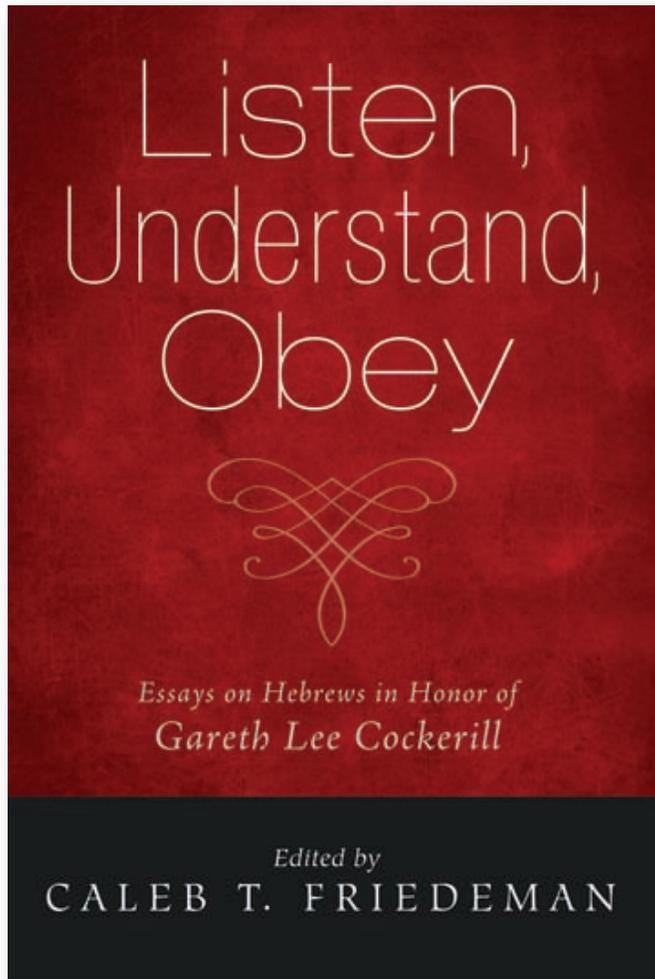


Listen, Understand, Obey

Essays on Hebrews in Honor of Gareth Lee Cockerill



Edited by
CALEB T. FRIEDEMANN

This volume brings together a diverse group of scholars, including biblical, systematic, and historical theologians, to honor Gareth Lee Cockerill, longtime professor of New Testament at Wesley Biblical Seminary (Jackson, MS) and distinguished scholar of the book of Hebrews. The essays focus on various aspects of Hebrews’ theology, ranging from the nature of “rest” in Hebrews to the interpretation of Hebrews in early Methodism. Readers will find resources to hear and comprehend Hebrews afresh and will be challenged to draw near to the throne of grace with confidence (Heb 4:16).

CALEB T. FRIEDEMANN is a PhD candidate in Biblical Theology—New Testament at Wheaton College (Wheaton, Illinois).

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
AS	<i>Asbury Seminarian</i>
ATJ	<i>Ashland Theological Journal</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BCOT	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BTCP	Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CC	Continental Commentaries
CGC	Contemporary Greek Theologians
CJT	<i>Canadian Journal of Theology</i>
CUASST	The Catholic University of America Studies in Sacred Theology
EBib	Etudes bibliques
EGGNT	Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
FAPC	Francis Asbury Press Commentary

x ABBREVIATIONS

FCNTECW	Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBLMS	Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTISup	Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplements
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>LQHR</i>	<i>London Quarterly and Holborn Review</i>
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NABPRDS	National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Dissertation Series
<i>NETS</i>	Pietersma, Albert, and Benjamin G. Wright, eds. <i>A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under that Title</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NPNF²</i>	<i>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2</i>
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NT	New Testament
NTC	New Testament Commentary

NTL	New Testament Library
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OT	Old Testament
OTP	Charlesworth, James H., ed. <i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . 2 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983–1985.
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
QR	<i>Quarterly Review</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
RNT	Reading the New Testament
SBET	<i>Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SMTS	Saint Mary's Theological Studies
SPS	Sacra Pagina Series
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
StBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPB	Studia Post-Biblica
TBl	<i>Theologische Blätter</i>
THOTC	Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary
TJ	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
VE	<i>Verbum et Ecclesia</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum neuen Testament

Introduction

IT IS MY PRIVILEGE to introduce this collection of essays in honor of Gareth Lee Cockerill, known to his friends and colleagues as Gary. Dr. Cockerill has spent his life serving the church—both in the United States and abroad—as a missionary and biblical scholar, and it is this life of faithful service that this volume seeks to honor. Dr. Cockerill is perhaps best known for his scholarship on Hebrews, which culminated in his *The Epistle to the Hebrews* in the New International Commentary on the New Testament series (2012). However, the primary mission field of his life has undoubtedly been his students at Wesley Biblical Seminary (WBS), where he has taught New Testament and made disciples for more than thirty years. It was at WBS that I first met Dr. Cockerill, initially as a colleague of my father's, and later as a professor. In addition to training me in the art of biblical exegesis, Dr. Cockerill was also instrumental in my decision to pursue doctoral work. I still have the email I received from him in November of my final year of seminary in which he encouraged me to pursue PhD work, and suggested that Wheaton College was the best place to do so. As I write this introduction from my study carrel in Wheaton's Buswell Library—now finishing my second year of doctoral work—I am reminded of the way that Dr. Cockerill has shaped not only my life, but the lives of so many students who now serve around the world as missionaries, laypersons, pastors, and scholars for the church of Jesus Christ.

The title of this volume—*Listen, Understand, Obey*—is one of the oft-repeated anthems of Dr. Cockerill's teaching. Former students will vividly recall Dr. Cockerill exclaiming, "Listen! Understand! Obey!" each word punctuated with pointed finger as the corresponding clip art appeared on the projector screen. For Dr. Cockerill, this phrase expressed a deeply-held conviction that the true goal of biblical interpretation is to live the text rather than to merely understand it. (As many of the contributors in this volume can testify, he has endeavored throughout his life to embody this belief and

to help others to do so.) The emphasis on *hearing* God's word is, of course, a product of his lifelong love for the book of Hebrews, which—somewhat uniquely in the NT canon—characterizes OT Scripture as divine speech.

The essays in this volume focus on Hebrews, Dr. Cockerill's primary area of research, and are written by a mixture of his collaborators in Hebrews studies, WBS colleagues, and former students (some of whom fall into more than one of those categories). After a brief tribute to Dr. Cockerill's life and ministry by longtime fellow WBS faculty member Matt Friedeman, the book opens with four essays that contribute to Hebrews proper: Rick Boyd examines the use of Ps 8 in Hebrews, Scott D. Mackie and Matt O'Reilly each consider present dimensions of salvation in Hebrews, and John C. Laansma presents a theological reading of Hebrews. Three essays follow that focus on Hebrews as it connects to other NT books: I explore the relationship between how Mark and Hebrews each portray the Son as climactic revelation, Amy L. Peeler investigates the filial foundation of ordination in Hebrews and other NT texts, and Carey B. Vinzant notes a common narrative arc in Hebrews, John, and Paul and considers its significance. The volume closes with two essays on Hebrews from systematic- and historical-theological perspectives: Thomas H. McCall discusses the submission of Christ in Heb 5:7 in dialogue with Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth, and Christopher T. Bounds explores Hebrews through the eyes of early Methodist theologians. We hope that this collection will serve as both a fitting honor to Dr. Cockerill and a contribution to the study of Hebrews.

