

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 164 – Hebrews 4:6-8

Day 816: Hebrews 4:6-13

Verse 6

ἐπεὶ οὖν ἀπολείπεται τινὰς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς αὐτήν, καὶ οἱ πρότερον εὐαγγελισθέντες οὐκ εἰσήλθον διὰ ἀπειθειαν,

ἐπεὶ 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.

Verse 7

πάλιν τινὰ ὀρίζει ἡμέραν, Σήμερον, ἐν Δαυὶδ λέγων μετὰ τοσοῦτον χρόνον, καθὼς προεῖρηται, Σήμερον ἐὰν 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, αὐτή, οὗτον 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.

Verse 8

εἰ γὰρ αὐτοὺς Ἰησοῦς κατέπαυσεν, οὐκ ἂν περὶ 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.

Verse 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

Verse 10

ὁ γὰρ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ ὡσπερ 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

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own

Verse 11

σπουδάσωμεν οὖν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην
τὴν κατάπαυσιν, ἵνα μὴ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τις
ὑποδείγματι πέσῃ 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

ὑποδειγμα, τος η example

πέσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s πιπτω 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.

ἀπειθεία, ας f disobedience

Verse 12

Ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐνεργῆς καὶ
τομωτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν
δίστομον καὶ διῆκνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ
ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος, ἄρμων 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 ... τομωτερος ... διῆκνούμενος ... κριτικος ...) 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.

ζωω live, be alive

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

ἐνεργῆς, ες active, effective

τομωτερος, α, ον sharper; comparative of
τομος

μαχαира, ης f sword

διστομος, 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.

διῆκνεομαι go all the way through,
penetrate

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

μερισμος, ον 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, ον m joint (of the body)

τε enclitic particle and; τε και and also

μυελος, ον 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.

Verse 13

καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανῆς ἐνώπιον
αὐτοῦ, πάντα δὲ γυμνά καὶ
τετραχλισμένα 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.

κτισις, 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

προς όν ήμιν ό λογος "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.

Day 817: Hebrews 4:14-5:3

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

Verse 14

Έχοντες ούν αρχιερέα μέγαν διεληλυθότα
τους ούρανούς, Ίησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ
θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας·

ἀρχιερευς, 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, sieze

Seems to imply a need to sieze and retain hold.

ὁμολογια, ας f see 3:1

Verse 15

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

δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of
συμπαθῆσαι 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 sπειραζω test, tempt
ὁμοιοτης, ητος f likeness; κατα παντα
καθ ό. 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.

Verse 16

προσερχομεθα ούν 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.

παρηρησια, 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
 εὑρωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl εὑρισκω

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

εὐκαιρος, ον suitable, timely
 βοηθεια, ας f help

Verses 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).

Verse 1

Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐξ ἀνθρωπων
 λαμβανόμενος ὑπὲρ ἀνθρωπων
 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.

Verse 2

μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν
 καὶ πλανωμένοις, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς
 περικεῖται 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.

ἐπεὶ since, because, for
 περικεῖμαι be surrounded, be beset with
 ἀσθeneia, 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.

Verse 3

καὶ διὰ αὐτὴν ὀφείλει καθὼς περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ οὕτως καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ προσφέρειν περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν.

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

ὀφείλω ought, must, be bound
λαός, οὐ m people, a people
οὕτως thus, in this way
προσφέρω 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).

Day 818: Hebrews 5:4-10**Verse 4**

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

ἑαυτός, ἑαυτή, ἑαυτόν him/her/itself
τιμή, ἡς f honour

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

καθὼς περὶ as, just as

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

Verse 5

Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα, ἀλλὰ 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.

δοξάζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt
γεννηθῆναι Verb, aor pass dep infin γίνομαι
λαλέω speak, talk
σήμερον 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 γενναῶ
be father of, bear
σε Pronoun, acc s συ

Verse 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.

ἱερεὺς, εως m priest
αἰών, αἰῶνος m age, eternity

Christ has no successor.

ταξίς, 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

Verse 7

ὅς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ,
δεήσεις τε καὶ ἱκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν
δυνάμενον σῶζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου μετὰ
κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρῦων
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.

δεησις, εως f prayer, plea

τε καὶ and also

ἱκετηρια, ας f request, plea

δυναμαι be able to, be capable of

σωζω save, rescue

θανατος, ου m death

κραυγη, ης f shout, cry

ἰσχυρος, 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.

δακρυον, ου n tear (as in weeping)

προσενέγκας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s

προσφερω 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

εἰσακουω 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.

Verse 8

καίπερ ὢν υἱὸς ἔμαθεν ἄφ' 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).

Verse 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
γίνομαι

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

Verse 10

προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς
κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.

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

Day 819: Hebrews 5:11-14

Verse 11

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

περι 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."

πολὺς, πολλή, πολὺ gen πολλοῦ, ης, ου
much, many

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

δυσερμήνευτος, ον hard to explain
ἐπεὶ 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.

νωθρος, α, ον lazy, sluggish

γεγόνατε Verb, perf act indic γίνομαι
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 γίνομαι expresses very clearly that this is a state they have sunk into – something they *have become*.

Verse 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, [καὶ] 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.

γεγονατε 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.

Verse 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

Verse 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 pl 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

Day 820: Hebrews 6:1-8

Verse 1

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

διο therefore, for this reason

ἀφιημι 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.

τελειοτης, 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.

Verse 2

βαπτισμων διδαχης, 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."

Verse 3

και τουτο ποιησομεν εανπερ επιτρεπη ο θεος.

εαν if

The reading ποιησομεν 'we will do' is preferable to ποιησωμεν '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.

ἐπιτρεπω let, allow, permit

Verse 4

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

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

ἀδύνατος, 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
φωτιζω give light to, enlighten

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

γενομαι 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

γενηθέντας Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m acc pl
γίνομαι

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.

Verse 5

καὶ καλὸν γευσαμένους θεοῦ ῥήματα
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."

μελλω (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.

Verse 6

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

παραπεσόντας Verb, aor act ptc, m acc pl
παραπιπτω fall away, commit
apostacy

παλιν again, once more

ἀνακαινίζειν Verb, pres act infin

ἀνακαινίζω restore

μετανοια, ας f see v.1

ἀνασταυροῦντας Verb, pres act ptc, m acc
pl ἀνασταυρω 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, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

I.e. to their own loss.

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

Cf. the variant form in Matt 1:19.

Verses 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.

τελος, ους n end, conclusion,
termination

καυσις, εως f burning

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

Verse 7

γῆ γὰρ ἡ πιούσα τὸν ἐπ' αὐτῆς ἐρχόμενον
πολλάκις ὑετόν, καὶ τίκτουσα βοτάνην
εὐθετον ἐκείνοις δι' οὗς καὶ γεωργεῖται,
μεταλαμβάνει εὐλογίας ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ·

γη, γης f earth, land

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

πολλακις often

ὑετος, ου m rain

τικτω bear, produce

βοτανη, ης f vegetation, crop

εὐθετος, ον fit, suitable, useful

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

γεωργεω cultivate (of land)

μεταλαμβανω receive, share in

εὐλογια, ας f blessing, praise

Verse 8

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

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