

A New Covenant Hermeneutic:  
the Use of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10

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This work offers a description of the use of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10 and then some suggestions as to the hermeneutic that stands behind it. *Chapter One* suggests an approach to determining the structure of Hebrews and argues that chs. 8–10 constitute the theological heart and paraenetic core of the book or homily. *Chapter Two* investigates the use of Scripture in Heb. 8:1–13, and asserts that Hebrews 8 serves as an introduction to the material in chs. 9 and 10, setting out the three main topics dealt with in detail in these chapters under the rubric of the priestly work of Christ: sanctuary, sacrifice and covenant. *Chapter Three* works through the main theological section of Heb. 9:1–10:18, in which the old and new sanctuaries, sacrifices and covenants are compared. *Chapter Four* examines Heb. 10:19–39, a section of paraenesis that grows out of the preceding theological discussion of Christ’s superior priestly ministry. *Chapter Five* concludes this study by describing matters relevant to the author’s use of Scripture in chs. 8–10, such as textual issues, technical concerns—including introduction of quotations and the influence of contemporary Jewish interpretation—and theological presuppositions. From this, certain hermeneutical principles underlying the author’s use of Scripture come to light, supporting a framework of prophetic, typological and universal fulfilment of Scripture.

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## Abbreviations

AnBib	Analecta biblica
ATJ	<i>Asbury Theological Journal</i>
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BRev	<i>Bible Review</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BT	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
CalTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
CGTC	Cambridge Greek Testament Commentaries
EAJT	<i>East Asian Journal of Theology</i>
EncJud	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> (1972)
ET	English Translation
Evan	<i>Evangel</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
GTJ	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
HeyJ	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
JTSoAfrica	<i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i>

## *Abbreviations*

KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
<i>KD</i>	<i>Kerygma und Dogma</i>
<i>LQHR</i>	<i>London Quarterly and Holborn Review</i>
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Massoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NC	New Covenant
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	<i>New International Version</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
OC	Old Covenant
<i>OPTAT</i>	<i>Occasional Papers on Translation and Textology</i>
<i>PTR</i>	<i>Princeton Theological Review</i>
QR	Quarterly Review
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RelS</i>	<i>Religious Studies</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
SBLSem	SBL Seminar Papers
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>STog</i>	<i>Search Together</i>
<i>SWJT</i>	<i>Southwest Journal of Theology</i>
<i>TBT</i>	<i>The Bible Today</i>
<i>TGl</i>	<i>Theologie und Glaube</i>
<i>Th</i>	<i>Theology</i>
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologischer Literaturzeitung</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
VD	<i>Verbum domini</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>

## *Abbreviations*

<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

## Introduction

The author of Hebrews states plainly and categorically that the Old Covenant (OC) is obsolete and that his readers are no longer under its authority. At the same time, he confidently applies OC Scripture to his readers and their New Covenant (NC) situation, accepting its authority as the word of God. This tension generates an obvious question: If the OC is obsolete in the view of the author of Hebrews, how can he use OC Scripture as if his readers are under its authority? Answering this question should provide insight into the way the author of Hebrews views the OC and its institutions as well as the hermeneutic that guides his use of Scripture. This study is not the first to ask this type of question in relation to Hebrews,<sup>1</sup> but it is the first to base its investigation on a detailed analysis of the central chapters of the book where the backbone of its theology is worked out.

For the author of Hebrews, Scripture “is a divine oracle from first to last”,<sup>2</sup> and its message has as much authority for his Christian readers as it did for its original, OC readers, even if its application is different in the age of the NC, that is, in the new, Christian situation. The main contributions of Hebrews to New Testament (NT) theology are easily discernible: the priesthood of Christ is developed only here in the NT, and, more than any other book of the NT, Hebrews expounds the relationship between the Old and New Covenant economies, and in this process comes nearest to defining the relevance of OC Scripture for NC believers. In the structure of Hebrews, both the priestly work of Christ and the relationship between the old and new ages are developed most extensively in chs. 8–10, the three chapters that, as argued in *Chapter One* of this work, contain the theological climax and the paraenetic core of

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. G. Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>F.F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 26.

Hebrews. A close reading of these chapters, therefore, with a view to discovering how the author of Hebrews uses Scripture in the development of his argument, should provide valuable information regarding not only the author's use of Scripture, but also the hermeneutic which underlies it.<sup>3</sup> Although the author of Hebrews never offers an explicit statement of the relevance of OC Scripture to NC believers, his own use of Scripture in the light of what he says about the OC and its institutions, especially in Hebrews 8–10, provides many clues to the discovery of the hermeneutic he employs. Concentrating on these chapters of Hebrews, then, in view of their centrality to the theology and message of the book, should contribute significantly to an understanding of the use of Scripture in Hebrews as a whole, while at the same time providing a more detailed exegetical basis from which to draw conclusions.

*Chapter One* of this work suggests an approach to determining the structure of Hebrews and argues that chs. 8–10 constitute the theological heart and paraenetic core of the book or homily. *Chapter Two* investigates the use of Scripture in Heb. 8:1–13, with its allusion to Ps. 110:1, 4 and its citations of Exod. 25:40 and Jer. 31:31–34.<sup>4</sup> This chapter asserts that Hebrews 8 serves as an introduction to the material in chs. 9 and 10, setting out the three main topics dealt with in detail in these chapters under the rubric of the priestly work of Christ: sanctuary, sacrifice and covenant. *Chapter Three* works through the main theological section of Heb. 9:1–10:18, in which the old and new sanctuaries, sacrifices and covenants are compared. In this section our author alludes to various passages in the Pentateuch and to Psalm 110, utilises quotations from Exod. 24:8 and Ps. 40:6–8 and re-quotes with modifications part of the Jeremiah 31 passage he used in ch. 8. *Chapter Four* completes the exegetical task with its examination of Heb. 10:19–39, a section of paraenesis that grows out of the preceding theological discussion of

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<sup>3</sup>“Hermeneutics” is often defined similarly to “the science of biblical interpretation” (e.g. L. Jacobs, “Hermeneutics”, in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, col. 366), although many might dispute the difference between the two terms “hermeneutics” and “interpretation” (e.g. H. Jacobsen [“On the Limits of Hermeneutics”, p. 217] says, “I have thought of making a motto of the following sentence: ‘Interpretation used to be easy, and then someone called it hermeneutics’”; see also A. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, p. 10). In this work, I use the various forms of the word “hermeneutic” to refer to the method used by the author of Hebrews in his interpretation of Scripture, including the contribution of his theology and exegetical method to his interpretive task.

<sup>4</sup>Scripture references follow the English versions unless otherwise noted.

Christ's superior priestly ministry. The practical application in this section includes both encouragement and warning, and for this the author relies on reference to the law of Moses, citations from Deut. 32:35<sup>36</sup> and Hab. 2:3, 4 and the possible citation of three words from Is. 26:20 (LXX). Chapter Five concludes this study by describing matters relevant to the author's use of Scripture in chs. 8–10, largely matters having come to light in the exegesis of chs. 8–10 such as textual issues, technical concerns—including introduction of quotations and the influence of contemporary Jewish interpretation—and theological presuppositions. From this, certain hermeneutical principles underlying the author's use of Scripture emerge, supporting a framework of prophetic, typological and universal fulfilment of Scripture.

“Probably the key to Hebrews does not lie outside the book itself, but is to be found in an analysis of the author's use of the Scriptures in the context of his total work”.<sup>5</sup> It is impossible to study Hebrews in any depth without considering its use of Scripture, and understanding the message of Hebrews depends to a great extent on understanding the author's use of Scripture. In Hebrews the relationship between the old and the new is a foundational theme, and this relationship is inextricably intertwined with the relationship between NC believers and OC Scripture. The book of Hebrews speaks more directly to the question of the significance of OC Scripture in the NC age than any other book in the NT. Because of this, Hebrews is an important source for determining how (at least one leader in) the early church viewed and utilised Scripture.

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<sup>5</sup>D. Smith, “The Use of the Old Testament in the New”, p. 59. See also W. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, pp. cxiii–cxv.

