category of Melchizedek, who was both king of Salem and priest of God Most High (Gen 14:18; Ps 110:1,4; Heb 7:1), there is a union of the royal and priestly functions." Hughes.

ἱερευς, εως m priest
αἰων, αιωνος m age, eternity

Christ has no successor.

ταξις, εως f order, division

"Two features in Melchizedek's priesthood appear to be specially present to the mind of the writer, 1. that it was connected with kingly office, and 2. that it was not made dependent on any fleshly descent or limited by condition of line ... He represents a non-Jewish, a universal priesthood. In relation to the Priesthood he occupies the position which Abraham occupies in relation to the Covenant." Westcott

Hebrews 5:7

ὃς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ δεήσεις τε καὶ ἰκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σώζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρῶν προσενέγκας καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας,

"Christ – the Son, the priest after the order of Melchizedek – has been shewn to have fulfilled one condition of true High-priesthood by his Divine appointment. He is now shewn to have fulfilled the other, as having learnt through actual experience the uttermost needs of human weakness." Westcott

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body

Emphasises the condition of human weakness that was his during his earthly life.

δεήσεις, εως f prayer, plea

τε καὶ and also

ἰκετηρία, ας f request, plea

δυναμῖαι be able to, be capable of

σώζω save, rescue

θανάτος, ου m death

κραυγή, ης f shout, cry

ἰσχυρός, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful

"There is a tradition that originally the High-priest on the Day of Atonement, when he offered the prayer for forgiveness in the Holy of Holies, uttered the name of God with a loud voice so that it could be heard far off." Westcott.

δακρῶν, ου n tear (as in weeping)

προσενέγκας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s

προσφέρω offer, present

Hughes comments, "The occasion intended is beyond doubt that of Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane... (Mk 14:32ff.)... The dread with which he approached the cross is explained, as Calvin says, by the fact that in the death which awaited him 'he saw the curse of God and the necessity to wrestle with the total sum of human guilt and with the very powers of darkness themselves.' The 'loud cries and tears' which accompanied Christ's supplication are to be understood, then, in relation to the indescribable darkness of the horror that he, our High Priest, was to pass through as, on the cross, he bore not only the defilement and guilt of the world's sin but also its judgment. At Gethsemane and at Calvary we see him enduring our hell so that we might be set free to enter into his heaven."

εἰσακουσθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
εἰσακουῶ hear (of prayer)

There are several interpretations of this verse:

- i) A rather odd suggestion is that he prayed not to die in Gethsemane (cf. Mk 14:34; Mt 26:38), but to be given grace to proceed to the cross (so Hewitt).
- ii) 'Able to save from death' refers to the character of God and not to the content of the prayer.
- iii) Christ prayed to be delivered from death but God delivered him from the fear of death (Montifiore) 'and being heard (was set free) from fear.' This understanding of the text is favoured also by Calvin, Owen, Bengel and Hering.
- iv) The first expression means able to save him out of death – i.e. raise him from the dead.
- v) God was able to save him from death but did not. Jesus was heard but not in the sense of a strict answer to prayer being granted. So this leads into v.8 concerning learning obedience/submission.
- vi) Harnack amends the text to "He was not heard for all His godly fear, Son though He was." (incorporating the first part of v.8). Westcott says, "The phrase [save from death] covers two distinct ideas, 'to save from physical death so that it should be escaped,' [and] 'to bring safe out of death into a new life.' In the first sense the prayer recorded in John 12:27 was not granted, that it might be granted in the second."

Hughes similarly, having noted that the phrase can mean either 'save from dying' or 'save out of death' comments, "The former deliverance would, indeed, have been welcome to Christ, who naturally shrank from draining the bitter cup that was now set before him; but he who had come to do the Father's will, which involved the offering up of his body for us (10:9f. below), turned away from the temptation to avoid the cross and held fast to the purpose of his coming, as he affirmed: 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done' (Mt 26:42). He was, however, 'saved from death' inasmuch as on the third day he rose triumphantly from the grave; and it is in this sense that *he was heard*, that is to say, his prayer was granted."

εὐλαβεια, ας f godly fear, reverence

"Watchfulness over ourselves, so as to avoid whatever might displease him." Delitzsch. Cf. 12:28. This noun cannot naturally be read as fear (terror) in the face of death.

Hebrews 5:8

καίπερ ὄν υἱός, ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν,

καίπερ though, although

"Son though he was" (Phillips, Bruce). Although he was the Son he went through the discipline of obedience – perhaps *because* he was the Son.

ἔμαθεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s μανθανω
learn, find out

ἔπαθεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πασχω
suffer, experience

ὑπακοη, ης f obedience

Learned obedience not in the sense that before he was disobedient but rather he learned what obedience to the will of God meant for him, namely suffering and death (cf. Phil 2:8 also Rom 5:19).

Hebrews 5:9

καὶ τελειωθείς ἐγένετο πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου,

τελειωθείς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
τελειωω make perfect, complete

For use of this term see 2:10; 7:11,14,28; 9:9,11. "This perfection was seen on the one side in the complete fulfilment of man's destiny by Christ through absolute self-sacrifice, and on the other in His exaltation to the right hand of God, which was in the divine order its due consequence." Westcott.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι
ὑπακουω obey, be subject to

"Having learnt to obey, he saves those who obey." Spicq.

"Here again, then, they are being reminded, as previously they have more forcefully been reminded (cf. 2:3; 3:12ff.; 4:11), that this great salvation belongs only to those who persevere in obedience to Christ." Hughes.

αἴτιος, ου m cause, source
σωτηρια, ας f salvation

"The perfection, then, of the Saviour's unstained manhood capacitated him to endure the ultimate suffering of the cross for us, who because of our own sin are stained and defeated and in need of salvation. It is thus, the perfection of his life leading up to the perfection of his death, that *he became the source of eternal salvation*. In this affirmation, too, the thought of Hebrews 2:10 is recapitulated, for the description of Christ here as 'the source of eternal salvation' corresponds to his designation there as 'the pioneer of our salvation.' He, and no one else, is the cause of man's redemption: it is from him that it flows to us." Hughes.

αἰωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

It is eternal salvation "because it is based on the sacrifice of Christ, once for all accomplished, never to be repeated and permanently valid." Bruce

Hebrews 5:10

προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.

προσαγορευθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
προσαγορευω designate, name
τάξις, εως f see v.6

Hebrews 5:11

Περὶ οὗ πολλὸς ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος καὶ δυσερμήνευτος λέγειν, ἐπεὶ νωθροὶ γεγόνατε ταῖς ἀκοαῖς·

περὶ οὗ may be taken as:

- i) 'about which', namely the high-priestly nature of Christ.
- ii) 'about whom', namely Jesus.
- iii) 'about whom', namely Melchizedek.

Westcott says "it seems best to interpret the οὗ of Christ as typified by Melchizedek or of Melchizedek as a type of Christ."

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much,
many

The singular, ὁ λογος refers to the teaching or discourse which the writer wished to deliver.

δυσερμηνευτος, ον hard to explain
ἐπει since, because, for

Expresses the reason for the difficulty: it is not simply because of the complex nature of the subject but is due to the condition of the hearers.

ωθρος, α, ον lazy, sluggish
γεγόνατε Verb, perf act indic γινομαι
ἀκοη, ης f report, news, hearing

They have lazy ears – they are reluctant to listen to anything which requires mental effort or exercise of spiritual discernment. The perfect tense of γινομαι expresses very clearly that this is a state they have sunk into – something they *have become*.

Hebrews 5:12

καὶ γὰρ ὀφείλοντες εἶναι διδάσκαλοι διὰ τὸν χρόνον, πάλιν χρεῖαν ἔχετε τοῦ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς τινὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ γεγόνατε χρεῖαν ἔχοντες γάλακτος, οὐ στερεᾶς τροφῆς.

ὀφείλω ought
εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι
διδασκαλος, ου m teacher

Not here implying an official office but simply that maturity of faith that enables a person to share or convey that faith to others (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).

χρονος, ου m time, period of time

δια χρονον 'by reason of time' i.e. 'by this time/ by now'.

παλιν again, once more
χρεια, ας f need, want
διδασκω teach

στοιχεια, ων n elements, basic principles
ἀρχη, ης f beginning, first principle

They need to be taken back to the ABCs of the faith.

λογια, ων n oracles, words, messages

των λογιων του Θεου cf. Rom 3:2; 1 Peter 4:11; Acts 7:38. "The phrase might refer to the new revelation given by Christ to His apostles (cf. 1:2); but it seems more natural to refer it to the collective writings of the O.T. which the Hebrew Christians failed to understand and so, through mistaken loyalty to the past, were in danger of apostasy." Westcott. Bruce also thinks it refers to teaching about the meaning of the O.T. Hughes says it is "the message and teaching of Christianity" cf. 6:1.

γεγόνατε Verb, perf act indic γινομαι
γαλα, γαλακτος n milk
στερεος, α, ον firm; solid (food)
τροφη, ης f food, nourishment

Cf. 1 Cor 3:1ff.; 1 Peter 2:2.

Hebrews 5:13

πᾶς γὰρ ὁ μετέχων γάλακτος ἄπειρος λόγου δικαιοσύνης, νήπιος γὰρ ἐστίν·

μετεχω share in, eat
ἀπειρος, ον inexperienced in,
unacquainted with
δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

In the light of the following verse, Motifore understands this to mean 'inexperienced in moral truth'.

Westcott thinks it refers to "teaching which deals at once with the source of righteousness in Christ, and the means by which man is enabled to be made partaker of it. The doctrine of Christ's priestly work is based on these conceptions." Hughes also favours this sense.

νηπιος, α, ον baby, infant, child

Hebrews 5:14

τελείων δέ ἐστιν ἡ στερεὰ τροφή, τῶν διὰ τὴν ἔξιν τὰ αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα ἐχόντων πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ.

τελειος, α, ον complete

The genitive here carries the force 'for mature people'.

ἐξις, εως f use, practice

δια ἐξιν by reason of, or on account of habit. Westcott says of ἐξις, which occurs here only in the NT, that it "expresses not the process but the result, the condition which has been produced by past exercise."

αἰσθητηριον, ου n power of discernment

Also here only in the NT. The faculties or senses of perception, "here used metaphorically of spiritual sensitivity." Hughes.

γεγυμνασμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc
πλ γυμναζω train, exercise; discipline

Cf. 12:11; 1 Tim 5:7. "Like the serious athlete who trains himself so that he is in the peak of condition for the contest, the mature Christian is equipped to face responsibly the demands and endure to the end the rigours of the conflict by the habitual exercise of his powers." Hughes.

διακρισις, εως f ability to discriminate
καλος, η, ον good
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong

Hebrews 6:1

Διὸ ἀφέντες τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερόμεθα, μὴ πάλιν θεμέλιον καταβαλλόμενοι μετανόιας ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων, καὶ πίστεως ἐπὶ θεόν,

διο therefore, for this reason
ἀφημι leave, forsake

Here meaning not forget but move beyond.

ἀρχη, ης f beginning, first principle

Westcott understands 'the beginning of Christ' to mean "the fundamental explanation of the fulfilment of the Messianic promises in Jesus of Nazareth."

"The first simple presentation of the gospel message." Hughes.

τελειότης, ητος f completeness; maturity
φερω bring, lead

By using the first person plural the author identifies himself with his readers. The passive voice suggests "personal surrender to an active influence." Westcott. I.e. the desire to be carried forward by God. Owen writes, "If the holy gales of the Spirit of God do breathe on us ... we are in a blessed tendency towards perfection."

παλιν again, once more

θεμελιος, ου m (also θεμελιον, ου n)
foundation

καταβαλλω midd lay (a foundation)

What is this foundation? Montefiore understands it to refer to basic *Christian* doctrine (as do Westcott and Hughes). Bruce understands it to be Jewish belief and practices which were used as a foundation on which Christian truth was then built. The six elements mentioned were, according to Bruce, characteristic both of Pharisaic and of non-conformist Judaism. The critical question focuses on the meaning of βαπτισμων.

μετανοια, ας f repentance

νεκρος, α, ον dead

From works that proceed from a dead (unregenerate) state and which lead to death. Westcott says "Dead works are not vaguely sins which lead to death, but works devoid of that element which makes them truly works. They have the form but not the vital power of works... All acts of man in himself, separated from God, are 'dead works'."

"This is the first step on the road which leads the sinner back home to the Father. It is the moment when he 'comes to himself' (Lk 15:17), and in doing so turns away from the course he has pursued to this point. Thus our author speaks of *repentance from*, and specifies that from which the repentant man turns as 'dead works.'" Hughes.

πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

Repentance and faith are closely associated in the NT as 'negative' and positive aspects of a single quality in the believer – abandoning trust in oneself in order to place trust wholly in God.

Hebrews 6:2

βαπτισμων διδαχην επιθεσεως τε χειρων,
αναστασεως τε νεκρων και κριματος αιωνιου.

βαπτισμος, ου m ritual washing, baptism

This noun is not used elsewhere in the NT of baptism.

διδαχη, ης f teaching

Montefiore argues that the plural is a reference to the baptisms of John and of Jesus. Westcott says it implies teaching about Christian baptism in relation to other ceremonial washings. This interpretation is favoured by Hughes who writes, "We conclude, then, that our author is returning here to instruction regarding washings and baptisms, but, quite naturally, with particular respect to Christian baptism, by which all others are surpassed and replaced."

επιθεσις, εως f laying on (of hands)

χειρ, χειρος f hand

Montefiore views this as a Christian rite (Acts 19:5). Westcott links it with the practice of Jesus in laying hands on many of those he healed and of the apostles in connection with the gift of the Spirit. Others think that the reference is to the laying on of hands which accompanied Jewish sacrifices or ordination. Bruce links these ideas, saying "The imposition of hands was an early Christian practice, associated especially with the impartation of the Holy Spirit, and this is most probably its significance here. But it too was inherited from the Old Testament, where it is used especially in commissioning someone for public office, or as part of the sacrificial ritual."

αναστασις, εως f resurrection, raising up
νεκρος, α, ον see v.1

Bruce says that while the resurrection of Christ gave special significance to this doctrine among Christians, it too has its foundation in the Old Testament.

κριμα, τος n judgement, condemnation
αιωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

Hughes draws attention to the fact that these eschatological elements of the faith are foundational for Christianity since, "the end is already present in the beginning, and the beginning is the window through which the end is viewed. Thus baptism, which is the first event, is the symbol of the judgment of the unregenerate life and of resurrection to new life in Christ, which, in its fulness, is the ultimate event; and the laying on of hands is the symbol of the eternal blessing which replaces the curse of man's fallenness borne by Christ on the cross."

Hebrews 6:3

καὶ τοῦτο ποιήσομεν ἂν ἄνθρωπος ἐπιτρέπη ὁ θεός.
ἐάν if

The reading ποιήσομεν 'we will do' is preferable to ποιήσωμεν 'let us do.'
The phrase 'this we will do' is "an expression of confidence on the part of the author in the reality of his readers' experience of grace and therefore in their capacity for instruction and spiritual progress." Hughes.

ἐπιτρέπω let, allow, permit

Hebrews 6:4

Ἀδύνατον γὰρ τοὺς ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας
γευσαμένους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου
καὶ μετόχους γεννηθέντας πνεύματος ἁγίου

He returns to the theme of apostasy touched on in 3:12ff.

ἄδυνατος, ον impossible

Much discussion surrounds the nature of this impossibility. The words of Bruce are helpful here, "In these verses he is not questioning the perseverance of the saints; we might say that rather he is insisting that those who persevere are the true saints. But in fact he is stating a practical truth that has verified itself repeatedly in the experience of the visible church. Those who have shared the covenant privileges of the people of God, and then deliberately renounce them, are the most difficult persons to reclaim to the faith. It is indeed impossible to reclaim them, says our author. We know of course, that nothing of this sort is ultimately impossible for the grace of God, but as a matter of human experience the reclamation of such people is, practically speaking, impossible."

ἅπαξ once, once for all time

φωτισθέντας Verb, aor pass ptc, m acc pl

φωτίζω give light to, enlighten

Cf. 10:32 also 2 Cor 4:4,6; Eph 5:8,11.

γευομαι taste, eat, experience

Cf. 1 Peter 2:3; Ps 34:8.

δωρεα, ας f gift

ἐπουρανιος, ον heavenly

Hughes rejects the attempt of some to link these words with the Eucharist.

μετοχος, ου m one who shares in, partner
γεννηθέντας Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m acc pl

γινομαι

Refers to experience of all the blessings of belonging to the community of God's people – an experience of the life of the age to come. Hughes links the last phrase with 2:4 and the charismatic gifts mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor 12:4ff.

Hebrews 6:5

καὶ καλὸν γευσασμένους θεοῦ ῥῆμα δυνάμεις τε
μέλλοντος αἰῶνος,

καλος, η, ον good, right, proper, fine,
beautiful, precious

ῥημα, ατος n word, thing, matter

Westcott thinks this refers to some general utterance such as "the confession of faith apprehended in its true character as an utterance of God." Hughes says the meaning is "the recipients of this letter had entered into the experience of the blessings that belong to the gospel."

μέλλω (ptc. without infin) coming, future
αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order, eternity

Bruce cites the example of Simon Magus in Acts 8:9ff, 18ff.

These expressions can only be understood of the church as the community of the age to come (see Acts 4:32-35). "The new creation is even now taking place in the lives and communities of Christian believers." Hughes.

Hebrews 6:6

καὶ παραπεσόντας, πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς
μετάνοιαν, ἀνασταυρόντας ἑαυτοῖς τὸν υἱὸν
τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παραδειγματίζοντας.

παραπεσόντας Verb, aor act ptc, m acc pl

παραπιπῶ fall away, commit apostasy

πάλιν again, once more

ἀνακαινίζειν Verb, pres act infin ἀνακαινίζω
restore

μετανοια, ας f see v.1

ἀνασταυρόντας Verb, pres act ptc, m acc pl

ἀνασταυροῶ crucify; crucify again

By apostasy and return to Judaism, they align themselves again with those who crucified the Lord (or who were instrumental in his crucifixion), and so, in effect, crucify him again. "It is the sin which brought the direst judgment upon the Israelites of old, and also the sin by which in the first days of the gospel their descendants proved themselves unworthy of eternal life (Acts 13:46). To enter into the light and then to reject the light in favour of the darkness of unbelief incurs the judgment of being broken off from the tree of life (cf. Rom 11:17ff.)." Hughes.

ἑαυτος, εαυτη, εαυτον him/her/itself

I.e. to their own loss.

παραδειγματίζοντας Verb, pres act ptc, m acc
pl παραδειγματίζω expose to public
ridicule

Cf. the variant form in Matt 1:19.

Hebrews 6:7,8

In verses 7 and 8 there is an allusion to the opening chapters of Genesis. Verse 7 refers back to the world under God's blessing (Gen 2:3) and verse 8 to the world under God's curse. Note that in the Genesis account it is the blessing of God which is *productive* of the fruit and the curse of God which is *productive* of the thorns and thistles. But, by that very token, the fruit of the land is *evidence* of God's blessing and, more than that, may even be said to constitute that blessing. In the same way the thorns and thistles are *evidence* of God's judgement and even constitute a vital element of that judgement.

There may be an element of that here too, but the 'parable' is used here to reinforce the admonition given: to taste and drink in the showers of God's provision in the gospel but then to respond with only thorns and thistles is to invite the consuming fire of God's judgment.

Hebrews 6:7

γῆ γὰρ ἢ πιούσα τὸν ἐπ' αὐτῆς ἐρχόμενον
πολλάκις ὑέτον, καὶ τίκτουσα βοτάνην εὖθετον
ἐκείνοις δι' οὓς καὶ γεωργεῖται, μεταλαμβάνει
εὐλογίας ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ·

γη, γης f earth, land

πιούσα Verb, aor act ptc, f nom s πινω
drink

πολλάκις often

ὑετος, ου m rain

τικτω bear, produce

βοτανη, ης f vegetation, crop

εὖθετος, ον fit, suitable, useful

ἐκεινος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that, he,
she, it

γεωργεω cultivate (of land)

μεταλαμβανω receive, share in

εὐλογία, ας f blessing, praise

Hebrews 6:8

ἐκφέρουσα δὲ ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους
ἀδόκιμος καὶ κατάρας ἐγγύς, ἧς τὸ τέλος εἰς
καῦσιν.

ἐκφερω bring out; produce

ἀκανθα, ης f thorn-plant

τριβολος, ου m briar, thistle

Hughes interprets the 'thorns and thistles' as
"hostility to the Son of God and conduct
incompatible with his profession."

ἀδοκιμος, ον failing to meet the test,
worthless

καταρα, ας f curse, something accursed

ἐγγυς adv near

τελος, ους n end, conclusion, termination

καυσις, εως f burning

See John 15:6; 1 Cor 3:15 and 2 Peter 3:12,13.

Hebrews 6:9

Πεπεισμεθα δὲ περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀγαπητοί, τὰ
κρείσσονα καὶ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας, εἰ καὶ οὕτως
λαλοῦμεν·

πεπεισμεθα Verb, perf pass indic, 1 pl πειθω
persuade; perf act & pass trust, rely on,
have confidence, be confident

Cf. 2 Cor 7:4. "The great principle which gives
rise to this confidence is the absolute
sovereignty of the God of grace and the
indefectibility of his work in the lives of men."
Hughes.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

The only occurrence of this word in this
epistle.

κρειπτων and κρεισσων, ον gen ονος
better

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

ἐχομενα σωτηριας 'Things that belong to
salvation'. "The presence of those things in the
readers' lives was a token of the presence of
salvation too, since they were so clearly and
inevitably bound up with salvation." Bruce

οὕτως thus, in this way

λαλεω speak, talk

Hebrews 6:10

οὐ γὰρ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιλαθέσθαι τοῦ ἔργου
ὑμῶν καὶ τῆς ἀγάπης ἧς ἐνεδείξασθε εἰς τὸ
ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, διακονήσαντες τοῖς ἀγίοις καὶ
διακονοῦντες.

ἀδικος, ον unjust

ἐπιλαθέσθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin

ἐπιλανθανομαι forget, neglect, overlook

Does not suggest meritorious works that
demand divine recompense but a life that
demonstrates the genuineness of the work of
God's grace and will therefore be owned by
God.

ἐνεδείξασθε Verb, aor midd indic, 2 pl

ἐνδεικνυμαι show

ὄνομα, τος n name

"The love shown to their fellow Christians ... is
for his sake, or, more literally, it is love shown
'to his name.' This implies that their coming to
the assistance of their brethren is evidence of
their willingness to identify themselves with
the stigma attaching to the name of Jesus, and
thus of the genuineness of their love for him."
Hughes.

διακονήσαντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl

διακονεω serve, care for

οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

The present participle is added to underline
that this is not just past conduct but is
continuing.

Cf. also 10:32ff for things which the readers had suffered for the 'name'

Hebrews 6:11

ἐπιθυμοῦμεν δὲ ἕκαστον ὑμῶν τὴν αὐτὴν ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδὴν πρὸς τὴν πληροφορίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἄχρι τέλους,

ἐπιθυμῶ long for, desire, lust after

A strong verb expressing passionate longing or an 'earnest wish' Phillips.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

He is not happy for any of them to bein to fall away – the expression of a pastor's heart.

σπουδῆ, ης f earnestness, eagerness, zeal

πληροφορία, ας f full assurance, conviction

Westcott says that πληροφορία means fullness and "it seems better to understand it here of the full development of hope rather than the full assurance of hope (1 Thess. 1:5)."

ἐλπίς, ιδος f hope, ground of hope

"The invitation to faith is not an invitation to inactivity but to the perseverance of pilgrimage, for Christ is not only the source but also the goal of our salvation, the end as well as the beginning. Faith indeed rests upon the alpha, but it also displays itself as hope directed towards the omega (cf. Rev 22:13)." Hughes.

ἄχρι prep with gen until, as far as
τέλος, ους n end, conclusion

Hebrews 6:12

ἵνα μὴ νωθροὶ γένησθε, μιμηταὶ δὲ τῶν διὰ πίστεως καὶ μακροθυμίας κληρονομοῦντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας.

νωθρος, α, ον lazy, sluggish

γένησθε Verb, aor midd depo subj, 2 pl
γινομαι

μιμητης, ου m imitator

πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

μακροθυμία, ας f longsuffering, patience

"'Faith' is the essential principle through which the blessing is gained and 'long-suffering' marks the circumstance under which faith has to be maintained." Westcott.

Westcott says that μακροθυμία is to be distinguished from ὑπομονή in that ὑπομονή is patience in the face of trial while μακροθυμία "expresses the trial of unfulfilled desire."

κληρονομεῶ receive, gain possession of, inherit

"The participle is a strict present. Believers even now enter on their inheritance (4:3), and with them the saints of old time enjoy the fulfilment of that for which they looked (12:22ff)." Westcott

ἐπαγγελία, ας f promise

Hebrews 6:13

Τῷ γὰρ Ἀβραάμ ἐπαγγειλάμενος ὁ θεός, ἐπεὶ κατ' οὐδενὸς εἶχεν μείζονος ὁμόσαι, ὥμοσεν καθ' ἑαυτοῦ,

"The example of Abraham establishes two things, the certainty of the hope which rests on a promise of God, and the need for patience in order to receive its fulfilment." Westcott.

Abraham is the great example of faith in the promises of God (see Matt 3:9; Lk 3:8; Gal 3:6; Rom 4:3,18,20f.; James 2:21f.).

ἐπαγγειλάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m
nom s ἐπαγγελλομαι promise

ἐπεὶ since, because

οὐδεις, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing

εἶχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἔχω

μείζων, ον and μείζοτερος, α, ον (comp of
μεγας) greater

ὁμόσαι Verb, aor act infin ὁμνῶ and

ὁμνυμι swear, vow, make an oath

Westcott suggests that the promise was first given and then later confirmed with an oath (see Gen 12:3,7; 13:14; 15:5ff; 17:5ff compared with Gen 22:16ff). He adds that the oath indicated that there would be delay in fulfilment but that also fulfilment was certain.

ὥμοσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ὁμνῶ

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

Hebrews 6:14

λέγων· Εἰ μὴν εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ σε·

The reference is to Gen 22:17 which is preceded by God's swearing by himself in v.16.

μὴν intensive particle indeed, surely

εὐλογῶ bless

This construction reflects the Hebrew infinitive absolute with the finite verb which expresses certainty "I will most certainly bless you."

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

πληθυνῶ increase, multiply

"It is of particular interest that the occasion was the offering up by Abraham of Isaac, the son of the promise, in obedience to the command of God. The patriarch's trust in the integrity of God and his promise could not have been put to a more severe test, for the fulfilment of the covenant which God had made with him depended on the life and the line of Isaac, and the instruction to slay his son had the appearance of the failure of the divine word (cf. Gen 12:2f.; 13:15f.; 15:5f., 18; 17:7, 9, 15, 19, 21; 18:18f.; 21:12). Abraham's confidence in that word and its fulfilment was so firm, however, that he obeyed without question the command to offer up his son Isaac, convinced, as our author points out in 11:19 below, that God would, if need be, raise him up from the dead and thus vindicate the trustworthiness of the promise." Hughes. The oath let Abraham know that just as his son had been spared, so surely would God fulfil all of the promises he had made to him.

Hebrews 6:15

καὶ οὕτως μακροθυμήσας ἐπέτυχεν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας.

οὕτως and οὕτω thus, in this way
μακροθυμεῶ be patient, wait patiently
ἐπέτυχεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἐπιτυγχάνω
obtain, receive
ἐπαγγελία, ας f promise, what is promised

Abraham received the immediate promise of a son but did not see the full promise of 'the seed' in whom all the nations of the world are blessed.

Concerning the *obtaining* of the promise, Hughes writes, "This the majority of the people of Israel, the nation descended from Abraham through Isaac, failed to do because of the hardness of their hearts; and this the Hebrew Christians to whom this latter is addressed are also in danger of failing to do, unless they imitate the faith and persistence of Abraham."

Hebrews 6:16

ἄνθρωποι γὰρ κατὰ τοῦ μείζονος ὁμνύουσιν, καὶ πάσης αὐτοῖς ἀντιλογίας πέρασ εἰς βεβαίωσιν ὁ ὄρκος·

μείζων, ον see v.13
ἀντιλογία, ας f argument, dispute
περας, ατος n end, boundary, conclusion
βεβαιώσις, εως f confirmation, establishing firmly
ὄρκος, ου m oath, vow

περας εἰς βεβαιώσιν ὁ ὄρκος 'the oath is final for confirmation'. Montifiore comments "An oath has a double function. Positively it adds moral and legal force to a statement (for who would dare to call God as a false witness?). Negatively, it ends controversy among men by introducing the testimony of God."

Hebrews 6:17

ἐν ᾧ περισσότερον βυλόμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιδειξάτω τοῖς κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκω,

περισσοτερον adv. more, more clearly
βουλομαι want, desire, wish

Westcott says that βουλομαι is to be distinguished from θελω in that the first indicates purpose with respect to something while the latter "the feeling in respect of the person himself."

ἐπιδειξάτω Verb, aor act infin ἐπιδεικνυμι
show, point out
κληρονομος, ου m heir, one who receives
what is promised (by God)

The promise was not for Abraham alone but for him and his heirs – including Christians (11:39) – heirs with him of the promise.

ἀμεταθετος, ον unchangeable; το α.
unchangeableness
βουλη, ης f purpose, plan, decision
μεσιτευω interpose; confirm, guarantee

The only occurrence of this verb in the NT.

Hebrews 6:18

ἵνα διὰ δύο πραγμάτων ἀμεταθέτων, ἐν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι θεόν, ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν ἔχωμεν οἱ καταφυγόντες κρατήσαι τῆς προκειμένης ἐλπίδος·

δύο gen & acc δύο dat δυσιν two
πραγμα, τος n matter, thing

The two things are:
i) the promise itself which, being a promise from "God who cannot lie," is certain in itself;
ii) the oath by which the promise is confirmed.

ἀμεταθετος, ον v.17
ἀδυνατος, ον impossible
ψεύσασθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin
ψευδομαι lie, speak untruth, deceive

The anarthrous use of θεος here shows that the reference is to the divine nature rather than person (so Westcott, Montifiore).

ἰσχυρος, α, ον strong, powerful
παρακλησις, εως f encouragement

The oath was added not to make the promise more certain but to strengthen faith in the certainty of the promise.

καταφυγόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
καταφευγω flee, flee for safety

May be an allusion to the 'cities of refuge' in the Old Testament. Montefiore says, "The city of God is the one true city of refuge."

κρατεω hold, hold fast, seize
προκειμαι be set before, lie before
ἐλπις, ιδος f hope

Hope rests in the promises and the promises have their focus in Christ – as the following verses make plain. So it is to Christ that Christian believers have fled for refuge.