A volume like this is always the product of many hands, and so I would like to extend my gratitude to those who have assisted in the process. I would first like to thank my father, Dr. Matt Friedeman, for assembling the initial contributors and providing advice at many points in the editing process. I am grateful to my mother, Mary, who graciously read over the manuscript and offered valuable suggestions. I would also like to extend my gratitude to each of the contributors for their hard work and for being so flexible on a tight editing schedule. Thanks are due to the editorial staff at Pickwick, particularly Matthew Wimer, Chris Spinks, and Brian Palmer, all of whom answered questions and assisted at various points along the way.

Caleb T. Friedeman
Wheaton, Illinois
April 2016

Gareth Lee Cockerill

A Tribute

MATT FRIEDEMANN

GARY COCKERILL HAS HAD a long and an outstanding career at Wesley Biblical Seminary. His passion for the classroom has been a hallmark of that service. Former students, now all over the world, love and admire him.

Dr. Cockerill keeps the “biblical” in Wesley Biblical Seminary. His passion for and insights of Scripture are profound and contagious.

—Dr. David Fry

Lead Pastor (Frankfort, Indiana) and Adjunct Professor at God’s Bible School and College

My first experience at WBS was Dr. Cockerill’s Hermeneutics class that I took one summer, and this set me on a new and positive trajectory for my life and ministry. Dr. Cockerill has had a profound influence on how I view Scripture and on how I interpret Scripture. I really appreciated how approachable and helpful he was as my teacher. I still deeply respect him as a person and as a scholar. I am grateful for his friendship to this day.

—Dr. Mark Bird

Professor of Systematic and Practical Theology, God’s Bible School and College

Dr. Cockerill always inspires me: considerate, scholarly, disciplined, forthright, fun, energetic, skilled, devout. But the greatest impact is from our first encounter at WBS. While visiting in their home he reveled in taking our three year-old son to the

park, revealing the mix of scholar and joyful servant that endears him to us all.

—Randy Huff
Interim Pastor (North Pole, Alaska)

He loves Jesus. This one thing comes shining through whether in the classroom or over a cup of coffee. His lasting impact in my life comes in hoping to love Jesus as much as he does.

—Matt Marshall
Chaplain and Professor at the Faculty of Theology, Southern Africa
Nazarene University¹

This is where Gary Cockerill has left his greatest mark—in the hearts of many hundreds of Wesley students as he dutifully taught New Testament and lived his life among these young disciples. His example of academic excellence, personal piety, commitment to the Great Commission, and devoted family life has shaped a generation of pastors and scholars.

TESTIMONY

Gary Cockerill was born in northern Virginia, in the Washington D.C. area, to a godly Wesleyan pastoral couple who kept Scripture in the forefront of their home. Many notable Christian leaders and missionaries passed through the Cockerill household during Gary's childhood, and these encounters helped expose him to a Great Commission worldview and lifestyle. Cockerill committed his life to the Lord at a young age and solidified that commitment during his teenage years when he sensed with increasing certainty that his life would be spent in ministry.

STUDENT

Cockerill received his B.A. from Central Wesleyan College in 1966 and the Master of Divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary in 1969. He earned the Master of Theology degree from Union Theological Seminary in 1973. While a student he engaged in both academic study and practical ministry as he visited house to house, prayed for those in nursing homes, shared the gospel in prisons, traveled as part of gospel teams, and served as an intern and supply pastor. This blend of academic life and hands-on application would serve him well in the days ahead, both internationally and

1. Quotes from personal correspondence, February 15–18, 2016.

in the American classroom. His studies at Union culminated in a PhD in Biblical Studies with a dissertation that would forecast a lifelong interest in a particular book of the Bible: “The Melchizedek Christology in Heb. 7:1–28.”

MISSIONARY

West Africa has always been on the mind and heart of this New Testament professor, and his missionary experiences are frequently referenced in his lectures, writings, and conversations. After seminary Gary met his wife Rosa, who had served as a nurse in Sierra Leone and planned to return there for further service. The young couple decided that the Lord would have them marry and go back to West Africa. Gary, Rosa, and their daughters spent three terms of missionary service in Sierra Leone, from 1969–1972, from 1976–1979, and again in 1981–1984. He served as chaplain and Bible teacher for the Kamakwie Wesleyan Secondary School and helped to build a dispensary where his wife Rosa, a registered nurse anesthetist, ministered to the medical needs of the people. Cockerill ministered through evangelism, discipleship, promoting stewardship, and counseling local pastors. He also assisted in translating the New Testament into the local dialect of the Limba language. When he arrived at Wesley Biblical Seminary immediately after his first term of missionary service, he was initially appointed Assistant Professor of Biblical Literature and *Missiological* Studies. Cockerill’s work in Sierra Leone paved the way for his 2002 book *Guidebook for Pilgrims to the Heavenly City*, in which Cockerill uses his career-long specialty in Hebrews to disciple believers of Muslim background.

HUSBAND AND FATHER

Gary Cockerill met Rosa Bishop in 1970. Their two older daughters, Ginny and Allene, were born on the mission field. A third daughter, Kate, arrived while they served at Wesley Biblical Seminary. The Cockerills took seriously the scriptural mandate to diligently teach their children God’s word (Deut 6:4–9). Today all three of their daughters are devoted Christians: Ginny has recently served at a Christian college and today works in higher education in Alabama, Allene teaches English and Latin at the secondary level, and Kate serves as a missionary in Central Asia. The latter two are married and are nurturing their children in the love of Christ; all are strongly committed to the church.

WESLEY BIBLICAL SEMINARY

Cockerill has served as Wesley's premier professor in New Testament for three and a half decades and in briefer stints as Vice President for Academic Affairs. His legacy is found in his passionate commitment to the inductive approach to Scripture and the use of proper exegetical methodology. He has been able to draw upon insights from multiple disciplines—rhetorical criticism, canonical criticism, and intertextuality—to enrich Bible study methodology. He is experienced in teaching Greek, knowledgeable in Hebrew, and skilled in showing students how to use the original languages to enhance the inductive process. He has taught the whole array of New Testament courses at Wesley, as well as courses in biblical theology, hermeneutics, and the biblical basis for Christian holiness. In all these disciplines, he exhibits a passionate commitment to the church's mission to communicate the gospel cross-culturally.

SCHOLAR

Cockerill has spent much of his academic career pursuing a keen interest in the book of Hebrews. His capstone academic achievement, after numerous journal articles and academic presentations, was *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (2012) in The New International Commentary on the New Testament series. This publication replaced an earlier volume of the same title by eminent New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce. Cockerill's commitment to the value of theological education resulted in *Christian Faith in the Old Testament: The Bible of the Apostles* (2014), which compiled in a single volume many of his most incisive classroom insights. Also helpful to lay and clergy was *The Wesley Bible: A Personal Study Bible for Holy Living*, for which he served as New Testament editor.

Beyond these volumes he has contributed numerous chapters for books, written extensively for Sunday school curriculum, and produced articles and book reviews for the *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, *Tyndale Bulletin*, *Missiology: A Review*, *The Evangelical Quarterly*, *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, *Interpretation*, *Review of Biblical Literature*, *Ashland Theological Journal*, and the *Asbury Seminarian*. He is a member of the Evangelical Theological Society, the Institute for Biblical Research, and the Society of Biblical Literature. Further, he has taught concentrated courses or presented lecture series at Ohio Christian University, Patrick Henry College, Kingswood University, Oklahoma Wesleyan University, God's Bible School, and the Henry

Center for Theological Inquiry at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He has also taught at numerous camps and conferences and has been the keynote speaker at the Japan Holiness Association and the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone.