## Chapter One

# The Function of Chapters 8–10 in the Structure of Hebrews

“In order to understand correctly the message which the author of Hebrews has left us it is not enough to read his sentences one after the other. One must also and above all figure out the composition of the work as a whole.”<sup>1</sup> Although this seems self-evident, some scholars do not recognise the importance of structure for understanding the book of Hebrews.<sup>2</sup> Those who do consider issues of structure are by no means in agreement regarding the structure of Hebrews.<sup>3</sup> This is due in part to the

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<sup>1</sup>A. Vanhoye, *Structure and Message of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>The outline given in F.F. Bruce’s original commentary (*Hebrews*, p. xix-xxii), for example, is simply topical and shows no concern for an overall structure: The Finality of Christ 1:1–2:18; The True Home of the People of God 3:1–4:14; The High Priesthood of Christ 4:15–6:20; The Order of Melchizedek 7:1–28; Covenant, Sanctuary and Sacrifice 8:1–10:18; Call to Worship, Faith and Perseverance 10:19–12:29; Concluding Exhortation and Prayer 13:1–25; Postscript 13:22–25. In the revised edition of his commentary, however, Bruce does include a footnote on the literary structure of Hebrews (*Hebrews*, p. xxii).

<sup>3</sup>G.E. Rice (“Apostasy as a Motif and its Effect on the Structure of Hebrews”, p. 29) says, “Beyond . . . generalisations, however, agreement on the structure of Hebrews comes to an end. As a result, the message of Hebrews, which all agree is influenced by its structure, becomes the victim of a ‘structural push and shove’. That is not to say that Hebrews’ major themes are lost in the discussion. Jesus’ divinity, his superiority to Moses and Aaron, the superiority of his priesthood over that of the Levitical system, the superiority of the new covenant over the old, etc., remain; but the fine nuances of the text that enrich our understanding of the major themes are often minimised by the structural divisions suggested by various authors.” See P. Ellingworth (*Hebrews*, pp. 50–58) for an overview of how Bruce has approached the

author's ability to construct very smooth transitions, which tend to create inconspicuous section breaks, and the sheer complexity of the author's line of argumentation and hence his structuring of the book. Whatever can be said for the structure of Hebrews, one must admit that uncovering it is a long and arduous process. David Alan Black holds a similar view:

Literary structures, to use a scientific analogy, are like those mysterious species of fish which live on the ocean floor. As soon as they are brought to the surface to be examined, the change in pressure is too great for them, and they explode, leaving their investigators in a state of frustration and bewilderment.<sup>4</sup>

After some frustration and not a few explosions, I will endeavour once again to bring this delicate creature to the surface. In this attempt, I will consider the implications of literary genre and rhetorical technique and then offer an overview of the content of the book. Finally, from the three perspectives of the author's choice of literary genre, his use of rhetorical devices and the content of his message, I will suggest an overall structure for the book of Hebrews.

### *STRUCTURE AND THE LITERARY GENRE OF HEBREWS*

"Establishment of a literary genre is essential for the full understanding of any piece of literature. Hebrews is no exception."<sup>5</sup> It is clear that Hebrews functions in a way similar to a letter, sent to those known to the author but some distance away (13:18, 22-25), but it is becoming more widely accepted that Hebrews is most fundamentally a homily.

#### *Hebrews as a Homily*

Some who have considered the notion that Hebrews may actually be a sermon have not approved it. Manson considers the epistolary ending of Hebrews as evidence that the book is not a sermon.<sup>6</sup> It is, however, altogether possible that this ending could have been added to a

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structure of Hebrews from the perspective of content and Dussaut from the perspective of form, and Vanhoye who falls somewhere between these two.

<sup>4</sup>D.A. Black, "The Problem of the Literary Structure of Hebrews: An Evaluation and a Proposal", p. 163.

<sup>5</sup>J. Swetnam, "On the Literary Genre of the 'Epistle' to the Hebrews", p. 269.

<sup>6</sup>W. Manson, *Hebrews*, p. 3.

sermon which was to be delivered and read by another. Davies draws the conclusion that it is best to take Hebrews as a letter since it is addressed to the specific needs of its readers.<sup>7</sup> This characteristic, though, is as much a part of sermonising as letter writing, as both are forms of personal communication usually tailored to a particular audience. Many others, however, do recognise sermonic elements in Hebrews, and with them I agree.<sup>8</sup>

Probably the most telling evidence for Hebrews as a homily is the phrase in 13:22 where the writer describes his own work as a “word of exhortation” (ὁ λόγος τῆς παρακλήσεως).<sup>9</sup> In the NT, this phrase is used only once again, in Acts 13:15, where it clearly refers to a synagogue speech or sermon.<sup>10</sup> Lawrence Wills has established that the word of exhortation is in fact a sermonic form in Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity.<sup>11</sup> According to Wills, the word of exhortation follows a tripartite structure: 1) an indicative or exemplary section (the “exempla”), which contains scriptural quotations, authoritative examples from the past or present, or theological exposition, 2) a conclusion based on the exempla and showing their relevance to the addressees, and 3) an exhortation, usually employing an imperative or hortatory subjunctive. An entire sermon may be structured according to this pattern, or the pattern may be repeated several times throughout a sermon. Variations

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<sup>7</sup>J.H. Davies, *A Letter to Hebrews*, p. 2. H.H.B. Ayles (*Destination, Date, and Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 3) also prefers to take Hebrews as a letter.

<sup>8</sup>For example, H.W. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 13; Attridge, “Paraenesis in a Homily (λόγος παρακλήσεως)”, pp. 216–17; H. Braun, *An Die Hebräer*, p. 2; Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. 25, 26; Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 398; and R.McL. Wilson, *Hebrews*, pp. 16, 17.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Attridge, “Paraenesis in a Homily (λόγος παρακλήσεως)” pp. 211–26.

<sup>10</sup>Swetnam, “On the Literary Genre of the ‘Epistle’ to the Hebrews”, p. 261. Cf. also Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 1; Black, “The Problem of the Literary Structure of Hebrews”, p. 167.

<sup>11</sup>L. Wills, “The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity”, pp. 277–99. Cf. the critique of Wills by C.C. Black II, “The Rhetorical Form of the Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian Sermon: A Response to Lawrence Wills”, pp. 1–18. Black accepts Wills’ main thesis, saying, “his presentation is carefully and copiously documented and, in the main, convincingly argued” (p. 2), but Black wants to see a closer connection of the word of exhortation form to Greek rhetoric than Wills. Black’s critique, therefore, does not diminish Wills’ conclusion that Hebrews is a sermon. Cf. also D. Aune (*The New Testament in its Literary Environment*), who asserts that Hebrews is “a hortatory sermon”.

may include temporary digression from this structuring as well as repetition of certain elements of this structure, usually the exhortation, for rhetorical effect. As Wills points out, Hebrews repeats this pattern several times, while at the same time digressing from it and repeating some of its elements out of order. Other examples of the word of exhortation format include Paul's speeches in Acts 13:14-41; 17:24-29; 27:17-35, Peter's sermons in Acts 2:14-41; 3:12-26, the town clerk's speech in Ephesus in Acts 19:35-40, the instruction of the elders in Jerusalem to Paul in Acts 21:20-25, 1 Cor. 10:1-14, 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1, 1 and 2 Peter, 1 Clement, the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the old LXX version of Susanna, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and many more. Several of these examples also demonstrate the practice of repeating the tripartite pattern to form one longer more complex sermon, as well as that of digressing from the established pattern and of repeating elements of that pattern out of order. The presence of the word of exhortation form in a piece of literature, however, does not demand that it be considered a sermon, as made clear by many of the examples cited above, but it does indicate, according to Wills, that the work is either a sermon or sermon-influenced. With respect to Hebrews, Wills asserts that "the author utilises the [word of exhortation] form and adapts it to a more sophisticated overall structure".<sup>12</sup> Hebrews calls itself a word of exhortation, and this is consistent with the dominant structural patterns of the book. This, along with the truncation of epistolary conventions in Hebrews, would indicate that rather than simply being a sermon-influenced epistle, Hebrews is a sermon turned epistle.<sup>13</sup>

H. Thyen has also argued that Hebrews shares the style of a Jewish-Hellenistic homily in the light of its similarities with the Cynic-Stoic diatribe, its use of the OT, and its method of handling paraenesis. Particular homiletical devices highlighted by Thyen include the frequent change from "we" to "you" to "I", citation of OT witnesses, reliance on

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<sup>12</sup>Wills, "The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity", p. 280.