Hebrews 6:19

ἦν ὡς ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν καὶ εἰσερχομένην εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος,

ἄγκυρα, ας f anchor
ψυχη, ης f self, inmost being, life, 'soul'
ἀσφαλῆς, ες safe, sure
βεβαιος, α, ον reliable, firm, effective

"The stability of hope is twofold. It is undisturbed by outward influences (ἀσφαλῆς), and it is firm in its inherent character (βεβαία)." Westcott

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in
ἐσώτερος, α, ον i) adj inner; ii) prep with gen behind, inside
καταπετασμα, τος n curtain

Our hope is Christ (cf. 1 Tim 1:1), whose present state is our certain destiny – the force of 'forerunner', v.20. He is 'the hope of glory' (Col 1:27).

Hughes quotes Herveus who says, "In the case of sailors, the sands in which the anchor is fixed and holds are hidden and invisible, and yet the sailors are secure, although they cannot see how the arms of the anchor are held. So also we, placed as we are amid the waves of this world, do not see the heavenly realities, and yet we are so joined to them through hope that we cannot be moved by any onset of fear."

Hebrews 6:20

ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσήλθεν Ἰησοῦς, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

ὅπου adv. where
προδρομος, ου m forerunner

ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν 'on our behalf'. Cf Jn 14:2.

Westcott highlights the new aspect of Christ's work, "The High-priest entered the Holy of Holies on behalf of the people, but they never followed him. Christ enters heaven as the forerunner of believers."

The word προσδρομος was used of the men or troops which were sent out to explore before the advance of an army.

εἰσήλθεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s εἰσερχομαι
τάξις, εως f order, division
ἀρχιερεὺς, εως m high priest
γενόμενος Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γινομαι
αἰών, αἰώνος m eternity

Hebrews 7

The theme of the distinctive High Priesthood of Jesus is picked up again with the reference to Melchizedek at the end of the previous chapter and leads into resumption of the argument suspended at 5:11.

Chapter 7 begins with a summary of the Genesis account concerning Melchizedek (vv.1-3) leading into an extended argument (vv.4-28) concerning the superiority of this priestly order. In the middle of this argument (vv. 12-19), there is a digression on the subject of how Jesus can be a priest since he is not of Levitical descent.

Hebrews 7:1

Οὗτος γὰρ ὁ Μελχισέδεκ, βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ, ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου, ὁ συναντήσας Ἀβραάμ ὑποστρέφοντι ἀπὸ τῆς κοπῆς τῶν βασιλέων καὶ εὐλογήσας αὐτόν,

βασιλεὺς, εως m king
ἱερεὺς, εως m priest
ὑψιστος, η, ον highest, most high

Cf. Gen 14:18.

συνανταω meet, happen
ὑποστρεφω return, turn back
κοπη, ης f slaughter, defeat
εὐλογεω speak well of, bless

"By the act of blessing, Melchizedek at once assumed the position of a superior. And Abraham on his part freely acknowledged Melchizedek's implied claim to superiority." Westcott

Hebrews 7:2

ὃ καὶ δεκάτην ἀπὸ πάντων ἐμέρισεν Ἀβραάμ, πρῶτον μὲν ἐρμηνευόμενος βασιλεὺς δικαιοσύνης ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ, ὃ ἐστὶν βασιλεὺς εἰρήνης,

δεκατη, ης f a tenth part, tithe
μεριζω divide, assign, apportion
πρωτον adv. first, in the first place

ἐρμηνεύω interpret; pass. mean, be translated

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness

ἔπειτα then, afterwards

εἰρήνη, ης f peace

"The meanings of the two names Melchizedek and Salem have been introduced to prove that righteousness and peace are combined in the Melchizedekian order of priesthood (cf. Is 9:6f). These qualities found fulfilment in Christ (1 John 2:1; Eph 2:14)." Montefiore. "In Christ we see the appearance of the expected everlasting king promised to David's line under whom righteousness flourishes and peace abounds (Ps 72:7; cf. Ps 97:2; 98:3,9); he is 'the Prince of Peace,' of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end (Isa 9:6f.); he is the long-awaited king who will speak peace to the nations (Zech 9:9f.), and 'the righteous Branch,' whose name is 'The Lord our Righteousness' and who administers justice in his glorious reign (Jer 23:5f.; 33:15f.). As king he is just, and as priest he justifies all who trust in his atoning sacrifice (Rom 3:26; 5:8f.)." Hughes.

Hebrews 7:3

ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων, ἀφομοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ, μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές.

ἀπατωρ, ορος without (record of) a father
ἀμητωρ, ορος without (record of) a mother
ἀγενεαλόγητος, ον without (record of) lineage

μητε and not; μητε ... μητε neither ... nor

ἀρχη, ης f beginning

ζωη, ης f life

τελος, ους n end

ἀφομοιωμένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s
ἀφομοιωω be like, resemble

μενω remain, stay, abide

διηνεκης, ες continuous; εἰς το δ. for all time; continually, perpetually

Montefiore says that the writer of Hebrews uses the Alexandrian principle, common in Philo, that "what is unmentioned in the Bible is presumed not to exist." Bruce takes a more balanced view stating that the author would have acknowledged that Melchizedek was *historically* a man who belonged to a dynasty of priest-kings. However, what was important was the *record* concerning Melchizedek in Scripture. Scripture, by what it includes and what it omits makes Melchizedek a fitting type of Christ.

Neither of these comments, however, does justice to Psalm 110. It is the Old Testament itself which links the Messiah with everlasting priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:4-10

Four arguments are provided for the superiority of Melchizedek:

- i. Abraham paid tithes to him;
- ii. Melchizedek blessed Abraham
- iii. Melchizedek's priesthood, in contrast with that of Levi, is permanent;
- iv. Levi himself (in a manner of speaking) paid tithes to Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:4

Θεωρεῖτε δὲ πηλίκος οὗτος ὃ δεκάτην Ἀβραάμ ἔδωκεν ἐκ τῶν ἀκροθινίων ὁ πατριάρχης.

θεωρεω see, observe, notice

πηλικος, η, ον how large, how great

δεκατη, ης f see v.2

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι

ἀκροθινιον, ου n spoils, plunder

πατριαρχης, ου m patriarch (one of the noted ancestors of the Jewish nation)

The definite article and the position of πατριαρχης in the sentence provide emphatic force. "The author draws his readers' attention to the remarkable consideration that Abraham, eminent patriarch though he was, gave Melchizedek a tithe of the spoils and was blessed by him." Hughes.

Hebrews 7:5

καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Λευὶ τὴν ἱερατείαν λαμβάνοντες ἐντολὴν ἔχουσιν ἀποδεκατοῦν τὸν λαὸν κατὰ τὸν νόμον, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τοῦς ἀδελφοῦς αὐτῶν, καίπερ ἐξεληλυθότας ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος Ἀβραάμ·

ιερατεια, ας f priestly office

This word occurs in the NT only here and in Luke 1:9. Westcott states that it differs from ἱερωσυνη (7:11,12,24) in that "it expresses the actual service of the priest and not the office of priesthood. The tithes were given to the 'children of Levi' 'for their service' (Num 18:21)."

ἐντολη, ης f command, order, instruction
ἀποδεκατωω give a tenth, tithe, exact

tithes from

λαος, ου m people, a people

νομος, ου m law

καιπερ though, although

ἐξεληλυθότας Verb, perf act ptc, m acc pl

ἐξερχομαι

ὀσφυς, υος f waist, reproductive organs

Hebrews 7:6

ὁ δὲ μὴ γενεαλογούμενος ἐξ αὐτῶν
δεδεκάτωκεν Ἀβραάμ, καὶ τὸν ἔχοντα τὰς
ἐπαγγελίας εὐλόγηκεν.

γενεαλογεομαι descend from

δεκατω collect tithes

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised
εὐλόγηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s εὐλογεω
see v.1

Westcott says of the perfect tenses in this verse, "The fact is regarded as permanent in its abiding consequences. It stands written in Scripture as having a present force." Westcott goes on to list the use of the perfect tense in Hebrews and its significance.

Hebrews 7:7

χωρὶς δὲ πάσης ἀντιλογίας τὸ ἔλαττον ὑπὸ τοῦ
κρείττονος εὐλογεῖται.

χωρὶς without, apart from

ἀντιλογία, ας f argument, dispute

ἐλαττον Adjective, nom/acc n s (variant
spelling) ἐλασσων, ον (comp of μικρος)
lesser, inferior

κρειττων and κρεισσων, ον gen ονος
better; greater, superior

It is remarkable that God had promised Abraham that in him and his seed, all nations of the world would be blessed, and yet Melchizedek blessed Abraham!

Hebrews 7:8

καὶ ὧδε μὲν δεκάτας ἀποθνήσκοντες ἄνθρωποι
λαμβάνουσιν, ἐκεῖ δὲ μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῆ.

ὧδε adv here

δεκατη, ης f see v.2

ἀποθνησκω die, face death, be mortal

Levitical priests were mortal but
Melchizedekian priests immortal (Ps 110:4).

ἐκει there, in that place, to that place
μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify
ζῆ Verb, pres act indic, 3s ζω live, be
alive

Of the phrase 'that he lives' Bruce says that it is true "of Melchizedek in the sense that we never read of him otherwise than as a living man; of Christ absolutely – in the sense that, having died once for all and risen from the dead, he is alive for evermore (see vv 16, 23-25 and cf. Rev 1:18; Rom 6:9)."

Hebrews 7:9

καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, δι' Ἀβραάμ καὶ Λεὶνὸν ὁ
δεκάτας λαμβάνων δεδεκάτωται,

ἔπος, ους n word; ὡς ἔπος εἶπεν so to
speak

"This classical phrase does not occur elsewhere in the NT." Westcott

δεδεκάτωται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s
δεκατω collect tithes; pass. pay tithes

Hebrews 7:10

ἔτι γὰρ ἐν τῇ ὁσφύϊ τοῦ πατρὸς ἦν ὅτε
συνήνησεν αὐτῷ Μελχισέδεκ.

ἔτι still, yet

ὁσφυς, υος f see v.5

πατὴρ Noun, gen s πατηρ, πατρος m
father

ὅτε conj when, at which time

συνανταω see v.1

"In this historic encounter, then, what was established was not simply a precedent but a whole relationship, the significance of which is permanent: namely, that the order of Melchizedek, fulfilled in Christ, is superior to the order of Levi, which with the advent of Christ is surpassed and superseded." Hughes.

Hebrews 7:11-28

The writer now argues that the Levitical priesthood has been replaced by Jesus' Melchizedekian priesthood. The argument is similar, in some respects, to that of Paul in Romans 4 and Galatians 3 where he argues that the law was transitory in nature.

"The Levitical priesthood and the Law, which it represented, were alike transitional and transitory... If ... there had been a bringing to perfection through the Levitical priesthood – if in other words there had been a bringing to perfection through the Law – there would have been no need for another priesthood." Westcott.

Hebrews 7:11

Εἰ μὲν οὖν τελείωσις διὰ τῆς Λευιτικῆς
ἱερωσύνης ἦν, ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῆς
νενομοθέτηται, τίς ἔτι χρειαῖα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν
Μελχισέδεκ ἕτερον ἀνίστασθαι ἱερέα καὶ οὐ
κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Ἀαρὼν λέγεσθαι;

τελειωσις, εως f fulfilment, perfection

I.e. perfection of the worshipper or in respect of the worshipper's relationship with God.

Λευιτικος, η, ον Levitical

ἱερωσυνη, ης f priesthood

See the note on verse 5.

λαος, ου m people, a people

νενομοθέτηται Verb, pluperfect pass indic, 3
s νομοθετομαι be given the law

ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῆς νενομοθέτηται on the basis of it or in association with it (the Levitical priesthood) the people were given the law. I.e. the institution of the Levitical priesthood was laid down as part of the body of Mosaic law.

ἔτι still, yet

χρεία, ας f need

ταξίς, εως f order, division

"The appearance of Melchizedek on the stage of patriarchal history is fleeting and dramatic. He is identified as king of Salem and priest of the Most High God, but nothing is said in Genesis 14 about an *order* of Melchizedek. Only in Psalm 110, in the mainstream, as it were, of the history of the Israelites, is there an isolated, and for this reason cryptic mention of one who is 'a priest after the order of Melchizedek.' The psalm, which expresses the expectation of the establishment of a messianic priesthood and kingdom, was written some hundreds of years after the inauguration of the Levitical order... Thus the plain implication of this flash of revelation is that the old and inferior order is to be superseded by a new and superior order, which, compared with the inadequate and temporary nature of the former, will be distinguished by full and abiding efficacy." Hughes.

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

ἀνίστασθαι Verb, pres midd infin ἀνίστημι raise; midd rise, arise

Cf Acts 3:22

ἱερεὺς, εως m priest

"If God had intended the Aaronic priesthood to introduce the age of perfection, the time when man would enjoy unfettered access to Him, why should He have conferred on the Messiah (in Ps 110) a priestly dignity of His own – different from Aaron's and by implication superior to Aaron's?" Bruce

Hebrews 7:12-19

The mention of the Levitical nature of the priesthood (v.11) leads into a digression on how Jesus can be a priest since he is not of Levitical descent. Two arguments are used:

- i) The words 'order of Melchizedek' imply an abandoning of the old order, i.e. that involving Levitical descent;
- ii) The old order required a principle of descent because of the transitory nature of those who hold office. In Jesus we have an eternal priesthood and an everlasting Priest.

Hebrews 7:12

μετατιθεμένης γὰρ τῆς ἱερωσύνης ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ νόμου μετὰθεσις γίνεται.

μετατιθεμι remove, take back

ἀνάγκη, ης f necessity

μεταθεσις, εως f removal, change

Since the priesthood formed part of the Law, it could not be changed without a change in or removal of the Law.

Hebrews 7:13

ἐφ' ὃν γὰρ λέγεται ταῦτα φυλῆς ἑτέρας μετέσχηκεν, ἀφ' ἧς οὐδεὶς προσέσχηκεν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ·

ἐφ' ὃν γὰρ λέγεται ταῦτα i.e. Ps 110, speaking of the Messiah from David's line, from the tribe of Judah.

φυλή, ης f tribe, nation, people

ἕτερος, α, ον see v.11

μετέσχηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s μετεχω share in, belong to

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδέν no one, nothing

προσέσχηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s

προσεχω pay close attention to, watch

θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar (of incense)

Hebrews 7:14

πρόδηλον γὰρ ὅτι ἐξ Ἰούδα ἀνατέταλκεν ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν, εἰς ἣν φυλὴν περὶ ἱερέων οὐδὲν Μωϋσῆς ἐλάλησεν.

προδηλος, ον very obvious or evident

Ἰούδα Noun, gen s Ἰουδας

This and Rev 5:5 are the only references, apart from the nativity genealogies, that refer to Jesus' descent from Judah.

ἀνατέταλκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s

ἀνατελλω rise, dawn, shine

Cf. Mal 4:2. The use of this verb carries a distinctly messianic connotation.

λαλεω speak, talk

Hebrews 7:15-19

An exposition of the imperfections of the Levitical order.

Hebrews 7:15

Καὶ περισσότερον ἔτι κατάδηλόν ἐστιν, εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὁμοίότητα Μελχισέδεκ ἀνίσταται ἱερεὺς ἕτερος,

περισσότερος, α, ον adj more, much more

ἔτι see v.11

κατάδηλος, ον very evident

This word occurs here alone in the NT

ὁμοιοτης, ητος f likeness, similarity

ἀνίσταται Verb, pres midd indic, 3 s

ἀνίστημι see v.11

Hebrews 7:16

ὅς οὐ κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης γέγονεν
ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύναντιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου,

ἐντολή, ης f command

σαρκινος, η, ον fleshly, belonging to this world

So termed because it was concerned with the externalities of religion – the physical descent of the priests; a physical temple etc.

γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

ζωη, ης f life

ἀκαταλυτος, ον indestructible, without end

"There is a double contrast between 'law' and 'power' and between 'commandment of flesh' and the 'indissoluble life'... The possession of the indissoluble life is not only the characteristic of Christ's exercise of His priestly office: it is the ground on which he enters upon it. Other priests were made priests by virtue of special ordinance: He was made priest in virtue of His inherent nature. He could be, as none other, victim at once and priest."

Westcott

Hebrews 7:17

μαρτυρεῖται γὰρ ὅτι Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα
κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.

μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify

αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

The Aaronic priesthood itself is described as "an everlasting priesthood" (Ex 40:15; Jer 33:18), but no individual member of the priesthood is described as an everlasting priest.

On the phrase κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ Hughes writes, "There is, however, no more than a *likeness* between Christ and Melchizedek, a likeness which is suggested by the mysterious silence of the Genesis narrative concerning the birth and death and the parentage and posterity of Melchizedek.

Within this setting, the figure of Melchizedek is a semblance or shadow, a signpost pointing to someone greater than himself. He is like a primeval John the Baptist who testifies in effect: 'After me comes one who ranks before me, for he was before me' (Jn 1:30). The *reality* foreshadowed by Melchizedek is Christ, the one who is *for ever*, first, because he is the eternal Son, and, second, because by his incarnation and sacrifice of himself he *has become* mankind's high priest, who by the power of his resurrection from the dead and the glory of his exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high has redeemed and raised up with himself our fallen nature. He who died once for us now lives, never again to die (Rom 1:4; 6:9; 1 Cor 15:20). The crown has followed the cross, and it is this *power of an indestructible life* which guarantees that he is indeed our priest *for ever*."

Hebrews 7:18

ἀθέτησις μὲν γὰρ γίνεται προαγούσης ἐντολῆς
διὰ τὸ αὐτῆς ἀσθενὲς καὶ ἀνωφελές,

ἀθετησις, εως f nullification, abrogation

Occurs in the NT only here and in 9:26. A legal term for an annulment.

προαγω go before; ptc. foregoing, former ἐντολή, ης f see v.16

Particularly the legislation regarding the levitical priesthood and associated sacrifices.

ἀσθενης, ες sick, weak, helpless

ἀνωφελης, ες useless(ness)

The law offers no help.

Hebrews 7:19

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν ὁ νόμος, ἐπεισαγωγή δὲ
κρείττονος ἐλπίδος, δι' ἧς ἐγγίζομεν τῷ θεῷ.

τελειωω make perfect

Particularly the sacrificial system.

ἐπεισαγωγή, ης f bringing in

ἐπεισαγωγή δε – the completion of the μὲν ... δε phrase begun in verse 18 concerning the abrogation of the old.

κρειττων and κρεισσων, ον gen ονος
better; greater, superior

"The comparison is between the commandment characteristic of the Law and the hope characteristic of the Gospel; and not between the temporal hope of the Law and the spiritual hope of the Gospel." Westcott

ἐλπις, ἰδος f hope

ἐγγιζῶ approach, draw near

The comments of Bruce are helpful here. He says, "The psalmist who cried 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity' (Ps 32:1f) knew the blessedness of a peaceful conscience; and his colleague who said, 'It is good for me to draw near unto God' (Ps 73:28), knew that access to the divine presence was always available to the man of faith. But these experiences had nothing to do with the Levitical ritual or the Aaronic priesthood. The whole apparatus of worship associated with that ritual and priesthood was calculated rather to keep men at a distance from God than to bring them near. But the 'hope set before us' in the Gospel is better because it accomplishes this very thing that was impossible under the old ceremonial; it enables Christians to 'draw nigh unto God.'" Cf. Rom 8:3.

Calvin comments, "The person who still holds to or wishes to restore the shadows of the law not only obscures the glory of Christ but also deprives us of a tremendous blessing, in that he puts a distance between us and God, to approach whom freedom has been granted in the gospel."

Hebrews 7:20

Καὶ καθ' ὅσον οὐ χωρὶς ὀρκωμοσίας (οἱ μὲν γὰρ χωρὶς ὀρκωμοσίας εἰσὶν ἱερεῖς γεγονότες,

As in the case of the promise to Abraham (cf. 6:13ff.), so with priesthood after the order of Melchizedek (Ps 110:4), the promise was accompanied by an oath. Hughes comments, "It is a matter of exceptional significance that the covenant with Abraham and the declaration concerning the priestly order of Melchizedek were both confirmed by God with an oath, for under these two heads all the gracious promises and prophecies which precede the coming of Christ are gathered, and with the coming of Christ both the evangelical covenant and the evangelical priesthood burst into fulfilment."

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as
χωρὶς prep with gen without, apart from
ὀρκωμοσία, ας f oath, taking of an oath

"The Law is an expression of the sovereign power of God who requires specific obedience: the oath implies a purpose of love not to be disturbed by man's unworthiness." Westcott

γεγονότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl
γίνομαι

Hebrews 7:21

ὁ δὲ μετὰ ὀρκωμοσίας διὰ τοῦ λέγοντος πρὸς αὐτόν· Ὁμοσεν κύριος, καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται, Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα),

ὤμοσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ὁμνυω and ὁμνυμι swear, make an oath
μεταμεληθήσεται Verb, fut pass dep indic, 3 s μεταμελομαι change one's mind

Because no oath was attached to the Aaronic priesthood, so it could be annulled. But, in contrast concerning the Melchizedekian priesthood, God has sworn and will not go back on his word.

Hebrews 7:22

κατὰ τοσοῦτο κρείττονος διαθήκης γέγονεν ἔγγυος Ἰησοῦς.

τοσοῦτος, αστη, ουτον / ουτο correlative adj
so much

κρείττων see v.19

διαθήκη, ης covenant

A passing mention of 'covenant' before turning to consider the theme in chapter 8.

γένεον Verb, perf act indic, 3s γίνομαι
ἐγγυος, ου m guarantor, guarantee

Only here in the NT. The term was common in legal and promissory notes of the period. "The ἐγγυος undertakes weightier responsibility than the μεσιτης, he is answerable for the fulfilment of the obligation which he guarantees." Bruce "Jesus – the Son of man – having entered into the presence of God for man is the sure pledge of the validity of the New Covenant ... A surety for the most part pledges himself that something will be: but here the Ascended Christ witnesses that something is: the assurance is not simply of the future but of that which is present though unseen." Westcott

Hebrews 7:23

Καὶ οἱ μὲν πλείονες εἰσὶν γεγονότες ἱερεῖς διὰ τὸ θανάτῳ κωλύεσθαι παραμένειν·

πλειων, πλειον ογ πλεον more, many, a
larger number

γεγονότες see v.20

θανατος, ου m death

κωλυω hinder, prevent

παραμενω remain, continue in office

Hebrews 7:24

ὁ δὲ διὰ τὸ μένειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα
ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην·

μενω remain, stay, abide

ἀπαράβατος, ον permanent, untransferable

Westcott says that this word implies that "Christ's Priesthood is His alone, open to no rival claims, liable to no invasion of its function.

ἱερωσυνή, ης f see v.11

Hebrews 7:25

ὅθεν καὶ σώζειν εἰς τὸ παντελὲς δύναται τοὺς
προσερχομένους δι' αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ, πάντοτε
ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν.

ὅθεν therefore, for which reason

σωζω save, rescue

παντελής, ες complete; εἰς το π. fully,
completely, forever

"The salvation wrought by Christ reaches to the last element of man's nature and man's life." Westcott

δυναμαι can, be able to

προσερχομαι come or go to, approach

παντοτε always

ζαω live, be alive

ἐντυγχανω turn to (God on behalf of), plead,
appeal

"He pleads our cause with the Father (1 John 2:1 παρακλητος), and makes the prayers heard which we know not how to shape." Westcott. And the Father most willingly answers these prayers, cf. Rom 8:37.

"His eternal session in heaven, since his ascension, results in the ceaseless maintenance of this priestly ministry ... His intercession is not the humble prayer of a suppliant, but the confident plea of an advocate. Aaron bore the names of the children of Israel on the breastplate of judgement when he went into the Holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually (Ex 28:29). But Jesus, the high priest of the heavenly sanctuary, lives for ever to intercede for all time with God himself." Montefiore

It is impossible to pray for someone and, at the same time, to forget them. Christ is able to save because he has his people always and individually at the centre of his thoughts.

Hebrews 7:26-28

These verses focus on the perfection of Jesus' high priesthood and his self-offering, preparing the way for an exposition of the heavenly sanctuary (chapter 8) and of Jesus' self-sacrifice (chapters 9-10).

Hebrews 7:26

Τοιοῦτος γὰρ ἡμῖν καὶ ἔπρεπεν ἀρχιερεὺς,
ὁσῖος, ἄκακος, ἀμίαντος, κεχωρισμένος ἀπὸ
τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν, καὶ ὑψηλότερος τῶν
οὐρανῶν γενόμενος·

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and
adjective such, of such kind

πρεπει impers verb it is fitting, it is proper

Τοιοῦτος γὰρ ἡμῖν καὶ ἔπρεπεν ἀρχιερεὺς 'such a high priest exactly befitted us,' "that is to say, answered exactly to the requirements of the predicament in which we, as fallen creatures, were placed." Hughes. Cf 2:10. Jesus has inherent fitness for the office of Mediator unlike the Levitical priests who were ritually made fit.

ὁσῖος, α, ον holy

Westcott says that ἅγιος marks consecration, devotion; ὁσῖος marks a particular moral position. Hughes remarks that this adjective has specifically messianic connotations in the thought of the apostles reflecting Ps 16:10 (see Acts 2:27; 13:35).

ἀκακος, ον innocent

ἀμίαντος, ον pure, undefiled, unstained

Some suggest that these qualities describe Christ respectively in relation to God, to other men and to himself. These qualities were necessary for him to offer the sacrifice of *himself* on our behalf (v.27).

κεχωρισμένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s

χωρίζω separate; pass. separate

oneself, be separated

ἀμαρτωλος, ον sinful, sinner

"The complete separation of the Lord from sinners which was realised through His life (John 14:30) was openly established by His victory over death at the Resurrection (Acts 2:24); and that victory is the foundation of His present work." Westcott.

Hughes underlines that this is not a quasi-physical separation, for "the epistle as a whole ... emphasises *nearness* rather than remoteness... The separateness of Christ from sinners of which our author speaks here points rather to his separation from that which constitutes them sinners, namely their sin." Calvin similarly says, "He is described as separated from us not because he rejects us from his society, but because he is uniquely distinguished from us in that he is free from all defilement."

ὑψηλότερος, α, ον higher, above

(comparitive of ὑψηλος)

οὐρανός, ου m heaven

This also is an element that enables him to be the high priest we need for he is our mediator in the presence of God.

Hebrews 7:27

ὃς οὐκ ἔχει καθ' ἡμέραν ἀνάγκην, ὥσπερ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς, πρότερον ὑπὲρ τῶν ἰδίων ἀμαρτιῶν θυσίας ἀναφέρειν, ἔπειτα τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ (τοῦτο γὰρ ἐποίησεν ἐφάπαξ ἑαυτὸν ἀνενέγκας)·

ἀνάγκη, ης f necessity

ὥσπερ as, just as

πρότερον adv προτερον first of all

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

ἀμαρτια, ας f sin

θυσια, ας f sacrifice

ἀναφρω offer (of sacrifice)

Many commentators object that the High priest only offered up sacrifices for himself and then for the rest of the community *once a year* on the day of atonement. Hughes considers the suggestion that these words may reflect first century practice but, having considered this and several other interpretations, concludes, "It is perhaps best to suppose that our author is speaking both generally and particularly in this verse, in such a way that when he says 'daily' he has in mind the complex daily sacrificial routine performed by high priest as well as priests, whereas when he says 'first for his own sins and then for those of the people' his thought is moving from the general to the particular, and is in fact beginning to focus on that great festival which was the annual consummation of the whole sacrificial system. Certainly, from now on, the centre of interest becomes the significance of the entry of our Melchizedek into the heavenly holy of holies once for all, in fulfilment of the typology of the entry of the Aaronic high priest into the earthly holy of holies once a year, and his opening of the way for us into the divine presence, in contrast to the Levitical dispensation under which the people were totally excluded from the innermost sanctuary."

ἔπειτα then, afterwards

λαος, ου m people, a people

ἐφάπαξ adv. once for all time

This, and its simpler form *ἀπαξ* are central concepts in this epistle. Taken together these words occur 11 times. *ἐφάπαξ* is the more emphatic form.

ἑαυτος, εαυτη, εαυτον him/her/itself

ἀνενέγκας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s

ἀναφρω

Hebrews 7:28

ὁ νόμος γὰρ ἀνθρώπους καθίστησιν ἀρχιερεῖς ἔχοντας ἀσθενεῖαν, ὁ λόγος δὲ τῆς ὀρκωμοσίας τῆς μετὰ τὸν νόμον υἱόν, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον.

καθιστημι and καθιστανω put in charge, appoint

ἀσθενεια, ας f weakness

"This 'weakness' includes both the actual limitations of humanity as it is, and the personal imperfections and sins of the particular priest." Westcott. Hughes comments, "Because of their weakness these former high priests were incapable of making an atonement infinite in worth and eternal in its effect."

ὀρκωμοσια, ας f see v.20

Cf. Ps 110:4.

μετὰ τὸν νόμον i.e. showing the imperfection of the law in that the oath instituted another priesthood.

υἱόν The theme of the Son is central to this epistle, cf. 1:1,5,8,13; 3:5 etc. Part of the contrast here is between the plural ἀνθρώπους and the singular υἱόν.

τετελειωμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n nom/acc s τελειωω make perfect

"This verse condenses and recapitulates within the briefest possible compass the main themes of the epistle up to this point." Hughes.

Hebrews 8:1-6

The focus moves onto the theme of the new Sanctuary. There are not only aspects of discontinuity but also typological affinities between the old system of the sanctuary set up under Moses and the eternal order of Melchizedek established in Christ.

Hebrews 8:1

Κεφάλαιον δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις, τοιοῦτον ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα, ὃς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, κεφαλαιον, ου n main point, summary

The main point is that "it is precisely *such a high priest that we have*: he is real and he is ours!" Hughes.

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and adjective such, of such kind

ἐκάθισεν ... for this phrase, cf. 1:3. The sense here is that Christ has 'taken his seat'.

θρονος, ου m throne

οὐρανος, ου m heaven

τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς a reverential periphrasis for God.

"Unlike the earthly priesthods, that of the Son of God is performed in heavenly glory with a dignity that is kingly and a power that is divine." Spicq.

Hebrews 8:2

τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς, ἣν ἔπηξεν ὁ κύριος, οὐκ ἄνθρωπος, ἅγιος, α, ον holy

τῶν ἁγίων is probably to be taken as neuter, referring to holy things or to the sanctuary. A number of patristic authors treated it as masculine, 'among the saints,' or 'a minister of the saints.'

λειτουργος, ου m servant, minister

"Christ serves though He reigns and reigns in serving." Westcott. The noun λειτουργος specifically designates the priestly minister in Is 61:6 and Jer 33:21.

σκηνη, ης f tent, tabernacle, dwelling place

"The general thought is that of the immediate presence of God." Westcott

ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true

"In contrast to the perishable tent or tabernacle which accompanied the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings, the heavenly reality into which the ascended Lord has entered is the genuine sanctuary, the imperishable holy of holies." Hughes. Cf. 9:24.

Owen interprets the 'true tent' here and 'greater and more perfect tent' of 9:11 to mean the body or humanity of Christ. This sense is unlikely.

ἔπηξεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s πηγνυμι put up, pitch (a tent)

Cf. Num 24:6.