DISCIPLE-MAKER

Wesley Biblical Seminary has, from its earliest days, endorsed small group discipleship as a leading ideal and principal practice for her professors. All students were required to participate in a group, and all professors were expected to lead one. Cockerill's groups were always memorable and a favorite among the students. Most often, professor and students would decamp to a nearby restaurant and discuss personal challenges, disappointments and opportunities over coffee. Through the years, this simple method of what has sometimes been referred to as "life-to-life transference" impacted scores of students and stands as a strong testimony to Cockerill's consummate grasp of what it means to be a Christian scholar. For him, it was never enough to merely write high-brow academic tomes and papers, nor was it sufficient to offer outstanding classroom presentations. Throughout his career, Cockerill invested in his students and was the quintessential example in counseling them one-on-one both academically and personally.

CONCLUSION

As Gary Cockerill's longest serving colleague on the Wesley Biblical Seminary faculty I can attest that our seminary has never known a more passionate, impactful, hard-working, life-changing, and disciple-making professor. There could hardly be a more influential professor in the nation once family, scholarship, classroom performance, and one-on-one discipleship opportunities are considered. Jesus said, "Make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19); Gary Cockerill has, indeed, fulfilled that commission through service abroad, family discipleship, formidable scholarship, and student inspiration.

The Kingdom is a better place because of God's work through Gary Cockerill. His ears will most certainly be privileged one day to hear, "Well done . . ."

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1

The Use of Psalm 8 in Hebrews

RICK BOYD

I MET DR. GARETH Lee Cockerill at a 2006 conference on Hebrews and Theology in St. Andrews, Scotland as I was beginning to prepare for my doctoral thesis on Hebrews. Following the opening morning session, as we moved en masse toward the cafeteria, Gary came up to me, asked who I was, and offered to buy me lunch. I got to know Gary that day because that is the kind of person he is. He manifests the very character of Christ, taking the initiative and offering grace to those who are strangers to him. Gary and I became friends that day because he put his arm around me both literally and metaphorically, and we now serve together as colleagues at Wesley Biblical Seminary.

Because of our close association through the book of Hebrews, I was honored to be asked to contribute a chapter in this tribute to Gary, specifically related to our common interest in the pastor's message.¹ It is with profound gratitude that I dedicate this study to my dean, mentor, and brother, Dr. Gareth Lee Cockerill.

INTRODUCTION

Hebrews is generally regarded as containing the most sophisticated use of Greek in the NT. The author's craftsmanship is evident at every turn.

1. Cockerill refers to the author of Hebrews as "the pastor" (e.g., *Hebrews*, 2) because of the book's sermonic character.

2 LISTEN, UNDERSTAND, OBEY

Included among his² mastery of the Greek is his use of Ps 8 in the second chapter. This is a much debated passage, specifically as it pertains to the interpretation of the appropriated psalm. The key question is whether the author uses Ps 8 christologically, anthropologically, or perhaps both. The answer to this question has repercussions related to what may be the central theme of the book, and it is the subject of this brief essay.

In the following pages I will consider the use of Ps 8 in Hebrews in terms of its various hermeneutical emphases. I will begin by surveying the interpretation of Ps 8 in early Judaism and the NT with an eye to Hebrews, and will go on to argue that Hebrews' interpretation and appropriation of the psalm is eschatological, teleological, and filial in nature, involving both Christ and humanity. I will then conclude with some reflections on the importance of the author's hermeneutical approach and its implications for the interpretation of Hebrews and the resulting Christian praxis.

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION OF PSALM 8

Until the first century, Ps 8 generally had been understood as a reflection on creation, although as Mark Stephen Kinzer notes, "there are few explicit references to Ps 8 in ancient Jewish literature outside the rabbinic and Christian canon."³ The psalm was appropriated in celebration of the exalted position the human had been given by the creator,⁴ a position as ruler of

2. The recognition of the author as male is dependent on the masculine form of the participle διηγούμενον (11:32). See Attridge, *Hebrews*, 5; Cockerill, *Hebrews*, 2; Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 20; Johnson, *Hebrews*, 41; Koester, *Hebrews*, 45; Witherington, *Letters*, 22.

3. See Kinzer, "All Things," 12. Kinzer's focus is primarily first-century Jewish and Christian appropriation and interpretation of Psalm 8. Two documents suggest that Ps 8 was interpreted as a creation psalm: see *Sib. Or.* fragment 3.13–14 and 1QS 3.17–18 (both possibly dating to the second century BC). Additionally, possible allusions to Ps 8 and creation can be found in 4 *Ezra* 6.46 (for the dating to AD 100, see *OTP* 1:520) and 3 *En.* 5.10 (for the dating with connection to traditions in line with developments already begun in the Maccabean era, see *ibid.*, 1:225–29; Evans, *Noncanonical*, 20–25). For other perspectives regarding the relationship between Ps 8 and creation, see Goldingay, *Psalms*, 159–61; Grogan, *Psalms*, 53–54; Kraus, *Psalms*, 179–80, 185; Louis, *Theology*, 57, 101–8, 121; Pietersma, "Text-Production," 487–501, esp. 490, 495; Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 59–112, esp. 72.

4. See Craigie, *Psalms*, 106. Craigie asserts that the psalm "may be classified as a *psalm of creation*," but adds, "there can be no certainty whether or not the psalm was designated in the first instance for use in the cult, in some specific act of worship." See also Kinzer, "All Things," 38, 40–41.

God's creation,⁵ specifically as ruler of the animals, birds, and sea creatures (8:7–9).⁶

However, in the Second Temple period the interpretation of Ps 8 began to shift toward an eschatological hope related to the anticipated restoration of Israel and a “second Adam.”⁷ Israel, emerging from the exile and in the midst of varying degrees of oppression by other nations, was looking for God's promise of the restoration of his people, and Ps 8 spoke to that expectation. Israel waited with increased anticipation for the coming Messiah who would be the instrument to realize the promises God had made to his people. Psalm 8 reinforced that hope by referring to the glory with which “Adam” was once crowned, a glory to be restored in the coming days.⁸

This hermeneutical shift in the understanding of Ps 8 may have contributed an eschatological influence on both the interpretation of the psalm in first century Judaism⁹ and the appropriation of the text within the NT church. One branch of Jewish interpretation saw the “second Adam” as Moses,¹⁰ while another was focused on a variety of individual figures thought to be addressed in the psalm (e.g., Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Samson, Elijah, Jonah, and the children of Israel),¹¹ but Christian interpretation identified Jesus as the main subject of the psalm.¹²

5. See Mowinckel, *Worship*, 85. Mowinckel refers to Ps 8 as providing a “graphic and epic description of one of Yahweh's great works—particularly of the creation.” Mowinckel focuses on the use of Ps 8 in the cult of Israel.

6. The versification of the Old Testament texts used in this essay will follow that of the LXX and not the Hebrew (MT) or English text.

7. Kinzer, “All Things,” 11. Kinzer attempts to establish a hermeneutical foothold over against others who deny messianic Jewish interpretation of Ps 8. See Westcott, *Hebrews*, 42: “[Psalm 8] is not, and has never been accounted by the Jews to be, directly Messianic.” See also Kistemaker, *Citations*, 29. Nevertheless, the eschatological anticipation of a “new creation” can be found in texts as early as Isa 65:17–25. The idea of a future and ultimate new creation was introduced by the time of the Second Temple period and reflected in texts that date as early as 100 BC to AD 100 (*OTP* 2:252, 299). One of these texts associates Adam with the people of God, referring to them as “the holy people” (*Apoc. Mos.* 13.2–6), and it refers to a future dominion of Adam (39.2–3). Another echoes the language of Ps 8 in an eschatological sense (*L.A.B.* 13.8–9; 26.13). For more, see Kinzer, “All Things,” 96–113.

8. See Pate, *Glory*. Regarding Israel in particular, see Anderson, “Exaltation,” 83–110, esp. 108–10; Kinzer, “All Things,” 96.

9. See Kinzer, “All Things,” 96–149.

10. The association of the “second Adam” with Moses, especially in reference to Moses and the giving of the Torah at Sinai, is found in rabbinic literature with some traditions likely going back to the Second Temple period. E.g., *Gen. Rab.* 19:7. See Kinzer, “All Things,” 150–208.