<sup>13</sup>To say that Hebrews is a sermon is not to say that it was written only with a view to being used in a preaching context, although that would have been its first and primary function. The literary quality of Hebrews would suggest that the author may have envisioned his work being used outside a formal preaching context as well. In this way Hebrews probably functioned in a secondary sense in a way similar to an epistle, just as it was sent in the fashion of an epistle, but its primary identity remains as a sermon.

the Pentateuch and the Psalms, methods of introducing OT citations (λέγει—1:6, 7; 10:5, καὶ πάλιν—1:5; 2:13; 4:5; 10:30, καί—1:10, and καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει—5:6), the employment of several rhetorical devices, attribution of a citation to the Holy Spirit, and more.<sup>14</sup> Having evaluated Thyen's work with special reference to Hebrews, James Swetnam concludes that his work is valuable though not definitive. Nonetheless, in Swetnam's view, it is a matter of general consensus that Hebrews is in fact a homily.<sup>15</sup> Finally, D. Aune observes several rhetorical devices in Hebrews which would cater to an oral setting: the avoidance of hiatus (when one word ends in the same vowel sound as the beginning of the next, as in "see easily"), the avoidance of anacolouthon (breaks in grammatical sequence), the use of anaphora (several lines beginning with the same word), careful attention to prose rhythm and alliteration. He also points to 11:32 as an indicator of an oral context for Hebrews: "And what more shall I say? Time will fail me if I tell of . . ."<sup>16</sup>

If a first-century sermon can be described as a religious speech delivered before an assembly of believers, and which typically employs rhetorical techniques as described above, then it seems most reasonable to understand Hebrews as a written homily, sent in the fashion of an epistle, but meant to be read aloud as a sermon before a congregation.<sup>17</sup>

The identification of Hebrews as a sermon is also consistent with its pastoral concern. It would be an error to treat Hebrews as if it were primarily a doctrinal tract or rhetoric for its own sake. In fact, the primary thrust of the letter (or homily) is not theoretical but practical, even though doctrine does play a foundational role by providing a basis for the writer's exhortation. The warning passages throughout the book are designed to exhort the readers to faithfulness and obedience, that they might avoid the judgment of God, and the last three chapters of Hebrews clearly flow from a pastoral concern for the readers' spiritual under-

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<sup>14</sup>H. Thyen, *Der Stil der Jüdisch-Hellenistischen Homilie*, pp. 10-23, 43-50, 62-72.

<sup>15</sup>Swetnam, "On the Literary Genre of the 'Epistle' to the Hebrews", pp. 265-66, 261.

<sup>16</sup>Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*, pp. 212-14.

<sup>17</sup>J.L. Bailey and L.D. Vander Broek (*Literary Forms in the New Testament*, p. 193) cite Hebrews as an example of a NT sermon, saying, "The sermon form found in Hebrews most certainly reflects the structure of sermons preached in the early church and as such indicates its link with the world of rhetoric".

standing and well-being. Hebrews does not share the view common today that thinking theologically is too difficult for the average Christian, but theology is not the driving force behind the book. Passages such as 2:18; 4:15, 16; 5:12–14; 10:22; 12:1–4; 13:1–10 testify to the author's heart-felt, pastoral concern for his readers; this is what drove him to write, and this is what drives his sermon.<sup>18</sup>

In the light of this, it would be misguided to look for the climax of Hebrews in its doctrinal parts, and equally questionable to describe the message of the book without highlighting its paraenetic focus. In Hebrews we find a sophisticated view of the Christian faith: it is at one and the same time to be rooted in an informed understanding of theology, and reflected in a unique lifestyle of fidelity. To understand the message of Hebrews, then, it is important to recognise that all of its theologising serves the purpose of providing a firm basis for its exhortation, which is the point of the book.

#### *Hebrews as an Exposition of Psalm 110*

The application of Psalm 110 to Christ represents one of the earliest Christian traditions. In fact, according to Mk. 12:36<sup>19</sup> Jesus himself suggests that Ps. 110:1 is a reference to the Messiah. Many of the NT writers did not find it difficult to appreciate the implication that Psalm 110 was messianic, and therefore that it could be applied to Jesus, as indicated by quotations of and allusions to the psalm in passages such as Acts 2:34; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1 and 1 Pet. 3:21. Similar quotations and allusions to Ps. 110:1 and 110:4 are scattered throughout Hebrews as well (1:3, 13; 2:5, 8; 5:5, 6, 10; 7:1–10, 17, 20; 7:28–8:2; 10:12, 13; 12:2).

Allusions to Ps. 110:1 can be found as early as the prologue of Hebrews (1:3) and as late as 12:2. In ch. 1, the well-known catena of quotations in vv. 5–13 ends with Ps. 110:1, the author finally making the connection between Ps. 2:7 (Heb. 1:5) and Ps. 110:1 (Heb. 1:13) by way of several Scripture quotations. He does this in order to show, among other things, that it is the Son who is spoken of in Ps. 110:1. This is so that he can develop the concept of Son throughout the next four chapters

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<sup>18</sup>Cf. B. Lindars ("The Rhetorical Structure of Hebrews", p. 384), who says, "the author is dealing with an extremely urgent practical situation which demands his utmost skill in the art of persuasion, if disaster is to be averted". Cf. also M. Rissi, *Die Theologie des Hebräerbriefs*, pp. 1, 21.

<sup>19</sup>See also Mt. 22:44 and Lk. 20:42.

(e.g. 2:6; 3:6; 4:14; 5:8), make the connection between the Son and the priest in the order of Melchizedek (from Ps. 110:4) in 5:5, 6 and then develop the significance of Christ's priesthood in the order of Melchizedek in ch. 7. The first seven chapters are spent, therefore, making the connection between Jesus as Sovereign Son (Ps. 110:1—read in the light of Ps. 2:7) and Jesus as the priest in the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4), and showing the significance of having a priest who is also a Son. The kind of skilful exegetical synthesis represented by the author's confluence of the two roles described in Ps. 110:1 and 110:4 into the single person of Jesus is characteristic of our author's exposition of Scripture. It is also at the heart of his unique contribution to the early church's messianic understanding of Psalm 110: "If Jesus is the one addressed in v. 1, he is equally the one addressed in v. 4".<sup>20</sup> If his readers had no difficulty believing Jesus was the "Lord" spoken of in verse 1—and they presumably did not—then they should be able to accept that he was also the "priest" spoken of in v. 4, but of course, they had not yet adequately understood this.

On the basis of his connection of Ps. 110:1 and Ps. 110:4, and therefore the connection of Jesus as Sovereign Lord with Jesus as priest, he goes on in chs. 8–10 to describe the nature and significance of Christ's priestly ministry. Here he develops the doctrinal significance of Jesus' priesthood, building on his exegesis of Ps. 110:4, and using other relevant Scripture passages such as Jer. 31:31–34. In the next section, chs. 11–12, he develops the paraenetic thrust of his argument, driving home the practical implications of his previous exposition. And even though paraenesis comes to the fore in this section, he continues to rely heavily on the exposition of Scripture.

Other passages, such as Ps. 95:7, 8 and Jer. 31:33, turn up more than once in Hebrews, but never in more than one division, unlike Psalm 110 which can be found in every major division of Hebrews. And no other Scripture passage is alluded to with nearly the same frequency as Psalm 110, which "runs like a red thread through the work".<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, an examination of the psalm's place in the development of the author's thought shows that vv. 1 and 4 of the psalm actually serve as the backbone of the book. The first seven chapters of Hebrews are concerned with the connection of Jesus the Sovereign Lord as portrayed

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<sup>20</sup>Bruce, "The Kerygma of Hebrews", p. 4.

<sup>21</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 23.

in Ps. 110:1 with his role as priest as described in Ps. 110:4 and the significance of Jesus filling this dual role. The next three chapters explore the theological and paraenetic implications of Christ's priestly work, focusing on his once-for-all sacrifice, while the last three chapters deal with the motivational and practical implications of his priesthood. Finally, in the one place where the author offers a clear and straightforward statement of his thesis, 8:1, he relies on allusion to both Ps. 110:1 and 110:4. Therefore, although our author relies very heavily on a plethora of scriptural quotations and allusions, it is Psalm 110 that stands at the core of his message. To put this in different terms, Hebrews, as a homily, is most fundamentally an exposition of Ps. 110:1 and 110:4.<sup>22</sup>

### *Structural Implications of the Use of Psalm 110*

Since Hebrews is most fundamentally a homily, which is an exegetical and practical treatment of Psalm 110 and several other Scripture passages, it is my contention that the use of Scripture as a homiletical device in Hebrews can provide useful clues to its structure. For example, it is hard to imagine anyone suggesting a major division between chs. 3 and 4 since the exposition of Psalm 95 extends over the chapter break. In the same way, understanding the use of Psalm 110 can provide some insight into the overall structure of Hebrews since it is used throughout most of the book. Taking notice of our author's use of Scripture, and particularly Psalm 110, helps to establish the limits of the first section of Hebrews, which in turn suggests a structure for the rest of the book, as demonstrated by figure 1.

