

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Week 162 – Hebrews 1:1-2:9

Day 806: 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.

Referenced Works

- 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

Day 807: Hebrews 1:1-6

Verses 1-4

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

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

Verse 1

Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς
λαλήσας τοῖς πατέρασιν 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
παλαι 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 *τουτων* indicates that this long-expected messianic age has now arrived.

πατήρ, πατήρ m father
προφήτης, οὐ m prophet

Verse 2

ἐπὶ ἔσχατου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν
ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ, ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον
πάντων, διὸ οὐ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας·

ἔσχατος, ἡ, οὐ adj last, final

ἐπὶ ἔσχατου των ἡμερων echoes the LXX rendering of the Hebrew *בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים* '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 τιθεμι
place, set, appoint
κληρονόμος, οὐ 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 αἰών, αἰῶνος 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 αἰών (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 των αἰῶνων ...) In this aspect 'the King of the ages' is contrasted with 'the rulers of this age' (οἱ ἄρχοντες του αἰῶνος τουτου)." Westcott.

Postscript on verses 1-2

Jesus is at the centre of the purposes of God:

- i) The diversity of past revelation is now unified, focused and completed in Christ. Christ is the fulfilment, not abrogation of the redemptive revelation of the Old Testament – he is the *ἔσχατος* 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*.)

Verse 3

ὅς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτῆρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, καθαρισμὸν 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.

ὑποστασις, εως f nature

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

φέρω bring, carry, bear, lead

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

τε enclitic particle and, and so

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

ῥημα, ατος n word, thing, matter

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

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

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

"The use of the middle suggests the thought
which the late gloss δι· ἐαυτοῦ 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.

δεξιος, α, ον right, δεξια right hand

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

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

Expresses the idea of God in his greatness.

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

Verses 1-3 – Postscript

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

1:4-2:18 Christ superior to angels

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

Verse 4

τοσοῦτω κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων
ὅσω διαφορωτερον παρ· αὐτοῦς
κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα.

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

τοσοῦτω ... ὅσω (by) as much ... as

κρείπτων and κρείσσω, 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 exaltation of the divine *man* he has become superior to the angels.

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

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

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.

Verses 5-14

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

Verse 5

Τίνι γὰρ εἶπέν ποτε τῶν ἀγγέλων, Υἱὸς μου εἶ σύ, ἔγω σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε; καὶ πάλιν, Ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἰόν;

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 γεννωω
be father of, bear, give birth to

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 6

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

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as

παλιν can here be understood either as:

- i) simply introducing another quotation;
- ii) connected with εἰσαγάγῃ – 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.

Day 808: Hebrews 1:7-14

Verses 7-9

The Superior dignity of the Son as Anointed King

Verse 7

καὶ πρὸς μὲν τοὺς ἀγγέλους λέγει, Ο ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα, καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πυρὸς φλόγα:

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

λειτουργος, ου m servant, minister

πνευματα here = winds, not spirits.

πυρ, ος n fire

φλοξ, φλογος f flame

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

The Psalm is a Psalm of creation. "The thought is that where man at first sees only material objects and forces of nature, there God is present, fulfilling his will through his servants under the form of elemental action.... The reference to the 'winds' and 'flame of fire' could not fail to suggest to the Hebrew reader the accompaniments of the giving of the Law (cf 12:18ff)" Westcott
Delitzsch comments that Ps 104:4 "may either affirm that God makes wind and fire serviceable to Him for special missions (cf. 148:8), or that He gives wind and fire to his angels as the material of their manifestation and, as it were, their assumption of a corporeal form, for the purpose of His activity within the world, which is mediated by means of them."

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

Verses 8-9 The angels are subject to constant change, the Son has dominion for ever and ever.
The quotation from Ps 45:6-7 agrees with the LXX with only minor deviations

Verse 8

πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν, ὁ θρόνος σου, ὁ θεός,
εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος
τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου.
θρονος, ου m throne

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

ῥάβδος, ου f stick, rod, sceptre
εὐθύτης, ητος f uprightness, justice

A word used only here in the NT.

Verse 9

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

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

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

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness
μισεω hate, despise
ἀνομια, ας f wickedness, lawlessness
χρω anoint
σε Pronoun, acc s ου
ἔλαιον, ου n olive oil, oil
ἀγαλλιασις, εως f great joy

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

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

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

Verse 10

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

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

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

Verse 11

αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται, σὺ δὲ διαμένεις· καὶ πάντες ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσονται,
ἀπολλυμι destroy; midd perish

The idea is that of change not annihilation.
διαμενω stay, remain, continue

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας ἱματιον, ου n garment, clothing, cloak
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.

Verse 12

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

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

Verse 13

πρὸς τίνα δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἴρηκέν 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

εἴρηκέν 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
έως άν until

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

Cf. 1 Cor 15:28

έχθρος, α, ον enemy
ύποποδιον, ου n footstool
πους, ποδος m foot

Verse 14

ούχι πάντες είσιν λειτουργικά πνεύματα
είς διακονίαν άποστελλόμενα διά τούς
μέλλοντας κληρονομείν σωτηρίαν;

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

λειτουργικός, η, ον ministering
διακονία, ας f ministry, service
άποστελλω send, send out

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be
destined
κληρονομεω receive, gain possession of,
inherit
σωτηρια, ας f salvation

Salvation is both present and future.

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

Day 809: Hebrews 2:1-4

Verse 1

Διά τούτο δεί περισσοτέρως προσέχειν
ήμάς τούς άκουσθείσιν, μήποτε
παραρυώμεν.

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
άκουσθείσιν Verb, aor pass ptc, m & n dat
pl άκουω

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.

Verse 2

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

Verse 3

πὼς ἡμεῖς ἐκφευξόμεθα τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας; ἥτις, ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀκουσάντων εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαιωθη,

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'

βεβαιωω **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.

Verse 4

συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος τοῦ θεοῦ σημεῖοις 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."

Day 810: Hebrews 2:5-9

Verse 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
μελλω (before an infin) be going; (ptc. without infin) coming, future
λαλεω speak, talk

Verse 6

διαμαρτύρατο δὲ πού τις λέγων, τί ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος ὅτι μιμήσκη αὐτοῦ, ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ὅτι ἐπισκέπη 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."

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

ἢ or

ἐπισκεπτομαι visit, care for, be
concerned about

Verse 7

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

ἔλαττω 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

ἀγγέλους translates the Hebrew אַנְגְלִים

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

δόξα, ης f glory

τιμη, ης f honour

στεφανωω crown; reward

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

After ἐστεφανώσας αὐτοῦ many MSS add και κατεστήσας αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τα ἔργα των χειρων σου from Ps 8:6 LXX.

Verse 8

πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν
αὐτοῦ. ἐν τῷ γὰρ ὑποτάξαι [αὐτῷ] τὰ
πάντα οὐδὲν ἀφήκεν αὐτῷ ἀνυπότακτον.
νῦν δὲ οὐπω ὁρώμεν 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

ὁραω see, observe

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

Verse 9

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

βραχυς, εια, υ see v.7

ἠλαττωμένον Verb, perf apss ptc, m acc &
n nom/acc s ἐλαττω 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 στεφανω 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.