Hebrews 8:3

πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰς τὸ προσφέρειν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας καθίσταται· ὅθεν ἀναγκαῖον ἔχει τι καὶ τοῦτον ὃ προσενέγκη.

προσφερω offer, present

δωρον, ου n gift, offering

θυσια, ας f sacrifice

καθίσταται Verb, pres pass indic, 3 s

καθιστημι see 7:28

ὅθεν where, from where, therefore, for which reason

ἀναγκαῖος, α, ον necessary

προσενέγκη Verb, aor act subj, 3 s

προσφερω

"The one sufficient offering was made by Christ as the condition of entrance into the sanctuary *through His own blood* (9:12). On this His intercession is based. That intercession knows no end or interruption; and therefore no second offering is required ... Many have interpreted the τι of 'the Blood'. But the Blood was not properly 'offered' in the Holy of Holies on the Day of atonement (yet see 9:7). It was used as the means of entrance and purification. Even so Christ entered into the Divine Presence through (δῖα) His own Blood (9:12), and by that purifies 'the heavenly things' (9:23) and the people (13:12); but we do not read that He 'offered' it." Westcott.

Bruce thinks that the aorist προσενεγκη indicates a reference to Christ's once-for-all sacrifice. Montefiore similarly argues that the offering is past, "Jesus' present ministry in heaven is intercession, not offering, and so it was in the past that he had to have had something to offer."

Hebrews 8:4

εἰ μὲν οὖν ἦν ἐπὶ γῆς, οὐδ' ἂν ἦν ἱερεὺς, ὄντων τῶν προσφερόντων κατὰ νόμον τὰ δῶρα·

γη, γης f earth, land

ἂν particle indicating contingency

I.e. Christ was not of the tribe of Levi. Cf. 7:14.

νομος, ου m law

δωρον, ου n see v.3

"The statement in the present tense that 'there are priests who offer gifts according to the law,' is another of the indications in this epistle that the Levitical priesthood was still in existence when it was written, and thus that the Jerusalem temple was still standing, with the consequence that the date of composition must have been prior to AD 70." Hughes.

Hebrews 8:5

(οἵτινες ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσιν τῶν ἐπουρανίων, καθὼς κεκηρύχθη Μωϋσῆς μέλλων ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν σκηνήν, Ὅρα γάρ, φησίν, ποιήσεις πάντα κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν δειχθέντα σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει)·

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἡτις, ὁ τι who, which

ὑποδειγμα, τος n example

Here, maybe 'plan,' cf. Ezek 42:15 LXX.

σκια, ας f shadow, foreshadowing

Cf. 10:1; Col 2:17.

λατρευω serve, worship

ἐπουρανιος, ον heavenly

κεκηρύχθη Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s

κηρυματιζω instruct, reveal

Carries the sense of Divine direction.

μελλω be going, be about, intend
 επιτελεω complete, accomplish

Here has the sense of 'put into effect' rather than 'complete.'

σκηνη, ης f see v.2

οραω see, observe; make sure

The reference here is to Ex. 25:40.

φησιν Verb, pres act indic, 3 s φημι say
 τυπος, ου m pattern, example, type

It is claimed by some that the author of Hebrews is influenced by Philo, especially in his contrast between the earthly type and the heavenly αληθινος. But, as Bruce puts it, the thought is rather that the whole of the Levitical order foreshadowed the spiritual order of the New Covenant (cf. 10:1). The new not only replaces the old, it fulfils it, for the old was designed to point to the reality of the new.

δειχθέντα Verb, aor pass ptc, m acc s

δεικνω show

ορος, ους n mountain

Against the suggestion that the author of this Epistle is influenced by Philo, Hughes comments "It is idle to inquire concerning the manner in which Moses was shown the pattern of the tabernacle at Sinai... The instructions Moses received on the mountain were followed in the construction of the tabernacle, but we may be sure that we who live after the advent of Christ have a clearer comprehension of its typological significance than he had, man of faith though he was (11:23ff.; cf. 1 Pet 1:10-12)."

Hebrews 8:6

νονι δε διαφορωτέρας τέτυχεν λειτουργίας,
 ὅσῳ καὶ κρείττονός ἐστιν διαθήκης μεσίτης,
 ἥτις ἐπὶ κρείττοσιν ἐπαγγελίαις νενομοθέτηται.

νονι (originally an emphatic form of νυν)

now

The force is primarily logical rather than temporal.

διαφορωτερος, α, ον superior, far superior
 (comp. of διαφορος)

τέτυχεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s τυγχανω
 obtain, receive

λειτουργια, ας f service

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as
 κρειττων see 7:19

διαθηκη, ης covenant

μεσιτης, ου m mediator, intermediary

"μεσιτης describes the action of Christ at the establishment of the New Covenant, as ἐγγυος (7:22) describes the position which He holds towards men by assuring them of its validity."

Westcott

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι who, which

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise

Cf. Jn 1:17. The 'better promises' are those connected with the New Covenant as prophesied in Jer 31:31ff – cf. vv8-12.

νενομοθέτηται Verb, pluperfect pass indic, 3

s νομοθετεομαι be given the law; be

based on

Westcott prefers 'enacted.' Hughes says the meaning is 'legally secured.'

Hebrews 8:7-13

"The teaching of the prophets bears witness to the superiority of the New order over the Old... for if the first Covenant had completely fulfilled the purpose to which a Covenant between God and man is directed, then there would have been no room for another."

Westcott

Hebrews 8:7

Εἰ γὰρ ἡ πρώτη ἐκεῖνη ἦν ἄμεμπτος, οὐκ ἂν δευτέρας ἐζητεῖτο τόπος·

πρωτος, η, ον first

ἐκεινος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that

ἀμεμπτος, ον blameless, faultless

The fault lay not with the Covenant itself but with those who received it as is clear from the opening words of the next verse.

δευτερος, α, ον second

ζητεω seek, search for, look for

τοπος, ου m place, opportunity

On this phrase, cf. 12:17; Rom 12:19; Acts 25:16.

Hebrews 8:8

μεμφόμενος γὰρ αὐτοὺς λέγει· Ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, λέγει κύριος, καὶ συντελέσω ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰούδα διαθήκην καινὴν,

μεμφομαι find fault with, blame

The variants αὐτοὺς (8* A D *et al*) and αὐτοῖς (p⁴⁶ 8^c B D^c Byz *et al*) are fairly evenly supported. Metzger reports of the UBS Committee that "Observing the direction in which scribal corrections moved, a majority of the Committee preferred the reading αὐτοὺς." Hughes argues that αὐτοῖς makes more sense in context. He argues that God does not find fault with them but with the covenant and so reads, 'for he finds fault (i.e. with the first covenant) when he says to them...' The point, however, is arguable.

The quote that follows if from Jer 31:34ff

συντελεω complete, finish, bring about, establish

It will be entirely of God's doing.

οίκος, ου m house, household, people
Ἰουδα Noun, gen s Ἰουδας

It will result in a united people of God, a covenant characterised by reconciliation.

διαθηκη, ης see v.6
καινος, η, ον new

"In 12:24 we read διαθηκη νεα. The distinction between καινος and νεος is clearly marked in the NT usage. Καινος expresses that which is new in regard to what has preceded, is novel in character or unused; νεος that which is new in regard to its own being, as having been in existence but a short time." Westcott

Hebrews 8:9

οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην ἣν ἐποίησα τοῖς πατέρας αὐτῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου, ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου, κἀγὼ ἡμέλησα αὐτῶν, λέγει κύριος.

ἐπιλαβομένου Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m & n
gen s ἐπιλαμβανομαι take hold of, seize
χειρ, χειρος f hand
ἐξαγαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐξαγω lead or bring out
γη, γης f earth, land

"The Old Covenant is connected with the first formation of the nation and with that sovereign display of God's power by which he separated externally a people from the world." Westcott

ἐνέμειναν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἐμμενω
remain faithful to, obey
κἀγω a compound word = καὶ ἐγώ
ἀμελεω disregard, reject

This follows the LXX, but the Hebrew has the verb לַבַּח which is normally rendered "I was husband (or lord) to them." However, it is argued by Delitzsch and others that לַבַּח with the preposition אֶל carries the force 'I rejected; I was displeased with, grew weary of them.'

The promise of the New Covenant provides remedy for the weaknesses of the Old in that it includes:

- i) The implanting of God's law in the heart;
- ii) Knowledge of God as a matter of personal experience;
- iii) The blotting out of sins.

Hebrews 8:10

ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη ἦν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας, λέγει κύριος, διδοὺς νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν.

διαθήσομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s
διατιθεμαι make (of covenants)

μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας corresponds to 'last days' of 1:2.

διδούς Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s διδωμι
νομος, ου m law

The plural emphasises the detail, i.e. there will not merely be a general desire to please but a concern for detailed obedience.

διανοια mind, understanding, intentions
καρδια, ας f heart

Cf. 2 Cor 3:3

ἐπιγράψω write on or in

"The law which formerly was external and accusing now becomes internal, an element of the redeemed nature, and a delight to fulfil." Hughes.

ἔσομαι Verb, fut indic, 1 s εἰμι
ἔσονται Verb, fut indic, 3 pl εἰμι
λαος, ου m people, a people

Hebrews 8:11

καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πολίτην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, λέγων· Γνώθι τὸν κύριον, ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσίν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν.

διδάξωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl διδασκω
teach

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every
πολιτης, ου m citizen, fellow-citizen
γνώθι Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s γινωσκω
πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας
εἰδήσουσίν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl οἶδα
know, understand

μικρος, α, ον little, small, insignificant
ἕως prep with gen to, as far as
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

One mark of the New Covenant is that there is no priestly or privileged class. All have immediate knowledge of God, from the least to the greatest.

Hebrews 8:12

ὅτι ἵλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν, καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι.

ἵλεως, ων merciful

ἔσομαι see v.10

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

μνησθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s μμνησκομαι
remember, call to mind
ἔτι still, yet

"The New Covenant ... rests upon forgiveness on the part of God, not on performance on the part of men. Its foundation is grace and not works (John 1:17)." Westcott. The new covenant has its focus in the perfect atoning work of Christ, "this forgiving and reconciling mercy has been procured for us by the high-priestly mediation of our Saviour Christ." Hughes.

Hebrews 8:13

ἐν τῷ λέγειν Καινὴν πεπαλαίωκεν τὴν πρώτην, τὸ δὲ παλαιούμενον καὶ γηράσκον ἐγγύς ἀφανισμοῦ.

καινος, η, ον see v.8

πεπαλαίωκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s
παλαιοω make or declare old or
obsolete

πρωτος, η, ον see v.7

γηρασκω become old, age

ἐγγυς adv near

ἀφανισμος, ου m disappearing,
destruction

Further evidence that Hebrews was written before 70 AD – the temple and its sacrifices were still continuing, though declared obsolete. Cf. 13:10.

Hebrews 9

Verses 1-10 describe in summary the features of Old Testament worship. Verses 11-26 contrast this with the work of Christ. Verses 1-5 focus on the Tabernacle

Hebrews 9:1

Ἔιχε μὲν οὖν ἡ πρώτη δικαιοῦματα λατρείας τοῦ ἁγίου κοσμικόν.

εἶχε Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἔχω
πρωτος, η, ον see 8:7

ἡ προτη refers to διαθηκη

δικαιωμα, τος n regulation, requirement
λατρευα, ας f service, worship

"What follows is, in fact, an explanation of these 'regulations for worship,' with particular reference to the parallels and contrasts between them and the high-priestly ministry of Christ." Hughes.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated

"The singular τοῦ ἁγίου is the sense of the sanctuary is not found elsewhere in the NT." Westcott

κοσμικος, η, ον worldly; man-made

Here bears the sense 'belonging to this world.'

Hebrews 9:2

σκηνὴ γὰρ κατασκευάσθη ἡ πρώτη ἐν ᾗ ἦ τε λυχνία καὶ ἡ τράπεζα καὶ ἡ πρόθεσις τῶν ἄρτων, ἧτις λέγεται Ἅγια.

σκηνη, ης f tent, tabernacle

κατασκευάσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
κατασκευαζω prepare, construct,
furnish

ἡ πρώτη here means the *outer* tent, i.e. the holy place rather than the holy of holies.

λυχνια, ας f lampstand, stand

τραπεζα, ης f table, food, meal; bank

προθεσις, εως f something set forth; ἄρτοι

της π. bread offered to God

ἄρτος, ου m bread, a loaf

"After ἄρτων several witnesses (B cop^{fay} eth^{ro}) add καὶ το χρυσοῦν θυμιατηριον, and in verse 4, instead of χρυσοῦν ἔχουσα θυμιατηριον καὶ the same witnesses read only ἔχουσα. The transposition was obviously made in order to remove the difficulty concerning the author's statement regarding the location of the golden altar of incense in the Tabernacle." Metzger *Textual Commentary*

ὅστις, ἧτις, ὅ τι who, which

Hebrews 9:3

μετὰ δὲ τὸ δεύτερον καταπέτασμα σκηνὴ ἡ λεγομένη Ἅγια Ἁγίων,

"This is the only place in which μετὰ is used in this local sense in the NT." Westcott

δευτερος, α, ον see 8:7

"No other, or first, curtain has been mentioned by our author, but he has two in mind, the first being the curtain to which one entering the tabernacle would come as he passed from the courtyard into the holy place. To move on further into the innermost sanctuary of the holy of holies he would have to pass through a second curtain." Hughes.

καταπετασμα, τος n curtain

Ἅγια Ἁγίων – 'Holy of Holies' or 'most holy place'

Hebrews 9:4

χρυσοῦν ἔχουσα θυμιατήριον καὶ τὴν κιβωτὸν τῆς διαθήκης περικεκαλυμμένην πάντοθεν χρυσίῳ, ἐν ᾗ στάμνος χρυσεῖ ἔχουσα τὸ μάννα καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος Ἀαρὼν ἡ βλαστήσασα καὶ αἱ πλάκες τῆς διαθήκης,

χρυσους, η, ουν made of gold, golden
θυμιατηριον, ου n altar of incense

θυμιατηριον means literally, 'place where incense is burnt'. It is used in the LXX with the meaning "censer" but not of the incense altar. Some argue that the reference here is therefore to the golden censer used on the Day of Atonement which *was* taken within the veil (so AV which reads 'the golden censer'). However, Westcott argues it is unlikely that the altar of incense would have been omitted from the description. He suggests "The Altar of incense bore the same relation to the Holy of Holies as the Altar of burnt offering to the Holy Place. It furnished in some sense the means of approach to it. Indeed the substitute of ἐχουσα for ἐν ἧ ἐν ἧ (v.2) itself points clearly to something different from mere position." A similar assertion that the altar of incense *belonged to* the holy of holies, though it was situated outside the curtain, is found in Keil and Delitsch and is favoured by Spicq and Hughes. The latter cites Rev 3:8f as reflecting a similar understanding of the doctrinal association of the altar of incense with the throne of God.

κιβωτος, ου f ark, box

περικεκαλυμμένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s

περικαλυπτω cover, cover over

παντοθεν adv on all sides

χρυσιον, ου n gold

The OT mentions only the two tables of the law as being *in* the ark but this does not mean that the other things which were placed before the ark were not later put inside for safe keeping, particularly as it was moved.

The ark and its contents disappeared with the destruction of Solomon's temple in 587 BC.

The holy of holies in NT times was empty.

σταμνος, ου f jar

Cf. Rev 2:17

ῥαβδος, ου f stick, rod

βλαστήσασα Verb, aor act ptc, f nom s

βλαστανω sprout

The divine proof of Aaron's exclusive right to the priesthood.

Hughes comments, "Though the wilderness manna and Aaron's rod have perished long since, the Christian who overcomes is promised that he will be given 'the hidden manna' to eat (Rev 2:17), that heavenly nourishment with which God eternally sustains his faithful servants. And through union with Christ he whose life previously was productive only of dead works (Heb 6:1) is now enabled to bring forth much good fruit to the glory of God (Jn 15:4,5,8; Gal 5:22f.). The same power that caused Aaron's rod to bud, blossom and bear fruit (Num 17) is even more powerfully at work in his experience."

πλαξ, πλακτος f tablet

Hebrews 9:5

ὑπεράνω δὲ αὐτῆς Χερουβὶν δόξης
κατασκιάζοντα τὸ ἱλαστήριον· περὶ ὧν οὐκ
ἔστιν νῦν λέγειν κατὰ μέρος.

ὑπερανω prep with gen far above; above,
over

"Not simply 'glorious Cherubim,' as if the epithet characterised their nature, but 'Cherubim of glory' ministering to the divine revelation. The divine glory, the revelation of God's majesty was in a peculiar sense connected with them. God revealed Himself 'from between them'." Westcott

κατασκιάζω overshadow

ἱλαστήριον, ου n atoning sacrifice, place
where sins are forgiven

The Hebrew word *kapporeth* which this translates means simply 'cover.' Hughes comments, "This Hebrew word was descriptive in a literal sense, because, as we have seen, the mercy seat exactly covered the ark of the covenant. But it may well also have had a symbolical significance from the earliest times in that, as Westcott and others have pointed out, it was interposed between the tables of the law contained in the ark, by which the sinner stood condemned, and the glory of God's holy presence. This is certainly the implication of the Greek ἱλαστήριον, which means a place of propitiation. On the great annual Day of Atonement the culminating moment of propitiation and reconciliation came when the high priest, on entering the holy of holies, sprinkled the blood of atonement on the mercy seat in the awesome presence of God's glory (Lev 16:14ff.). It may reasonably be assumed that the same association between the atoning blood of sacrifice and the mercy of God was in the mind of the Psalmist when he exclaimed: 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity' (Ps 32:1f.). For the Christian, the rightness of linking the blood of atonement which was shed at Calvary with the mercy of God is confirmed both in the argument our author is about to develop (see vv 11ff. below) and in the only other place in the New Testament where the noun ἱλαστήριον occurs, namely Romans 3:25, a passage in which Paul applies the term directly to Christ: God, says the Apostle, set Christ Jesus forth 'to be a propitiation, through faith, by his blood' (ERF)."

μερος, ους n part; in part; κατα μέρος in
detail

Hughes warns against excessive detailed allegorising of the minutiae of the tabernacle with examples by way of warning from medieval commentators.

Hebrews 9:6

Τούτων δὲ οὕτως κατεσκευασμένων, εἰς μὲν τὴν πρώτην σκηνὴν διὰ παντὸς εἰσίασιν οἱ ἱερεῖς τὰς λατρείας ἐπιτελοῦντες,

οὕτως thus, in this way

κατεσκευασμένων Verb, perf pass ptc, gen pl κατασκευαζω see v.2

πρωτος, η, ον see 8:7

Here meaning the outer Tabernacle

σκηνη, ης f see v.2

δια παντος continually

"As distinguished from παντοτε (cf. 7:25) it seems to express the continuous, unbroken permanence of a characteristic habit while παντοτε marks that which is realised on each several occasion." Westcott

εἰσίασιν Verb, pres indic 3s εἰσεμι enter, go in

λατρεια, ας f service, worship; pl. rites ἐπιτελεω complete, accomplish

"The ritual duties performed by them there were three in particular: (1) the tending from evening to morning of the golden lampstand to ensure that its lamps were kept burning without interruption (Ex 27:20f.); (2) the burning of incense on the altar of incense each morning and evening when the lamps were dressed (Ex 30:7f.); and (3), in contrast to the two duties already mentioned, which were performed daily, the weekly replacement, on every sabbath day, of the loaves on the table of showbread (Lev 24:8f)." Hughes.

Hebrews 9:7

εἰς δὲ τὴν δευτέραν ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ μόνος ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, οὐ χωρὶς αἵματος, ὃ προσφέρει ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων,

δευτερος, α, ον second

I.e. the Holy of Holies.

ἅπαξ once, one time, once for all time

Meaning, only on that one day. The priest entered the Holy of Holies more than once on that day.

ἐνιαυτος, ου m year

μονος, η, ον adj only, alone

χωρις prep with gen without, apart from αἷμα, ατος f blood

He brought first the blood of the bullock which was a sin offering for himself and then the blood of the goat, a sin offering for the people. See Leviticus 16.

προσφερω offer, present

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

Cf. 5:3; 7:27.

λαος, ου m people

ἀγνοημα, τος n a sin committed through ignorance

Again, the limitations of the Old Covenant are stressed. It could only deal with sins committed in ignorance.

Hebrews 9:8

τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, μήπω πεφανερῶσθαι τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδὸν ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσης στάσιμ,

δηλωω make clear, indicate

The details of the Tabernacle were ordained by God and through them, and the rituals of worship, God the Holy Spirit was teaching vital lessons.

μηπω adv not yet

πεφανερῶσθαι Verb, perf pass infin φανερωω make known, reveal, make evident

ὁδος, ου f way, path

τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδὸν 'The way into the holies', i.e. probably the 'Holy of Holies'.

ἔτι still, yet

στασις, εως f standing, existence

"... as long as the old system with its imperfections remained in force." Hughes. "Does not necessarily imply that the earthly sanctuary, as a natural structure, no longer existed; what is implied is that, with Christ's passing 'through the heavens' (4:14) into the presence of God, the earthly structure has lost its sanctuary status." Bruce. I.e. no longer has its divinely appointed standing.

Hebrews 9:9

ἥτις παραβολὴ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα, καθ' ἣν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίαι προσφέρονται μὴ δυνάμεναι κατὰ συνείδησιν τελειῶσαι τὸν λατρεύοντα,

ὁστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι who, which

παραβολη, ης f parable, comparison

καιρος, ου m time, season, age

ἐνεστηκότα Verb, perf act ptc, m acc s

ἐνιστημι be present

This phrase is the focus of some debate as to whether it refers to 'the time *then* present' i.e. the time of the Old Covenant, or 'the time *now* present', introducing the contrasting freeness of access *now* enjoyed under the New Covenant compared with the shadows of the Old. Westcott suggests that the writer of Hebrews distinguishes between three periods – the past (the Old Covenant), the present (the New Covenant inaugurated), and the future (the consummation of the New Covenant at Christ's return). Hughes follows Delitzsch in thinking that the meaning is that the Mosaic ritual was a parable pointing to the new dispensation in which the types and shadows are now being fulfilled.

καθ ἣν the antecedent is the σκηνης

δωρον, ου n gift, offering

θυσια, ας f sacrifice

προσφερω see v.7

δυναμαι be able to, be capable of

συνειδησις, εως f conscience

Cf. 5:14; 7:18f.,27. "By these sacrifices the conscience could only be cleansed from the kind of guilt which had been incurred through ritual offences." Montefiore.

τελειωω make perfect

λατρευω serve, worship

Hebrews 9:10

μόνον ἐπὶ βρώμασιν καὶ πόμασιν καὶ διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς, δικαιώματα σαρκὸς μέχρι καιροῦ διορθώσεως ἐπικείμενα.

μονον adv only, alone

βρωμα, τος n food, solid food

πομα, τος n drink

διαφορος, ου different

βαπτισμος, ου m washing (of hands); ritual washing

δικαιωμα, τος n regulation, requirement

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body

Ordinances which dealt with that which is external, cf. 7:16.

μεχρι and μεχρις prep with gen until διορθωσις, εως f new order, reformation

A word not found elsewhere in Biblical Greek. Montefiore thinks it refers to the future 'new world' (cf. Matt 19:28; Acts 3:21). But the context seems to require reference to Christ's inauguration of the New Covenant through his death and resurrection which *is* the institution of the new age, as Hughes comments, "This 'time of reformation' has already been defined in terms of Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant and its fulfilment in Christ (Heb 8:7ff.)."

ἐπικειμαι lie upon, be imposed (of regulations)

Hebrews 9:11

Χριστὸς δὲ παραγενόμενος ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν γενομένων ἀγαθῶν διὰ τῆς μείζονος καὶ τελειότερας σκηνῆς οὐ χειροποιήτου, τοῦτ' ἔστιν οὐ ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως,

The focus now turns to the superior and perfect High Priestly work of Christ.

παραγενόμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s παραγινομαι come, arrive, appear

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful

'good things' = all the blessings of the New Covenant. These are now realised (γενομένων) by virtue of his work. Some MSS read μελλοντων rather than γενομενων i.e. stating that the good things are 'to come' rather than being present. This reading is rejected by the majority of textual scholars (e.g. Nestle, Metzger), who argue that though the evidence is finely balanced, γενομενων has slightly better support and the reading μελλοντων could be a careless assimilation to 10:1. However, μελλοντων is preferred by Montefiore on dogmatic grounds – he argues that the good things are future rather than present.

μείζων, ον greater, greatest

τελειοτερος, α, ον more perfect

χειροποιητος, ον made by human hands

Cf. Mk 14:58; Jn 2:19ff.; Acts 7:48; 17:24.

κτισις, εως f creation, what is created

Hebrews 9:12

οὐδὲ δι' αἵματος τράγων καὶ μόσχων διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος, εἰσηλθεν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ ἅγια, αἰώνιαν λύτρωσιν εὐράμενος.

αἷμα, ατος f blood

τραγος, ου m he-goat

μοσχος, ου m calf, young bull

ιδιος, α, ον one's own

The phrase δια του ιδιου αιματος contrasts with the μετα in the case of the priests of the Old Covenant. The writer does not say that Christ took his own blood into the heavenly sanctuary.

εἰσηλθεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s εἰσερχομαι enter, go in

ἐφάπαξ adv. once for all time

αἰωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

λυτρωσις, εως f redemption, setting free

It was because he has effected αἰωνιαν λυτρωσιν, an eternal redemption, that he has entered once for all time. This sacrifice does not need (annual) repetition.

εὐράμενος Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom s
εὕρισκω find, discover

"The form εὐράμενος is found here only in the NT. The force of the middle voice (compare 1:3 ποιησαμενος) is that of 'having obtained as the issue of personal labour' directed to this end." Westcott.

Hughes comments, "The aorist participle εὐράμενος plainly means that Christ entered into the heavenly sanctuary *after he had secured* an eternal redemption: the securing of our eternal redemption took place at the cross and was followed by his entry into heaven. Hughes includes an extended and very helpful excursus on *The Blood of Jesus and his Heavenly Priesthood*. Hughes quotes with approval the words of Bruce, "Aaron certainly carried the sacrificial blood into the holy of holies, but our author deliberately avoids saying that Christ carried His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary. Even as a symbolic expression this is open to objection. There have been expositors who, pressing the analogy of the Day of Atonement beyond the limits observed by our author, have argued that the expiatory work of Christ is not completed on the cross – not completed indeed, until he ascended from earth and 'made atonement for us in the heavenly holy of holies by the presentation of His efficacious blood'. But while it was necessary under the old covenant for the sacrificial blood first to be shed in the court and then to be brought into the holy of holies, no such division of our Lord's sacrifice into two phases is envisaged under the new covenant. When upon the cross He offered up His life to God as a sacrifice for his people's sin, He accomplished in reality what Aaron and his successors performed in type by the twofold act of slaying the victim and presenting its blood in the holy of holies. The title of the Anglican Article XXXI speaks rightly 'of the one oblation of Christ finished upon the cross.'"

Hebrews 9:13

εἰ γὰρ τὸ αἷμα τράγων καὶ ταύρων καὶ σποδοῦς
δαμάλεως ῥαντίζουσα τοὺς κεκοινωμένους
ἀγιάζει πρὸς τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς καθαρότητα,

The blood of bulls and goats refers to the ceremony of the Day of Atonement – the plural recalling its annual repetition.

σποδος, ου f ashes
δαμάλις, εως f heifer

See Numb 19. Again Hughes warns against "pressing every detail [of the ceremony] to serve a typological purpose. Hughes includes an extended note on the purpose of the inclusion of this reference to the ashes of a heifer.

ῥαντίζω sprinkle
κεκοινωμένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc pl
κοινοῶ defile, make unclean
ἀγιάζω sanctify, make holy
σαρξ, σαρκος f see v.10

See the note on verse 9. These ceremonies provided 'ritual' purification, ceremonial cleanness. "The idea is that of ceremonial purity which enabled the Jew to enjoy the full privileges of his covenant worship and fellowship with the external church of God." Westcott.

καθαροτης, ητος f purification, purity

Hebrews 9:14

πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς διὰ
πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν
ἄμωμον τῷ θεῷ, καθαρῆι τὴν συνείδησιν
ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων εἰς τὸ λατρεύειν θεῷ
ζῶντι.

"The work of the incarnate Son penetrated right to the heart of the matter: it was *inward*, not outward, *radical* instead of superficial, purifying *the conscience*, not just the flesh, and therefore fully and finally effective as a remedy for the sickness of mankind." Hughes. Westcott says that Christ's sacrifice was "voluntary, rational, spontaneous and moral."

ποσος, η, ον how much(?)
μᾶλλον adv more
αἰωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

πνευματος αἰωνιου Westcott understands as a reference to Christ's 'inseparable and unchangeable Divine Nature' – so also Montefiore.

Bruce suggests that the author has in mind here the Servant of Yahweh (cf. v.28). In Isaiah, the Servant is introduced when God says 'I have put my Spirit upon Him' (Is 42:1). It is in the power of the Divine Spirit accordingly that the Servant accomplishes every phase of his ministry including the crowning phase in which he accepts death for the transgression of his people."

ἑαυτος, εαυτη, εαυτον him/her/itself
προσήνεγκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
προσφερω see v.7

Cf. Jn 10:17f where Jesus says that he will lay down his own life, no one will take it from him.

ἄμωμος, ον faultless; without blemish

Cf. 1 Peter 1:19 and Is 53:9.

καθαριεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s καθαριζω
cleanse, make clean, purify
συνειδησις, εως f see v.9

The readings ἡμῶν and ὑμῶν have fairly well balanced support. Metzger writes concerning the UBS text, ἡμῶν "Was preferred because the author uses the direct address only in the hortatory sections of his epistle."

νεκρος, α, ον dead

On 'dead works' see 6:1

λατρευω see v.9

ζωω live, be alive

"Purity is not the end but the means of the new life. The end of the restored fellowship is energetic service of Him who alone lives and gives life." Westcott.

The living God cannot be served with dead works.

Hebrews 9:15- 10:18

"Mention of the new covenant in the last section leads the writer to further reflection on Christ as mediator. He shows the significance of Christ's death in his role as mediator between God and man and makes clear that he had entered a better sanctuary and offered a more complete offering, i.e. of himself. This section concludes the main doctrinal argument" Guthrie

The main divisions of this section are:

- i) 9:15-22, the significance of Christ's death;
- ii) 9:23-28, his entrance into the heavenly sanctuary;
- iii) 10:1-18, his offering of himself for others.

Hebrews 9:15

Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διαθήκης καινῆς μεσίτης ἐστίν, ὅπως θανάτου γενομένου εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ πρώτῃ διαθήκῃ παραβάσεων τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν λάβωσιν οἱ κεκλημένοι τῆς αἰωνίου κληρονομίας.

διαθηκη, ης covenant, will, testament

καινος, η, ον new

μεσιτης, ου m mediator, intermediary

Cf. 1 Cor 3:6

ὅπως (or ὅπως ἂν) that, in order that
θανατος, ου m death

The death of Christ was both an atoning sacrifice and that which seals the covenant and guarantees its promises – the shedding of the 'blood of the New Covenant'.