## *STRUCTURE AND THE RHETORICAL CHARACTER OF HEBREWS*

“While the author of Hebrews is not a philosopher, it is undeniable that the book is the work of a skilled rhetorician.”<sup>23</sup> Hebrews is perhaps

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<sup>22</sup>Cf. Bruce, “The Structure and Argument of Hebrews”, p. 6; A. Snell, *New and Living Way*, p. 32. W. Manson (*Hebrews*, p. 117) says, “The survey we have now concluded will have made plain the extent to which the epistle to the Hebrews is dominated by one great Old Testament Oracle—Psalm cx”. G.W. Buchanan (*To the Hebrews*, p. xix) makes the dramatic but probably slightly overstated remark: “The document entitled ‘To the Hebrews’ is a homiletical midrash based on Ps. 110.”

<sup>23</sup>J.W. Thompson, *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 158.

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I. Jesus' Fulfilment of Ps. 110:1 and 110:4	1:5–7:28
A. Jesus' qualifications as Son (1:5–4:16) (Development of Ps. 110:1)	
B. Jesus' Dual Role as the Son/Priest (5:1–10) (Connection of Ps. 2:7 and 110:1 with 110:4)	
C. Jesus' Qualifications as Priest (5:11–7:28) (Development of Ps. 110:4)	
II. Theological and Paraenetic Implications of Jesus' Fulfilment of Ps. 110:1 and 110:4	8:1–10:39
III. Practical Implications of Jesus' Fulfilment of Ps. 110:1 and 110:4	11:1–13:25

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*Fig. 1.*

the most rhetorically polished text in the NT, and Harold Attridge finds no less than thirteen rhetorical devices: alliteration, anaphora, antithesis, assonance, asyndeton, brachylogy, chiasm, ellipse, hendiadys, hyperbaton, isocolon, litotes, and paronomasia.<sup>24</sup> Recognising the rhetorical character of Hebrews has advanced the study of its structure, especially in the light of the work of Wills and A. Vanhoye, who offer some helpful insights.

*The Place of Rhetorical Study*

The word-of-exhortation form as described by Wills and employed by our author has obvious implications for the study of the structure of Hebrews, since the repetition of the exempla-conclusion-exhortation pattern can give some clue as to the limits of certain sections.<sup>25</sup> I shall refer to Wills' interpretation of these cycles in Hebrews at critical points in this discussion.

The work of Vanhoye is shaped largely by his application to the book of Hebrews of what he terms the "structuralizing techniques of composition". According to him, our author employs several literary techniques for marking out the structure of his sermon:

- Announcement of the subject to be discussed [e.g. 1:1–4];
- Inclusions which indicate the boundaries of the developments [e.g. 3:1 and 4:14];

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<sup>24</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 20.

<sup>25</sup>Wills, "The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity", pp. 277–99.

- Variation of literary genre: exposition or paraenesis [e.g. 2:1-4];
- Words which characterise a development [e.g. angels in chs. 1 and 2];
- Transition by immediate repetition of an expression or of a word which is termed a hook word [e.g. Melchizedek in ch. 7];
- Symmetric arrangements [1:5-14 and 2:5-18].<sup>26</sup>

The most important of these techniques, in Vanhoye's estimation, is the announcement of subject. According to him, our author uses this technique in conjunction with the others to indicate the structure of his homily, avoiding the coarse method of counting out his points, relying on the insight of his readers to recognise more artistic and subtle literary clues to the structure of his work.<sup>27</sup>

Vanhoye is correct in his observation that our writer gives few overt clues to the structure of his work, and it is easy to find examples of the more subtle structuralizing techniques in Hebrews. Furthermore, it is possible to build an outline of the book on the basis of his theory. So, has someone finally devised a "scientific", or at least literary method for solving the problem of the structure of Hebrews? If so, this should greatly reduce if not end the disagreement. But it does not, for now there is disagreement over whether or not Vanhoye is right. Some, including Black and Montefiore, believe he has got it right,<sup>28</sup> but many, among whom Swetnam has probably given the most thorough and gracious evaluation,<sup>29</sup> do not (entirely) accept the analysis of Vanhoye. In the end, Vanhoye's observations do have much to be commended, and should at least be considered in the process of evaluating the clues to the structure of Hebrews, but they probably do not offer the final solution, as they might initially appear to do. The reason for this is that the task of recognising Vanhoye's "structuralizing techniques" in Hebrews is not as objective as it might seem. If a section of Hebrews, for instance 3:1–5:10, is announced at the end of the previous section (in this case 2:17,

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<sup>26</sup>Vanhoye, *Structure and Message of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 20. Cf. Vanhoye's *La Structure littéraire de l'épître aux Hébreux*, p. 37, where he lists the first five of these literary indices, not including "symmetric arrangements" in his list of fully-fledged "structuralizing techniques" until his later English treatment.

<sup>27</sup>In Vanhoye's scheme (*La Structure littéraire de l'épître aux Hébreux*, pp. 59-63) the structure of the book of Hebrews as a whole forms an elaborate chiasm.

<sup>28</sup>Black ("The Problem of the Literary Structure of Hebrews: An Evaluation and a Proposal", pp. 168-75) rightly says, "Vanhoye's analysis has much in its favor and is due more attention than it has received" (p. 169); Montefiore, *Hebrews*, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup>Swetnam, "Form and Content in Hebrews 1-6", pp. 368-85; and "Form and Content in Hebrews 7-13", pp. 333-48.

18), marked out by inclusion, change of genre, characteristic words and symmetry, who could argue that it does not comprise a structural unit? However, one can pose an alternative scenario by discovering a different set of structural clues: by finding a different announcement of subject in the previous section, a different inclusion and so on, and this is quite possible (which I will demonstrate later). So if two interpreters do not recognise the same structural clues, it is probable that at least one misconstrues what the author had in mind. Then, along with the subjective element in the task of defining structural clues, the interpreter must also determine whether a particular clue marks out a main division or a subdivision. This decision, which establishes structural relationships, cannot be made in isolation from the reader's interpretation of the book's content. Finally, it is important to bear in mind that the "techniques" Vanhoye defines as structural clues can also be used as literary devices which have nothing to do with the structure of the composition. Therefore, some judgment must be made as to whether any given device is intended as a structural marker or is simply there for persuasive effect.

Since Vanhoye's approach of relying on literary devices does not avoid the subjective element which is a part of any interpretive enterprise, it does not represent a fail-safe method for determining structure. Therefore, it seems prudent to consider all the factors that may have a bearing on the issue of structure, not the least of these being content. This is Swetnam's main criticism of Vanhoye, that he does not give proper consideration to content:

But worthy as this attention to form is, there is a concomitant danger which should not be overlooked: if form is too much divorced from content it can lead to a distortion of content, not a clarification.<sup>30</sup>

It seems reasonable to conclude that content is an important factor, if not in the establishment of structure itself, then at least in the interpretation of literary devices. But surely, any proposed structure of Hebrews must not be at odds with its content, and therefore must be derived from content, at least in part. Swetnam's correction, then, that the structure of Hebrews must be analysed "with attention being paid to both form and content", must be taken.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Swetnam, "Form and Content in Hebrews 1-6", p. 369.

<sup>31</sup>Swetnam, "Form and Content in Hebrews 1-6", p. 369.

*Structural Implications of Rhetorical Study*

Both form and content are important for determining the structure of Hebrews. In fact, if the primary goal of the author was to communicate a message, and structure is one device by which he could accomplish this goal, then structure should be viewed as the servant of content, and therefore as determined by it. However, form and content are not the only structural considerations. Literary genre, I submit, also plays a formative role in the structural development of Hebrews, not genre as mentioned by Vanhoye—“exposition or paraenesis”—but the broader question of the genre of the book as a whole.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, formal considerations can be very useful structural indicators, and an outline derived from them can be very instructive.