11. *Midr. Pss.* 8.7 (on Ps 8:5–10).

12. See Matt 21:16; 1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:22.

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Additionally, Ps 8 was being coupled with Ps 109, with both psalms being interpreted messianically,¹³ to explain the exaltation of Jesus. The author of Hebrews, by utilizing both psalms, seizes the opportunity to address a believing community in need of reassurance and exhortation to persevere in the faith. Psalm 8, once understood in terms of a reflection on creation and the glorious position God gave to humanity in the beginning, was positioned to fit into the argument of Hebrews by pointing to the eschatological purpose of the human: a filial relationship with God.

HEBREWS: ESCHATOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF PSALM 8

The opening statement of Hebrews declares that, unlike times in the past, God has spoken eschatologically in the Christ-event.¹⁴ The author identifies that communication as having been accomplished ἐν υἱῷ. Essentially God has given his perfect revelation “in son,” not only in the person of Jesus his Son,¹⁵ but also in the form of *sonship* and with the provision of a filial relationship for the believer.¹⁶ This becomes evident as the opening declaration is unpacked through the rest of the epistle with references to believers as sons (2:10; 12:5–8), brothers of the Son (2:11–12, which establishes future references to believers as brothers; 2:17; 3:1, 12; 12:19; 13:22), and heirs (1:14; 6:12, 17; 9:15).

As the author builds his argument, he begins to particularize¹⁷ his opening general statement (1:1–4) by establishing the superiority of the filial relationship to God over the relationship of angels to God.¹⁸ Chapter

13. See Chester, *Messiah*, 35–37. See also Attridge, *Hebrews*, 72.

14. See among others Attridge, *Hebrews*, 39; Johnson, *Hebrews*, 63–64; O’Brien, *Hebrews*, 50.

15. Hebrews deals with sonship on two levels: The author makes reference to Jesus’ ontological sonship (cf. 1:2–13; 5:8), and he also refers to Jesus as son in the flesh (2:11–14, 17; 5:7–8). The second level is the primary concern of the author, who presents Jesus, the ontological Son, as having become perfected as son in the flesh (2:10; 5:7–9; 7:28). This second level incorporates believers who are also called “sons” (2:10; 12:5–8). With this in mind, I will use the lowercase “son” to refer to sons and sonship in the flesh, whereas I will use the uppercase “Son” to refer exclusively to Jesus as the ontological Son of God.

16. See Boyd, “Sonship.” The anarthrous use of υἱός in 1:2a is taken to be qualitative and foundational as the central theme of the book.

17. Particularization is a term used for a semantic structural relationship characterized by the movement from a general statement to the unpacking of the particulars of that statement. See Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 100–103.

18. See Boyd, “Sonship,” 62–65.

one evinces the superiority of sonship and concludes by describing angels as “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will [τοὺς μέλλοντας] inherit salvation” (1:14). The author’s use of μέλλω with reference to the heirs of salvation suggests an urgency that recalls the opening eschatological statement about God speaking in the Christ-event. These are the last days and the heirs are about to inherit salvation. This is further strengthened in 2:1 with a causal warning: “Therefore [Διὰ τοῦτο]”—a reference to the nearness of inheriting salvation—“we must pay the most careful attention . . . to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.”¹⁹ Once again the author calls the recipients’ attention to the opening words of the homily, to the things spoken eschatologically by God,²⁰ the form and content of which demand the closest of attention.

The author continues the warning by contrasting what was spoken through angels (2:2)²¹ to what was spoken through the Lord (2:3). This is referred to as “so great a salvation” and one from which those who neglect it will not be able to escape. The contrast between God’s former revelation and His eschatological revelation ἐν υἱῷ is unmistakable.

The final element the author employs before his use of Ps 8 comes in 2:5 as he prepares to introduce the quotation. The author returns to the use of μέλλω (1:14) in referring to the world about which he has not only been speaking, but which he is about to further elucidate through his use of Ps 8. This is the “*about-to-be* world,”²² again suggesting an eschatological realm.²³ The author describes this realm as not being subjected to angels, continuing the contrast between son and angels that began in 1:4. According to 1:4, this one in whom God has spoken eschatologically “became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.”²⁴ The author uses the rest of the first chapter to substantiate his claim that the *son* is superior to *angels*. In 2:5 the author implies that the eschatological realm he is

19. The Greek verb παραρῶμεν connotes the idea of being carried away, once again emphasizing the urgency of the situation.

20. See Boyd, “Sonship,” 65–66.

21. This is an apparent reference to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai (Acts 7:38, 53; Gal 3:19). This would be consistent with the revelation God gave to “the fathers” in many parts and many ways long ago (1:1). *Ibid.*, 46.

22. My translation.

23. Note also that the use of μέλλω connects the heirs of salvation (1:14) with the eschatological realm described by the quote from Ps 8 (2:5–8).

24. Actually, the pronoun used is αὐτούς and not αὐτῶν suggesting a superiority of essential relationship and not just name. This suggests the name inherited is “son,” a name superior to angels, as the author goes on to explicate.

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about to describe using Ps 8 has been subjected, not to *angels*, but to the one whose name has just been proven superior, the heir of all things (1:2): *Son*.

In the actual quote from Ps 8, the author advances his argument regarding the superiority of “son” with what Kinzer calls an “ingenious” move:²⁵ He appropriates the words *βραχύ τι* temporally over against the traditional interpretation referring to the comparative position of the human to heavenly beings. Instead of understanding Ps 8:6 positionally in line with the Hebrew text (“You have made him *a little* lower than . . .”), the author of Hebrews makes use of the flexibility of the Greek to add a temporal element in turning the use of the psalm into an eschatologically hopeful assertion: “You have made him *for a little while* lower than . . .”²⁶ This shift is subtle but vital to his argument regarding what God has done in speaking *ἐν υἱῷ*. In his use of Ps 8 the author has taken a text reflecting on creation and turned it into a picture of the eschatological realm God has now provided in the Christ-event.

HEBREWS: TELEOLOGICAL/FILIAL INTERPRETATION OF PSALM 8

The key issue in understanding the use of Ps 8 in Hebrews is determining whether the author is applying the psalm anthropologically, christologically, or both, and the scholarly community remains divided on the matter.²⁷ The implied indirect object of 2:5, the one to whom the about-to-be realm is subjected, is the focus of the Ps 8 quotation. This object is pivotal

25. Kinzer, “All Things,” 288. Kinzer suggests that the author of Hebrews is utilizing “creative exegesis . . . rather than [depending on] a received tradition.”

26. The NIV translates this, “You made them a little lower than the angels.”

27. The published material on this issue has continued to increase as evidenced by the advocates for the various positions in the current millennium alone. For an anthropological interpretation, see Blomberg, “Jesus,” 88–99. For a christological interpretation, see Cockerill, *Hebrews*, 126–35; Guthrie and Quinn, “Discourse,” 235–46, esp. 246; Lee, *Messiah*, 221–23; Mason, *Priest*, 19; Pietersma, “Text-Production,” 494–95; Thompson, *Hebrews*, 60; Witherington, *Letters*, 141. For a dual anthropological-christological interpretation, see Caneday, “World,” 28–39, esp. 35; De Wet, “Messianic,” 113–25; deSilva, *Perseverance*, 108–10; Gäbel, *Kulttheologie*, 134–44; Gheorghita, *Role*, 17, 63; Hahn, *Kinship*, 284–88; Isaacs, *Reading*, 41; Johnson, *Hebrews*, 89–92; Karrer, *Brief*, 169; Keener, *Canonical*, 169–82, esp. 179; Koester, *Hebrews*, 220–21; Mackie, *Eschatology*, 45–46; Marshall, “Soteriology,” 253–77, esp. 257–61; McCrudden, *Solidarity*, 45–49; Mitchell, *Hebrews*, 68–69; Rascher, *Schriftauslegung*, 53–56; Rhee, *Faith*, 82–84; Schenck, *Cosmology*, 54–59; Schunack, *Hebräerbrief*, 31–32; Steyn, “Observations,” 493–514, esp. 510; Westfall, *Discourse*, 101–3, 111–12; Whitlark, *Fidelity*, 143.

in determining the use of Ps 8 in Hebrews, and that object involves not only the Son but sons.