ἀπολυτρωσις, εως f redemption,
deliverance, setting free

παραβασις, εως f transgression,
disobedience, sin

"That is, deliverance from the guilt and condemnation which the law pronounces against all law-breakers and which the blood of brute beasts could never remove (see vv. 9f., 13f. above, and 10:4)." Hughes

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise

λάβωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl λαμβανω

αἰωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

κληρονομια, ας f inheritance

The old (Mosaic) covenant included the promise of an inheritance, a promise first given to Abraham, but its realisation was conditional upon obedience. The blood of Christ atones for sin (transgression of the law), and secures the promised eternal inheritance of which the land under the old covenant was but a shadow (cf. 1 Peter 1:3ff). Hughes comments, "The physical land and the posterity that in due course inherited it were in effect sacramental in character: they constituted a sign, visible and passing, which pointed beyond itself to a reality, as yet invisible, which would be permanent. And this is precisely what our author teaches. Although Abraham and the other early patriarchs died without seeing the fulfilment of the covenant promise, they were not therefore excluded from the enjoyment of what had been promised... They looked for 'a better country, that is, a heavenly one' (11:3-15). Patiently enduring, they seized the hope that was set before them and through the victory of their faith 'obtained the promise' (6:15,18)."

Hebrews 9:16

ὅπου γὰρ διαθήκη, θάνατον ἀνάγκη φέρεσθαι τοῦ διαθεμένου·

ὅπου adv. where

ἀναγκη, ης f necessity

φέρεσθαι Verb, pres pass infin φερω bring

Most argue that the thought has moved from that of covenants to testaments or wills. However, Westcott argues that there is a single model here – that of the covenant. "It is not said that he who makes the covenant 'must die,' but that his death must be 'brought forward,' 'presented,' 'introduced upon the scene,' 'set in evidence,' so to speak... He who makes the covenant (ὁ διαθεμενος) is, for the purpose of the covenant, identified with the victim by whose representative death the covenant is ordinarily ratified. In the death of the victim his death is presented symbolically... But here Christ died in His own Person; and by this dying He gave absolute validity to the covenant which He mediated." Cf. Genesis 15.

Bruce suggests that this is straining the sense here and Hughes says that ratification of covenants did not always involve a death, e.g. the covenant between David and Jonathan or the covenant with Noah. Hence διαθηκη is used here in the sense of a 'last will and testament.' A will is operative only with the death of the testator.

διαθεμένον Verb, aor midd ptc, m gen s
 διατιθεμαι make (of covenants or wills)

Hebrews 9:17

διαθήκη γὰρ ἐπὶ νεκροῖς βεβαία, ἐπει μὴποτε ἰσχύει ὅτε ζῆ ὁ διαθέμενος.

νεκρος, α, ον dead

ἐπὶ νεκροῖς 'with reference to dead people'

βεβαίος, α, ον reliable, confirmed, effective

With the death of the testator, a last will and testament is unalterable, it cannot be changed in any way.

ἐπει since, because, for
 μὴποτε conj. otherwise; here = 'never'
 ἰσχυω be able, be effective
 ὅτε conj when, at which time
 ζῆ Verb, pres act indic, 3s ζω see v.14

Bruce comments, "All analogies from ordinary life must be defective when they are applied to Him who rose from the dead and is thus able personally to secure for His people the benefits which he died to procure for them. He is testator and executor in one, surety and mediator alike."

Hebrews 9:18

ὅθεν οὐδὲ ἡ πρώτη χωρὶς αἵματος ἐγκεκαίνισται·

ὅθεν therefore, for which reason

χωρὶς see v.7

αἷμα, ατος f see v.7

ἐγκεκαίνισται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s
 ἐγκαινίζω put into force, inaugurate

Hebrews 9:19

λαληθείσης γὰρ πάσης ἐντολῆς κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὑπὸ Μωϋσέως παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, λαβὼν τὸ αἷμα τῶν μόσχων μετὰ ὕδατος καὶ ἐρίου κοκκίνου καὶ ὕσώπου αὐτὸ τε τὸ βιβλίον καὶ πάντα τὸν λαὸν ἐράντισεν,

This verse refers back to the ceremonies of Exodus 24.

λαληθείσης Verb, aor pass ptc, f gen s λαλεω
 speak, talk
 ἐντολη, ης f command
 νομος, ου m law
 λαος, ου m see v.7
 λαβων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s λαμβανω
 μοσχος, ου m see v.12

τραγος, ου m see v.12

The phrase καὶ τῶν τραγῶν is omitted from p⁴⁶ K L Ψ syr *et al.* It is possible that these words were omitted to conform the statement to Ex 24:5. However, it is equally possible that the shorter reading was expanded in imitation of v.12."

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

ἐρίον, ου n wool

κοκκινος, η, ον scarlet, red

ὕσσωπος, ου m & f hyssop (a small bush with aromatic leaves used for ritual purification)

Cf. Lev 14:1ff; Num 19:6,18.

βιβλίον, ου n book, scroll

ῥαντιζω sprinkle

There are a number of features here which differ from the account in Exodus. Exodus makes no mention of goats, water, scarlet wool or hyssop (though cf. Lev 14:4-7 and Num 19:6,17), nor does Moses sprinkle the scroll. Owen suggests that the author "gathers into one head sundry things wherein the sprinkling of blood was of use under the law, as they are occasionally expressed in various places." Bruce suggests that here (as elsewhere with details of the Tabernacle furnishings) our author may be drawing upon some other source which is no longer extant – an oral tradition perhaps (cf. comment on v 21).

Hebrews 9:20

λέγων· Τοῦτο τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης ἧς ἐνετείλατο πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός·

ἐνετείλατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

ἐντελλομαι command, order

Cf. Ex 24:8. "The extent to which our author's quotation varies from this [Ex 24:8] is not significant, except for the probability that the form 'This is the blood of the covenant' is an assimilation to the words used by Christ at the institution of the eucharist: 'this is my blood of the covenant' (Mk 14:24; Mt 26:28; cf. Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25), thereby implying a bond between the two occasions. To partake of the eucharistic cup is to declare in faith and with gratitude one's acceptance of the new covenant in Christ's blood (Lk 22:20)." Hughes.

Hebrews 9:21

καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν δὲ καὶ πάντα τὰ σκεύη τῆς λειτουργίας τῷ αἵματι ὁμοίως ἐράντισεν.

σκηνη, ης f tent, tabernacle

σκευος, ους n object, vessel

λειτουργια, ας f service

ὁμοίως likewise, in the same way

Again, the writer goes beyond what is recorded in the Exodus narrative, but his words echo those of Josephus (Ant 3:8:6).

Hebrews 9:22

καὶ σχεδὸν ἐν αἵματι πάντα καθαρίζεται κατὰ τὸν νόμον, καὶ χωρὶς αἱματεκχυσίας οὐ γίνεται ἄφεσις.

σχεδὸν adv almost, nearly

καθαρίζω cleanse, make clean, purify

Montefiore says that this is not strictly true and suggests that other means of forgiveness are prayer (Dan 9:19), fasting (Joel 2:12) and penitence (Ps 51:17). But Bruce rightly states that the *general rule* was that *ceremonial cleansing* or atonement had to be effected by means of blood.

χωρὶς see v.7

αἱματεκχυσία, ας f shedding of blood

A word not found elsewhere in Biblical Greek.

ἄφεσις, εως f forgiveness, cancellation (of sins)

"Once again ... the language used here is strongly reminiscent of the words with which our Lord instituted the eucharist: 'this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Mt 26:28)." Hughes.

Westcott suggests that, "The absence of further definition here (contrast 10:18) leaves it with the broad sense of 'release,' 'deliverance,' not so much from special sins as from the bondage of which wrong-doing is a result."

Hebrews 9:23

Ἀνάγκη οὖν τὰ μὲν ὑποδείγματα τῶν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς τούτοις καθαρίζεσθαι, αὐτὰ δὲ τὰ ἐπουράνια κρείττοσι θυσίαις παρὰ ταύτας.

ἀνάγκη, ης f see v.16

ὑπόδειγμα, τος n example

οὐρανός, ου m heaven

καθαρίζω see v.22

ἐπουράνιος, ου heavenly, celestial

The suggestion is not that heaven itself needed some purification but that Christ's sacrifice has opened the way for humankind to enter into the very presence of God in a manner not effected by the sacrifices of the old covenant.

κρείττων and κρείσσων, ου gen ουος
better; greater, superior

Westcott says of these verses that they offer "an additional feature in the pre-eminence of the new order over the old. The sacrifice on which it rests is better (vv. 12f); the covenant in which it is embodied is better (15-22): the service also – one sovereign and all-sufficing act – is better (23-28)."

θυσία, ας f see v.9

"The plural is used for the expression of the general idea ... And in point of fact the simple sacrifice of Christ fulfilled perfectly the ideas presented by the different forms of Levitical sacrifices." Westcott. Hughes similarly says that the plural is an accommodation to the plural 'these [rites].' In reality, the better is a single sacrifice, cf. 10:12.

παρα preposition with acc beside, rather than

Hebrews 9:24

οὐ γὰρ εἰς χειροποίητα εἰσῆλθεν ἅγια Χριστός, ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν, ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν, νῦν ἐμφανισθῆναι τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν.

χειροποίητος, ου see v.11

ἀντίτυπος, ου copy; figure pointing to ἀληθινός, η, ου real, genuine, true

'heaven itself' "is regarded as the absolute truth which the Holy of Holies symbolised." Westcott

ἐμφανισθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin ἐμφανίζω
make known, reveal, pass appear
openly

"The word ἐμφανίζεσθαι (Matt 27:53; cf Rom 10:20) as distinguished in such a connexion from φανεροῦσθαι (2 Cor 10:11f), conveys the thought of that being made a clear object of sight, which under ordinary circumstances is not so... Ἐμφανής is the general opposite of 'invisible' as φανερός is to 'indistinct.'" Westcott. Westcott also comments on the unusual combination of νῦν with the aorist ἐμφανισθῆναι. It expresses both a completed act and also a continuing effect.

προσωπον, ου n face, presence

Note the ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν Christ appears as our Advocate (1 Jn 2:2).

Hebrews 9:25

οὐδ' ἵνα πολλάκις προσφέρῃ ἑαυτὸν, ὥσπερ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὰ ἅγια κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἐν αἵματι ἀλλοτρίῳ,

πολλάκις often, repeatedly, frequently
προσφέρω see v.7

Cf. v.14

ἑαυτός, ἑαυτή, ἑαυτὸν reflexive pronoun,
himself, herself, itself

ὥσπερ as, just as

ἐνιαυτός, ου m year

αἷμα, ατος f blood

ἀλλοτριός, α, ου belonging to another

Hebrews 9:26

ἐπει ἔδει αὐτὸν πολλάκις παθεῖν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου· νυνὶ δὲ ἅπαξ ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς ἀθέτησιν ἁμαρτίας διὰ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ πεφανέρωται.

ἐπει since

Here, 'since in that case', 'else'

ἔδει Verb, imperf indic, 3 s (impers) δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary

παθεῖν Verb, aor act infin πασχω suffer, experience

καταβολῆ, ης f beginning, creation

νυνὶ (orig. an emphatic form of νυν) now

ἅπαξ once, one time, once for all time

συντελεῖα, ας f end, completion

αἰώνων Noun, gen pl αἰών, αἰώνας m age, world order, eternity

συντελεῖα τῶν αἰώνων 'the end of the ages'. The phrase is not found elsewhere in the NT, but cf. Matt 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20. The phrase should be linked with 'last days' in 1:2. Cf. also Gal 4:4; 1 Peter 1:20; 1 Cor 10:11.

ἀθετησις, εως f nullification, removal

ἁμαρτία, ας f sin

θυσία, ας f sacrifice, victim

Calvin comments, "He appeared once for all because if he had come a second or third time there would have been a defect in the first sacrifice which would deny this fulness."

φανερῶ make known, reveal

"Each element in this sentence brings out some contrast between the work of Christ and that of the Levitical High-priests. Their sacrifices were repeated year by year during a long period of preparation: His sacrifice was offered once for all at the close of the succession of ages. They by their action called sins to mind (10:3): He annulled sin. They provided typical atonement through the blood of victims: He provided an absolute atonement by the sacrifice of Himself. With them the most impressive fact was the entrance into the darkness in which the Divine Presence was shrouded: with Him the manifestation on earth, still realised as an abiding reality, brought the Divine Presence near to men." Westcott

Hebrews 9:27

καὶ καθ' ὅσον ἀπόκειται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἅπαξ ἀποθανεῖν, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο κρίσις,

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;

καθ' ὅσον inasmuch as

καθ' ὅσον ... οὕτως καὶ expresses a conclusion drawn from an identity between two objects in some particular respects." Westcott

ἀποκεῖμαι be stored away; impers be one's lot

It is 'laid up' for man – appointed to man.

ἅπαξ see v.26

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death

κρίσις, εως f judgement, condemnation

Hebrews 9:28

οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός, ἅπαξ προσενεχθεὶς εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας, ἐκ δευτέρου χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας ὀφθήσεται τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀπεκδεχομένοις εἰς σωτηρίαν.

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. formed from οὕτος thus, in this way

"Men die once by divine appointment, and in their case death is followed by judgement. Christ died once, by divine appointment, and his death is followed by salvation for all his people." Bruce

προσενεχθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s προσφέρω

πολύς, πολλή, πολυ gen πολλοῦ, ης, ου much, many

ἀνενεγκεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἀναφέρω bear the burden of, take away

"This most remarkable phrase appears to be taken from Is 53:12, where the sense is 'to take upon himself and bear the burden of sin.' Christ 'carried to the cross' and there did away with sin and sins." Westcott

δευτερός, α, ον second; ἐκ δευτέρου a second time

χωρὶς prep with gen without, apart from ὀφθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s ὄραω

see; pass. appear

ἀπεκδεχόμεναι look for, wait for

"The Israelites who watched their High Priest enter the sanctuary for them watched expectantly for his reappearance; that was a welcome sign that he and the sacrifice which he has presented had been accepted by God." Bruce. Hughes adds that the High Priest during his time in the holy of holies was interceding for his people. "Thus Aaron bore the names of the sons of Israel upon his heart and in the sanctuary brought them to continual remembrance before the Lord (Ex 28:29)." He comments that those who eagerly await Christ's reappearance will receive "the full and consummating joy of their eternal salvation ... while for those who neglect such a great salvation (2:3) there can be only 'a fearful expectation of judgment' (10:27; cf. 12:25)."

σωτηρία, ας f salvation

Hebrews 10

Westcott says that in chapter 10, the writer points out:

i) The inherent weaknesses and provisional nature of these sacrifices (vv. 1-4);

- ii) The true action of the sacrifice of Christ (vv. 5-10);
- iii) The perpetual efficacy of Christ's sacrifice is then argued from his present Kingly Majesty (vv. 11-14);
- iv) In consequence, the prophetic description of the New Covenant finds its fulfilment in Him (vv. 15-18).

Hebrews 10:1

Σκιαν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων, κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ταῖς αὐταῖς θυσίαις ἃς προσφέρουσιν εἰς τὸ διηκεῖς οὐδέποτε δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους τελειῶσαι·

σκια, ας f shadow, foreshadowing

Cf. 8:5. Westcott thinks that the illustration is from art. The σκια is the outline figure while the completed representation with all its colour and solidity is the εἰκων.

νομος, ου m law
μελλω (ptc. without infin) coming, future
ἀγαθος, η, ον good

"The blessings which belonged to the 'coming age' (6:5) ... These are here spoken of as future from the standpoint of the Law. And though they were essentially realised by the accomplishment of Christ's work (9:11...) they still remain in part yet future in regard to man's full enjoyment of them (13:14)."

εἰκων, ονος f likeness, image, form
πραγμα, τος n matter, thing

"In the expression αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων [*the true form of these realities*] the noun εἰκων does not connote a copy or likeness which as such would be other than the reality; if it did, what is said here would be meaningless if not contradictory. Its sense, rather, is the *manifestation* of the reality itself, and this is the sense found in both classical and contemporary Greek." Hughes. Cf. 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15.

ἐνιαυτος, ου m year

Westcott says that "the two phrases κατ' ἐνιαυτον and εἰς το διανεκες are placed (irregularly) at the head of the clauses to which they belong in order to bring out the conception of 'yearly repetition' and 'perpetuity' of effect which characterise the Old and New Covenants."

θυσια, ας f see 9:26

"The identical repetition was a sign of the powerlessness of the system." Westcott

προσφερω see 9:7

διηκενης, ες continuous; εἰς το δ. for all time; continually, perpetually

Westcott argues that διηκεῖς belongs with the final verb, τελειῶσαι (see note above). It "expresses the thought of a continuing and abiding result."

οὐδέποτε never
δυναμαι be able to, be capable of
προσερχομαι come or go to, approach

Includes all of the worshipers, not just the priests (cf. 7:25).

τελειωω make perfect

Contrast this with Jn 17:4 and Jesus' cry from the cross τετελεσται Jn 19:30

Hebrews 10:2

ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐπαύσαντο προσφερόμενοι, διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν ἔχειν ἔτι συνείδησιν ἁμαρτιῶν τοὺς λατρεύοντας ἅπαξ κεκαθαρισμένους;

ἐπει since, for
ἂν particle indicating contingency

Introducing a hypothetical question, 'since in that case would they not have ceased ...'

παυω stop; midd stop, cease, cease from

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
ἐτι still, yet

συνειδησις, εως f conscience, awareness

Here in the latter sense of consciousness, awareness. "Though what is being spoken of here is more than mere consciousness or awareness (JB): it is the *conscience* or radical knowledge of guilt which places one under the shadow of God's judgment, described as the 'evil conscience' in verse 22 below, and which, as we have seen, the blood of Christ alone purifies from dead works to serve the living God (9:14)." Hughes.

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

λατρευω serve, worship

ἅπαξ once, one time, once for all time

κεκαθαρισμένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc
πλ καθαριζω cleanse, make clean

Hebrews 10:3

ἀλλ' ἐν αὐταῖς ἀνάμνησις ἁμαρτιῶν κατ' ἐνιαυτόν,

ἀναμνησις, εως f reminder, remembrance

The continual sacrifices served as a continual reminder of sin without providing relief. Hughes suggests that, "It is worthy of notice that the term *reminder* used here by our author is potentially ambivalent, in that the yearly sacrifices not only reminded the people of their own sinfulness but also reminded them that *God remembers sin*." Westcott draws the contrast between this and the 'Christian Eucharist' "that was instituted in Christ's words, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν (Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24), to bring to men's minds the recollection of the redemption which he accomplished. Hughes comments that, "The gospel transforms *anamnesis* from a remembrance of guilt to a remembrance of grace." The promise of the new covenant quoted in 8:12 and in verse 17 below, is that God "will remember their sins no more."

ἐνιαυτος, ου m see v.1

Hebrews 10:4

ἀδύνατον γὰρ αἷμα ταύρων καὶ τράγων ἀφαιρεῖν ἁμαρτίας.

ἀδυνατος, ου impossible

αἷμα, ατος f blood

ταυρος, ου m bull

τραγος, ου m he-goat

Cf. 9:12f, 19.

ἀφαιρω take away

Cf Rom 11:27 quoting Is 27:9 LXX

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

Hebrews 10:5

διὸ εἰσερχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον λέγει·
Θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, σῶμα
δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι·

Attention now turns to the continuing effective sacrifice of Christ using words from Ps 40:6-8.

διὸ therefore, for this reason

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

θυσια, ας f see 9:26

προσφορα, ας f offering, sacrifice; act of offering

θελω wish, will

σωμα, τος n body

Follows the LXX. The Hebrew reads 'ears'. Hughes comments, "The original form, 'ears thou hast dug for me,' means simply, 'thou hast caused me to hear and obey thy will,' or, in other words, to 'glorify God in [my] body' (1 Cor 6:20). The thrust is identical with that of Samuel's admonitory words to Saul: 'Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams' (1 Sam 15:22; cf. Isa 1:11ff.; Amos 5:21f.; Hos 6:6; Ps 51:16ff.; Jer 7:21f.)."

καταρτιζω act & midd make, prepare

"The King, the representative of men, recognises in the manifold organs of his personal power – his body – the one fitting means for rendering service to God. Through this, in its fulness, He can do God's will. Not by anything outside of Himself, not by animals in *sacrifices*, not by the fruits of the earth in *offerings*, but by the use of his own endowments, as He is enabled to use them, He will accomplish that which God designed for him to do." Westcott. Compare the use of Ps 8 in chapter 2.

Hebrews 10:6

ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ εὐδόκησας.

ὀλοκαυτωμα, τος n whole burnt offering
εὐδοκεω be pleased, take pleasure in

Verse 7

τότε εἶπον· Ἴδὸν ἤκω, ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου
γέγραπται περὶ ἐμοῦ, τοῦ ποιῆσαι, ὁ θεός, τὸ
θέλημά σου.

τοτε then, at that time

εἶπον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl λεγω

ἤκω come, have come, be present

κεθαλις, ιδος f roll (of a scroll or book)

βιβλιον, ου n book, scroll, written

statement

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

write

"The Law which foreshadowed the duties of a King of Israel (περὶ ἐμοῦ) was the rule of the King's life." Westcott

ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω

θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

"The will of God answers to the fulfilment of man's true destiny; and this, as things actually are, in spite of the Fall. Christ, as Son of man, made this will His own and accomplished it. The utterance of the King of Israel expressed man's true aim, which was beyond human reach, and so rightly belongs to the Messiah who attained it. Compare John 4:34; 8:29." Westcott

Hebrews 10:8

ἀνώτερον λέγων ὅτι Θυσίας καὶ προσφορὰς καὶ ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἀμαρτίας οὐκ ἠθέλησας οὐδὲ εὐδόκησας, αἵτινες κατὰ νόμον προσφέρονται,

ἀνώτερον adv first

ὅστις, ἡτίς, ὁ τί who, which
νομος, ου m see 9:19

Hebrews 10:9

τότε εἶρηκεν· Ἴδου ἤκω τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου· ἀναιρεῖ τὸ πρῶτον ἵνα τὸ δεύτερον στήσῃ.

τοτε see v.7

εἶρηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s λεγω

ἀναιρεω do away with

στήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἵστημι set,
establish

τὸ δεύτερον στήσῃ "namely, the will of God involving the offering of himself as the one sacrifice for sins forever." Hughes.

Hebrews 10:10

ἐν ᾧ θελήματι ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμὲν διὰ τῆς προσφορᾶς τοῦ σώματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐφάπαξ.

θελημα, ατος n will, wish

ἡγιασμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl

ἁγιαζω sanctify, make holy

σωμα, τος n body

ἐφάπαξ adv. once for all time

This sanctification was accomplished through the perfect life and atoning death of Christ.

Hebrews 10:11

Καὶ πᾶς μὲν ἱερεὺς ἔστηκεν καθ' ἡμέραν λειτουργῶν καὶ τὰς αὐτὰς πολλάκις προσφέρων θυσίας, αἵτινες οὐδέποτε δύνανται περιελεῖν ἀμαρτίας.

ἱερευς, εως m priest

ἔστηκεν Verb, Perf act indic, 3 s ἵστημι pf
stand

Cf. Deut 10:8; 18:7. "The idea of 'standing' is that of a work still to be done, of service still to be rendered, of homage still to be paid." Westcott

λειτουργεω serve, worship

"They not only 'stand ministering,' but 'stand ministering daily.' They had ministered yesterday; but today they must minister again, and again they must minister tomorrow and the next day – so long as the legal dispensation continues. Every day they began afresh, as if nothing had yet been done." John Brown

πολλακις often, repeatedly, frequently

προσφερω offer, present

θυσια, ας f see 9:6

ὅστις, ἡτίς, ὁ τί see v.8

οὐδέποτε never

δυναμαι be able to, be capable of

περιελεῖν Verb, aor act infin περιαιρεω
take away, remove

"Man is, so to speak, wrapped up in sin. He weaves, as it were, in action ... a terrible robe for himself ... This enveloping shroud, no part of his true self, has to be stripped off (2 Cor 3:16)." Westcott

Hebrews 10:12

οὗτος δὲ μίαν ὑπὲρ ἀμαρτιῶν προσενέγκας θυσίαν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ,

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one, single
προσενέγκας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s

προσφερω

διηνεκης, ες continuous; εἰς το δ. for all
time; perpetually

Cf. 10:1, 14 and 7:3. Does the phrase εἰς το διηνεκης belong with προσενεγκας or ἐκάθισεν? Westcott argues the former, saying that "The connexion of εἰς το διηνεκης with the following ἐκάθισεν is contrary to the usage of the Epistle; it obscures the idea of the perpetual efficacy of Christ's one sacrifice." Tasker disagrees saying that Westcott's claims are "excessive."

καθίζω sit down, take one's seat

"A seated priest is the guarantee of a finished work and an accepted sacrifice." Bruce

δεξιως, α, ον right, δεξια right hand

Hebrews 10:13

τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκδεχόμενος ἕως τεθῶσιν οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτοῦ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ,

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining: (το) λοιπον
adv. henceforth, from now on

ἐκδεχομαι wait for, expect

ἕως conj until, while

τεθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl τιθημι
place, set

ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy, one hated

ὑποποδιον, ου n footstool

πους, ποδος m foot

An echo of Ps 110:1, cf. also Heb 2:8.

Hughes comments, "The complete defeat of his enemies is assured, for the supreme exaltation by which the redemption he accomplished on earth as the incarnate Son has been crowned spells the doom of every opponent of his authority. Indeed, the coming of the Son into the world is already his overcoming of the world (Jn 16:33)." Hughes continues by quoting PT Forsyth, "The absolute ultimate judgment of the world took place in Christ's death. There God spoke his last word – His last endless word. The last moral reality is there, the last standard, the last judgment. The last judgment is behind us. The true judgment-seat of Christ, where we must all appear, is the Cross... We do not realise that the prince of this world has been finally judged, and that we live in a saved world only because we live in a judged world... Christ is not Judge merely at some future coming. He is eternal Judge in His great work as the Crucified, a work historic yet timeless and final. In him the prince of this world has been finally and effectively judged, and the absolute condemnation passed. Satan then fell from his heaven. The absolute and irreversible judgment was passed upon evil. There too, the judgment of our sins fell once for all on the Holy One and the Just. The judgment Christ exercises stands on the judgment He endured. He assumes judgment because He absorbed it. Salvation and judgment are intertwined..."

Hebrews 10:14

μιὰ γὰρ προσφορὰ τετελείωκεν εἰς τὸ διηνεκῆς τοὺς ἁγιαζομένους.

εἰς, μιᾶ, ἐν see v.12

τετελείωκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s τελειωω
make perfect, complete

"It is significant that Christ Himself is said to perfect 'the offering': it is not said that 'the offering' perfects. His action is personal in the application of His own work. The importance of this form of expression appears from the language used of the Law: 7:19 οὐδὲν ἐτελειωσεν ὁ νομος. Cf. 9:9; 10:1. In the case of the Levitical institution the action of the appointed ministers fell into the background." Westcott

διηνεκῆς, εἰς see v.12

ἁγιαζω see v.10

Here we have the present continuous in contrast to the Aorist participle of 10:10. It may mean either:

- i) Those who are undergoing the progressive experience of sanctification – to be completed in glory;

- ii) Those many people who are, throughout this Gospel age, coming to know Christ and are sanctified in him.

Westcott combines the two saying it refers to "all who from time to time realise progressively in fact that which has been potentially obtained for them." John Flavel focuses on the latter sense, saying it implies "that the oblation made unto God by Jesus Christ is of unspeakable value, and everlasting efficacy, to perfect all them that are, or shall be sanctified, to the end of the world." (*Works*, Vol 1, p.55).

Hebrews 10:15-18

"The apostle goes back in conclusion to the testimony of the prophet from which he commenced his exposition of the high-priestly and sacrificial service of the New Covenant." Westcott

Hebrews 10:15

μαρτυρεῖ δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, μετὰ γὰρ τὸ εἰρηκέναι·

"The reintroduction of this quotation with the assurance that it is in truth the witness of the Holy Spirit has the effect of clinching and bringing to its conclusion the long argument regarding the nature of Christ's high priesthood and the perfection and finality of his atoning sacrifice, whereby the new covenant is brought to fulfilment." Hughes.

μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify, affirm
εἰρηκέναι Verb, perf act infin λεγω

Hebrews 10:16

Αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη ἦν διαθήσομαι πρὸς αὐτοὺς μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας, λέγει κύριος, διδοὺς νόμους μου ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς,

Cf. 8:10 – part of a fuller quotation from Jer. 31:31-34 in Heb 8:8-12.

Hebrews 10:17

καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθήσομαι ἔτι·

Cf. 8:12

ἀνομία, ἀσ f wickedness, lawlessness, sin
μνησθήσομαι Verb, fut pass dep indic, 1 s
μυνησκομαι remember, call to mind

Here μνησθήσομαι rather than the LXX μνησθω which is also in 8:12. οὐ μὴ μνησθω focuses on the single act of forgetting while μνησθήσομαι carries the forgetfulness to an endless future.

Hebrews 10:18

ὅπου δὲ ἄφεσις τούτων, οὐκέτι προσφορά περὶ ἁμαρτίας.

ὅπου adv. where

ἄφεσις, εως f see 9:22

"The consequences of sin are threefold: debt which requires forgiveness, bondage which requires redemption, alienation which requires reconciliation ... The words ἄφεσις, ἀφιεναι express the first idea: comp Matt 18:27, 32, 35." Westcott

οὐκέτι adv no longer, no more

προσφορά, ας f offering, sacrifice

"If, as seems to be the case, those to whom this letter is addressed have been swayed by enticements to return to or compromise with a purified type of Judaism, they cannot now, after the full and careful instruction our author has given them, pretend to be ignorant that any reversion to the shadowy forms and sacrifices of the Mosaic law can only mean the negation of the Christian gospel. There follows, approximately, a prolonged and powerful exhortation to lay firm hold of the blessings of the new covenant which God has made available to them through the mediation of Jesus Christ, our sole Redeemer and Lord." Hughes.

Hebrews 10:19-39

"Although various appeals to the readers have been made during the main doctrinal section, the concluding chapters contain Christian advice about various issues of practical life. There are extended passages on faith and discipleship."

In the rest of chapter 10 "The writer sets out the privileges and responsibilities of the Christian life (10:19-25). This leads into another solemn warning passage (10:26-31) and a reminder of the value of past Christian experience (10:32-39)." Guthrie

Hebrews 10:19

ἔχοντες οὖν, ἀδελφοί, παρρησίαν εἰς τὴν εἰσοδὸν τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ αἵματι Ἰησοῦ,

"The manner in which our author addresses his readers as *brethren* is particularly appropriate at this juncture as he solemnly urges them to give proof of their faith by acting upon it, for it shows that he admonishes them not as their judge but as their brother or fellow Christian and thus that he is confident that a genuine work of God has taken place in their midst." Hughes.