The first structural seam of Hebrews comes after 1:4. This is indicated by a change from the compact and highly poetical style of vv. 1-4 to the rapid-fire quotation of Scripture forming the catena in vv. 5-14. This division is also indicated by the announcement of subject in v. 4, which is that the Son is superior to the angels. This comparison of Christ to the angels continues through 2:18, with the characteristic word *ἄγγελος* appearing throughout the section. This section, from 1:5–2:18, is divided in two by the warning in 2:1-4. The next section, which begins at 3:1, is announced in 2:17, “in order that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, for the propitiation of the sins of the people”. Jesus is shown to be faithful in 3:1-6, and merciful in 4:14–5:10. Chapter 7, which details God’s appointment of Christ as high priest in the order of Melchizedek, is announced by the phrase in 2:17 “in service to God,” and the phrase “for the propitiation of the sins of the people” announces what would come in chs. 8–10. The admonition which starts in 5:11 marks the beginning of a new section, scolding the readers for their immaturity. Since the previous section ends with the words “designated by God high priest according to the order of Melchizedek”, it is reasonable to entertain the idea that this section ends at 6:20 with the similar phrase “according to the order of Melchizedek he has become high priest forever”. This is because this section seems to stand as a digression in the author’s argument,<sup>33</sup> meant to prepare the

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<sup>32</sup>That is, if Hebrews is an exegetical homily based on Ps. 110:1, 4, then the author’s development of these verses may, and in fact does, influence the structure of the book.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. F.D.V. Narborough, *Hebrews*, pp 102-106.

readers for what would follow, and if this section is a digression, the near repetition of the end of the previous section at the end of the digression may be the author's way of helping himself and his readers back into the flow of his argument, which would resume at 7:1. A further indication that 5:11–6:20 forms a unit is that, although it does remain connected to the context by the oath theme which can be found both before and after the digression, it does not follow directly from the apparent announcement of subject in 5:9, 10.<sup>34</sup> Vanhoye understands this announcement as tripartite: 1) being made perfect, anticipating chs. 8 and 9, 2) he became a cause of eternal salvation, anticipating 10:1–18, and 3) he is designated high priest in the order of Melchizedek, anticipating ch. 7. However, this does not seem to fit the content of chs. 8 and 9, which more naturally fit together with 10:1–18, showing Christ as a cause of eternal salvation.<sup>35</sup> It may be better to understand the participle “made perfect” in v. 9 as looking back to what has gone before, and the announcement as consisting of three different parts: 1) to all those who obey him, anticipating chs. 11–13,<sup>36</sup> 2) a cause of eternal salvation, anticipating chs. 8–10, and 3) appointed by God high priest according to the order of Melchizedek anticipating ch. 7. This understanding of the announcement of subject in 5:9, 10 would stand against the divisions suggested by Vanhoye, because it provides no justification for grouping chs. 7–10 as a structural unit. Wills' understanding of 8:1–10:25 as a complete cycle of the word of exhortation form also stands against Vanhoye's grouping of chs. 7–10, since ch. 7 does not follow the word of exhortation pattern.<sup>37</sup> This change of genre between chs. 7 and 8 affirms the presence of a structural seam at this point.

Chapter 7 is clearly a unit unto itself, with characteristic words like Melchizedek, *ὀρκωμοσία* (“oath”), and various forms of *τελειόω* (“to perfect, complete”), along with repeated references to Ps. 110:4. If we continue to follow the announcement of subject in 5:9, 10, then chs. 8–10 also form a unit, and this can be verified by several structural clues within this section. First, these chapters include one longer section of theological discourse and one shorter section of paraenesis, both of which use a form of *ἐχέω* at or near the beginning. Further investigation

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<sup>34</sup>5:8 looks back to the previous context (i.e. 2:10, 18; 4:15)

<sup>35</sup>See Attridge, “The Uses of Antithesis in Hebrews 8–10”, p. 1–5.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. 11:8, and the concept of fatherly discipline in 12:7–11 and 13:7.

<sup>37</sup>Wills, “The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity”, p. 282.

reveals that there are several words in the first sentence of the theological part that correspond to words in the first sentence of the paraenetic part: ἔχομεν—ἔχοντες, ἀρχιερέα—ἱερέα, ἀγίων—ἀγίων, σκηνηῆς—οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ and ἀληθινῆς—ἀληθινῆς. This list of words or similar words common to the first sentences of these two parts may indicate a structural connection, that is, that the paraenetic part (10:19–39) should be seen as connected to the doctrinal part (8:1–10:18). Secondly, the repetition of parts of Jeremiah 31 in chs. 8 and 10 serves to bind the doctrinal part of these chapters together with an *inclusio*. Thirdly, understanding 8:1–10:25 as forming a cycle of exempla (8:1–10:18), conclusion (10:19–21) and exhortation (10:22–25) indicates that these chapters must be a unit. Fourthly, fourteen of the seventeen occurrences of *διαθήκη* in Hebrews occur in chs. 8–10, making it a characteristic word in this section. Fifthly, the word “faith” serves as a hook word in 10:39 and 11:1, marking out a structural seam, just as the word “Melchizedek” serves as a hook word in 6:20 and 7:1 and has a similar function.

The last three chapters, 11–13, are set apart from the rest of the book by virtue of genre. The development of doctrine and theology which makes up the bulk of the first ten chapters and provides a foundation for paraenesis is nearly absent from the last three (though 12:18–29 repeats the earlier pattern in miniature). Instead, these chapters rely on both positive and negative examples from the past as a springboard for paraenesis. The first section in these last three chapters, 11:1–12:3, forms a discourse on faith, with “faith” serving as a characteristic word for that section. The limits of this section are defined quite clearly, with 11:4–38 as exempla, 11:39, 40 as the conclusion and 12:1–3 as the exhortation. The next division is indicated less clearly in terms of structural clues. A structural seam may be indicated at 13:1 by the cluster of exhortations in 13:1–6—“remain”, “do not forget”, “remember”, “let it be”, and “let it be”. But more important is the anticipation of a tripartite structure for the last three chapters found in 10:22–25, which constitutes an announcement of subject. The faith theme of 11:1–12:3 is anticipated in 10:22, “let us approach with true hearts in full assurance of faith”; the endurance theme of 12:4–29 is anticipated in 10:23, “let us hold fast the confession of hope without wavering”; the theme of Christian sacrifice (works) in ch. 13 is anticipated in 10:24, 25, “consider one another for the stimulation of love and good works”. Therefore, it seems best to understand 11:1–12:3, 12:4–29 and 13:1–19 as forming three units that

make up the last main section of Hebrews. The final two divisions of the book are clearly marked out by genre. Hebrews 13:20, 21 is a benediction, and 13:22-25 constitutes an epistolary closing.

On the basis of this analysis a rough outline of Hebrews emerges, one which shows several main divisions and subdivisions of the book and which indicates some grouping of these divisions, as demonstrated in figure 2.

With regard to the location of the divisions in Hebrews, this evaluation agrees with that of Vanhoye to a large extent, yet I have tried to repeat his most enlightening and detailed analysis as little as possible. There are points at which I disagree with Vanhoye, however, primarily as a result of differing interpretations of announcements of subject. With regard to prioritising these divisions, that is, determining which are the main divisions and which are the subdivisions and thus grouping the sections, Vanhoye's analysis is less helpful.<sup>38</sup> This becomes most evident when factors such as literary genre and content are given greater consideration.

## *STRUCTURE AND THE CONTENT OF HEBREWS*

### *The Content of Hebrews*

It is widely accepted that there are two strands that run through Hebrews, one doctrinal and the other paraenetic, and each of these strands has a distinct focus. To suggest an overall theme for Hebrews, then, it is necessary to distil the message of each strand, consider how these two strands work together to form the whole and then derive a theme that is both specific to and inclusive of the book as a whole. The problem with this procedure is that the demarcation of the two strands is not always absolutely clear, and there is some overlap between them. In the end, however, this will not preclude an acceptable outcome since the interpretation of the parts of the book is not finally determined by how they are labelled, and since the consideration of every part of the book is more important than labelling those parts.

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<sup>38</sup>Cf. Vanhoye's response to this charge in the form of his "Discussions sur la structure de l'épître aux Hébreux", pp. 349-380.

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Prologue	I:1-4
I. Jesus Superior to the Angels	I:5–2:18
A. Superior in Divinity (1:5-14)	
B. Warning (2:1-4)	
C. Superior in Humanity (2:5-18)	
II. Jesus a Faithful Priest	3:1–4:13
III. Jesus a Merciful Priest	4:14–5:10
IV. Digression (Readers' unpreparedness for teaching on the subject announced because of Immaturity)	5:11–6:20
V. Jesus in the Order of Melchizedek	7:1-28
VI. Jesus a Cause of Eternal Salvation	8:1–10:39
A. A Unique Priest which the Readers Have (8:1–10:18)	
B. The Consequent Responsibility which the Readers Have (10:19-39)	
VII. Jesus as an Example of Obedience	11:1–13:19
A. Faith (11:1–12:3)	
B. Endurance (12:4-29)	
C. Sacrifice (13:1-19)	
Benediction	13:20, 21
Epistolary Closing	13:22-25

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*Fig. 2*

The thrust of the doctrinal sections seems to be superiority: the superior personal qualifications of Jesus in the first seven chapters, the superior ministry of Jesus in the next three chapters and the superior standing of NC believers in the last three chapters. According to 8:1, the main point of the sermon is that Christians have a superior high priest in Christ. It may be argued that 8:1 is a reference to one section of the book and not to the whole. Even if this point is taken, and I do not accept it, the fact that the writer is compelled only here to make such a clear and succinct statement of his point must indicate that it is central to his thesis. Therefore, the focal point of the doctrinal parts of Hebrews seems to be the priestly work of Christ, which is superior because Jesus himself and his ministry are superior, and which in turn gives NC believers a superior standing. The paraenetic sections are dominated by the readers' need for fidelity to their commitment to Christ. Our author is concerned to encourage his readers to be faithful to Christ and enjoy the blessing of God rather than slipping away and facing God's judgment.