The contrast the author presents between “son” and angels in 1:4–14²⁸ continues in 2:5 following the brief interjected exhortation for “us” to hold to the things having been heard (2:1), a likely reference to 1:2a and God speaking to “us” ἐν υἱῷ.²⁹ After establishing the superiority of son to angels in 1:4–14, the author urges the recipients not to neglect so great a salvation (2:3), but to hold to what has been heard even more closely. The author then substantiates the urgent warning: “It is not to angels that [God] has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking.” This statement prepares for the use of the quotation from Ps 8 in 2:6–8a.

The use of ἀγγέλοις in 2:5 is anarthrous and may point to the quality of angels in their relationship to God over against that of “son,” which has been clearly proven to be superior beginning in 1:4. It seems evident from the contrast in 1:4–14 between angels and “son” that the about-to-be realm is subjected to “son,” but which son is intended by the author? Is it the Son who is seated at the right hand of the Father (1:13), or does the son to whom all things are subjected (2:8a) include the heirs of salvation (1:14), the *many sons* who follow their pioneer into glory (2:10)?

One important consideration often overlooked in the debate concerns 2:6b: “What is mankind [ἄνθρωπος] that you are mindful of them, a son of man [υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου] that you care for him?” Some who support a christological interpretation of Ps 8 in Hebrews draw support from the other two NT passages that appropriate Ps 8 (1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:22) in combination with Ps 109 (1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20). In both passages the interpretation is clearly christological,³⁰ perhaps influencing those scholars toward a christological interpretation in Hebrews. The fact that Heb 2:6b is the *only* use of Ps 8:5 in the NT is not sufficiently appreciated by many scholars with respect to the reference to ἄνθρωπος as being more than a reference to the incarnation. Hebrews *intentionally* goes beyond the other christological uses of Ps 8:7 by incorporating Ps 8:5–7. The other NT occurrences of Ps 8:7 lack direct reference to ἄνθρωπος and, therefore, can easily be interpreted as exclusively christological. The situation in Hebrews is different. Although the author

28. Note the filial reference in 1:14 to those about to *inherit* salvation. See Boyd, “Sonship,” 62–63.

29. The author uses ἡμῖν in 1:2a and ἡμᾶς in 2:1.

30. See Guthrie and Quinn, “Analysis,” 237–38; Lee, *Messiah*, 223; Pietersma, “Text-Production,” 494; Thompson, *Hebrews*, 61; Witherington, *Letters*, 141. See also Kistemaker, *Citations*, 29; März, “Zeit,” 29–42, esp. 35; Vanhoye, *Situation*, 303. The common concept linking Psalm 8 and Ps 109 is the subjugation “underneath the feet” of the subject of interest (πάντα in Ps 8:7; τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου in Ps 109:1).

makes it clear that Jesus is the only one we see fulfilling the psalm (2:9a), yet he also refers to Jesus as the “pioneer of [the] salvation” of many sons (2:10).³¹ Jesus, in fulfilling the psalm to a degree (crowned with glory and honor following a brief time of being positionally subordinate to angels), is also the trailblazer (cf. 12:2; 6:19–20) for other sons and daughters to follow into glory. With the unique reference to humanity in 2:6b,³² serious consideration must be given to including other sons in the interpretation of 2:5 as well as 2:6–8.

Another significant factor must be considered involving the interpretation of Heb 2:5–8. If the author’s use of Ps 8 should be interpreted anthropologically *in any way*, the reference to the son having been appointed heir of all things in 1:2b must be reconciled with 2:8 (“you have put everything under their feet [τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ]”) and the original indirect object of that statement, ἄνθρωπος (2:6). Unless Jesus alone is given reign over creation, the domain *originally* intended for humanity according to the traditional reading of Ps 8, the interpreter must reconcile the two statements in Hebrews having to do with God granting authority over all things. Is it the *Son* in whom God has spoken eschatologically in 1:2, or *humanity* who is made lower than angels “for a little while” (2:8)?

Those who interpret the use of Ps 8 christologically have no problem with reconciling these two statements. Their solution is simple: The heir of all things is Jesus. With that interpretation he would be the only one to whom God has subjected the about-to-be realm, which simplifies the need for reconciling 1:2 and 2:8. The heir of all things, by God’s appointment, is the one to whom all things are subjected: Jesus. The use of Ps 109:1 (Heb 1:13) could also support this interpretation since Jesus is seated at the right hand of God, a position of authority, until his enemies are placed under his feet.

However, the context (1:4–14) of that quotation of Ps 109:1 (1:13) is the contrast between angels and *Son*.³³ As *Son*, not as Jesus or as Christ, he takes

31. The NIV translates this “many sons and daughters.” However, due to the specific emphasis on υἱός in 1:2a and elsewhere, the term “many sons” has particular relevance.

32. Some scholars among those who interpret Hebrews’ use of Ps 8 christologically argue for a variant reading, Τίς, at the beginning of the quote instead of the preferred reading, Τί ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος. They argue that the translation should read, “Who is the human that you remember him . . .” and they point to Christ who fulfils the psalm. This argument is largely rejected by the academy with but a few exceptions. See Braun, *Hebräer*, 53; Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 148; Leschert, *Foundations*, 102–3; Zuntz, *Text*, 48–49.

33. Hubert James Keener refers to “one motif [that] dominates substantial portions of the book, including the section within which Psalm 8 is cited (Heb 1:5–2:18): the motif of Jesus’ superiority in comparison with figures respected within Judaism” (Keener, *Canonical*, 172). Yet Jesus is shown to be superior to angels *as son* (1:5–13),

his seat at the right hand of God. Furthermore, a christological interpretation with Jesus as heir of all things fails to consider adequately the reference to *ἄνθρωπος* in the Ps 8 quotation that is unique in the NT and purposeful in Hebrews. The author of Hebrews is very careful about his appropriation of the Old Testament. For example, he leaves out *καὶ κατέστησας αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου* (Ps 8:7a) in his quote of Ps 8:5–7. Why would the author excise half of a verse (Ps 8:7a) that simply supports the other half (8:7b), which he quotes? The quotation of Ps 8:5–7 is continuous with the exception of 8:7a. The exclusion of Ps 8:7a could be because of the reference in Heb 1:10–12 to the works of God’s hands perishing (*ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου εἰσὶν οἱ οὐρανοί· αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται*). If they are going to perish, they cannot be part of the future dominion of the son and must be left out of the Ps 8 quotation if it is to be understood eschatologically. Crowning the son with glory and honor and placing him over works that will perish is inconsistent with the author’s eschatology. The author of Hebrews is purposeful in building his argument with his use of the Old Testament.