παρρησια, ας f openness, boldness, assurance

The gospel which reconciles gives bold access to God, as children to a Father, "...boldness despite the frankest recognition of our sins, comp 3:6; 4:16." Westcott. Hughes comments, "The freedom of access into the presence of God guaranteed by the gospel, furthermore, contrasts strikingly with the exclusion of the people from the most holy place where the glory of the Lord rested upon the mercy seat." Cf. Eph 3:12.

εἰσοδος, ου f entrance

αἷμα, ατος f see 9:12

Hebrews 10:20

ἣν ἐνεκαίνισεν ἡμῖν ὁδὸν πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ,

ἐνεκαίνισεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

ἐγκαινίζω inaugurate, open

ὁδος, ου f way

πρόσφατος, ον new, not previously available

A word not found elsewhere in the New Testament.

"It is *ever* new, inasmuch as, unlike the old imperfect way, it never becomes old and obsolete (cf. 8:13)." Hughes.

ζῶσαν Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s ζω live, be alive

The way is Christ himself. It is 'living' by virtue of his endless life. Cf. Jn 14:6.

καταπετασμα, τος n curtain

The curtain which barred access into the presence of God under the Old Covenant is replaced by Christ himself who provides access as Mediator of the New Covenant. The way that was closed is now open.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

Westcott understands σαρξ of 'human nature' and believes that the phrase qualifies ὁδον rather than καταπετασματος – Jesus' human nature is the way of access through the veil into God's presence. "It was by the 'way of His flesh,' by a way which lay in His humanity, that Christ entered through the veil after the offering of Himself as a High-priest able to sympathise with men. And it is by virtue of His humanity, and sprinkled with His blood, that Christians come before God."

Hughes says that the Greek does not lend itself to this interpretation. Rather, he quotes with approval John Owen who says that the significance of the analogy between the curtain of the tabernacle and the flesh (i.e. human person) of Jesus "is only this, that by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, wherein his flesh was torn and rent, we have a full entrance into the holy place [meaning, as the context shows, the most holy place], such as would have been of old upon the rending of the veil."

Hebrews 10:21

καὶ ἱερέα μέγαν ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ,

ἱερεὺς, εὼς m priest

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

Westcott says that this is not meant as an alternative form to ἀρχιερεὺς but that "The epithet *great* describes the sovereign power of our Priest."

οἶκος, οὐ m house, household

"The House of God includes the whole Christian economy both in its earthly and in its heavenly elements; in its organisation and its members. The Church on earth, so far as it has a true existence, lives by its embodiment of the heavenly idea." Westcott. Cf. 3:6.

Hebrews 10:22

προσερχόμεθα μετὰ ἀληθινῆς καρδίας ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πίστεως, ῥεραντισμένοι τὰς καρδίας ἀπὸ συνειδήσεως πονηρᾶς καὶ λελουσμένοι τὸ σῶμα ὕδατι καθαρῷ·

"These privileges of Christians are to be used. They must personally exercise their right of access to God." Westcott

προσερχομαι come or go to, approach

For the use of this verb in connection with approach to God cf. 1 Peter 2:4.

ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true

"A heart which expresses completely the devotion of the whole person to God. There is no divided allegiance: no reserve of feeling." Westcott

πληροφορια, ας f full assurance

Westcott says, "faith which has reached its mature vigour." But the sense seems rather, the full assurance which comes from faith: faith itself is weak, the assurance is in its object.

πιστις, εὼς f faith

ῥεραντισμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl

ῥαντιζω sprinkle

συνειδησις, εὼς f conscience

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad

λελουσμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl

λουω wash, bathe

σῶμα, τος n body

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

καθαρος, α, ον pure, clean

Hughes comments, "As under the old system the priests drew near in the person of him who was their high priest, so now in the person of our unique High Priest we have priestly access into the sanctuary of God's presence. Thus Peter teaches that Christians constitute 'a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ' (1 Pet 2:5). And as at their consecration the levitical priests were washed with water and sprinkled with the blood of sacrifice (Ex 29:4, 21), so now sprinkling and washing are obligatory for all who belong to this 'holy priesthood.' In this connection, the fact that the altar of sacrifice, where the blood of the victims was shed, and the laver, containing the water used for washing by the priests, were closely associated with each other in the court of the tabernacle is particularly significant (see Ex 40:29-32)." Hughes follows Westcott and Bruce in seeing here an allusion to baptism but rejects Westcott's suggestion that there is also an allusion to the eucharist.

Hebrews 10:23

κατέχωμεν τὴν ὁμολογίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀκλινῆ, πιστὸς γὰρ ὁ ἐπαγγειλάμενος·

κατεχω hold fast, keep

ὁμολογια, ας f confession, profession

Westcott thinks that this term was used especially of the profession of faith that accompanied baptism.

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope

Cf. 6:18. This 'hope' is that of perfect communion with God in glory. "The resurrection of Christ is the pledge of its fulfilment (1 Peter 1:3, 21)." Westcott.

ἀκλινης, ες without wavering, firmly

The word occurs here only in the NT.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, reliable

ἐπαγγειλάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m

nom s ἐπαγγελομαι promise

"The fidelity of God is not only the sure ground of our confidence but ... it challenges our fidelity." Westcott

Hebrews 10:24

καὶ κατανοῶμεν ἀλλήλους εἰς παροξυσμὸν ἀγάπης καὶ καλῶν ἔργων,

"As has frequently been observed, the first appeal (v. 22) is related to faith, the second (v. 23) to hope, and the third (v. 24) to love (cf. 1 Cor 13:13)." Hughes.

κατανοεω consider, think of, observe

Christians are not to be those who 'mind their own business' (though cf. 1 Thess 4:11).

ἀλλήλων, οἰς, οὐς reciprocal pronoun one another
παροξυσμος, ου m encouragement; sharp agreement or disagreement

Cf Acts 15:39. Of παροχυσμον ἀγαπης Westcott says, "The combination has a startling sound. Christians are to be roused, provoked, but to love."
Westcott distinguishes καλά ἔργα from ἀγαθα ἔργα saying that the former are "Works which by their generous and attractive character win the natural admiration of men ... Compare Matt 5:16."

Hebrews 10:25

μη̄ ἐγκαταλείποντες τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν ἑαυτῶν, καθὼς ἔθος τισίν, ἀλλὰ παρακαλοῦντες, καὶ τοσοῦτῳ μᾶλλον ὅσῳ βλέπετε ἐγγιζοῦσαν τὴν ἡμέραν.

The pain of relating to others whose imperfections are as great as one's own, and indeed mirror one's own, is sometimes so sharp that we wish only to shut ourselves away from fellowship. That is not an option open to the Christian.

ἐγκαταλείπω forsake, abandon; leave behind
ἐπισυναγωγή, ης f assembling, gathering

The verbal form ἐπισυναγῶ occurs 7 times in the NT: of crowds gathered around Jesus (Mk 1:33; Lk 12:1); in Jesus' words concerning Jerusalem – how he would have gathered them (Matt 23:37 (twice); Lk 13:34); of the end of the age when the elect are gathered together (Matt 24:31; Mk 13:27). The noun occurs only once apart from this verse, and that is in 2 Thess 2:1 of our being gathered to Christ when he returns. In every instance, the word is used of being gathered together *around the Lord Jesus*.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself
ἔθος, οὐς n custom, practice
τις, τὶ acc τινά, τὶ gen τινός dat τινί enclitic pronoun and adj anyone, a certain

Some had fallen into the habit of absenting themselves from the meetings of the church, perhaps because of the threat of persecution.

παρακαλῶ exhort, encourage
τοσοῦτος, αυτη, ουτον / ουτο correlative adj so much
μᾶλλον adv more
ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as, how far
βλεπῶ see
ἐγγιζῶ approach, draw near

Hughes comments, "When spoken of in this absolute manner, 'The Day' can mean only the last day, that ultimate eschatological day, which is the day of reckoning and judgment, known as the Day of the Lord (cf. 1 Cor 3:13; Acts 2:20; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10,12; Mt 7:22; 10:15; 11:22,24; 24:36; Mk 13:32; Lk 10:12; 17:26,30,31; 21:34; Jn 6:39; Phil 1:6,10; 2:16; 1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Jude 6; Rev 6:17)."

And F F Bruce comments, "The period between the first advent of Christ and His parousia is the end-time, the 'last days', the 'last hour.' Whatever the duration of the period may be, for faith 'the time is at hand' (Rev 1:3). Each successive Christian generation is called upon to live as the generation of the end-time, if it is to live as a *Christian* generation."

Hebrews 10:26-31

These verses speak of a settled state of rebellion rather than a fall into sin. "It must be observed that the argument assumes that the sacrifice of Christ is finally rejected, and sin persisted in (ἀμαρτανοντων). The writer does not set limits to the efficacy of Christ's work for the penitent." Westcott

Hebrews 10:26

Ἐκουσίως γὰρ ἀμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν μετὰ τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας, οὐκέτι περὶ ἀμαρτιῶν ἀπολείπεται θυσία,

ἐκουσίως willingly; deliberately
ἀμαρτανῶ sin, commit sin

"The phrase includes two distinct elements, the voluntariness, that is the realised consciousness of the sin, and the habitual indulgence in the sin. Such a sin involves apostasy from Christ." Westcott

λαβεῖν Verb, aor act infin λαμβανῶ
ἐπίγνωσις, εως f knowledge, recognition

"The use of the compound phrase (λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν) for the simple verb ... brings out the double aspect of the knowledge as God's gift and man's acquisition... In gaining it man is active and yet it is not from him." Westcott

ἀληθεια, ας f truth
οὐκέτι see v.18
ἀπολείπω leave behind; pass. remain
θυσια, ας f sacrifice, victim

If the one sacrifice for sin is rejected, there is no other. "They have wilfully cut themselves off from the sole means of forgiveness and reconciliation." Hughes.

Hebrews 10:27

φοβερά δέ τις ἐκδοχή κρίσεως καὶ πυρὸς ζήλος
ἐσθίειν μέλλοντος τοῦς ὑπεναντίους.

φοβερός, α, ον fearful, terrifying

Cf. v 31.

τις see v.25

"The rhetorical use of the indefinite τις gives a solemn awe to the statement. The fact that the expectation cannot be exactly defined necessarily makes it more impressive."

Westcott

ἐκδοχή, ης f expectation, prospect

The noun occurs here only in the NT

κρισις, εως f judgement

πυρ, ος n fire

ζήλος, ου m, and ους n zeal, jealousy

The words πυρὸς ζήλος are adapted from Is 26:11, cf. Zeph 1:18. "The word ζήλος suggests the thought of love which has been wronged, just as πυρ describes one aspect of the Divine Nature: cf. 12:29." Westcott

ἐσθίω and ἐσθώ eat, consume

μελλω be going, be destined

ὑπεναντίος, α, ον against, opposed to; ὁ ὑ.
foe, enemy

Hebrews 10:28

ἀθετήσας τις νόμον Μωϋσέως χωρὶς
οἰκτιρμῶν ἐπὶ δυσὶν ἢ τρισὶν μάρτυσιν
ἀποθνήσκει·

ἀθετήσας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ἀθετέω
reject, set aside

νόμος, ου m law

χωρὶς prep with gen without, apart from

οἰκτιρμος, ου m compassion, mercy

δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυσιν two

ἢ or

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m
witness

"The reference, as marked by the clause ἐπὶ
δυσὶν ἢ τρισὶν μάρτυσιν ἀποθνήσκει (Deut
17:6), appears to be to the specific warning
against idolatry (Deut 17:2ff)." Westcott

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death

Hebrews 10:29

πόσῳ δοκεῖτε χειρόνος ἀξιοθήσεται τιμωρίας
ὁ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καταπατήσας, καὶ τὸ αἷμα
τῆς διαθήκης κοινὸν ἡγησάμενος ἐν ᾧ
ἡγιάσθη, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας.

πόσος, η, ον how much(?)

δοκεω think, suppose

χειρων, ον gen ονος worse, more severe

ἀξιοθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s ἀξίωω
consider worthy

τιμωρία, ας f punishment, penalty

"It expresses simply the notion of retributive
punishment in regard to the offence." Westcott

καταπατέω trample on, trample under foot

Hughes comments, "To trample the Son of
God under foot implies, within the context of
our epistle, the sneering rejection of Jesus as
the Son in whom God has spoken and enacted
his final redeeming word to mankind, through
whom the world was created, and by whose
powerful word the universe is sustained and
carried forward to its predestined end (1:1-3)."
He continues with a list of further implications
from the description of Christ and his work in
Hebrews.

αἷμα, ατος f blood

διαθηκη, ης covenant

Cf. 13:20.

κοινος, α, ον common, unclean

The NT "uniformly places κοινος in contrast
with ἅγιος or καθαρος." Westcott.

ἡγησάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s
ἡγεομαι think, regard, consider

ἡγιάσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ἁγιαζω
sanctify, make holy

"By this blood-shedding the believer is
sanctified, that is to say, his defilement is
removed and in Christ he is made acceptable to
God; his conscience purified from dead works,
he is set apart for the holy calling of serving
the living God (1:3; 9:14; 10:14). The
communion cup, from which we drink in
remembrance of our Redeemer, is the new
covenant in his blood (1 Cor 15:25). Week
after week the apostate has partaken of the
sacrament of the body and blood of Christ,
thereby professing to look to Christ for the
washing away of sin. But his faith has been
simulated, not genuine, and his secession from
the community of believers reveals that, far
from thankfully trusting in the blood of Jesus
for forgiveness, he has *profaned* it, or, literally,
counted it as common. The blood which made
it possible for him to enter into the sphere of
God's holiness he has treated as a thing unholy,
thus completely contradicting the profession he
had formerly made." Hughes.

χαρις, ιτος f grace

ἐνυβρίζω insult, outrage

Not found elsewhere in the NT. "It combines
arrogance with wanton injury." Westcott.

"Just as, during his earthly ministry, Christ's opponents wished to ascribe his works of grace to the agency, not of the Spirit of God, but of Satan, the Evil Spirit, so the apostate, in headstrong antagonism to what he knows to be the truth, traitorously denounces the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, of which he has claimed personal experience, as demonic instead of divine. This outrageous falsification of the Good News, this incredible exchange of the truth about God for a lie (Rom 1:25), this wilful rejection of grace and light in favour of unbelief and darkness, is the 'sin unto death' for which there is no remission (1 Jn 5:16), the eternal and irremissible sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mk 3:22-30)." Hughes.

"There is a triple indictment. The manifestation of the apostasy of the offender is described under three distinct aspects, as an act (καταπατησας), as an opinion (ήγησαμενος), as a personal and wilful assault (ένυβρισας). His conduct shews that he has already abandoned his faith, and that too after he had made trial of its blessings. His decision, expressed in deed, is regarded as complete and final." Westcott

Hebrews 10:30

οἶδαμεν γάρ τὸν εἰπόντα· Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω· καὶ πάλιν· Κρινεῖ κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ.

οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

Know not only who it is who has said this, but also his character.

εἰπόντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s λεγω
 ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγω
 ἐκδίκησις, εως f retribution, rendering of justice, punishment
 ἀνταποδώσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s
 ἀνταποδίδωμι repay

Dt 32:35, cf. Rom 12:19.

παλιν again, once more
 κρινεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s κρινω judge
 λαος, ου m people

Dt 32:36; Ps 135:14. "The Lord will judge his people' (Dt 32:36), speaks, as originally uttered, of judgment in the sense of vindication (cf. Ps. 135:14) – but, again, those with reference to whom the Lord's people are vindicated are not only the alien adversaries but also the ones who contemptuously desert the fellowship of grace." Hughes.

Hebrews 10:31

φοβερὸν τὸ ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς χεῖρας θεοῦ ζῶντος.
 φοβερος, α, ον fearful, terrifying

Takes up the φοβερα of v.27.

ἐμπεσεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐμπιπτω fall into

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power
 ζαω live, be alive

Hebrews 10:32-39

Words of encouragement now follow the previous words of warning.

Hebrews 10:32

Ἀναμνησθεσθε δὲ τὰς πρότερον ἡμέρας, ἐν αἷς φωτισθέντες πολλὴν ἄθλησιν ὑπεμείνατε παθημάτων,

ἀναμνησκω remind; pass remember

"The word is used of recalling specific subjects to the mind." Westcott

πρότερον adv previously, formerly, at first

"The phrase τας προτερον ημερας does not so much express 'the former days' (τας προτερης ημ.) as a definite period as 'the days of a former time,' at an earlier stage of your faith." Westcott. Cf. 1 Peter 1:14.

φωτισθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
 φωτιζω give light to, enlighten

I.e when they first became Christians.

ἀθλησις, εως f difficult struggle

This word occurs here only in the NT. It "adds to the picture the image of the resolute combatant. The Hebrews not only suffered, but bore themselves as those who were contesting for a crown." Westcott.

ὑπεμείνατε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl ὑπομενω endure

παθημα, τος n suffering

It is quite probable that those converting to Christianity from Judaism suffered persecution particularly in the first days of their newly professed faith.

Hebrews 10:33

τοῦτο μὲν ὀνειδισμοῖς τε καὶ θλίψεσιν θεατριζόμενοι, τοῦτο δὲ κοινωνοὶ τῶν οὕτως ἀναστροφόμενων γενηθέντες·

τουτο μεν ... τουτο δε 'in this regard ... and also in that...'

ὀνειδισμος, ου m insult, abuse; disgrace, shame

τε και and also

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

"Reproaches affect the character: afflictions affect material prosperity." Westcott

θεατριζω expose to public shame

κοινωνος, ου m partner, sharer

ἀναστροφω pass live, conduct oneself

γενηθέντες Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom pl
γίνομαι

"The contrast in the tenses of the participles, θεατριζομενοι, γενηθεντες, ... suggests that upon some special occasion the persons addressed had in a signal manner identified themselves with fellow-Christians in an outbreak of persecution ... while they were habitually exposed to public disgrace." Westcott. In the past, identification with the Christian community had been vital to them, even when that community faced opposition.

Hebrews 10:34

καὶ γὰρ τοῖς δεσμίοις συνεπαθήσατε, καὶ τὴν ἀρπαγὴν τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ὑμῶν μετὰ χαρᾶς προσεδέξασθε, γινώσκοντες ἔχειν ἑαυτοῦς κρεῖττονα ὑπαρξιν καὶ μένουσαν.

καὶ γὰρ "Constant usage suggests that the καὶ emphasises the general statement and does not simply correspond with the καὶ which follows: *For in fact ye ...* Comp 4:2; 5:12; 12:29; 13:22." Westcott.

δεσμιος, ου m prisoner

Cf. Acts 8:3.

συνεπαθήσατε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl
συμπασχω suffer together
ἀρπαγή, ης f greed, violence, seizure
ὑπαρχω be at one's disposal (τα ὑ. possessions).

χαρά, ας f joy, gladness

Cf. Rom 5:3; Acts 16:24f.; 1 Peter 4:13; Jas 1:2.

προσεδέξασθε Verb, aor midd dep indic, 2 pl
προσδεχομαι welcome, accept

"By the use of the word γινώσκοντες, as distinguished from εἰδοτες ... the writer implies that the knowledge was realised through the trial." Westcott.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself
κρεττων and κρεισσων, ον gen ονος

better; greater
ὑπαρξις, εως f possession, property
μενω remain, abide

Cf. 1 Peter 1:23.

"Our author makes it plain that those to whom he is writing had endured much in the days following their acceptance of the gospel – sufferings, abuse, affliction, imprisonment, loss of property; and now he is saying to them in effect what Paul found it necessary to say in his letter to the Galatian Christians, 'Have you suffered so many things in vain?' (Gal 3:4 KJV). It would be incomprehensible for them now even to consider the possibility of abandoning the struggle and with it the prize. This is the burden of the appeal that follows." Hughes.

Hebrews 10:35

μη ἀποβάλητε οὖν τὴν παρρησίαν ὑμῶν, ἣτις ἔχει μεγάλην μισθοποδοσίαν,
ἀποβάλητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl ἀποβαλλω
throw off; lose

A graphic phrase, 'do not fling away...'

παρρησια, ας f boldness, assurance
ὅστις, ἣτις, ὅ τι who, which
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
μισθοποδοσια, ας f reward

"The recompense is included even now in the spirit of the believer who has learnt to rate outward afflictions at their true value (Rom 8:3)." Westcott. On future reward, cf. Rom 8:18; 1 Peter 1:4; 2 Tim 4:8.

Hebrews 10:36

ὑπομονῆς γὰρ ἔχετε χρεῖαν ἵνα τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ποιήσαντες κομίσησθε τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν·
ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

Cf. 12:1.

χρεια, ας f need, want
θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

"The phrase ... recalls what was said of Christ's work (10:5ff) as a fulfilment of the will of God. Man in his little field must follow the example of his Lord (1 Peter 2:21), which is always set before us as an example of suffering." Westcott.

κομίσησθε Verb, aor midd subj, 2 pl κομιζω
midd receive, obtain, be paid back
ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised

"Of this the gift of the Spirit (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:23ff; Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13) and the 'presence of the Lord' (2 Peter 3:4,9) were pledges." Westcott.

Hebrews 10:37

ἔτι γὰρ μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἤξει
καὶ οὐ χρονίσει·
ἔτι still, yet

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as, how much, how far

Westcott says that the phrase ὅσον ὅσον is a colloquial form. The whole phrase means 'For, yet a very little while.' The phrase appears to have been borrowed from Is 26:20 LXX, the context of which is also relevant to the point being made.

ἦκω come, have come, be present
χρονίζω delay

The quotation, with some modification and transposition, is from Hab 2:3-4. "In the original context that which is expected is the fulfilment of the prophetic vision of the destruction of the Chaldeans, the enemies of God's people, to be followed by the revelation of his glory. The judgement was executed and the promise was accomplished in due time, but not as men had hoped. The lesson had a significant application to the condition of the early church." Westcott.

Hughes comments, "Instead of the Septuagint's 'he will surely come,' our author has *the coming one shall come* (involving no more than the addition of the definite article in the Greek), which, without in any way impairing the note of emphasis and certainty, gives the expression a definite messianic connotation, 'the coming one' or 'he who is coming' being a familiar description of the Messiah."

Hebrews 10:38

ὁ δὲ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, καὶ ἐὰν ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἢ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ.

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
πιστις, εως f faith, trust

"The just – the true believer – requires faith, trust in the unseen, for life. Such faith is the support of endurance (ὑπομονη) and the seal of confidence (παρρησια)." Westcott.

"The declaration, 'my righteous one shall live by faith,' provides the *motif* of the great eleventh chapter of our epistle at which we have now arrived." Hughes

ζήσεται Verb, fut mid indic, 3s ζῶ live
ὑποστείληται Verb, aor midd subj, 3s
ὑποστελλω draw back; midd turn back, shrink back

Shrinking away through fear or improper regard for others – the opposite of faith.

εὐδοκεω be pleased, take pleasure in
ψυχη, ης f self, inmost being, 'soul'

Hebrews 10:39

ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐσμὲν ὑποστολῆς εἰς ἀπώλειαν, ἀλλὰ πίστεως εἰς περιποίησιν ψυχῆς.

Note again the first person plural: the author identifies himself with his readers.

ὑποστολη, ης f shrinking back, turning back

ἀπωλεια, ας f destruction, utter ruin
περιποιησις, εως f obtaining, gaining

Cf. 1 Thess 5:9; 2 Thess 2:14.

Hebrews 11

"The writer is well aware that the life of faith is not easy, but he calls to mind the exploits of many men and women of faith from the past. He produces a miniature picture-gallery of godly people who nevertheless, in spite of their achievement, did not fully inherit the promises since they had lived before the time of Christ." Guthrie

Westcott divides the chapter up as follows:

- i) vv.1-2 Preliminary view of the characteristics and work of faith.
- ii) vv. 3-7 Faith as seen in the prophetic records of the old world.
- iii) vv. 8-22 The faith of the Patriarchs, marked by obedience, patience and sacrifice.
- iv) vv. 23-31 The faith of conflict and conquest.
- v) vv. 32-38 Faith active in national life.
- vi) vv. 39,40 Conclusion

Hebrews 11:1

Ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.

"The order (ἔστιν δε πιστις) shews that the object of the writer is not to give a formal definition of faith but to bring out characteristics of faith which bear on his argument." Westcott

ἐλπίζω hope, hope for, hope in, expect
ὑποστασις, εως f confidence, assurance, conviction; nature, essence, substance

Westcott considers the meanings of ὑποστασις and ἔλεγχος. He says that the structure of the sentence demands that their meanings must be co-ordinate. He says that they refer *either* to:

- i) a particular frame of mind – so ὑποστασις is translated 'assurance', as in 3:14.
- ii) a description of what faith does – ὑποστασις is 'substance' – that which gives real existence to a thing.

Westcott prefers the latter since he argues that ἔλεγχος (which occurs nowhere else in the NT) carries the sense of 'proof' rather than 'conviction'.

Hughes lists four possible meanings of ὑποστασις and concludes, "Despite the different interpretations proposed, there is in all cases, as Moulton and Milligan point out, 'the same central idea of something that *underlies* visible conditions and guarantees a future possession.'"

πραγμα, τος n matter, thing, event, deed
ἐλεγχος, ου m verification, certainty
βλεπω see, be able to see

The *object* of faith is 'things hoped for' and 'things not seen'. The *quality* of faith is to create 'assurance' and 'certainty' concerning such things. The life of faith is built upon the certain reality of what is not seen but hoped for. The certainty itself arises from the fact that faith simply trusts what God has said.

Hebrews 11:2

ἐν ταύτῃ γὰρ ἐμαρτυρήθησαν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι.

ἐν ταύτῃ 'in respect of this' i.e. of faith

ἐμαρτυρήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify, affirm,
approve; pass be well spoken of,
receive approval

Westcott takes the verb to mean 'the elders had witness borne to them' i.e. the testimony of Scripture concerning them (cf. v.4). The NIV takes it in the sense that they received commendation (from God).

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder

Hebrews 11:3

πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας
ῥήματι θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὸ
βλεπόμενον γεγονέναι.

νοεω understand, perceive, discern

Faith provides a foundation for the reasoning activity of the believer – provides a 'world view'. Faith is not opposed to reason.

κατηρτίσθαι Verb, perf pass infin καταρτιζω
make complete

Bears the sense 'put together.' "expresses the manifoldness and the unity of all creation; and by the tense marks that the original lesson of creation remains for abiding use and application." Westcott

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

The sense is not just the original cosmos but "creation as unfolded in time, the many 'ages' going to form one 'world'." Westcott

ῥημα, ατος n word

An expression of the divine will.

φαινω shine; midd. and pass. appear, be
seen

βλεπω see v.1

γεγονέναι Verb, perf act infin γινομαι

"The purpose and end of the knowledge gained by faith as to the creation of the world is the conviction that the visible order as we observe it, as a whole has not come into being by simple material causation. We learn to recognise that there is a divine power behind it. Such a conclusion is the fundamental triumph of faith." Westcott

Hebrews 11:4

Πίστει πλείονα θυσίαν Ἄβελ παρὰ Κάιν
προσήνεγκεν τῷ θεῷ, δι' ἧς ἐμαρτυρήθη εἶναι
δίκαιος, μαρτυροῦντος ἐπὶ τοῖς δόροις αὐτοῦ
τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀποθανὼν ἔτι λαλεῖ.

πλειων, πλειον ογ πλεον more

I.e. 'more excellent', 'more abundant'

θυσια, ας f sacrifice

προσήνεγκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

προσφερω offer, present

Gregory the Great, quoted by Hughes, states, "It is obvious that it was not the offeror who received approval because of the offerings but the offerings because of the offeror." Similarly Calvin comments, "the sacrifice of Abel was more acceptable than that of his brother only because it was sanctified by faith."

Hughes considers the view of Owen and others that Abel's offering involved the shedding of blood and so signified an acknowledgment of sin that was absent from that of Cain. Hughes comments, "Whether or not this is a correct understanding of the situation it is impossible to say. The developed system of blood-sacrifice for sin receives explicit formulation only later in the Old Testament, though it may be assumed that its roots go back to a very early period."

ἐμαρτυρήθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

μαρτυρεω

δι' ἧς ἐμαρτυρήθη i.e. 'through which *sacrifice*'. "The sacrifice was the sign of the righteousness – the true relation to God by faith – which he had inwardly. Through this the witness came, as *God bore witness on the occasion of his gifts...* There is nothing in Scripture to shew in what way the divine witness was given to Abel." Westcott.

Hughes says that δι ἧς refers to *faith*, not to the sacrifice, saying, "*Faith* is the ruling concept of this verse, and indeed of the whole chapter, as the emphatic position of πιστει at the beginning of the sentence attests, and accordingly πιστει not θυσιαν is the proper antecedent of the relative ἧς, as it is also, by general agreement, the antecedent of the pronoun αὐτης in the last clause of the verse. The connection of thought is the fact seen in the sequence πιστει ... δι ἧς ... και δι αὐτης..."

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι
δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
δωρον, ου n gift, offering

δι αὐτης 'through it', i.e. faith

ἀποθανων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
ἀποθνησκω die
ἐτι still, yet
λαλεω speak, talk

"Abel by his example of faith and righteousness still speaks to us today, even though he has so long been dead. The spectacle of his trustful integrity, even in the face of violence, should inspire us to persevere and to overcome by the same means." Hughes.

Hebrews 11:5

Πιστει Ἐνὼχ μετετέθη τοῦ μὴ ἰδεῖν θάνατον, καὶ οὐχ ἠύρισκετο διότι μετέθηκεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεός· πρὸ γὰρ τῆς μεταθέσεως μεμαρτύρηται εὐαρεστικένας τῷ θεῷ,

Cf. Gen 5:18-24.

μετετέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s μετατιθημι
remove, take back
ἰδεῖν Verb, aor act infin ὄραω see
θανατος, ου m death
εὕρισκω find, discover
διότι because, for
μετέθηκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s μετατιθημι

"Enoch, indeed, may be seen as a sort of prototype (together with Elijah at a later period) of the men and women of faith who will be living at the moment of Christ's return – an occasion of surpassing glory – and who, too, will be caught up to be with Christ without passing through the experience of death (see 1 Thess 4:15-17)." Hughes.

μεταθεσις, εως f removal; taking up
μεμαρτύρηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s
μαρτυρεω

The perfect carries the sense 'the witness stands recorded'

εὐαρεστικένας Verb, perf act infin
εὐαρεστεω please, be pleasing to

"The circumstances under which Enoch lived gave prominence to his faith. In a corrupt age he is said to have maintained that fellowship with God which is identical with pleasing him." Westcott

Hebrews 11:6

χωρις δὲ πίστεως ἀδύνατον εὐαρεστησαι, πιστεῦσαι γὰρ δεῖ τὸν προσερχόμενον τῷ θεῷ ὅτι ἔστιν καὶ τοῖς ἐκζητοῦσιν αὐτὸν μισθαποδότης γίνεται.