Since it is reasonable to understand the paraenetic sections as growing out of and being supported by the doctrinal parts, a synthesis of the two should yield an acceptable understanding of the overall message of the book. This synthesis is accomplished by answering the question: what does Christian fidelity have to do with the priesthood of Christ? For our author, Christian fidelity means fidelity to the new relationship with God mediated by Christ (e.g. 9:11-16), and this fidelity is necessary and reasonable in the light of Christ's priestly ministry (e.g. 10:19-39). Hence, the message of Hebrews simply stated is, "Christ's priestly ministry demands fidelity to the new relationship with God that he mediates". Fidelity to this new relationship, or NC, is more than doctrinal commitment for our author; it includes confidence in Christ's ministry both past and present as well as willingness to follow and obey him whatever the cost. Christ's NC ministry revolves around his priestly work, which supersedes the OC ministry of the priests in the earthly tabernacle. Clearly, our writer means to persuade his readers to place their trust in the priestly ministry of Christ when they are accustomed to placing it, at least to some degree, in the ministry of the Mosaic Covenant. From this perspective, Hebrews is all about practising faith in God under the NC instead of the OC.

### *Structural Implications of Content*

Hebrews opens with a poetically styled pericope designed to lay a foundation of revelatory authority upon which our author will work. It is the incomplete word of God through the prophets of old accompanied by God's final word in his Son<sup>39</sup> that forms the source and authority of his message.<sup>40</sup> The last verse of the opening introduces the first subject of the first section, the superiority of Christ to the angels. Much speculation has gone into explaining the author's reason for emphasising the lower place of angels in chapter one, since it is difficult at first glance to relate the importance attached to angels in this section to the argument of the rest of the book. Some have suggested the readers' religious background as an explanation for the prominence of angels here, for

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<sup>39</sup>Cf. R. Williamson ("The Incarnation of the Logos in Hebrews", p. 7), who says, "The argument of Hebrews also makes it clear that the 'Word' spoken 'by a Son' was made up of the whole life, words and, more importantly, deeds of Jesus. And the opening section of chapter one implies a clear distinction between God's previous 'words' and his final 'Word'."

<sup>40</sup>Cf. Lindars, "The Rhetorical Structure of Hebrews", p. 387.

example, proto-Gnosticism, a connection with Qumran or throne mysticism. It may be that a simpler solution is to be preferred, that the angelic role in the establishment of the Mosaic covenant drew our author's attention to the angels (2:2),<sup>41</sup> which would reflect the same train of thought as his comparisons with the exodus leaders and the Aaronic priests in the following chapters. He begins with the figures (mediators) that have the closest contact with God—the angels—and works out from there—Moses, Joshua and then Aaron and the priests. In the catena of Scripture quotations that makes up the bulk of chapter one, our author accomplishes two main objectives. First, he shows that Jesus is superior to the angels because he is divine. Secondly, he shows that it is Jesus the Son who is referred to in Ps. 110:1, an important connection for him since he will found the book's argument on his exegesis of Psalm 110, but will prefer to speak in terms of the Son (cf. 5:5, 6; 7:28).<sup>42</sup>

Chapter 2 opens with the book's first warning: if the message brought by angels was binding, how much more the message brought by the Son. This seems to sum up the importance of the angels in this section as being mediators of God's message to humanity, which affirms the conclusion that our writer understands the angels as involved in the establishment of the Mosaic covenant. The superiority of Christ, then, has important implications for the Christian's relationship to the Mosaic covenant, implications which the author develops later in the book. The rest of ch. 2 is spent showing the superiority of Christ to the angels because he is human. Jesus' humanity allows him to fulfil the place of dominion given to humanity, although our author is very careful to point out that this dominion, though certain, has not yet been fully accomplished. Jesus' humanity also allows him to suffer and die in the place of his "brothers", and to help them through their temptations. The first two chapters, then, assert that Christ is superior to the angels, first because

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<sup>41</sup>See Ex. 23:20–24. Cf. Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought*, p. 46; Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 189, 194.

<sup>42</sup>Lindars ("The Rhetorical Structure of Hebrews", p. 391) explains one important aspect of the Son connection to our author: "He then reveals why he has devoted so much space in his opening statement to the contrast between the messianic Son of God and the angels. It is because of the humanity of Jesus, which is essential to salvation, for otherwise he would not have died a human death. Though the point is not taken up immediately, it is an indispensable prerequisite for the later exposition of the purification of sins."

he is divine, secondly because he is human, therefore it is all the more important to heed his message.

A comparison of Christ to Moses begins ch. 3. They are both declared faithful, Moses as a servant in the house of God, Christ as a Son. The rest of the chapter develops a comparison between the people of the exodus and the readers, or, more precisely, a warning to the readers not to follow the example of disobedience set by the children of Israel. This comparison between the two peoples continues into ch. 4, and assumes a great deal of continuity between the two, especially in the basic necessity for faith and obedience.<sup>43</sup> While ch. 3 and the first part of ch. 4 highlight the need for faith and obedience, as described in Psalm 95, the middle section of ch. 4 takes up the theme of entering God's rest, which is the final point of the Psalm 95 quotation. Joshua enters the picture with the theme of rest, so that Jesus is presented as superior to both of the exodus leaders, and his followers are expected to exceed the faith and obedience of the exodus generation. Just as the superior faithfulness of the Son is compared to the faithfulness of Moses and Joshua in 3:1–4:13, it is the superior mercy of the Son that is compared to Aaron and the Aaronic priests in 4:14–5:10. Jesus' mercy is seen to be more deliberate and helpful since it flows from temptations and suffering common to humanity, and since he successfully withstood that temptation and suffering and did not sin. Because of this, he should be seen as both a merciful and faithful high priest.

Priesthood and related matters will dominate the next several chapters. In ch. 5 the writer makes his first explicit identification of Christ as the referent of both Ps. 110:1 and Ps. 110:4. He speaks of the Son who is a priest in the order of Melchizedek, since he has already established in the first chapter that Ps. 110:1 is about the Son. After introducing the subject of the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, the author inserts a warning against slackness which begins at the end of ch. 5 and runs through ch. 6. Since this section (5:11–6:20) forms a digression, it is best to understand the flow of the main argument as moving from the order of Melchizedek at 5:10 to the order of Melchizedek at 7:1. Chapter 7 brings the readers to a proper discussion of Melchizedek and a creative proof that the priesthood of Christ is superior to that of the levites. The logic of ch. 7 fits neatly into a syllogism, whether or not the writer was thinking in these terms:

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<sup>43</sup>See R.V.G. Tasker, *The Old Testament in the New Testament*, p. 107.

Melchizedek is a priest superior to the levites (vv. 1-10); Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (vv. 11-17); therefore, Christ is a priest superior to the levites (vv. 18-28). With the close of ch. 7, the author has accomplished his first main exegetical point: Christ is both the Sovereign Lord referred to in Ps. 110:1 and the priest referred to in Ps. 110:4, and as such he is superior to all those associated with the Mosaic covenant, especially the priests.