An exclusively christological interpretation also marginalizes the references to other sons in 2:10–11 and 12:5–11 in their relationship to God and creation. The author makes it clear that those who are being sanctified are sons (2:10) and brothers of the Son (2:11–12). Additionally, it attaches little importance to the reference to God’s unchanging purpose (6:17), a reference which appears to be a character issue. According to 6:13–18, God wanted to show Abraham that his purpose does not change *because* his character does not change. God is faithful to his word, specifically his word of promise. Considering the immutability of God’s nature and purpose in light of the traditional interpretation of Ps 8 (looking back to Gen 1:26–28 and creation), a problem arises for those with a christological-only view of Hebrews’ use of Ps 8. If God’s purpose is unchanging, what happened to God’s purpose for humanity at creation? Has it been completely abandoned? Furthermore, following the Ps 8 quote in 2:6b–8a, the author writes, “yet at present we do see everything subject to them”³⁴ (*νῦν δὲ οὐπω ὀρώμεν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα*, 2:8b). This statement must denote humanity since the referents of the pronouns in 2:7 (*αὐτόν*) and 2:8 (*αὐτοῦ* and *αὐτῷ*)

superior to Moses *as son* (3:5–6), and superior to all other priests *as son* (7:28). The eschatological revelation of God is superior to the former revelation because Jesus is superior to prophets *as son* (1:1–2a).

34. Once again the NIV translation takes liberties by softening the translation of *δὲ οὐπω* (but not yet . . .) and translating the singular pronoun *αὐτῷ* with the plural “them.”

are ἄνθρωπος³⁵/υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου.³⁶ The time is apparently coming in the about-to-be realm for all things to be subjected to *humanity*.³⁷ Simon Kistemaker makes the observation that “the conclusio [in 2:9] is introduced by τὸν δέ, *which at all times* [in Hebrews] denotes a change of subject.”³⁸ Kistemaker asserts that the subject of 2:9, Jesus, is a different subject than αὐτοῦ of 2:8.

If indeed the focus of Ps 8 in Heb 2:6–8 is humanity, then Jesus, the one who fulfills Ps 8, crowned with glory and honor, must be the representative human in view.³⁹ He is the one who realizes the eschatological destiny portrayed in the psalm. Furthermore, according to 2:10, he is the *pioneer* of the salvation of *many sons*, having led them into the same glory. Jesus has fulfilled, manifested, and inaugurated the realization of the destiny and purpose for humanity: Being crowned with glory and honor.

Jesus was crowned following the suffering of death which, according to 2:10, was part of his being perfected. The realization of the eschatological realm as presented in Ps 8 involves both the death and the coronation of the *pioneer* of many sons, the one who has been perfected *as son* (7:28).⁴⁰ The perfection of the son culminates in the crown of glory and honor—for this reason he has become superior to the angels (1:4).⁴¹ No longer is he lower

35. See Bruce, *Hebrews*, 75; Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, 1:108; Moffatt, *Critical*, 22–23; Westcott, *Hebrews*, 45. See also Boyd, “Sonship,” 71.

36. Few scholars see the reference to “son of man” in 2:6b (the only use of the expression “son of man” in Hebrews) as being explicitly messianic. Most take it as a use of synonymous parallelism with ἄνθρωπος. This position is reinforced by the fact that “son of man” is embedded in an Old Testament quote and, although Ps 8:7 was understood by the first-century church as messianic as evidenced by its use in 1 Cor 15 and Eph 1, neither use incorporates the phrase “son of man.” See Attridge, *Hebrews*, 71; Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 27; Cockerill, *Wesleyan*, 59; Hughes, *Commentary*, 85; Isaacs, *Hebrews*, 40; Koester, *Hebrews*, 215–16; Lane, *Hebrews*, 1:47; Mitchell, *Hebrews*, 65; Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 23; O’Brien, *Hebrews*, 95–96.

37. See Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, 108, 112, 113. Delitzsch writes, “God has destined man to be lord over all things, [and] this destination has not yet been realized in mankind in general . . . The dominion [is] assigned (Ps. viii) by God to man [sic] . . . our ultimate destination . . . which [Jesus has] already entered Himself.” See also De Wet, “Messianic,” 116, 124–25; Keener, *Canonical*, 179; Leschert, *Foundations*, 107, 113–14; Pickup, “Midrashic,” 363–65.

38. Kistemaker, *Psalms*, 105; italics mine.

39. See Caird, “Just Men,” 89–103, esp. 93–94; Caird, “Son,” 1:73–81, esp. 1:76–78; Hurst, “Christology,” 151–64, esp. 152. Hurst writes of Caird that “he taught passionately that Heb. 2 points to the destiny of mankind [sic], which he also felt is the overall theme (2:5) of the epistle.” See also Hurst, *Background*, 110–11.

40. The identity of the one in whom God has spoken eschatologically (1:2a), through the quotation of Ps 8, is that of “son.” Only at 2:9 is the son revealed by name: Jesus. It is Jesus, *as son*, who is perfected (2:10). Cf. 5:8–9; 7:28.

41. It is noteworthy that 2:9 refers to τὸ πάθημα (singular) τοῦ θανάτου, yet in 2:10

than angels. The “little while” is over, and he has not only entered into the eschatological realm, but he has pioneered that way for many sons to follow.⁴² He has reached the goal intended for humanity: Perfected sonship.⁴³

The author appears to be suggesting that what God intended in the beginning, and the subject of reflection by the psalmist in Ps 8:5–7 (omitting 8:7a) regarding God’s grace given to all of humanity, is sonship. The grace of God, which was initially referred to in the context of creation, is, in Jesus, presented as redemption (Heb 2:9; 9:12, 15⁴⁴) and reformation (9:10). The Son reaches the destiny God intended for humanity from the beginning and leads other sons as pioneer of their salvation.⁴⁵

If the proposed solution is correct, then the reference to the son being appointed by God as heir of all things (1:2) has more to do with reaching the purposed destiny of humanity than his unique and eternal position as the one and only Son of God. The son in whom God has spoken is appointed heir because he has pioneered and perfected the faith (12:2).⁴⁶ He has become son in the way God designed for humanity and, therefore, reaches the destiny God intended for humanity, becoming heir of all things as God purposed for humanity. The filial relationship God intended all along is what God spoke ἐν υἱῷ in the Christ-event, according to the author of Hebrews.⁴⁷

Jesus is perfected διὰ παθημάτων (plural). This suggests the perfection takes place over a much larger span of life than the cross. Cf. 2:18; 5:7–9 (which also includes the plural ἀφ’ ὧν ἔπαθεν).

42. The term “sons” is borne out of the text. No evidence exists of any gender exclusion among those of faith. The expression “sons and daughters” could just as easily be used, as it is in the NIV.

43. See Schenck, *Cosmology*, 51–77, esp. 71–72. Schenck writes, “In Hebrews, something is perfected when it has attained its appropriate status within the purposes of God . . . perfection is by definition final.” See also Boyd, “Sonship,” 129–46.

44. Note the connection in 9:15 between redemption (ἀπολύτρωσιν) and sonship (τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τῆς αἰωνίου κληρονομίας) through the mediation of Christ in the new covenant (διαθήκης καινῆς μεσίτης ἐστίν). See Boyd, “Sonship,” 194–97, for more.

45. The keys to understanding this reference to the destiny of humanity are found in 2:5 (the about-to-be realm), 2:6 (the inclusion of ἄνθρωπος in the quotation of Ps 8), and the temporal use of βραχύ τι interpreted as “for a little while” (2:7). See Kinzer, “All Things,” 287–96. Kinzer concludes that the unique temporal use of Ps 8 by the writer of Hebrews is “ingenious” with respect to the eschatological destiny of humanity. It is clear, however, that it is only “sons” who realize this destiny, based in part on Heb 2:10–11. The sons of 2:10 follow their pioneer, Jesus, the son whom believers see crowned with glory and honor (2:9). See also France, “Expositor,” 245–76, esp. 262.

46. Note the articular use of faith, τῆς πίστεως, coupled with the second use of ἀρχηγός (2:10; 12:2).

47. See Rissi, *Theologie*, 45. Rissi, in reference to 1:1–2, writes, “das Kommen des Sohnes den Unterschied der Zeiten der göttlichen Offenbarungen markiert. Im Unterschied zu den Offenbarungsträgern der Zeit vor seinem Erscheinen spricht Gott

Filiation is only perfected, however, because of the suffering of death (2:9). The destiny is reached through the perfect completion of the flesh and blood (2:14; 5:7) life of the son.