χωρις prep with gen without, apart from
ἀδυνατος, ον impossible
πιστεω believe (in), have faith (in)
δει impersonal verb it is necessary, must
προσερχομαι come or go to, approach
ἐκζητοῦσιν Verb, pres act ptc, m & n dat pl
ἐκζητεω seek or search diligently
μισθαποδοτης, ου m rewarder

"The faith which is thus declared to be necessary for anyone who approaches God as a worshipper ... includes two elements, the belief: a) that God is, and b) that He is morally active; in other words it is a faith in the existence and in the moral government of God." Westcott.

Hughes, citing Gen 15:1, says that the reward is God himself. Those who seek him find *him*.

Hebrews 11:7

πίστει χρηματισθεῖς Νῶε περὶ τῶν μηδέπω βλεπομένων εὐλαβηθεῖς κατεσκεύασεν κιβωτὸν εἰς σωτηρίαν τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ, δι ἧς κατέκρινεν τὸν κόσμον, καὶ τῆς κατὰ πίστιν δικαιοσύνης ἐγένετο κληρονόμος.

χρηματισθεῖς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
χρηματιζω warn, instruct, reveal
μηδεπω not yet
εὐλαβηθεῖς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s
εὐλαβεομαι act in reverence, be moved with fear; take heed
κατασκευαζω prepare, build, construct, furnish

Includes both the construction and the fitting up.

κιβωτος, ου f ark, ship
σωτηρια, ας f salvation
οικος, ου m house, household, family

δι ἧς 'through which *ark*'. "His faith was visibly presented to the eyes of his contemporaries by the construction of the ark. Through this then he condemned the unbelieving world, as witnessing to the divine destruction which was to come upon them in just recompense for their deeds." Westcott. Again, Hughes sees this as a reference to *faith* not to the ark.

κατέκρινεν Verb, aor & imperf act indic, 3 s
κατακρινω condemn, pass judgement
ον

"Though the form is ambiguous, [it] is probably an imperfect and describes the constant significance of his action." Westcott

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness

"The righteousness which 'answers to,' 'corresponds with' faith, is that righteousness which God alone can give, which answers to, corresponds with, that spiritual order which faith also enters." Westcott

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι
κληρονομος, ου m heir, one who receives
what is promised (by God)

"The righteousness was not a hope for the future but a real possession by the gift of God." Westcott.

Hebrews 11:8-12

Westcott entitles these verses, "The Faith of persistent Obedience seen in the Faith of Abraham." The main emphasis is upon faith trusting wholly in God for what he has promised and, through patient endurance, inheriting the promise.

Hebrews 11:8

Πίστει καλούμενος Ἀβραὰμ ὑπήκουσεν ἐξελθεῖν εἰς τόπον ὃν ἤμελλεν λαμβάνειν εἰς κληρονομίαν, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν μὴ ἐπιστάμενος ποῦ ἔρχεται.

The present participle καλούμενος emphasises the immediacy of his obedience. "He obeyed the call while (so to say) it was still sounding in his ears." Westcott.

ὑπακουω obey, be subject to
τοπος, ου m place, opportunity
ἤμελλεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s μελλω
(before an infin) be going, be destined
κληρονομια, ας f inheritance, what is
promised

ἐπισταμαι know, understand
ποῦ adv where, to what place

"It is no ordinary trial of faith to give up what we have in hand in order to seek what is afar off and unknown to us." Calvin.

Hebrews 11:9

πίστει παρώκησεν εἰς γῆν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ὡς ἄλλοτριαν, ἐν σκηναῖς κατοικήσας μετὰ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ τῶν συγκληρονόμων τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῆς αὐτῆς·

παροικεω live in, make a temporary home,
live as a stranger

γη, γης f earth, land

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise

This phrase occurs here alone in the NT.

ἄλλοτριος, α, ον belonging to another

Cf. Acts 7:6

σκηνη, ης f tent, temporary shelter

κατοικήσας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s

κατοικεω live, inhabit

Westcott says that "Abraham dwelt throughout the time of his sojourn in tents, so declaring that which was permanent was not yet attained... The premature settlement of Lot and its disastrous issue point the lesson of Abraham's discipline."

συγκληρονομος, ον sharing together,
sharing together God's blessings

Hebrews 11:10

ἐξεδέχετο γὰρ τὴν τοῦ θεμελίου ἔχουσαν πόλιν, ἧς τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς ὁ θεός.

"It was by faith that Abraham learned to look beyond this present fleeting scene to the unseen and eternal blessings which God has prepared for those who love him (1 Cor 2:9) and to account the sufferings of this present time as unworthy of comparison with the glory that was to be revealed to him (Rom 8:18). Accordingly, he realised that the attainment of this earthly territory was not the completion of his pilgrimage and perceived that this land of promise, so unpromising in itself, was in fact a pointer to a further and more solid reality. The testing circumstances of his sojourn within its boundaries were a daily witness to him that fulfilment was not here and not yet. And so the land became to him a sacrament, or rather an element which, linked as it was with the word of promise, was invested with sacramental significance, and which, as such, pointed beyond itself to a more excellent consummation." Hughes.

ἐκδεχομαι wait for, expect, look forward to
θεμελιος, ου m (also θεμελιον, ου n)
foundation

πολις, εως f city, town

τεχνιτης, ου m craftsman; designer

δημιουργος, ου m builder, creator

"The word τεχνιτης in this connexion refers to the plan and δημιουργος to the execution of it. Τεχνιτης occurs in the more general sense of 'craftsman' Acts 19:24, 38; Rev 18:22: δημιουργος is not found again in the NT." Westcott

Hebrews 11:11

πίστει καὶ αὐτῇ Σάρρα δύναμιν εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος ἔλαβεν καὶ παρὰ καιρὸν ἡλικίας, ἐπεὶ πιστὸν ἠγήσατο τὸν ἐπαγγειλάμενον·

στειρα, ας f barren, a woman incapable of having children

καταβολη, ης f beginning, creation

σπερμα, τος n seed, offspring

ἔλαβεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s λαμβανω

There is much debate over whether Sarah or Abraham is the subject of this verse. There are a number of textual variants which seek to ease the ambiguity. The UBS Committee, influenced by the fact that the expression δύναμιν εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος ἔλαβεν is regularly used of the male in begetting rather than the female in conceiving, punctuate the text to indicate that καὶ αὐτῇ Σάρρα στειρα is considered a circumstantial clause, 'by faith, even though Sarah was barren, he [Abraham] received power ...' Hughes, having considered the various options and influenced by the fact that the Greek fathers uniformly understood the verse of Sarah, concludes, "Taking everything into consideration, it remains the most natural construction to accept Sarah as the subject of the sentence." He understands 'seed' here "not of the receiving of seed by the woman from the man nor of transmission of seed by the man to the woman, but of the founding or establishing of a seed or posterity."

παρὰ preposition with acc beside, contrary to

καιρος, ου m time, season

ἡλικια, ας f age, span of life, years

καὶ παρὰ καιρὸν ἡλικίας "Even against natural expectation of the age which she had reached."

ἐπεὶ since, because, for

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, reliable

ἠγήσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

ἡγεομαι think, regard, consider

ἐπαγγειλάμενον Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m acc & n nom/acc s ἐπαγγελλομαι promise

Hebrews 11:12

διὸ καὶ ἀφ' ἑνὸς ἐγεννήθησαν, καὶ ταῦτα νενεκρωμένου, καθὼς τὰ ἄστρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τῷ πλήθει καὶ ὡς ἡ ἄμμος ἢ παρὰ τὸ χεῖλος τῆς θαλάσσης ἢ ἀναριθμητος.

διο therefore, for this reason

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one, single

"Though Sarah is lost, so to speak, in Abraham with whom she was united (ἀφ' ἑνος), yet her act of Faith completing his Faith is made the reason of the fulfilment of the promise (διο)." Westcott.

ἐγεννήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

γενναω be father of, bear; pass be born

Westcott says of καὶ ταῦτα that it is a classical phrase found here only in the NT.

νενεκρωμένου Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n gen s νεκρωω put to death (pf pass ptc as good as dead)

Cf. Rom 4:19

ἄστρον, ου n star, constellation

οὐρανός, ου m heaven

πληθος, ους n crowd, multitude

Cf. Gen 22:17; 32:12.

ἄμμος, ου f sand

χεῖλος, ους n lip, shore

θαλασσα, ης f sea

ἀναριθμητος, ον innumerable

Hebrews 11:13

Κατὰ πίστιν ἀπέθανον οὗτοι πάντες, μὴ λαβόντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, ἀλλὰ πόρρωθεν αὐτὰς ἰδόντες καὶ ἀσπασάμενοι, καὶ ὁμολογήσαντες ὅτι ξένοι καὶ παρεπίδημοί εἰσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

κατὰ πίστιν "indicates that it was in accordance with the principle of faith that they faced the moment of death." Hughes.

ἀπέθανον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl

ἀποθνησκω die, face death

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

Meaning, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

ἐπαγγελια, ας f see v.9

Qualifies the assertion that these all died 'in faith'. They died in faith in the sense that they had not received the promises of the land, growth of a nation etc. but they died trusting God to fulfil his promise.

πορρωθεν at or from a distance

ἰδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὁραω

see, observe, perceive

The paradox of faith is that it sees the unseen, cf. v.1.

ἀσπάζομαι greet, welcome

"Thus the existential power of faith made the distant hope a present reality, and these believers of the ancient world 'saw' and 'greeted' the promised consummation, even, and indeed especially, in the hour of death, as though already face to face with it." Hughes.

ὁμολογήσαντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl

ὁμολογεω confess, declare

ξενος, η, ον strange, foreign; ὁ ξ. stranger, foreigner

παρεπίδημος, ου m temporary resident

Reflects Abraham's words in Gen 23:4 when seeking to buy a burial plot for Sarah.

Hebrews 11:14

οἱ γὰρ τοιαῦτα λέγοντες ἐμφανίζουσιν ὅτι πατρίδα ἐπιζητοῦσιν.

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and adjective such, of such kind
ἐμφανίζω inform, make known, reveal
πατρις, ιδος f native country, own city, own town, settled home

Only occurrence of this word in the epistle. Cf Jn 4:43. The word bears the sense 'fatherland', the place to which one truly belongs.

ἐπιζητεω seek, desire, search for

Hebrews 11:15

καὶ εἰ μὲν ἐκείνης μνημονεύουσιν ἀφ' ἧς ἐξέβησαν, εἶχον ἂν καιρὸν ἀνακάμψαι·

ἐκεινος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that
μνημονευω remember, keep in mind; make mention of

Westcott thinks that the second, and less common sense, 'make mention of' is the appropriate one here. He thinks that the reference is to their words rather than their feelings. The suggestion seems unnatural in context. The sense appears rather to be that of remembering with longing, rather as Israel in the wilderness looked back with longing to Egypt.

ἐξέβησαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἐκβαίνω leave, go out

καιρος, ου m time, here 'opportunity'
ἀνακάμψαι Verb, aor act infin ἀνακαμπτω return, turn back

The writer of this epistle is warning his readers against the temptations of turning back. There are always plenty of opportunities to turn back, but faith is forward looking. Faith looks back only in thankfulness and forward always in hope.

Hebrews 11:16

νῦν δὲ κρείττονος ὀρέγονται, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐπουρανίου. διὸ οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς θεὸς ἐπικαλεῖσθαι αὐτῶν, ἠτοίμασεν γὰρ αὐτοῖς πόλιν.

"To avow openly in the world, by our ways, walking and living, with a constant public profession, that our portion and inheritance is not in it, but in things invisible, in heaven above, is an illustrious act and the fruit of faith. But then it is incumbent on us, that we do not in anything contradict this testimony. If we love the world like others, use it and abuse it like others, we destroy our profession, and declare our faith to be in vain." John Owen. Owen says that their desire had three elements:
i) A sense of dissatisfaction with the present;

ii) A sense of the worth and excellence of what is desired;
iii) A sight of the means of attaining it, without which the desire would soon fade.

κρειττων and κρεισσων, ον gen ονοσ better

ὀρεγομαι be eager for, long for, desire
ἐπουρανιος, ον heavenly, celestial
διο therefore, for this reason
ἐπαισχνομαι be ashamed
ἐπικαλεω call, name

I.e. he calls himself 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob' (Gen 28:13; 31:5; 39:9; Ex 3:6; 4:5). Cf. Jn 20:17 – he now calls himself our God.

ἐτοιμαζω prepare, make ready

Cf. Jn 14:2-3.

πολις, εως f city

"The fulfilment of the promise in its highest form is set before us as social and not simply as personal. God prepared for His chosen not a home but a 'city,' a Divine Commonwealth." Westcott.

"It is the same goal toward which the apostle Paul, unhindered by present afflictions, pressed on, 'forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,' in the conviction that 'our citizenship is in heaven' where at last we shall be fully transformed into the likeness of our glorified Redeemer (Phil 3:12f., 20f.); and toward which we who are Christian believers hasten as we 'run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith' (Heb 12:1f.). In such single-minded commitment there can be no thought of turning back." Hughes.

Hebrews 11:17-19

"The greatness of Abraham's Faith was shewn by the fact that he was ready to sacrifice his only son, though it had been before declared that the fulfilment of the promise which he had received was to come through him. His obedience therefore included the conviction of some signal and incomprehensible work of God whose promise could not fail." Westcott

Hebrews 11:17

Πίστει προσενήνοχεν Ἀβραὰμ τὸν Ἰσαὰκ πειραζόμενος, καὶ τὸν μονογενῆ προσέφερεν ὁ τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀναδεξάμενος,

προσενήνοχεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s
προσφερω offer, present

Note the use of the perfect followed by the imperfect. Westcott comments, "The first verb expresses the permanent result of the offering completed by Abraham in will, the second his actual readiness in preparing the sacrifice which was not literally carried into effect." Faith is generally tested when it seems that circumstances run counter to the promises of God (cf. James 1:12). However, Abraham's faith was tested by a *command* of God that seemed to run counter to the promise.

πειράζω test, put to the test, tempt
μονογενής, ἐς only, unique

One cannot help but hear an echo of the use of μονογενής of Christ in Jn 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9 – though it is also used of an only child in Luke 7:12. Hughes comments, "Not that Abraham was the begetter of no other sons, for he was the father of Ishmael by Hagar and was to be the father of other sons by Keturah; yet there was but one son of the covenant, namely Isaac, who, contrary to human possibility, but in accordance with the power of the promise, was born to Sarah. Within the perspective of God's infallible purposes he was the only son."

ἐπαγγελία, ἀς f see v.13
ἀναδεξάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom
s ἀναδεχομαι receive, welcome

Hebrews 11:18

πρὸς ὃν ἐλαλήθη ὅτι Ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεται σοὶ σπέρμα,

πρὸς ὃν ἐλαλήθη Westcott says that this can be understood in one of two ways:

- i) 'he to whom it was said' i.e. of Abraham;
- ii) 'him in reference to whom it was said', i.e. of Isaac.

"The latter rendering is against the structure of the sentence; though it is in itself possible."

ἐλαλήθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s λαλεω
speak

κληθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s καλεω
σπέρμα, τοσ n seed, offspring

Cf. Gen 21:12.

Hebrews 11:19

λογισάμενος ὅτι καὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγείρειν δυνατὸς ὁ θεός· ὅθεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐν παραβολῇ ἐκομίσατο.

λογισάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom
s λογίζομαι reckon

νεκρός, α, ον dead

ἐγείρω raise

δυνατός, η, ον powerful, able

Cf. Gen 22:5 for the implied conviction.

ὅθεν where, from where

παραβολή, ης f parable, comparison,
proverb

ἐκομίσατο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s κομίζω
midd receive, get back

"So dramatic was the sequence of events that it was as though Isaac really had died and had been raised to life again." Hughes.

Westcott suggests that Abraham's faith was grounded in the fact that Isaac's birth was a receiving of what was promised in the face of death (cf. Rom 4:19).

Hughes includes part of Beza's dramatic verse on this incident, written in 1550.

Hebrews 11:20

Πίστει καὶ περὶ μελλόντων εὐλόγησεν Ἰσαὰκ τὸν Ἰακώβ καὶ τὸν Ἡσαΐ.

μελλω (ptc. without infin) coming, future
εὐλογεω speak well of, bless

Cf. Gen 27. Note that the younger son, Jacob, is mentioned before the elder. Isaac's blessings reflect the promise of God.

Hebrews 11:21

πίστει Ἰακώβ ἀποθνήσκων ἕκαστον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰωσήφ εὐλόγησεν, καὶ προσεκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ.

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death
ἕκαστος, η, ον each

Cf. Gen 48:2ff. In each of these instances, the theme is obedience to the divine choice.

προσκυνεω worship, fall down and
worship, fall at another's feet

These words echo an earlier passage in Genesis 47:31. Hughes says that the two incidents of blessing and worship, performed by Jacob from his death bed, are here brought forward as examples of his faith.

ἄκρον, ου n extreme limits, tip
ῥάβδος, ου f stick, rod, sceptre

Westcott says that ῥάβδος "follows the text of the LXX which renders a different pointing of the original from that adopted by the Massoretes and by other Greek translations" which have 'bed' (πῦρ) rather than 'staff' (πῦρ). (The LXX predates the work of the Massoretes by some nine centuries.)

Hebrews 11:22

πίστει Ἰωσήφ τελευτῶν περὶ τῆς ἐξόδου τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ἐμνημόνευσεν, καὶ περὶ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ ἐνετείλατο.

τελευταω die

Joseph's words reflect the promise of God (Gen 15:13-16) and are therefore an expression of faith. In the request concerning his bones, Joseph expresses the fact that he has an interest in the land of promise – that land rather than Egypt is his country or homeland.

The writer's purpose here is to encourage the Hebrew Christians to whom he was writing, to go on in faith to the end – even to death – looking to the sure promise of God beyond.

ἐξοδος, ου f departure, death

Occurs in Lk 9:31 of Christ, and 2 Peter 1:15 of Peter.

μνημονευω make mention of
ὀστέον, ου and ὀστουν, ου n bone
ἐνετείλατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
ἐντελλομαι command, give orders

The fulfilment of this command is recorded in Ex 13:19; Josh 24:32.

Hebrews 11:23

Πίστει Μωϋσῆς γεννηθεὶς ἐκρύβη τρίμηνον ὑπὸ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ, διότι εἶδον ἀστεῖον τὸ παιδίον καὶ οὐκ ἐφοβήθησαν τὸ διάταγμα τοῦ βασιλέως.

γενναω pass be born
ἐκρύβη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s κρυπτω
hide, conceal

τρίμηνον, ου n (a period of) three months
πατηρ, πατρος m father

The plural use in the sense of 'parents'

διότι because, for
εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὁραω see,
perceive

ἀστεῖος, α, ον pleasing, beautiful

Occurs in LXX at Ex 2:2 (cf Acts 7:20).

παιδίον, ου n child
φοβεομαι fear, be afraid of
διάταγμα, τος n order, decree

A word occurring here only in the NT.

βασιλευς, εως m king

"In 3:2ff. above our author draws a comparison between Moses and Christ in terms of the faithfulness of each... But even the events of Moses' infancy foreshadow the experience of him who is greater than Moses (Heb 3:3), for the life of the infant Jesus was threatened by the edict of a despotic monarch ordering the slaughter of all male children under the age of two years, and by their faith and obedience Joseph and Mary were enabled to preserve the child by taking refuge in the very country where Moses was preserved (Mt 2:13ff.)." Hughes.

Hebrews 11:24

πίστει Μωϋσῆς μέγας γενόμενος ἠρνήσατο λέγεσθαι υἱὸς θυγατρὸς Φαραῶ,

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
γενόμενος Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γινομαι
ἠρνήσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
ἄρνεομαι deny, disown, renounce,
refuse

θυγατηρ, τρος f daughter

Hughes notes that "the divine purposes were served equally, given the differing circumstances, by Joseph's remaining in high office and by Moses' renunciation of that privilege. Joseph was God's man to preserve the little band of his kinsfolk in Egypt. Moses was God's man to lead the people of Israel from Egypt to Canaan."

Hebrews 11:25

μᾶλλον ἐλόμενος συγκακουχεῖσθαι τῷ λαῷ τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ πρόσκαιρον ἔχειν ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν,

μαλλον more; rather, instead
ἐλόμενος Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom s
αἰρεομαι choose, prefer, decide
συγκακουχεομαι share hardship with,
suffer with

Found here only in the NT

λαος, ου m people, a people
ἢ or, than
προσκαιρος, ον temporary, not lasting
ἁμαρτια, ας f sin
ἀπολαυσις, εως f enjoyment

Hebrews 11:26

μείζονα πλοῦτον ἠγησάμενος τῶν Αἰγύπτου θησαυρῶν τὸν ὀνειδισμόν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἀπέβλεπεν γὰρ εἰς τὴν μισθαποδοσίαν.

μειζων, ον and μειζοτερος, α, ον greater,
greatest

πλουτος, ου m & n riches, wealth
ἠγησάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s
ἠγεομαι think, regard, consider
θησαυρος, ου m treasure store
ὀνειδισμος, ου m reproach, disgrace,
shame

The term του χριστου could refer to Israel as the anointed of God (cf. Ps 28:8; Hab 3:13). In this sense, Moses preferred to identify himself with Israel and with the reward (inheritance) God had promised to Israel. However, in context, the reference seems to be to Christ. Perhaps there is a deliberate play on words: Moses' identification with Israel was identification with Christ – as the servant songs of Isaiah move from a corporate reference to focus on a particular individual.

Westcott says, "*The reproach of Christ* is the reproach which belongs to Him who is the appointed envoy of God to a rebellious world. This reproach, which was endured in the highest degree by Christ Jesus (Rom 15:3) was endured also by those who in any degree prefigured or represented Him."

ἀποβλεπω keep one's eyes on, give one's attention to

Occurs here only in the NT. Means looking away from one object to focus upon another.

μισθαποδοσια, ας f reward

On looking for reward, cf. 2 Cor 4:17f; Heb 12:2; Matt 5:11.

Hebrews 11:27

πίστει κατέλειπεν Αἴγυπτον, μὴ φοβηθεὶς τὸν θυμὸν τοῦ βασιλέως, τὸν γὰρ ἀόρατον ὡς ὄρων ἐκαρτέρησεν.

κατέλειπεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s καταλειπω leave, leave behind

Calvin and Owen both argue strongly that the leaving of Egypt spoken of here is not that of Moses fleeing after killing the Egyptian, but the Exodus. Hughes disagrees, as does the NEB which translates, "By faith he left Egypt, and not because he feared the king's anger." Hughes says that Moses knew that 'his hour had not yet come' and therefore withdrew from threat (cf. Jn 7:30; 8:20,59; 10:31-39). "The governing impulse of his flight from Egypt was faith, not fear."

φοβηθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s φοβεομαι see v.23

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury

ἀόρατος, ου unseen, invisible

ὄραω see v.13

Cf. v.1

καρτερῶ endure, persevere

Occurs here only in the NT. Westcott says that "The idea of καρτερεῖν is complementary to the ideas of ὑπομένειν (10:32) and μακροθυμεῖν (6:15). The Christian has not only to bear his burdens in the conflicts of life, and to wait for the fulfilment of the promise which seems so strangely delayed: he must also bear himself valiantly and do his work with might through the Spirit (1 Cor 16:13; Eph 3:16)."

Hebrews 11:28

πίστει πεποίηκεν τὸ πάσχα καὶ τὴν πρόσχυσιν τοῦ αἵματος, ἵνα μὴ ὀλοθρεύων τὰ πρωτότοκα θίγῃ αὐτῶν.

πάσχα n Passover, Passover

πρόσχυσις, εως f sprinkling (of blood)

Cf. Ex 12:7, 22f.

The word is not found in the LXX or elsewhere in the NT. The cognate verb is commonly used in the LXX of the sprinkling of blood on the altar.

αἷμα, ατος f blood

ὀλοθρευω destroy

πρωτοτοκος, ου first-born, first

θίγῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s θιγγανω touch

Hebrews 11:29

Πίστει διέβησαν τὴν Ἐρυθρὰν Θάλασσαν ὡς διὰ ξηρᾶς γῆς, ἧς πείραν λαβόντες οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι κατεπόθησαν.

διέβησαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl διαβαινω cross, cross over

The focus shifts to the faith of the people.

ἐρυθρος, α, ου red

θαλασσα, ης f sea

ξηρος, α, ου dry

πειρα, ας f attempt (λαμβάνω π. attempt)

κατεπόθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

καταπινω swallow, swallow up

That which saved them destroyed their pursuers, just as "the waters of the flood which bore up the ark and those sheltering in it were at the same time the waters which destroyed all who had scornfully rejected the preaching of Noah. Thus the gospel is to one 'a fragrance from death to death,' but to another 'a fragrance from life to life' (2 Cor 2:16); Christ is set for the fall as well as for the rising of many (Lk 2:34); he is the chosen cornerstone, so that 'he who believes in him will not be put to shame,' whereas to the unbeliever he becomes a rock of stumbling (1 Pet 2:6-8; Isa 28:16; 8:14f.). The crucial importance of faith could hardly be more dramatically emphasised than by the opposite fortunes of the Israelites and the Egyptians at the Red Sea." Hughes.

Hebrews 11:30

πίστει τὰ τεῖχη Ἰεριχῶ ἔπεσαν κυκλωθέντα ἐπὶ ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας.

τειχος, ους n wall

ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall, fall down

κυκλωθέντα Verb, aor pass ptc, n nom/acc pl κυκλοω surround, march round

ἑπτα seven

Faith in God's appointed means of battle engages the power of God for the casting down of strongholds. Spicq comments of faith that it, "is not concerned with means; it achieves its objective because God intervenes for its vindication."

Hebrews 11:31

πίστει Ῥαάβ ἡ πόρνη οὐ συναπόλωτο τοῖς ἀπειθήσασιν, δεξαμένη τοὺς κατασκόπους μετ' εἰρήνης.

πορνη, ης f prostitute

"The list of the champions of Faith whose victories are specifically noticed is closed by a woman and a gentile and an outcast."
Westcott. Cf. Jas 2:25 also Mt 21:31f.

συναπόλωτο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s
συναπολλυμαι perish with, be put to death with

ἀπειθήσασιν Verb, aor act ptc, dat pl
ἀπειθεω disobey, be an unbeliever
δεξαμένη Verb, aor midd dep ptc, f acc s
δεχομαι receive, accept, welcome
κατασκοπος, ου m spy
εἰρηνη, ης f peace

Hebrews 11:32

Καὶ τί ἔτι λέγω; ἐπιλείπει με γὰρ διηγούμενον ὁ χρόνος περὶ Γεδεών, Βαράκ, Σαμψών, Ἰεφθάε, Δαυὶδ τε καὶ Σαμουὴλ καὶ τῶν προφητῶν,

ἔτι still, yet, moreover

ἐπιλειπω run short

The masculine με suggests "that the author of our epistle was a man and not, as some have supposed, a woman." Hughes.

διηγομαι tell, relate
χρονος, ου m time, period of time
τε και and also

Westcott says that the names listed are "representatives of the theocracy and ... of the monarchy."

Hebrews 11:33

οἱ διὰ πίστεως κατηγωνίσαντο βασιλείας, εἰργάσαντο δικαιοσύνην, ἐπέτυχον ἐπαγγελιῶν, ἔφραξαν στόματα λεόντων,

Westcott divides verses 33 and 34 into three lists each consisting of three accomplishments:

οἱ διὰ πίστεως κατηγωνίσαντο βασιλείας,
εἰργάσαντο δικαιοσύνην,
ἐπέτυχον ἐπαγγελιῶν,
ἔφραξαν στόματα λεόντων,
ἔσβεσαν δύναμιν πυρός,
ἔφυγον στόματα μαχαίρης,
ἐδυναμώθησαν ἀπὸ ἀσθενείας,
ἐγενήθησαν ἰσχυροὶ ἐν πολέμῳ,
παρεμβολὰς ἔκλιναν ἀλλοτρίων·

"In each group there is progress and there is a progress in the succession of groups in the direction of that which is more personal. The first triplet describes the broad results that believers obtained:

Material victory;
Moral success in government;
Spiritual reward.

The second triplet notices forms of personal deliverance from:

Wild beast;
Physical threats;
Human tyranny.

The third triplet marks the attainment of personal gifts:

Strength;
The exercise of strength;
The triumph of strength."

κατηγωνίσαντο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 pl
καταγωνιζομαι conquer, defeat

The cases that may be brought to mind from the OT generally involved victories of God's people over much greater armies.

εἰργάσαντο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 pl
ἐργαζομαι work, perform
δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness, what is right, what God requires, justice

The sense here would seem to be that of setting up just government, cf. 1 Sam 12:3-5; 2 Sam 8:15; 1 Ki 10:9.

ἐπέτυχον Verb, aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
ἐπιτυγχανω obtain, receive
ἐπαγγελια, ας f see v.13

Cf., for instance, Josh 21:43ff.

φρασσω silence, muzzle, stop
στομα, τος n mouth, edge (of a sword)
λεων, οντος m lion

As well as Daniel, the reference may be to Samson (Jud 14:6) and David (1 Sam 17:34).

Hebrews 11:34

ἔσβεσαν δύναμιν πυρός, ἔφυγον στόματα μαχαίρης, ἐδυναμώθησαν ἀπὸ ἀσθενείας, ἐγενήθησαν ἰσχυροὶ ἐν πολέμῳ, παρεμβολὰς ἔκλιναν ἀλλοτρίων·

ἔσβεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl σβεννυμι
extinguish, put out

πυρ, ος n fire

Cf. Dan 3:17.

ἔφυγον Verb, aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl φευγω
flee, avoid

μαχαира, ης f sword, war

E.g. David's escape from murderous Saul or Elijah's escape from the enraged Jezebel.

ἐδυναμώθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
δυναμοω strengthen, make strong
ἀσθενεια, ας f weakness, illness

"This principle is illustrated many times over in the records of Scripture. It is seen in Sampson's last great exploit when out of weakness and in dependence upon God he prayed for just one more accession of strength and was enabled to bring the temple of Dagon down upon the mocking assembly of the Philistines (Judg 16:23ff.). David's slaying of Goliath and Esther's courageous advocacy of her fellow Jews are other instances of the weak becoming strong through faith. The apostle Paul speaks of the same reality when he recounts how, denied release from the weakness of his own personal affliction, he was given the assurance by the Lord: 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness'; with the result that, now made aware that human weakness is precisely the opportunity for the manifestation of divine power, he declares: 'I will the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong' (2 Cor 12:8-10)." Hughes.

ἐγενήθησαν Verb, aor indic, 3 pl γινομαι
ισχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful
πολεμος, ου m war, battle

Cf. Ps 18:18f., 29, 34f., 39, 46-48.

παρεμβολη, ης f barracks; camp; army
ἐκλιναν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl κλινω lay,
bow, put to flight

This sense of κλινω ('rout', 'put to flight'), though common in Classical writers, is not found elsewhere in the NT.