The focus on the players of the exodus in the first seven chapters is met by a corresponding focus on the covenant of the exodus in the next three chapters. Just as Jesus' personal and priestly qualifications are compared to those of the exodus figures in chs. 1–7, his NC priestly work is compared to the OC ministry of the exodus priests in chs. 8–10. Throughout this comparison covenant and sacrifice are central issues, since both the levites' and Jesus' priestly sacrifices are seen as mediating their respective covenants. Chapter 8 serves as an introduction to the middle section of Hebrews, with the first verse providing a transition from ch. 7 and the rest of the first section of the book. The introductory function of ch. 8 is indicated by the fact that the over-arching theme of chs. 8–10 (Christ's priestly work) is encapsulated in ch. 8: all of the main topics dealt with in this section (the relationship of Christ's priesthood to sanctuary, sacrifice and covenant) are introduced in ch. 8, and there is no topic in ch. 8 that is not dealt with again in chs. 9 and 10. Chapter 8, which features the NC as the basis for Christ's priestly work, goes a step further than the author previously has in impugning the old, Mosaic system.<sup>44</sup> The trappings of the levitical priesthood are compared to Christ's priestly ministry in chs. 9 and 10. The first 14 verses of ch. 9 recall the old order of the tabernacle, calling it "a parable for the present time". Verses 15-22 of ch. 9 compare the new covenant to its Mosaic counterpart, emphasizing the importance of blood in the inauguration of both covenants. In 9:23–10:18 the author compares the sacrifices of the OC with that of Christ under the new. In this section, he traces the relationship between the tabernacle and sacrifice in 9:23-28, with animal sacrifice serving to cleanse the earthly tabernacle and Christ's sacrifice cleansing the heavenly sanctuary, with 10:1-18 explaining the superior effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice to deal with the sin problem of the people, in comparison to the levitical sacrifices. Christ's sacrifice is superior in that it is a once-for-all offering and is permanently effective.

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<sup>44</sup>Cf. R.E. Clements, "The Use of the OT in Hebrews", p. 44.

The last part of ch. 10 (vv. 19–39) applies the doctrinal content of chs. 8–10 in a section of paraenesis, including a warning. The readers' confidence before God is our author's primary burden here as he encourages his readers to draw near to God through the curtain and into the most holy place by way of Christ's sacrifice. The warning (10:26–31) is of the judgment of God for those who choose to continue sinning, or rejecting the covenant God has made with his people. Chapter 10 closes by stressing the importance of confidence (vv. 32–39), as expressed through enduring sacrifice in the light of Christ's parousia, and reviews the three main doctrinal topics covered in the previous section: sanctuary, covenant and sacrifice. Since 10:19–39 is the only paraenetic section in chs. 8–10, and since it focuses on the readers' confidence before God, confidence seems to be the underlying concern of the author in chs. 8–10.

The beginning of ch. 11 marks a dramatic shift in subject matter. The topic of priesthood, which dominates the first ten chapters, is rarely broached in the last three. Instead, the focus has shifted to Christian virtue: faith, endurance and sacrifice. Whereas chs. 1–10 concentrate on Christian responsibility in the light of the superior nature of what God has done in Christ, chs. 11–13 concern themselves with Christian responsibility in the light of the example of Jesus and others.<sup>45</sup> These examples include the saints of old who exemplify faith, as examined in ch. 11. Faith is such a strong theme in this chapter that a vital component of the argument can be overlooked, that these examples had unwavering faith in spite of not having experienced the ultimate fulfilment of God's promise. This point is consistent with a strand that runs through the book. That all things are not yet put under Christ's subjection comes up in 2:8 and 10:13, as does the postponement of reward and fulfilment of promise in 10:35–39. The exodus/pilgrimage theme also lines up with this concept of delayed fulfilment. Clearly, the possibility of a delayed but certain fulfilment of God's promise is an important concept to our author. This discussion of faith concludes with 12:1–3 where Jesus, the very author and perfecter of faith, is offered as the ultimate example of faith for the readers and one to whom they must look.

The rest of ch. 12 is concerned with endurance. According to 12:7 the readers were to endure for the sake of discipline, which indicates that they must have been facing some difficulty. That the readers' suffer-

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<sup>45</sup>With the exception of 12:18–24 and possibly 13:10–14.

ing may be coming from God in the form of fatherly discipline is offered as encouragement to continue in perseverance, which would result in maturity. Two negative examples form the focal points of a warning against failing to endure: Esau selling his birthright, which illustrates the foolishness of not enduring, and the Israelites before Mt. Sinai, which illustrates the relative ease of Christian endurance before God in Christ and the greater responsibility of NC believers to the Christian message because it gives them a direct connection to the heavenly realities. The chapter ends with a call to gratitude and reverence in the light of having received an unshakeable kingdom. This reference is similar to those in chapter eleven which speak of a heavenly country and city (vv. 10, 13-16).

Faith enables endurance, and endurance undergirds obedience. In ch. 13 the priesthood of Christ comes to the fore once again as the author explains that NC believers are to offer sacrifices to God through Christ (vv. 15, 16).<sup>46</sup> These sacrifices are praise, good deeds and fellowship, which represent a broad range of Christian activities, and are clearly intended to take the place of levitical sacrifices for the readers (cf. vv. 9, 10). Seen in this light, the several exhortations at the beginning of ch. 13 provide a more detailed description of the sacrifice of good deeds, or Christian obedience, and establish it as an important part of the readers' Christian commitment. That the readers continue in obedience to their Christian commitment and be willing to sacrifice for the sake of others and in service to God as illustrated by Christ "outside the camp" must have been our author's utmost concern. But he was not interested in blind obedience, as vv. 5 and 6 and the broader context of Hebrews show, but a sacrificial commitment to obey God that flows from understanding and faith. The homily ends with a benediction recalling some of the main points of the argument: covenant, perfection and obedience. It is interesting that the priesthood theme is not prominent in this benediction, but that Christ's resurrection, which is not mentioned earlier, is.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, the benediction does reflect the dual emphasis of the book: affirming the sufficiency of what God has done in Christ, and the responsibilities of those who follow him. The beginning of Hebrews shows no epistolary characteristics, but its ending is typical of the NT letters. The conclusion that Hebrews is a sermon which was

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<sup>46</sup>Cf. also Phil. 4:8 and 1 Pet. 2:5.

<sup>47</sup>However, resurrection of believers is mentioned in 11:35.

sent to an audience some distance away, an epistolary homily, is consistent with this observation.

Finally, having considered issues related to Hebrews' literary genre, its rhetorical character and its content, it is possible to develop an outline that reflects all three of these perspectives, with emphasis given to content, as shown in figure 3.

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PROLOGUE	1:1-4
I. THE SOVEREIGN SON AS SUPERIOR MEDIATOR	1:5-7:28
A. A Mediator Superior to the Angels (1:5-2:18)	
1. Superior because of his Divinity (1:5-14)	
2. The Superior Demand of his Message (2:1-4)	
3. Superior because of his Humanity (2:5-18)	
B. A Mediator Superior to the Exodus Leaders (3:1-5:10)	
1. Superior to Moses and Joshua in Faithfulness— the Readers' Need for Faith (3:1-4:13)	
2. Superior to Aaron in Mercy— the Readers' Need for Confidence (4:14-5:10)	
(3. Immaturity of the Readers—5:11-6:20)	
C. A Mediator Superior to the Levitical Priests (7:1-28)	
1. The Superiority of Melchizedek to the Levites (7:1-10)	
2. The Appointment of Jesus in the Order of Melchizedek (7:11-17)	
3. The Superiority of Jesus to the Levites (7:18-28)	
II. THE SUPERIOR MINISTRY OF THE NEW COVENANT MEDIATOR	8:1-10:39
A. Introduction to Christ's New Covenant Priestly Ministry (8:1-13)	
B. An Explanation of Christ's New Covenant Priestly Ministry (9:1-10:18)	
1. The Old and New Sanctuaries Compared (9:1-14)	
2. The Old and New Covenants Compared (9:15-22)	
3. The Old and New Sacrifices Compared (9:23-10:18)	
C. Paraenesis Based on Christ's New Covenant Priestly Ministry (10:19-39)	
1. Confidence to Enter the Sanctuary (10:19-25)	
2. Judgment for Rejecting God's Covenant (10:26-31)	
3. Reward for Enduring Sacrifice (10:32-39)	
III. NEW COVENANT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD	11:1-13:19
A. Faith in Spite of Delayed Promises (11:1-12:3)	
B. Endurance for the sake of God's Discipline (12:4-29)	
C. Obedience in a Context of Sacrifice (13:1-19)	
Benediction	13:20, 21
Epistolary Closing	13:22-25

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*Fig. 3*

CONCLUSION

In reality, it is impossible to consider the structural implications of literary genre, rhetorical device and content in isolation one from the other when contemplating an outline for Hebrews. I have attempted to treat them somewhat separately here in order to highlight the contribution and validity of each perspective. Nevertheless, any useful outline must take into account as much evidence as possible and, in the end, must seek to communicate the content of the book as accurately and comprehensibly as possible.