The realization of God's purpose for humanity is perfect sonship, crowned with glory and honor.⁴⁸ God has subjected the about-to-be realm to the perfected son, not to angels. Furthermore, the perfected son is the one who is leading other sons (his "brothers" according to 2:11–12) to that very destiny (2:10), the glory of perfected sonship, a new and living relationship with God as Father.

Sonship in the flesh is experienced in an arena where the son is *lower* than angels for a little while, yet *only* for a little while (βραχύ τι). The ultimate relationship that the eternal Son, who has taken on flesh, has entered into and inaugurated is perfected sonship. Sonship begun in the flesh must be completed in the flesh.⁴⁹ It must be perfected and reach the goal intended for the flesh. This kind of sonship is superior to angels, something God designed for the human and realized initially by Jesus, according to the author's use of Ps 8 in Heb 2:6–8 and his temporal interpretation of βραχύ τι. The perfected son realizes the destiny God planned for ἄνθρωποι (2:6–9) but only those who are referred to as πολλούς υἱούς (2:10)—those who follow their pioneer to glory—attain.⁵⁰ The statement that the human was made lower than angels for a little while (2:7) implies that inferiority to angels will not last *for the human*. The glory and honor of perfect sonship is the destiny God intends for humanity,⁵¹ sonship that was pioneered and perfected in Jesus.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Hebrews' use of Ps 8 is instrumental in the author's "word of exhortation" (13:22). He encourages the recipients to persevere through the sufferings of this realm (2:18; 4:14–16; 10:32–39; 12:1–11) for a "little while," (cf. 2:7, 8) knowing that doing so will lead to the realm of glory and honor God

nun durch den Sohn, der nicht nur am Ursprung der Welt beteiligt ist als Mittler der Schöpfung, sondern auch an deren Ziel (1,2)." Rissi refers to the son participating in the realization of the *goal* of creation.

48. Along with the commentaries, see Boyd, "Sonship," 231; Caird, "Method," 44–51, esp. 49; Caird, "Just Men," 93; Gäbel, *Kulttheologie*, 137; Kögel, *Sohn*, 43; Vanhoye, *Situation*, 282–83.

49. See Boyd, "Sonship," 129–46 for more.

50. Sons are referred to as those being "set apart" by the Son (2:10–11), those perfected by the ἐφάπαξ offering of Jesus (10:14).

51. See Caird, "Method," 46; Caird, "Son," 73–81, esp. 77–78.

intended for humanity all along, the perfected filial relationship pioneered and perfected by Jesus (12:2). We presently “see” that realm realized in Jesus (2:9), the perfected son who, as the ontological Son of God (5:8), calls his brothers (2:11–12) to obedience (5:9) and to continue to persevere. The manifestation of Ps 8 through Jesus urged the original recipients to live in the reality of an accomplished yet about-to-be hope. However, it also encourages the present reader of the text to come to the Father with confidence (10:22; 4:14–16), to hold on to the now-visible hope without wavering (10:23; 2:9), and to live in close fraternal relationship with one another in Christian love (10:24–25). The promise that we do see realized in the perfected son is a promise set aside for God’s children, a realm characterized by joy, and it makes us ask: What is the human that God should care for us, visit us, and crown us with the glory and honor of perfected sonship?

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2

“Let us draw near . . . but not too near”

A Critique of the Attempted Distinction between “Drawing Near” and “Entering” in Hebrews’ Entry Exhortations

SCOTT D. MACKIE

THE EPISTLE TO THE Hebrews is renowned for both its inspired novelties and its interpretative quandaries. Examples of the former include the mysterious Melchizedek who surfaces in chapter seven, the high priest Christology which dominates chapters 7–10, the curious blend of Platonic metaphysics and Jewish apocalypticism, and the dramatized voicing of scripture by the triune God. The two most important interpretative *desiderata* involve determining the nature of the author’s metaphysical thought-world and the provenance of his high priest Christology. Given these many attention-grabbing novelties and seemingly insolvable interpretive tasks, it should come as no surprise that many interpreters underemphasize (and sometimes even overlook) the actual intent of this self-proclaimed “word of exhortation”: to encourage a small community of embattled and weary early Christians to persevere in their commitment to Jesus. As might be expected, the author’s primary hortatory solution to this crisis of commitment is also inadequately appreciated: the community will find the strength and resolve to persevere in their commitment by “drawing near” to Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary (4:14–16; 10:19–23).

It was my great pleasure to find Gary Cockerill’s recent commentary on Hebrews so fully focused on the author’s main intent. In fact, as I noted

in my review, Gary repeatedly emphasizes both the pastoral purpose of this self-confessed “word of exhortation,” as well as its emotional and suasive power.¹ Throughout, the author is referred to as “the pastor,” whose “sermon” evinces “consummate skill” in its passionate appeal to “the faltering people of God,” who are “beleaguered and humiliated,” “intimidated,” and whose “own suffering corresponds to Christ’s.”² Moreover, this sermon seeks to bring “encouragement to believers suffering the rejection and the shame heaped upon them by an unbelieving world.”³ Conversely, it issues a “warning to believers of every age” who are “pressured by rejection from the unbelieving world and enticed by its offer of immediate, though temporary, gratification.”⁴

My greatest pleasure, however, was derived from Gary’s insightful handling of Hebrews’ rich experiential soteriology. And of these experiential elements, Gary places the greatest emphasis on the author’s exhortations to “draw near” to Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. Thus, Gary notes that the pastor’s “primary picture of the situation of its readers is as the people of God entering his presence.”⁵ This intimate and immanent access is “vital because life in God’s presence is the essence, means, and end” of the community’s “existence”; in fact, it “encompasses the entire orientation of the life of faith.”⁶ Drawing near and accessing God in the heavenly sanctuary represents the “polar opposite” of the community’s greatest threat, a “willful persistence in neglect of what Christ has provided.”⁷ This access to God is “intimately related” to the community’s most urgent need, perseverance, since “drawing near to God through Christ is the means of perseverance.”⁸

1. Mackie, “Review.”

2. Cockerill, *Hebrews*, 3, 8, 11–16, 134–38, 252–53, 347, 462–63, 489–90, 505, 586–87, 603, 647, 663, 702. Gary’s comments on 6:11 (“But we yearn for each of you to demonstrate the same zeal for full assurance of faith until the end”) are illustrative: “Nothing shows the writer’s pastoral heart like the intensity of longing revealed in this verse” (282). An extended demonstration of Gary’s perceptive grasp of Hebrews’ powers of persuasion can be found in his discussion of 10:26–39 (481–514). Hebrews’ literary virtues are also well appreciated, with a fine example occurring in Gary’s treatment of 11:32–38: “The very meandering style that the pastor has adopted for this section communicates the homeless wandering of those described” (594).

3. *Ibid.*, 165.

4. *Ibid.*, 277.

5. *Ibid.*, 6.

6. *Ibid.*, 472, 476.

7. *Ibid.*, 484–85.

8. *Ibid.*, 476. Gary elsewhere contends that “drawing near” offers both the “reason and resource for perseverance” (383).