ἄλλοτριος, α, ον belonging to another;
stranger, foreign, enemy

Hebrews 11:35

ἔλαβον γυναῖκες ἐξ ἀναστάσεως τοὺς νεκροὺς
αὐτῶν· ἄλλοι δὲ ἐτυμpanίσθησαν, οὐ
προσδεξάμενοι τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, ἵνα
κρείττωνος ἀναστάσεως τύχωσιν·

γυνη, αικος f woman, wife
ἀναστασις, εως f resurrection, raising up
νεκρος, α, ον dead
ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
ἐτυμpanίσθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
τυμpanίζω torture
προσδεχομαι expect, receive
ἀπολυτρωσις, εως f redemption,
deliverance, setting free
κρειττων and κρεισσων, ον see v.16
τύχωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl τυγχανω
obtain, receive, attain, experience

There is a contrast in this verse between the women who received back their dead by resurrection (yet had to lose them again to death) and those who looked for the *better* resurrection to eternal life. The verse underlines the fact that there were those in OT times who hoped for the future resurrection. Hughes thinks that the latter part of the verse may refer to incidents recorded in 2 Maccabees.

Hebrews 11:36

ἔτεροι δὲ ἐμπαιγμῶν καὶ μαστίγων πεῖραν
ἔλαβον, ἔτι δὲ δεσμῶν καὶ φυλακῆς·

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

These showed faith not so much in triumphant victories but in faithfully enduring trials.

ἐμπαιγμος, ου m public ridicule
μαστιξ, ιγος f whip, beating with a whip
πειρα, ας f attempt, trial
ἔτι see v.32
δεσμος, ου m (& n) bond, chain
φυλακη, ης f prison

Hebrews 11:37

ἐλιθάσθησαν, ἐπρίσθησαν, ἐν φόνοῦ μαχαίρης
ἀπέθανον, περιήλθον ἐν μηλωταῖς, ἐν αἰγείοις
δέρμασιν, ὑστερούμενοι, θλιβόμενοι,
κακουχούμενοι,

ἐλιθάσθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
λιθαζω stone
ἐπρίσθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl πριζω
saw in two

Most mss read ἐπειρασθησαν rather than ἐπρίσθησαν, though the latter occurs in a variety of old mss and ancient versions. Metzger provides lengthy discussion of the difficulties and gives rationale for the tentative acceptance of ἐπρίσθησαν. Westcott says that, according to tradition, Isaiah faced death by being sawn in two.

φονος, ου m murder, killing
μαχαιρα, ης f see v.34

ἀπέθανον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl
ἀποθνησκω die, face death

"The enumeration of sufferings of death is followed by references to sufferings in life."
Westcott

περιήλθον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl
περιερχομαι travel about
μηλωτη, ης f sheepskin
αἰγειος, α, ον of a goat
δερμα, τος n skin
ὑστερεω lack; midd be in want
θλιβω press hard, crush; pass experience
difficulty/trouble

Cf. 2 Thess 1:6f

κακουχεομαι be ill-treated

Hebrews 11:38

ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιος ὁ κόσμος ἐπὶ ἐρημίαις
πλανώμενοι καὶ ὄρεσι καὶ σπηλαίοις καὶ ταῖς
ὄπαῖς τῆς γῆς·

ἄξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting
ἐρημία, ας f deserted place, desert
πλαναω lead astray; pass wander about
ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill
σπηλαιον, ου n cave, hideout (for robbers)
ὄπη, ης f opening, hole, cave

Hebrews 11:39

καὶ πάντες μαρτυρηθέντες διὰ τῆς πίστεως οὐκ
ἐκομίσαντο τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν,

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας
μαρτυρηθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify; pass be
well spoken of, receive approval
ἐκομίσαντο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 pl
κομιζω midd receive, obtain

Hebrews 11:40

τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ ἡμῶν κρεῖττόν τι
προβλεψαμένου, ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν
τελειωθῶσιν.

κρεῖττων and κρεῖσσων, ον see v.16
τις, τι acc τινά, τι gen τινός dat τινί anyone,
anything
προβλεψαμένου Verb, aor midd ptc, m & n
gen s προβλεπομαι have in store,
provide
χωρὶς prep with gen without, apart from
τελειωθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl
τελειοω make perfect, complete

Cf. Matt 13:17; 1 Peter 1:12

"It is not that God had one plan for them and another for us, for in anticipation and faith they looked forward to the introduction of this better plan which would involve a High Priest superior to those of the levitical order (7:7), a sacrifice superior to that of bulls and goats (9:23), a covenant superior to that of the Mosaic dispensation (7:22), and a country superior to any earthly territory (11:16). As Owen observes, 'God's prevision is his provision,' and so it was graciously ordained that they should experience the substantiation of their hope not in separation from us but in union with us. This plan was put into operation by the coming of Christ and the performance of his perfect work of atonement..."

"Accordingly, the Old Testament believers do indeed attain the promised perfection, but not apart from us. They with us belong to the many sons who, thanks to the pioneer of our (and their) salvation, are brought to glory. Nor is their perfection attributable, any more than ours, to their own sufferings but solely to the suffering of Christ for us all, whereby all who are designated his brethren are sanctified, that is, made perfect before God (Heb 2:9-11, 14f.)." Hughes.

Hebrews 12

"Next the readers are exhorted to look to the example of Christ and this leads straight into a discourse on discipline. The writer shows that this is essential for the Christian life and he puts in a strong plea to his readers to avoid moral inconsistency, appealing to the case of Esau to illustrate the point. He again stresses the great advantages of the New Covenant over the Old." Guthrie

- i) The need for discipline, vv 1-11;
- ii) The avoidance of moral inconsistency vv.12-17;
- iii) The benefits of the New Covenant, vv 18-29.

Hebrews 12:1

Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς, τοσοῦτον ἔχοντες
περικείμενον ἡμῖν νέφος μαρτύρων, ὄγκον
ἀποθέμενοι πάντα καὶ τὴν εὐπερίστατον
ἀμαρτίαν, δι' ὑπομονῆς τρέχωμεν τὸν
προκείμενον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα,

τοιγαροῦν therefore, for that reason
τοσοῦτος, αὐτη, οὐτον / οὐτο correlative adj
so much, so great, so large
περικειμαι be surrounded, be beset with
νεφος, ους n cloud

"A 'cloud' is used ... for a dense mass of living beings from the time of Homer downwards." Westcott

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m
witness

The thought is not that they are witnesses of us – as spectators in a stadium but that their lives bear witness to us.

ὄγκος, ου m impediment, something that gets in one's way

"The word ὄγκος, which does not occur elsewhere in the NT or LXX, is used for bulk of body, ... for an arrogant bearing, and for a burdensome load. These several senses have been applied to the interpretation of the word here. The competitor in a race seeks by training to reduce all superfluity of flesh, and in the contest lays aside all undue confidence and every encumbrance of dress." Westcott

ἀποθέμενοι Verb, 2 aor midd ptc, m nom pl
 ἀποτιθημι throw off, take off (clothes)
 εὐπεριστατος, ον holding on tightly and
 causing entanglement
 ἁμαρτία, ας f sin

"An expression which seems best understood as a clarification of what is meant by the weight or encumbrance of every kind which must be laid aside. It is precisely sin, of whatever kind, that impedes or slows down the Christian in the spiritual race, and conversely, anything, however innocent in itself, which impedes or slows down the Christian in the spiritual race is for that reason sinful, and must, with God's help, be discarded." Hughes.

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

Emphasising the need to go on to the end.

τρεχω run, exert oneself
 προκειμαι be set before, lie before

"God Himself has set our work and our prize before us." Westcott

ἄγων, ονος m struggle, fight, race

The word here for 'race' emphasises its nature as contest or struggle.

Hebrews 12:2

ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἄρχηγὸν καὶ
 τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν, ὃς ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης
 αὐτῷ χαρᾶς ὑπέμεινεν σταυρὸν αἰσχύνῃς
 καταφρονήσας, ἐν δεξιᾷ τε τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ
 θεοῦ κεκάθικεν.

Note how that words used in exhortation of the Christian in verse 1 are now used of Christ's conduct in verse 2 – προκειμαι, ὑπομονη/ ὑπομενω. He also had a work and prize set before him and he endured it not only with patience but also with joy. It is because of this that he is our ἀρχηγος and our τελειωτης.

ἀφοραω fix one's eyes on

Does not occur elsewhere in NT or LXX.

ἀρχηγος, ου m leader, pioneer, originator
 τελειωτης, ου m perfecter

Not found elsewhere in NT or LXX – or classical writers. "He too looked through the present and the visible to the future and the unseen." Westcott.

"In looking to Jesus, then, we are looking to him who is the supreme exponent of faith, the one who, beyond all others, not only set out on the course of faith but also pursued it without wavering to the end. He, accordingly, is uniquely qualified to be the supplier and sustainer of the faith of his followers." Hughes.

ἀντι prep with gen for, because of
 προκειμαι see v.1

χαρα, ας f joy, gladness

"The joy was that of the work of redemption accomplished." Westcott. Hughes adds, "... thus bringing to fruition all the purposes of God's creation and all the promises of his covenant."

ὑπέμεινεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ὑπομενω
 endure

σταυρος, ου m cross

σταυρος without the article fixes attention on the nature of the death.

αἰσχυνη, ης f shame, disgrace
 καταφρονεω despise, think nothing of
 δεξιος, α, ον right, δεξια right hand
 θρονος, ου m throne

κεκάθικεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s καθίζω sit
 down, sit, take one's seat

A repeated theme, cf. 1:3; 2:9; 4:14; 5:5,8f.; 6:19f.; 7:26; 8:1; 9:12, 24, 28; 10:12; 13:20.

"The contrast of tenses is significant. *He endured ... and hath sat down...* The fact of suffering is wholly past but the issue of it endures for evermore." Westcott

Hebrews 12:3

Ἀναλογίσασθε γὰρ τὸν τοιαύτην
 ὑπομεμενηκότα ὑπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν εἰς
 ἑαυτοὺς ἀντιλογίαν, ἵνα μὴ κάμητε ταῖς ψυχαῖς
 ὑμῶν ἐκλυόμενοι.

ἀναλογίσασθε Verb, aor midd dep imperat, 2
 pl ἀναλογίζομαι consider closely, think
 of, compare

Does not occur elsewhere in NT or LXX. "It is common in classical Greek, and expresses in particular the careful estimate of one object with regard to another." Westcott

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον see v.1

ὑπομεμενηκότα Verb, perf act ptc, m acc s
 ὑπομενω endure

ἁμαρτωλος, ον sinful, sinner
 ἑαυτος, εαυτη, εαυτον him/her/itself

Metzger writes of the UBS text Committee, "Although external evidence strongly favours either εἰς ἑαυτοὺς or εἰς αὐτοὺς [p⁴⁶ p¹³ x D*^{gr} Origen], the difficulty of making sense of the plural led a majority of the Committee to prefer the singular number, choosing εἰς ἑαυτὸν as the least inadequately supported reading." Hughes follows Moffatt *et al* in concluding that the plural "represents an early corruption of the text."

ἀντιλογία, ας f hostility, hatred, rebellion
 κάμητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl καμνω be
 sick; ἐν ψυχῇ κ. be discouraged
 ἐκλυομαι give up, faint

Cf. Gal 6:9.

Hebrews 12:4

οὐπω μέχρις αἵματος ἀντικατέστητε πρὸς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἀνταγωνιζόμενοι,

οὐπω not yet

μεχρι and μέχρις prep with gen until, to the extent, as far as

αἷμα, ατος f blood

"This suggests a striking contrast between such affliction as they had passed through and the manner in which Christ came with the express purpose of shedding his blood on the cross for their redemption... Well do they know that their consciences have been purified from dead works and their eternal redemption procured by the shedding of the blood of Jesus (9:12,14; cf. 10:29): how willingly, then, should they be prepared to persevere and to suffer, even to the point of shedding their lifeblood, in gratitude to him who gave his all for them and in loyalty to so wonderful a gospel!" Hughes.

ἀντικατέστητε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl

ἀντικαθιστημι resist

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

Note that persecution is part of the struggle against sin! This is explained in the verses that follow which speak of the discipline of the Lord.

ἀνταγωνίζομαι struggle

Does not occur elsewhere in NT or LXX.

Hebrews 12:5

καὶ ἐκλέλησθε τῆς παρακλήσεως, ἥτις ὑμῖν ὡς υἱοῖς διαλέγεται, Υἱέ μου, μὴ ὀλιγώρει παιδείας κυρίου, μηδὲ ἐκλύου ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐλεγχομένοις·

ἐκλέλησθε Verb, perf pass dep indic, 2 pl

ἐκλανθανομαι forget completely

Occurs here only in NT

παρακλησις, εως f encouragement, counsel

The following is a word of *encouragement* because it is a reminder that trials do not signify abandonment by God but sonship.

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅτι who, which
διαλέγομαι address, speak

The quotation is from Prov 3:11f. "The utterance of Scripture is treated as the voice of God conversing with men." Westcott.

ὀλιγώρω think lightly of

Does not occur elsewhere in the NT or LXX

παιδεια, ας f discipline; instruction, training

μηδε and not, neither

ἐκλοομαι see v.3

ἐλεγχοω rebuke, convict

Hebrews 12:6

ὄν γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ κύριος παιδεύει, μαστιγοῖ δὲ πάντα υἱὸν ὃν παραδέχεται.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

παιδευω instruct, discipline, correct

Cf. 1 Tim 1:20

μαστιγοω beat with a whip, discipline, punish

παραδεχομαι accept, acknowledge, recognise

Hebrews 12:7

εἰς παιδείαν ὑπομένετε· ὡς υἱοῖς ὑμῖν προσφέρεται ὁ θεός· τίς γὰρ υἱὸς ὃν οὐ παιδεύει πατήρ;

παιδεια, ας f see v.5

ὑπομενω endure

"The clause may be either imperative or indicative. The absence of a connecting particle in the next clause favours the latter view." Westcott

προσφέρω offer; pass treat, deal with

"The word παιδεια is used differently in this verse and the next. Discipline is here regarded as the end, and in the following verse as the means." Westcott

πατηρ, πατρος m father

Hebrews 12:8

εἰ δὲ χωρὶς ἐστε παιδείας ἧς μέτοχοι γεγόνασι πάντες, ἄρα νόθοι καὶ οὐχ υἱοὶ ἐστε.

χωρις prep with gen without

μετοχος, ου m one who shares in, partner, companion

γεγόνασιν Verb, perf act indic, 3 pl γινομαι νοθος, η, ον illegitimate (as of children)

Hebrews 12:9

εἶτα τοὺς μὲν τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν πατέρας εἶχομεν παιδευτάς καὶ ἐντροπέμεθα· οὐ πολὺ μᾶλλον ὑποταγησόμεθα τῷ πατρὶ τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ ζήσομεν;

εἶτα adv. moreover, after all

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

εἶχομεν Verb, imperf act indic, 1 pl ἔχω

παιδευτης, ου m one who disciplines or corrects

ἐντροπω pass respect, regard

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, many

μᾶλλον adv more; rather

ὑποταγησόμεθα Verb, fut pass indic, 1 pl

ὑποτασσω subordinate; pass. be

subject, submit to

ζωω live, be alive

"Such absolute subjection is crowned by the highest blessing (και ζησομεν). True life comes from complete self-surrender. As the One Son fulfilled His Father's will and lives through Him, so the many sons live through His life in obedience to Him." Westcott

Hebrews 12:10

οἱ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς ὀλίγας ἡμέρας κατὰ τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτοῖς ἐπαιδεύον, ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον εἰς τὸ μεταλαβεῖν τῆς ἀγιότητος αὐτοῦ.

ὀλιγος, η, ον little, small; pl. few

δοκοῦν Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s

δοκεω think, suppose; intrans seem;

impers it seems good, proper or best

παιδεύω see v.6

συμφερον, ου n good, advantage, benefit

μεταλαμβανω receive, share in, have

ἀγιότης, ητος f holiness, moral purity

Here is the end God has in view, the purpose which we are to ascribe to trials. Cf. Romans 5:3-5.

Hebrews 12:11

πᾶσα δὲ παιδεία πρὸς μὲν τὸ παρὸν οὐ δοκεῖ χαρᾶς εἶναι ἀλλὰ λύπης, ὕστερον δὲ καρπὸν εἰρηνικὸν τοῖς δι' αὐτῆς γεγυμνασμένοις ἀποδίδωσιν δικαιοσύνης.

παιδεία, ας f see v.5

παρὸν Verb, pres ptc, n nom/acc s παρεμι be present

δοκεω see v.10

χαρά, ας f joy, cause of joy

Cf. 10:39

λύπη, ης f grief, sorrow, pain

ὕστερον adv afterwards, later, finally

καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome

εἰρηνικος, η, ον peaceful; peace-loving

Cf. James 3:17, also 2 Cor 4:17.

γεγυμνασμένοις Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n dat pl γυμναζω train, exercise; discipline

"When our author describes the harvest it produces as 'peaceful' the metaphor is still that of the athletic contest. For the adjective bespeaks the rest and relaxation enjoyed by the victorious contestant once the conflict is over." Hughes.

ἀποδίδωμι give, yield, repay

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness

"*Peacable fruit* – even the fruit of righteousness, that is, consisting in righteousness." Westcott.

"The righteousness produced by discipline is that perfect righteousness which, imputed in justification and striven for in the Christian race, is fully imparted when at last the victor stands before his exalted Lord face to face (1 Jn 3:2); for it is indeed nothing other than the unblemished righteousness of Christ himself." Hughes.

Hebrews 12:12

Διὸ τὰς παρειμένας χεῖρας καὶ τὰ παραλελυμένα γόνατα ἀνορθώσατε,

διο therefore, for this reason

παρειμένας Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc pl

παρημι neglect; pf pass ptc drooping, weakened

χειρ, χειρος f hand

παραλελυμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc

pl παραλυομαι be paralyzed

γονυ, γονατος n knee

ἀνορθώσατε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl

ἀνορθωω restore, rebuild, strengthen

"The Apostle urges those who were themselves in danger to help others in like peril."

Westcott. Westcott believes that the injunctions of these verses are directed towards our care one of another rather than simply watchfulness over ourselves as individuals. Hughes, however, comments, "In these two verses the imagery of the athletic contest is retained: the severity of the conflict with its continuous discipline is such that the competitor who lacks determination allows his hands to hang down and feels his knees to be weakened; and, giving way to discouragement, he easily falters in the race and fails to keep to a straight course." The context of the quotation from Is 35:3 does however suggest an element of encouraging others to remain strong, and this is acknowledged by Hughes in his note on the following verse.

Hebrews 12:13

καὶ τροχιάς ὀρθὰς ποιεῖτε τοῖς ποσὶν ὑμῶν, ἵνα μὴ τὸ χῶλον ἐκτραπῆ, ἰαθῆ δὲ μᾶλλον.

τροχία, ας f way, path

ὀρθος, η, ον straight

πους, ποδος m foot

Cf. Prov 4:26. "The Christian athlete must keep to the 'running lane' which has been assigned to him." Hughes.

χῶλος, η, ον lame, crippled

"By τὸ χῶλον... the Apostle describes the lame member of the Church, who is unable to stand or walk firmly on his way. Compare 1 Kings 18:21. The 'halting' of the Hebrews 'between two opinions' is the characteristic type of their weakness." Westcott

ἐκτραπή Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s ἐκτρεπομαι
wander, go astray; perhaps be disabled

Westcott thinks it means 'put out of joint,' as do Moffatt, Bruce, RSV, JB, NEB. Hughes follows Spicq in preferring the sense 'turned out of the way.'

ιαθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s ἰαομαι heal,
cure, restore
μαλλον adv rather, instead

"The note of concern and responsibility for others seems to be implicit in the admonition: by holding a straight course himself the Christian sets an example of constancy which will help those who are lame or faltering to do the same and thus to be healed and restored to the contest. In the spirit of 10:23-25 above, by holding fast the confession of our hope without wavering not only will we prove the faithfulness of all that God has promised but others also will be encouraged and freed from the crippling spirit of despondency and self-pity." Hughes.

Hebrews 12:14

Εἰρήνην διώκετε μετὰ πάντων, καὶ τὸν
ἀγιασμόν, οὗ χωρὶς οὐδεὶς ὄψεται τὸν κύριον,
εἰρήνη, ἡς f peace
διωκω seek after, pursue, follow

Marks the eagerness and constancy of the pursuit. Cf. Ps. 34:14; 1 Peter 3:11; Rom 12:18.

ἀγιασμος, ου m sanctification, holiness

Cf. 1 Peter 1:15f. The Christian seeks peace with all alike, but he seeks holiness also, and this cannot be sacrificed for that." Westcott

χωρὶς see v.8

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing
ὄψεται fut midd dep, 3 s ὄραω see,
observe, perceive

Cf. Mt 5:8. Westcott thinks that the reference is to seeing "Christ, for whose return in glory believers wait." Cf. 1 Jn 3:2f.

Hebrews 12:15

ἐπισκοποῦντες μὴ τις ὑστερῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χάριτος
τοῦ θεοῦ, μὴ τις ρίζα πικρίας ἄνω φύουσα
ἐνοχλῆ καὶ δι' αὐτῆς μιανθῶσιν πολλοί,

ἐπισκοπεω see to it, take care; oversee

"The word ἐπισκοποῦντες expresses the careful regard of those who occupy a position of responsibility... Each Christian shares in this in due degree." Westcott

τις, τὶ acc τινά, τὶ gen τινός dat τινί enclitic
pronoun and adj anyone, anything
ὑστερεω lack, fall short of

"The idea seems to be that of falling behind, not keeping pace with the movement of divine grace which meets and stirs the progress of the Christian." Westcott.

χάρις, ιτος f grace
ρίζα, ἡς f root, source
πικρία, ας f bitterness, spite, bitter feeling
ἄνω adv above; up, upwards
φύω grow, come up
ἐνοχλεω trouble, cause trouble

"The image is taken from Deut 29:17f... The root is personal ... and not doctrinal: a pernicious man and not a pernicious opinion." Westcott

μιανθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl μιανω
defile, contaminate

"The implication is that one embittered and rebellious person in their midst can have a disastrous effect on the community as a whole, so that *the many are defiled* – just as one noxious root can poison a whole crop." Hughes.

Verse 16

μή τις πόρνος ἢ βέβηλος ὡς Ἡσαῦ, ὃς ἀντὶ
βρώσεως μιᾶς ἀπέδετο τὰ πρωτοτόκια ἑαυτοῦ.

πορνος, ου m man who practices sexual
immorality

ἢ or

βέβηλος, ου vile, godless, irreligious

Westcott thinks that Esau is cited as an example of a βέβηλος but not of a πορνος. He thinks that πορνος is to be understood in its literal sense and not of an idolater. The two words focus on moral quality in the person themselves and in their attitude towards God. βέβηλος "describes a character which recognises nothing as higher than earth: for whom there is nothing sacred: no divine reverence for the unseen." However, Hughes says, "It is much more natural to understand both adjectives as referring to Esau. It has been pointed out ... that Esau's act in taking two foreign women as wives, who 'made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah,' must have been regarded by his parents as immoral and tantamount of the commission of fornication (Gen 26:34f.; 27:46)." Hughes.

ἀντι prep with gen for, in place of
βρωσις, εως f food, a meal
εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιᾶς, ἑνος one, single
ἀπέδετο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s ἀποδιδωμι
give, give back; midd sell
πρωτοτοκία, ὄν n birthright, rights
belonging to the firstborn son

Cf. Gen 25:33f. "These Hebrew Christians will be guilty of a much greater act of profanity if, disheartened by the difficulties of the contest, they barter not an earthly but a heavenly birthright for a short period of worldly ease and prosperity." Hughes.

Hebrews 12:17

ἴστε γὰρ ὅτι καὶ μετέπειτα θέλων κληρονομήσαι τὴν εὐλογίαν ἀπεδοκιμάσθη, μετανοίας γὰρ τόπον οὐχ εὔρεν, καίπερ μετὰ δακρύων ἐκζητήσας αὐτήν.

ἴστε Verb, indic or imperat 2 pl οἶδα
know, understand
μετεπειτα afterwards
θελω wish, will
κληρονομεω receive, gain possession of,
inherit
εὐλογία, ας f blessing, praise
ἀπεδοκιμάσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
ἀποδοκιμαζω reject
μετανοια, ας f repentance, change of
heart
τοπος, ου m place, opportunity

"'A place of repentance' is an opportunity for changing a former decision." Westcott

εὕρισκω find, discover
καίπερ though, although
δακρυον, ου n tear (as in weeping)
ἐκζητεω seek or search diligently

The αὐτήν refers to εὐλογίαν

Hebrews 12:18-29

"This section forms a solemn close to the main argument of the Epistle. It offers a striking picture of the characteristics of the two Covenants summed up in the words 'terror' and 'grace'; and at the same time, in harmony with the whole current of thought, it emphasises the truth that the greater privileges bring greater responsibility. The section falls into two parts:
a) The contrast of the position of the Christian with that of the Israelites at the giving of the Law (18-24); and
b) The duties of the Christian which flow from this position (25-29)." Westcott

Hebrews 12:18

Οὐ γὰρ προσεληλύθατε ψηλαφωμένω καὶ κεκαυμένω πυρὶ καὶ γνόφῳ καὶ ζόφῳ καὶ θυέλλῃ

προσεληλύθατε Verb, perf act indic, 2 pl
προσερχομαι come or go to
ψηλαφωω touch, feel (pass ptc able to be touched)

A number of MSS include the word ὄρει (mountain) after ψηλαφωμένω.

κεκαυμένω Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n dat s
καίω light, burn; pass be lit, burn
πυρ, ος n fire
γνοφος, ου m darkness

Cf. Deut 4:11; 5:22; Ex 19:16ff.

ζοφος, ου m gloom, darkness
θυελλα, ης f wind storm, whirlwind

Hebrews 12:19

καὶ σάλπιγγος ἤχῳ καὶ φωνῇ ῥημάτων, ἧς οἱ ἀκούσαντες παρητήσαντο μὴ προστεθῆναι αὐτοῖς λόγον·

σαλπιξ, ιγγος f trumpet; trumpet blast
ἦχος, ου m sound, noise

Cf Ex 19:16; 20:18.

ῥημα, ατος n word

Cf. Deut 4:12.

παρητήσαντο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 pl
παραίτεομαι ask for, request, beg
προστεθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin προστιθεμι
add, add to

Cf. Ex 20:19 also Dt 5:25-27.

Hebrews 12:20

οὐκ ἔφερον γὰρ τὸ διαστελλόμενον· Κἂν θηρίον θίγῃ τοῦ ὄρους, λιθοβοληθήσεται·

φερω bring, carry, bear
διαστελλομαι order, command
καν (καὶ ἔαν) even if, and if, even
θηριον, ου n animal, beast, wild animal
θίγῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s θιγγανω touch

Cf. Ex 19:12

ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill
λιθοβοληθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s
λιθοβολεω stone, throw stones at

Hebrews 12:21

καί, οὕτω φοβερὸν ἦν τὸ φανταζόμενον, Μωϋσῆς εἶπεν· Ἐκφοβός εἰμι καὶ ἔντρομος.

"The fear which was felt by the people was felt also by the Lawgiver himself." Westcott

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. thus, in this way
φοβερος, α, ον fearful, terrifying
φανταζομαι appear (το φανταζομενον the sight or spectacle)

Occurs nowhere else in the NT

ἐκφοβος, ον frightened, terrified
ἐντρομος, ον trembling, full of fear

"Similar words are used by Moses in connexion with the worshipping of the golden calf, Deut 9:19; but it is hardly possible that the writer of the Epistle transferred these directly to the scene of the giving of the Law when the fear was due to circumstances essentially different. It is more likely that he refers to some familiar tradition in which the feelings of Moses were described in these terms." Westcott. This was certainly Moses' reaction earlier at the 'burning' bush (Ex 3:6).

Hebrews 12:22

ἀλλὰ προσελήλυθατε Σιών ὄρει καὶ πόλει θεοῦ ζῶντος, Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐπουρανίῳ, καὶ μυριάσιν ἀγγέλων, πανηγύρει

On the contrast between Sinai and the heavenly Jerusalem, cf. Gal 4:25f.

προσελήλυθατε see v.18

"Ye are not brought face to face with any representation of the terrors of Sinai; but ye are even now still standing in a heavenly presence, not material but spiritual, not manifested in elemental powers but in living hosts, not finding expression in threatening commands but in means of reconciliation, inspiring not fear but hope. Yet, it is implied that the awfulness of the position is not less but greater than that of the Israelites." Westcott

ὄρος, οὗς n mountain, hill

The καὶ here has the force 'even'.

πολις, εὖς f city, town

ζῶ live, be alive

"In the spiritual reality, Mount Zion represents the strong divine foundation of the new Order, while the City of the Living God represents the social structure in which the Order is embodied. God – Who is a Living God – does not dwell alone, but surrounded by His people." Westcott.

"The author's assertion, *But you have come to Mount Zion, etc.*, is in itself indicative of his confidence that a genuine work of the gospel has been experienced among those to whom he is writing, however much some of them may be in danger of falling away into apostasy." Hughes.

ἐπουρανίος, οὗς heavenly, celestial
μυρίας, ἀδος f group of ten thousand,
myriad, countless thousands

πανηγυρίς, εὖς f festal gathering, joyful
gathering

"The word πανηγυρίς, which was used of the great national assemblies and sacred games of the Greeks ... occurs here only in the NT ... The suggestion is that of the common joy of a great race." Westcott

There is much debate as to whether the word belongs with what precedes ('thousands of angels in joyful assembly' NIV), or with what follows ('the general assembly and church of the firstborn' AV). Hughes, who favours the former, writes, "The eternal Son, who, to procure our redemption, 'for a little while was made lower than the angels,' is now 'crowned with glory and honour,' high above all angels (2:9). Before him, in the heavenly city, 'myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,' that is to say, an *innumerable* company, of angels adore him by singing: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing' (Rev 5:11f.). This scene of joyful praise and celebration in the heavenly Jerusalem is what is meant by their being *in festal gathering*."

Hebrews 12:23

καὶ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρωτοτόκων ἀπογεγραμμένων ἐν οὐρανοῖς, καὶ κριτῇ θεῷ πάντων, καὶ πνεύμασι δικαίων τετελειωμένων,

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church

Cf. the description of the Israelites assembled at Sinai as ἐκκλησία (Acts 7:38; Dt 4:10; 9:10; 18:16).

πρωτοτοκος, οὗς first-born, first

Note the plural. "They are spoken of as 'firstborn,' enjoying the privileges not only of sons but of firstborn sons ... Perhaps there is still some faint reminiscence of the reckless sacrifice of his birthright (v.16 πρωτοτοκια) by Esau." Westcott. Also recalls that God spoke of Israel as his firstborn son, Ex 4:22f.

ἀπογεγραμμένων Verb, perf pass ptc, gen pl
ἀπογραφῶ register, enrol

Cf. Ex 32:32f.; Ps 64:28; Lk 10:20; Phil 4:3.
The perfect tense signifies indelible action.

οὐρανός, οὗς m heaven

κριτής, οὗς m judge

δικαίος, ας, οὗς righteous, just

τετελειωμένων Verb, perf pass ptc, gen pl
τελειῶ make perfect

"The judgement ... has been in part triumphantly accomplished." Westcott.
Ὁν τελειοῦσθαι cf. 2:18; 7:11; 10:14.

Hebrews 12:24

καὶ διαθήκης νέας μεσίτη Ἰησοῦ, καὶ αἵματι ῥαντισμοῦ κρείττον λαλοῦντι παρὰ τὸν Ἄβελ.

διαθήκη, ης covenant

νεός, ας, οὗς new, fresh, young

"This is the only place in which διαθηκη νεα occurs in the NT ... The Covenant is spoken of as νεα in regard to its recent establishment, and not as καινη in regard of its character."
Westcott

μεσιτης, ου m mediator, intermediary
αίμα, ατος f blood
ράντισμος, ου m sprinkling
κρειττον and κρεισσον adv. better
λαλοῦντι Verb, pres act ptc, m dat s λαλεω
speak

"The voice of 'the blood of Jesus' is doubly contrasted with the voice of the blood of Abel. That, appealing to God, called for vengeance, and making itself heard in the heart of Cain, brought despair; but the blood of Christ pleads with God for forgiveness and speaks peace to man." Westcott

Hebrews 12:25-29

John Brown considers chapter 13 to be a kind of post-script to the main body of the letter which concludes with chapter 12. From this perspective he writes, "The Epistle commences with the declaration that the Gospel is the completed revelation of the divine will respecting the salvation of men, – a revelation not made by man or angel, but by the Only-begotten of God; and it closes with a solemn exhortation to beware of treating such a revelation in a manner unworthy of its character, as the ultimate manifestation of the word of God, made by that Eternal Word of life who was in the beginning with the Father, and who has declared Him unto man. The first and the last paragraphs of the Epistle, properly so called, bind together as it were, all the intervening statements, illustrations and arguments. 'God, who at sundry times spoke to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son.' 'See, then, that ye refuse not Him that speaketh.'"

Hebrews 12:25

Βλέπετε μὴ παραιτήσησθε τὸν λαλοῦντα· εἰ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι οὐκ ἐξέφυγον ἐπὶ γῆς παραιτησάμενοι τὸν χρηματίζοντα, πολὺ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς οἱ τὸν ἀπ' οὐρανῶν ἀποστρεφόμενοι·

βλεπω see, beware of, see to it
παραιτήσησθε Verb, aor mid dep subj, 2 pl
παραιτεομαι see v.19.

Note the present participle λαλουντα. He who spoke in the Son (1:2) still speaks in him.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that, those
ἐξέφυγον Verb, aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
ἐκφευγω escape
γη, γης f earth, land

Qualifies the whole phrase, while "the corresponding phrase ἀπ οὐρανῶν expresses only the position of the revealer and not of those to whom the revelation is given."
Westcott.

χρηματιζω warn, direct

"The long sufferings in the wilderness witnessed to the punishment of that unbelief which made the people rescued from Egypt unfit and unwilling to hold converse with God." Westcott.

μαλλον adv more; rather
οὐρανος, ου m heaven
ἀποστρεφω turn away; midd (and aor pass)
turn away from, refuse, reject

Suggests that such turning away had already commenced.

Hebrews 12:26

οὐ ἡ φωνὴ τὴν γῆν ἐσάλευσεν τότε, νῦν δὲ ἐπήγγελλται λέγων· Ἔτι ἅπαξ ἐγὼ σείσω οὐ μόνον τὴν γῆν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν.

σαλεωω shake, disturb

Cf Ex 19:18

τοτε then, at that time
ἐπήγγελλται Verb, perf midd (deponent) &
pass indic, 3s ἐπαγγελμομαι promise

"The prophecy of Haggai (2:6ff, 21ff.) deals with two main subjects, the superior glory of the second temple in spite of its apparent poverty: the permanent sovereignty of the house of David in spite of its apparent weakness. The prophet looks forward from the feeble beginnings of the new spiritual and national life to that final manifestation of the majesty of the kingdom of God in which the discipline begun on Sinai is to have an end. He naturally recalls in thought the phenomena which accompanied the giving of the law; and foreshadows a correspondence between the circumstances of the first and last scenes in divine revelation. That which was local and preparatory at Sinai is seen in the consummation to be universal." Westcott

ἐτι still, yet
ἅπαξ once, once for all time
σειωω shake
μονον adv only, alone

Hebrews 12:27

τὸ δὲ Ἔτι ἅπαξ δηλοῖ τῶν σαλευομένων μετὰθεσιν ὡς πεποιημένων, ἵνα μείνη τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα.

το δε Ἔτι ἅπαξ "The words, 'Yet once more ...'"

δηλοι Verb, pres act indic, 3 s δηλωω make clear, indicate

μεταθεσις, εως f removal, change
 πεποιημένων Verb, perf pass ptc, gen pl
 ποιεω
 μενω remain, stay, abide

"... all that stands undisturbed in the present trial. The 'shaking' is looked upon as already taking place." Westcott suggests that the reference is to the beginnings of the fall of Jerusalem.

"The purpose of this ultimate shaking is 'in order that what cannot be shaken may remain.' For the people of God, who belong to the order of things which are unshakable, the removal of all that is insecure and imperfect is something to be eagerly anticipated; for this final shaking of both heaven and earth is necessary for the purging and eradication from the universe of all that is hostile to God and his will, for establishment of all that, being in harmony with the divine mind, is permanent, and for the inauguration of the new heaven and the new earth, that is, the renewal as 'changed' creation, in which all God's purposes in creation are brought to everlasting fulfilment at the consummation of the redemption procured in and by Christ (Rev 21:1ff; 2 Peter 3:10-13); and this will take place with the return of Christ in glory and majesty (Rev 19:11ff.)...
 "Among those things which are shaken are the sacrifices of the old levitical system and the impermanent order of things instituted through the mediation of Moses, which have been surpassed and superseded by the one perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. This unique sacrifice, unshakable in its efficacy, is itself the foundation of that unblemished new order that abides forever (Rev 5:11ff.; 7:13ff.). Our author is concerned lest those to whom he is writing should forsake the unshakable realities of the gospel for the outmoded system they have professed to abandon." Hughes

Hebrews 12:28

διὸ βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες
 ἔχωμεν χάριν, δι' ἧς λατρεύωμεν εὐαρέστως
 τῷ θεῷ μετὰ εὐλαβείας καὶ δέους,

διὸ therefore, for this reason

"The thought of the 'Kingdom' lies in the second part of Haggai's prophecy, which the quotation naturally suggested to the readers." Westcott
 The Kingdom is "an ordered and harmonious society governed by him who is the Sovereign Lord of all (Rev 19:16)." Hughes.

ἀσαλευτος, ον immovable; unshakable
 παραλαμβανω take, receive, accept
 χαρις, ιτος f grace; thanks, gratitude

"The use of the phrase *χαριν ἔχειν* elsewhere in the NT is strongly in favour of the sense 'let us feel and shew *thankfulness* to God': Lk 17:9; 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 1:3." Westcott.

Gratitude is the heart's response to the Gospel: 2 Cor 9:15; Eph 5:20; Col 3:17; 1 Thess 5:18.

λατρευω serve, worship

Cf. Rom 12:1.

εὐαρέστως in an acceptable way

In NT always used in connection with relationship to God.

εὐλαβεια, ας f godly fear, reverence
 δεος, ους n awe, godly fear

Does not occur elsewhere in the NT.

Hebrews 12:29

καὶ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν πῦρ καταναλίσκων

πυρ, ος n fire

καταναλίσκω consume, devour

The God of Zion is one and the same with the God of Sinai. "He purifies by burning up all that is base in those who serve Him, and all that is unfit to abide in His Presence: Mal 3:2f; Mal 4:1." Westcott. Cf. Dt 4:24.

Hebrews 13

"The thirteenth chapter is a kind of appendix to the Epistle, like Rom 15,16. The first twelve chapters form a complete treatise; and now for the first time, distinct personal traits appear... but the central portion brings back with fresh power some of the main thoughts on which the writer has before insisted." Westcott

Guthrie provides the following summary, "A series of apparently disconnected exhortations and other incidental teaching is found in this last chapter. The moral advice covers social, private and religious life. The final exhortation is to readers to make a clean break with Judaism, which is mentioned under the term 'camp'. A magnificent doxology precedes the closing salutation."

- i) Exhortations affecting social life (13:1-3);
- ii) Exhortations affecting private life (13:4-6);
- iii) Exhortations affecting religious life (13:7-9);
- iv) About the Christian's new altar (13:10-16);
- v) Final words (13:17-25).

Hebrews 13:1

Ἡ φιλαδελφία μενέτω.

φιλαδελφια, ας f brotherly love
 μενω remain, stay, abide

May suggest the beginnings of a decline in such love. Just as our brotherhood derives from union with Christ, so also our love for the brothers originates in him, cf. Jn 13:34; 1 Thess 4:9.

Hebrews 13:2

τῆς φιλοξενίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε, διὰ ταύτης γὰρ ἔλαθόν τινες ξενίσαντες ἀγγέλους.

φιλοξενια, ας f hospitality
ἐπιλανθανομαι forget, neglect, overlook

Particularly Christians travelling from elsewhere and previously unknown to them.

ἔλαθόν Verb, aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
λανθανω be hidden; be unaware
τις, τὶ acc τινά, τὶ gen τινός dat τινί enclitic
pronoun anyone, a certain
ξενίσαντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
ξενίζω entertain as a guest

"The form of the illustration seems to be that we only observe the outside surface of those whom we receive. More lies beneath than we can see. Christ indeed comes to the heart of those who are welcomed in his name (Matt 25:40, 46; John 13:20)." Westcott.
The allusion is doubtless to Abraham's entertaining of three strangers, one of whom is later addressed by him as Yahweh (Gen 18:1ff.)

Hebrews 13:3

μνησθε τῶν δεσμίων ὡς συνδεδεμένοι, τῶν κακουχομένων ὡς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὄντες ἐν σώματι.

μνησκομαι remember, keep in mind
δεσμιος, ου m prisoner

Cf. 10:34, see also 2 Tim 1:16.

συνδεδεμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
συνδεομαι be in prison with
κακουχομαι be ill-treated
σωμα, τος n body

"The bodily hardships now being experienced by some of their fellow believers could equally well, and perhaps will, be experienced by them too." Hughes.

Verse 4

τίμιος ὁ γάμος ἐν πᾶσιν καὶ ἡ κοίτη ἀμίαντος, πόρνους γὰρ καὶ μοιχοὺς κρινεῖ ὁ θεός.

τιμιος, α, ου precious, valuable, held in honour
γαμος, ου m wedding, marriage

Many of the older commentators take the first phrase as indicative rather than imperative (so also AV). However, Westcott thinks that all the phrases in this and into the next verse are hortatory (so also NIV). This is the only occasion in the NT where γαμος is used to mean the married state.

κοιτη, ης f bed; marital relationship
ἀμιαντος, ου pure, undefiled, unstained

"It is possible that the Hebrew Christians to whom this letter was sent were being influenced by Essene doctrines of asceticism involving the denunciation of marriage as a state detrimental to the attainment of godliness. Or it may be that they were situated in a social environment in which the marriage bond was lightly esteemed or even regarded as unnecessary and sexual license of every kind condoned, and which therefore was in conflict with the Christian ideal of marriage and chastity. In either case the construction should be treated as hortatory rather than declaratory." Hughes.

πορνος, ου m man who practices sexual immorality

μοιχος, ου m adulterer

κρινεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s κρινω judge

Cf. Eph 5:5f; Rom 1:26ff.

Hebrews 13:5

ἀφιλάργυρος ὁ τρόπος· ἀρκούμενοι τοῖς παροῦσιν· αὐτὸς γὰρ εἶρηκεν· Οὐ μὴ σε ἀνῶ οὐδ' οὐ μὴ σε ἐγκαταλίπω·

ἀφιλαργυρος, ου not greedy for money
τροπος, ου m way, manner, way of life

"Ο τροπος describes the general character. It is not found elsewhere in the NT in this sense." Westcott

ἀρκεω be enough; pass. be content, be satisfied

Cf. Phil 4:10-13

παρειμι be present

εἶρηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s λεγω

These exact words are not found in the OT, but similar assurances are found in Gen 28:15; Josh 1:5; Deut 31:6ff. Westcott suggests that the words "had probably been moulded into this shape by common use."

ἀνῶ Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἀνιημι loosen, desert, fail

The sense is "losing hold so as to withdraw the support rendered by the sustaining grasp." Westcott

ἐγκαταλίπω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s
ἐγκαταλειπω forsake, abandon

"The avaricious man is never content: ungenerous and grasping, he always wants more and is always afraid of losing what he has. How different from the serenity of the true Christian who knows that, having Christ, he lacks nothing that is essential for his well-being (cf. Ps 23:1). Paul, destitute of worldly possessions, sublimely speaks of himself 'as having nothing, and yet possessing everything' (2 Cor 6:10). 'I have learned,' he assures his friends at Philippi, 'in whatever state I am, to be content' (Phil 4:11). His is the true imitation of the Master, who on earth had no place of his own where he might rest his head (Mt 8:20), who taught that 'a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions' (Lk 12:15), and who advised his disciples to lay up treasure for themselves in heaven rather than on earth (Mt 6:19f.) – in other words, though poor in the eyes of men, to be 'rich toward God' (Lk 12:21). We are made rich, indeed, by the poverty which he embraced for our sakes in the incarnation and at the cross (2 Cor 8:9), and having the assurance that our God will supply our every need 'according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus' we can find no excuse for discontent (Phil 4:19)." Hughes.

Hebrews 13:6

ὥστε θαρροῦντας ἡμᾶς λέγειν· Κύριος ἐμοὶ βοηθός, οὐ φοβηθήσομαι· τί ποιήσει μοι ἄνθρωπος;

ὥστε so that, with the result that
 θαρροῦντας Verb, pres act ptc, m acc pl
 θαρρεω be full of courage

The believer's declaration of faith rests upon God's declaration of faithfulness. "The quotation is from Psalm 118 (v. 6), a hymn expressing joy and confidence in God which was sung at the great festivals of the Jewish people. The same joy and confidence should be ours who are Christians, for ours is the same God, known to us in his grace and power as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Hughes.

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγω
 βοηθός, ου m helper
 φοβεομαι fear, be afraid (of)

Hebrews 13:7

Μνημονεύετε τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν, οἵτινες ἐλάλησαν ὑμῖν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ὧν ἀναθεωροῦντες τὴν ἐκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς μιμεῖσθε τὴν πίστιν.

μνημονευω remember, keep in mind
 ἡγεομαι think, regard; lead, rule (ὁ ἡ.
 leader, ruler)

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὁ τι
 who, which

The tense may suggest leaders who have died, in contrast with the present leaders mentioned in vv 17 and 24.

ἀναθεωρεω observe closely
 ἐκβασις, εως f way out, outcome
 ἀναστροφη, ης f manner of life, conduct

Westcott says "The reference here seems to be to some scene of martyrdom in which the triumph of faith was plainly shewn." Hughes, however, thinks that the reference is rather to the "'sum total' or 'achievement' of their day-to-day behaviour, manifested in a whole life."

μιμεομαι imitate, follow another's example
 πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

Hebrews 13:8

Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐχθὲς καὶ σήμερον ὁ αὐτός, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

ἐχθες adv yesterday
 σημερον today
 αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age,
 eternity

Against the background of changing leaders (v.7) there is an unchanging Lord – continuity both in the message and in its object. "The point would seem to be that, in the case of the original recipients of this letter, he who *yesterday* was the source and object of the triumphant faith of those leaders who instructed them in the word of God (see the preceding verse) is still *today* the same all-sufficient and all-powerful Redeemer and Lord, and will continue so *for ever*." Hughes.

Hebrews 13:9

διδασκαίς ποικίλαις καὶ ξέναις μὴ παραφέρεσθε· καλὸν γὰρ χάριτι βεβαιῶσθαι τὴν καρδίαν, οὐ βρώμασιν, ἐν οἷς οὐκ ὠφελήθησαν οἱ περιπατοῦντες.

διδαχη, ης f teaching, what is taught
 ποικίλος, η, ον various kinds of, diverse

"The unchangeableness of Christ calls up in contrast the variety of human doctrines." Westcott

ξενος, η, ον strange, foreign, unusual
 παραφερω take away, carry or lead away
 καλος, η, ον good, right, proper
 χάριτι Noun, dat s χαρις, ιτος f grace
 βεβαιωω confirm, verify, strengthen
 βρωμα, τος n food, solid food
 ὠφελήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
 ὠφελεω gain, profit, benefit
 περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

Food does not aid fellowship with God, cf. 1 Cor 8:8.

Hebrews 13:10

ἔχομεν θυσιαστήριον ἐξ οὗ φαγεῖν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν οἱ τῆ σκηνῆ λατρεύοντες.

θυσιαστήριον, ου n altar (of incense)

φαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐσθίω and ἐσθώ
eat, consume

ἐξουσία, ας f authority, right, capability,
power

σκηνη, ης f tent, tabernacle

"The main contention is that the exclusion from the sacrificial services of the Temple is compensated by something which answers to them and is of a nobler kind. Westcott goes on to apply this to 'the Eucharist' saying, "in this sacrament then, where Christ gives Himself as the support of His faithful and rejoicing people, the Christian has that which more than fulfils the types of the Jewish ritual." He points out that only the priests under the Old Covenant eat from the altar, and then not from the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. "The Gospel as compared with the Law offers not less but more to believers ... The Christian enjoys in substance that which the Jew did not enjoy even in shadow."

Hughes, however, does not think that the reference here is directly to the Eucharist but to the cross and to Christ's once-for-all sacrifice. He says that the issue of referent here is the same as with Jesus' words in Jn 6:52-55. The term 'altar' would not be used of the Eucharist in the New Testament but "as used here is a sort of shorthand, or synecdoche, for the whole sacrificial action of Christ, as the context plainly shows." The eating of the priests under the old covenant "was physical; ours is spiritual."

John Brown observes that we "are permitted to feast on the whole sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We not only eat his flesh, but we do what none of the priests durst do with regard to any of the sacrifices, we drink his blood. We enjoy the full measure of benefit which his sacrifice was designed to secure. We are allowed to feed freely upon the highest and holiest of sacrifices. Our reconciliation with God is complete, our fellowship with him intimate and delightful."

λατρεω serve, worship

Hebrews 13:11

ὃν γὰρ εἰσφέρειται ζῶων τὸ αἷμα περὶ ἁμαρτίας εἰς τὰ ἅγια διὰ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, τούτων τὰ σώματα κατακαίεται ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς·

Cf. Lev 16:27.

εἰσφερω bring in, carry in, lead in
ζῶον, ου n living creature; animal

αἷμα, ατος f blood

ἁμαρτία, ας f sin

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated

The meaning may be Holy of Holies or may include the Holy Place.

ἀρχιερεως, εως m high priest

σωμα, τος n body

κατακαίω burn, burn up, consume

ἐξω out, outside, away

παρεμβολη, ης f barracks; camp

Hebrews 13:12

διὸ καὶ Ἰησοῦς, ἵνα ἁγιάσῃ διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος τὸν λαόν, ἔξω τῆς πύλης ἔπαθεν.

διὸ therefore, for this reason

ἁγιάσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἁγιαζω

sanctify, make holy

Cf. 9:13.

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

λαος, ου m people, a people

πυλη, ης f gate

ἔπαθεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πασχω suffer

"The work of Christ, so far as it was wrought on earth, found its consummation outside the limits of the symbolic dwelling-place of the chosen people." Westcott

Hebrews 13:13

τοῖνυν ἐξεργώμεθα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς, τὸν ὀνειδισμόν αὐτοῦ φέροντες.

τοῖνυν therefore, for that very reason

παρεμβολη, ης f see v.11

ὀνειδισμος, ου m reproach, insult, abuse;
disgrace, shame

Cf. 11:26.

φερω bring, carry, bear, lead

Hughes comments, "'Going forth' to Christ 'outside the camp' certainly meant for these original readers, as it does for us, separation from the fallen values of unregenerate society, but in their case it meant also departure from the old Jewish order of their upbringing, from dependence on the levitical priesthood with its feasts and sacrifices, and also, it may well be, from the expectation of the restoration of a purified Judaism such as was entertained by the adherents of the Dead Sea Sect..."

"Of special interest in connection with the passage before us is the account (in Ex 33:7ff.) of how, after the incident of the golden calf (Ex 32) but prior to the setting up of the tabernacle proper (Ex 40), Moses took a tent and pitched it outside the camp, at a sufficient distance to make it quite separate from the camp, and called it 'the tent of meeting.' This served as a temporary sanctuary upon which the pillar of cloud descended when God spoke with Moses there. Moses, by this action, effectively emphasised the fact that the people's sin of apostasy had separated them from their God and had defiled the holy ground of the camp, with the result that it was now necessary for anyone who sought the Lord to go forth outside the camp. Thus the normal situation in which all territory outside the camp was regarded as unholy and the man who left the camp *ipso facto* became unclean was at this time reversed. Sin had rendered the camp unholy and Moses' withdrawal in order to establish a holy location outside the camp prefigured the setting up of the Christian altar, Christ's cross, outside the gate and the necessity for God's people to join Christ there."

Hebrews 13:14

οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ὧδε μένουσαν πόλιν, ἀλλὰ τὴν μέλλουσαν ἐπιζητοῦμεν·

ὧδε adv here, in this place

μενω remain, stay, abide

πολις, εως f city, town

μέλλουσαν Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s μέλλω

(ptc. without infin) coming, future

ἐπιζητεω seek, desire, search for

Cf. 11:14.

Hebrews 13:15

δι' αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως διὰ παντός τῷ θεῷ, τοῦτ' ἔστιν καρπὸν χειλέων ὁμολογούντων τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.

"The emphatic position of δι' αὐτοῦ brings out the peculiar privileges of the believer. He has One through Whom he can fulfil the ... duty of grateful worship... (7:25)." Westcott. Cf. 1 Peter 2:25; Rom 1:8.

ἀναφέρω offer (of sacrifice)

θυσια, ας f sacrifice

αἰνεσις, εως f praise, adoration

Cf. Lev 7:12; Ps 107:22; 116:17.

Of the δια παντός Westcott says "That which was exceptional service under the Old Dispensation [in connection with a vow] is the normal service under the New."

καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome

χειλος, ους n lip

Cf. Hos 14:2.

ὁμολογεω confess, declare, give thanks
ὄνομα, τος n name

Hebrews 13:16

τῆς δὲ εὐποιΐας καὶ κοινωνίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε, τοιαύταις γὰρ θυσίαις εὐαρεστεῖται ὁ θεός.

εὐποιΐα, ας f doing of good

Not found elsewhere in the NT

κοινωνια, ας f fellowship, sharing in, participation, contribution

Cf. 2 Cor 9:13.

ἐπιλανθανομαι forget, neglect, overlook
τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pro & adj
such, of such kind; similar, like
εὐαρεστεω please, be pleasing to

Hebrews 13:17

Πείθεσθε τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν καὶ ὑπέικετε, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀγρυπνοῦσιν ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν ὡς λόγον ἀποδώσοντες, ἵνα μετὰ χαρᾶς τοῦτο ποιῶσιν καὶ μὴ στενάζοντες, ἀλυσιτελὲς γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῦτο.

πειθω persuade; pass obey, listen to

ἡγεομαι see v.7

ὑπεικω accept (someone's) authority,

submit to, be subject to

ἀγρυπνεω be alert, watch over

Cf. Eph 6:18

ψυχη, ης f self, life, 'soul'

ἀποδωσοντες Verb, fut act ptc, m nom pl

ἀποδιδωμι give, pay, render

"Such an admonition implies the author's confidence in the ability and genuineness of this leadership, and it suggests that the community to whom he is writing is not as a whole giving these leaders the respect that is their due. It may perhaps be that the occasion of this epistle was the reception by its author of a report, either in writing or in person, from those leaders of the potentially serious situation which was developing among those over whom they had been placed." Hughes.

χαρα, ας f joy, gladness

στεναζω sigh, groan, grumble

Cf James 5:9; Rom 8:23

ἀλυσιτελης, ες of no advantage or help

Does not occur elsewhere in NT – but cf. Lk 17:22.

Hebrews 13:18-25

The letter closes with more personal requests and exhortations.

Hebrews 13:18

Προσεύχεσθε περὶ ἡμῶν, πειθόμεθα γὰρ ὅτι καλὴν συνείδησιν ἔχομεν, ἐν πᾶσιν καλῶς θέλοντες ἀναστρέφεσθαι.

προσευχομαι pray

πειθω persuade, convince

καλος, η, ον good, right, proper, fine

συνείδησις, εως f conscience, awareness

θελω wish, will

ἀναστρεφω pass live, conduct oneself

"Such a conviction must underlie the request for efficacious intercession. The prayers of others will not avail for the neglect of duty." Westcott

Hebrews 13:19

περισσοτέρως δὲ παρακαλῶ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι ἵνα τάχιον ἀποκατασταθῶ ὑμῖν.

περισσοτερος adv. (from περισσοτερος) all the more, especially

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω

ταχιον quickly, at once, soon

ἀποκατασταθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s

ἀποκαθιστημι restore, make well, send or bring back

"The expression does not necessarily imply a state of imprisonment, which is in fact excluded by the language of v.23." Westcott suggests it may have been an illness that kept the author from those to whom he was writing.

Hebrews 13:20

Ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης, ὁ ἀναγαγὼν ἐκ νεκρῶν τὸν ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων τὸν μέγαν ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου, τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν,

εἰρηνι, ης f peace

Cf. Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor 13:11; 1 Thess 5:23.

"It is through God, as the author and giver of peace, that man is able to find the harmony which he seeks in the conflicting elements of his own nature, in his relationship with the world, in his relation to God Himself." Westcott.

Bruce thinks these words may suggest that the community was troubled with disunity – as 1 Cor 14:33. Hughes disagrees, saying that the peace spoken of here is primarily the peace of the Gospel (Eph 6:15), "the peace which has been established, or re-established, between man and his Creator by the blood of Christ's cross (Col 1:20)." This was also the view of Owen who says, "The bringing back of our Lord Jesus, as the Shepherd of the sheep, from the state of the dead, through the blood of the eternal covenant, is the great pledge and assurance of peace with God, or the effecting of that peace which the God of peace had designed for the Church."

ἀναγαγων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ἀναγω bring up, lead up

νεκρος, α, ον dead

ποιμην, ενος m shepherd

προβατον, ου n sheep

Bruce says of these words, which in their context in Is 63:11 refer to Moses, "Here they are applied to Jesus as the second Moses, who was brought up not from the sea but from the realm of the dead. (In the Exodus typology of the New Testament the "sea of reeds" which Israel crossed on the way out of Egypt is taken of the death and resurrection of Christ into which his people are baptised.)" The passage in Isaiah continues by speaking of the Holy Spirit whom God has put among his people.

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

αἷμα, ατος f blood

διαθηκη, ης covenant, will, testament

αιωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

Cf. Zech 9:11.

Hebrews 13:21

καταρτίσαι ἡμᾶς ἐν παντι ἀγαθῷ εἰς τὸ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, ποιῶν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ εὐάρεστον ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.

καταρτιζω mend, restore, make complete

Cf 1 Peter 5:10 "The word καταρτιζειν, *to make perfect*, includes the thoughts of the harmonious combination of different powers (comp Eph 4:12 καταρτισμος, 2 Cor 13:9 καταρτισις), of the supply of that which is defective (1 Thess 3:10), and of the amendment of that which is faulty (Gal 6:1; comp Mk 1:19)." Westcott. Hughes prefers the translation "make you perfect in all goodness."

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

Later MSS read παντι ἐργῷ ἀγαθῷ. Metzger says that ἐργῷ is an obvious homiletic gloss.

ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω

"Action is the true object of the harmonious perfection of our powers. And each deed is at once the deed of man and the deed of God (ποιησαι, ποιων)." Westcott. Cf. Phil 2:12,13.

θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

Owen says that to do the will of God is "the sole rule of our obedience." Hughes writes, "The new creation is at the same time the re-creation; for redemption means reintegration and reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17ff.). And just as being cannot be divorced from doing, so the creature is redeemed not only to *be* a new man but also to *do* the works that spring from and make manifest the new nature, which means specifically to do God's will, for the performance of the divine will is the proper function of every creature. Yet this 'doing' is not the doing of the creature only, but at the same time the doing of the Creator; for it is the God of peace who is said here to be *working*, or doing, *in you that which is pleasing in his sight...* The Christian's service of God, therefore, is not passive submission but willing, joyful, and cooperative obedience. Thus in Christ the lifeline which connects the creature to the Creator and his eternal purposes is restored."

εὐαρεστος, ον acceptable, pleasing
ἐνωπιον before, in the presence of

ὁ The doxology may be addressed to Christ, as in 2 Tim 4:18; 2 Peter 3:18; Rev 1:6 or to God as 2 Thess 2:9. Westcott thinks the latter to be the more likely.

δοξα, ης f glory
αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age,
world order, eternity

A common phrase in doxologies – cf. Phil 4:20; 1 Tim 1:17; 2 Tim 4:18; 1 Peter 4:11; 5:11.

Hebrews 13:22

Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἀνέχεσθε τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως, καὶ γὰρ διὰ βραχέων ἐπέστειλα ὑμῖν.

Hughes suggests that the short postscript of vv 22-25 may have been in the author's own hand having used an amanuensis for the letter.

παρακαλεω see v.19
ἀνεχομαι endure, be patient with
παρακλησις, εως f encouragement, help,
comfort, counsel
βραχυς, εια, υ little, short, small; δια
βραχεων briefly

"That is, relative to the vastness of the subject." Westcott.

ἐπέστειλα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s ἐπιστελλω
write, instruct by letter

Hebrews 13:23

γινώσκετε τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν Τιμόθεον ἀπολελυμένον, μεθ' οὗ ἐὰν τάχιον ἔρχηται ὄψομαι ὑμᾶς.

Westcott thinks that the γινώσκετε is imperative, "Know ye that ...". The NEB translates, "I have news for you,..."

ἀπολελυμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s ἀπολυω release, set free
ἐὰν if
τάχιον quickly, at once, soon

Cf. v.19.

ὄψομαι Verb, fut act indic, 1 s ὄραω see

Hebrews 13:24

ἀσπᾶσασθε πάντας τοὺς ἡγουμένους ὑμῶν καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους. ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας.

ἀσπάζομαι greet, welcome
ἡγεομαι see v.7

Westcott suggests that "The special salutation of 'all that have the rule' implies that the letter was not addressed officially to the church, but to some section of it." Hughes disagrees with this inference.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

Does not necessarily imply that the letter was written from Italy. Bruce suggests a translation that reflects the ambiguity of the Greek, such as, "Greetings to you from our Italian friends."

Hebrews 13:25

ἢ χάρις μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

χαρις, ιος f grace

Cf. Titus 3:15. "Every Epistle of St Paul includes in its final greeting the wish for 'grace' to those who receive it... There is no corresponding greeting in James, 2 Peter, 1, 2 John, Jude." Westcott.