Gary helpfully distinguishes between “two types of imagery” used “to describe the place where God’s people enter his presence. When he is urging them to persevere . . . he uses Promised Land language,” including “rest,” “homeland,” and “City.” When Hebrews exhorts the community “to draw near in the present so that they can receive grace for perseverance, he speaks of the Most Holy Place.”⁹ This extraordinary hortatory motif is also repeatedly enlisted in Hebrews’ dialectic of superiority/inferiority. Gary insists “faithful believers” enjoy a level of “direct access to God” that “was not available before Christ,” even for the Levitical high priests.¹⁰ Thus, believers “have ‘authorization’ of the ‘entryway’ into the very presence of God. The way to God that was not even revealed under the old system (cf. 9:8) is now fully open to the people of God. God’s own enter freely and continuously . . . They need not ‘slink’ into his presence.”¹¹

Gary’s keen and comprehensive focus on Hebrews’ ultimate hortatory goal should come as no surprise, however, given his own effusive testimonies of the “pastor’s” power to inspire and exhort him to greater levels of devotion to Jesus and deeper dimensions of intimacy with God. As those who know him will attest, Gary freely and emotionally testifies to profound transformative encounters with our great high priest, encounters which occurred in the course of his (nearly) life-long study of Hebrews. A true Wesleyan, Gary has obviously *lived in* and *from* this remarkable inspired text. His example has been an inspiration to me and it was with pleasure that I accepted this opportunity to contribute to this much-deserved *Festschrift*!

In this present work, then, I will address a common misinterpretation connected with the two most important verbs that are used in conjunction with Hebrews’ theology of access and entry: *προσέρχουμαι* (“to draw near”) and *εἰσέρχουμαι* (“to enter”). A number of scholars, including John M. Scholer, Marie E. Isaacs, Hermut Löhr, and David A. deSilva, contend that the author of Hebrews maintains a careful and deliberate distinction between these terms, with *προσέρχουμαι* representing “drawing near,” and *εἰσέρχουμαι* reflecting actual “entry” into the inner sanctum of heavenly sanctuary.¹²

9. Ibid., 197.

10. Ibid., 327, 372.

11. Ibid., 466. Gary also repeatedly correlates soteriological benefits and life-giving access: cf. *ibid.*, 17, 77–79, 143, 149, 197, 224–26, 228, 269–72, 291, 362–63, 443, 452.

12. Scholer, *Proleptic Priests*, 11, 144–45, 149, 201; Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, 219; Löhr, *Umkehr und Sünde*, 269; deSilva, “Entering God’s Rest,” 28; deSilva, *Perseverance*, 337. Johnson (*Hebrews*, 131, 139) believes the entry terminology, when applied to believers, represents not an “entry” into a “physical-spatial reality,” but an “internal, moral transformation of persons.” When applied to Jesus, however, it denotes “the full and ontological entry of the human Jesus, through his resurrection . . . and his exaltation . . . into the power and glory that are proper to God.”

More specifically, for Scholer, *προσέρχουμαι* denotes the “proleptic,” “incomplete,” and “preliminary access into the holy of holies” which is the province of the “living,” while *εἰσέρχουμαι* describes the full access “afforded those who have died.”¹³ In this “thoughtful and intentional distinction,” the preliminary access denoted by *προσέρχουμαι* will be eventually “superseded by a still future and greater access,” indicated by *εἰσέρχουμαι*.¹⁴ While Scholer primarily focuses on the differing spheres of access attained by living and dead “saints,” Isaacs instead contrasts the access attained by believers with that of Jesus. Near the conclusion of her monograph on Hebrews’ “theology of access,” she contends that *προσέρχουμαι* represents “the language of approach rather than attainment. Only Jesus has entered (*εἰσέρχουμαι*, 6:20; 9:12, 24, 25) the presence of God. As yet for the people of God that entry remains in the future (4:1, 3, 4, 9).”¹⁵

Though this distinction between *προσέρχουμαι* and *εἰσέρχουμαι* seems both exegetically sound and theologically well-reasoned, ultimately it fails to withstand close scrutiny for at least three reasons:

(1) The author’s hortatory goals and suasive logic typically are not adequately appraised, and often they are even ignored. For example, far from making a strong distinction between the community’s access and that attained by Jesus, Hebrews instead repeatedly exhorts the community to mimetically replicate Jesus’ entry into the heavenly sanctuary (cf. 2:9–10; 4:14–16; 6:19–20; 10:19–23).¹⁶ Furthermore, the verbal and oral/aural “confessional” goals of the two main entry exhortations (4:14–16; 10:19–23) require and even demand that the community occupy a position “within earshot” of God and his Son. Their expected confession represents both an affirmation of Jesus’ sonship, and a reciprocal acknowledgement of the Son’s prior conferral of family membership on the community (2:12–13).¹⁷ It is truly a family-creating act of “saying the same things” (*ὁμο-λογία*) that Jesus has said to the community. However, this twice repeated and clearly stated

13. Scholer, *Proleptic Priests*, 11; cf. also 149, 183, 201.

14. Ibid., 11, 201. Cf. Löhr, *Umkehr und Sünde*, 269: “Umgekehrt wird von den Adressaten ein ‘Hinzugetretensein’ . . . ausgesagt, nicht jedoch ein ‘Eingetretensein.’”

15. Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, 219. DeSilva (“Entering God’s Rest,” 28) similarly distinguishes between the approach of the community and the full entry of Jesus.

16. See, e.g., Thompson (*Hebrews*, 30) who notes that the community is “consistently invited to follow where Jesus has gone (4:14–16; 10:19–23; 12:1–2)” (cf. also 73, 76–77, 114, 140).

17. On this confession of Jesus’ sonship and its hortatory significance, see my essays, “Confession of the Son of God in Hebrews,” 114–29; “Confession of the Son of God in the Exordium of Hebrews,” 437–53; and my monograph, *Eschatology and Exhortation*, 223–30.

hortatory goal would be frustrated if the alleged *προσέρχομαι-εἰσέρχομαι* distinction was indeed valid.

(2) The immediate context in which the verbs occur is often inadequately evaluated. Thus, the thoroughgoing emphasis on a full and confident entry in 10:19–23, which is based on profound architectural, psychological, and mystical/experiential changes effected by Jesus’ high priestly accomplishment, is severely attenuated by appeal to a dubious reading of one word, *προσέρχομαι*.

(3) The author’s overarching imagery, particularly his depiction of the cultic and regnal aspects of the heavenly sanctuary/throne room, is not accorded an appropriate level of prominence in the discussion.¹⁸ Instead, his often sparse and suggestive imagery is suffocated and supplanted by cultic architectural imagery imported from more elaborately detailed OT texts. These cultic texts, which use *προσέρχομαι* in their LXX translations, are then forced back on the context of the entry exhortations in Hebrews, warping their intended shape. It is surely significant that the cultic sacrifices of Leviticus are generally depicted as entirely “speech-less” acts.¹⁹ Given the prominence of aural/oral elements in Hebrews’ entry exhortations, more appropriate LXX texts should then be sought, texts which use *προσέρχομαι* to represent the attainment of communicative and relational proximity to the deity.

As we will see, these three issues will recur, and somewhat overlap, in our discussions of the three most significant occurrences of *προσέρχομαι* (4:14–16; 10:19–23; 12:22–24), and the one pertinent use of *εἰσέρχομαι* (6:19–20).²⁰

18. On the author’s use of visually oriented rhetorical techniques to stir the community’s visual imagination, and thus encourage their substantive participation in his hortatory program, see my essay, “Heavenly Sanctuary Mysticism,” 77–117; esp. 99–116.

19. In Lev 5:5 a “confession of guilt” is required before bringing a prescribed offering to the priest; however, this confession is not explicitly directed toward God. On the Day of Atonement Aaron “confesses all the iniquities and transgressions of the sons of Israel” over the scapegoat, thereby “laying them on the head of the goat” (Lev 16:21). Though this act is to be performed “before the Lord” (16:10), communication with God does not appear to be occurring, or intended to occur.

20. Two additional occurrences of *προσέρχομαι*, in 7:25 and 11:6, are not treated in this essay. Though these texts focus on access to God, their brevity and relatively undeveloped hortatory implications limit their relevance to the discussion.