As for the place of chs. 8–10 in Hebrews, it is clear that these chapters form the theological and paraenetic heart of the book. The discussion in chs. 1–7 demonstrates the superiority of the person of Christ who alone possesses a dual nature, human and divine, and who alone fulfils the dual role of king and priest. The topic of the person of Christ is, in Hebrews, important in its own right, but it also serves as the foundation for the discussion of the ministry of Christ in chs. 8–10. It is because of who and what Jesus is (chs. 1–7) that his ministry and death are so significant (chs. 8–10), but it is the discussion of the latter that provides the greatest justification for the author's paraenesis. In the light of what the ministry of Christ accomplishes and what his past suffering provides, the readers can be, through various means, exhorted to faithfulness in their difficult circumstances (e.g. chs. 11–13). This line of reasoning is employed in 12:3, for example, showing that the priestly ministry of Christ is not far from the author's mind in the latter stages of the book, though priestly functions are not explicitly mentioned in chs. 11–13 until 13:10. It is also clear from 12:18–24 that the provisions of the NC mediated by Christ (8:6–13; 9:15–22) undergird and justify the author's paraenetic demands (12:24).

Although it would not be proper to call Hebrews 8–10 the climax of the book—that appears in ch. 12—the *theological* climax of Hebrews does occur in ch. 10 with the discussion of Christ's NC sacrifice. And on the back of this theological high point we find what is certainly some of the most moving and intense paraenesis in the book, in which the author exposes the link between the book's theological and paraenetic streams: because of the priestly ministry of Christ NC believers enjoy confident and direct access to God, which should enable them to remain faithful (10:19–25), avoiding the judgment of God (10:26–31), enduring hardship and thus receiving their reward (10:32–39). It is proper, then, to think of

chs. 8–10 as the heart of Hebrews, since they contain the theological climax and the paraenetic core of the sermon.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 25; “The Uses of Antithesis in Hebrews 8–10”, p. 1.

## Chapter Two

### Introduction to Christ's New Covenant Priestly Ministry: Hebrews 8:1-13

Hebrews 8 introduces the second main section of the book.<sup>1</sup> The first six verses serve as a transition from the author's discussion of the priestly qualifications of Christ in the first seven chapters to the priestly ministry of Christ in the next three. Verses 7-13 provide the main scriptural basis for this section's argument, the heart of which begins at 9:1. This pattern of introducing a main division with a pithy theological statement accompanied by scriptural support is repeated near the beginning of each of the three main divisions of Hebrews, each with a theological component focusing on a different aspect of Christ's superiority and incorporating the term *κρείττων* (1:4; 8:6; 11:40), and each with a different style of offering scriptural support. Following this pattern, Chapter 1 asserts that Christ is "better" than the angels because he is a Son, using a catena of Scripture quotations stretching from v. 5 to v. 13 to support this proposition. Chapter 8 focuses on Jesus' "better" ministry under the NC, then for support offers the longest Scripture quotation in the NT, from Jer. 31:31-34. Chapter 11 and the first three verses of ch. 12 centre on faith and conclude with the readers' even "better" provision for faith in Christ, quoting very little Scripture for support, but rather spending 35 verses (11:4-38) reviewing the biblical history of individuals who had been faithful to God even before Christ's "better" example (cf. 11:40-12:3). In the light of this, then, Hebrews 8 follows a typical

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<sup>1</sup>See Attridge, "The Uses of Antithesis in Hebrews 8-10", pp. 5, 6.

pattern, for our author, of introducing a section with a theological statement supported by reference(s) to Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike the introductory chs. I and II, ch. 8 creates a smooth transition from the previous section to its own. The first verse looks back with the phrase “we have such a high priest”, that is, such as he has been describing, while vv. 2-5 anticipate the discussion of Christ in succeeding chapters as “a servant in the sanctuary and the true tabernacle”. The first two verses of Hebrews 8 also serve as a thesis statement for the book as a whole, with v. 1 offering a short, interpretive summary of Ps. 110:1, 4, and with v. 2 consisting of a tightly packed reference to the priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly temple. This thesis statement is introduced by the phrase *κεφάλαιον δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις* (“And [this is] the main point of what is being said”). The term *κεφάλαιον* was, according to Lane, used by the Greeks to denote 1) the main point of an argument, 2) a summary or 3) the “crowning affirmation” or “crowning example”.<sup>3</sup> There is no reason to restrict the meaning of *κεφάλαιον* in this context since it is quite conceivable for a thesis statement to fill each of these functions simultaneously, which is what it seems to do in this verse.

First as a summary, v. 1b, *τοιούτου ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα, ὃς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* (“we have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens”),<sup>4</sup> recaps the argument of

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<sup>2</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, pp. 217-25) includes only 8:1-6 as introductory, seeing the argument of this section as properly beginning with v. 7. However, the scriptural support offered in vv. 7-13 does not seem to be connected to the following material in such a direct manner as it is to the preceding verses. Whichever verses one wishes to label “introduction”, it is most important to recognise the repeated manner of beginning a section used by our author, that I have described in the main text above. In any case, I will deal with ch. 8 as a unit, because it will be easier to understand v. 6 if taken together with vv. 7-14, and *vice versa*, since they are so closely related conceptually.

<sup>3</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, p. 200. Lane observes that most prefer the first option, rules out the second and argues for the third. He may be splitting hairs, however, since these three options may be aspects of a thesis statement describing a piece of literature such as Hebrews. Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 217) chooses the second option, summary, as does S. Kistemaker (*Hebrews*, p. 222). Braun (*Hebräer*, p. 227), who recounts the various uses of *κεφάλαιον* in Greek literature, takes a view closest to the first option.

<sup>4</sup>See Harris (“Traces of Targumism in the New Testament”, pp. 374-75), who claims that the wording of this allusion to Ps. 110:1 is “a pure Targumism”.

chs. 1–7 in which our author introduces the Son/priest<sup>5</sup> and the beneficial nature of these two roles being fulfilled in one person. This verse is reminiscent of Heb. 1:3, *ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς* (“he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high”), another allusion to Ps. 110:1.<sup>6</sup> Together these two allusions (in 1:3 and 8:1) form a parenthesis or *inclusio* marking out the first main section of the book, which begins by focusing on the superiority of the Son, gradually introduces the subject of priesthood (2:17; 3:1; 4:14–5:10; 6:20–7:28) and ends by focusing on the superiority of that priesthood. Interestingly, the first allusion in 1:3 is restricted to Ps. 110:1 and the implications of sonship, while the allusion in 8:1 refers to both Ps. 110:1 and 4 and includes both subjects, the sonship and priesthood of Christ. Heb. 8:2, *τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς, ἣν ἔπηξεν ὁ κύριος, οὐκ ἄνθρωπος* (“a servant of the holy place and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not a human”) anticipates the material in chs. 9 and 10. These two verses, then, summarise the theological argument of the book. Secondly, as an assertion of the main point of Hebrews, 8:1, 2 are certainly an apt description of what the author is driving at in the theological sections of his work. An understanding of Christ as the Son/priest is the persuasive and theological force behind his paraenesis, which expects that when the readers understand the resources they have to draw upon in Christ they will be willing and able to remain faithful to God. At any rate, it would be difficult to imagine a summary as well crafted and succinct as this that did not also

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<sup>5</sup>From the beginning the author of Hebrews shows that he understands the Lord of Ps. 110:1 as one and the same as the Son referred to in Ps. 2:7 (Heb. 1:2, 3, 5, 13; 5:5, 6). He may well have been encouraged in this by the LXX version of Ps. 110:3 which records Yahweh's claim to have begotten the Lord. Throughout the first ten chapters the author refers repeatedly to Jesus as the Son to highlight his identity, but alludes to Ps. 110:1, 4 to highlight his position. The use of “Son” instead of “Lord” was probably designed to avoid confusing the two characters in Ps. 110:1, יהוה and יְהוָה, both of whom the LXX calls κύριος. Sonship may also serve to identify unmistakably the Lord of Ps. 110:1 as Jesus. Whatever the case, the term “Son” is preferred by our author over the term “Lord”, but it is still the description of Ps. 110:1 along with 110:4 which provides the primary foundation for the argument of chs. 1–10. So, because of the repeated use of the term “Son” in the first ten chapters, they can be described in the author's own terminology as being about the Son/priest, yet the main Scripture passage underpinning the discussion of the Son in these chapters is Ps. 110:1, even though it does not contain the word “son”. It is with this in mind that I refer to Ps. 110:1 as the basis of the discussion in Hebrews about the Son.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. G.W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, p. 132.

function to express the main point of what was being summarised.<sup>7</sup> Finally, Lane is correct to argue that this statement functions as the “crowning affirmation” of what has gone before. Here the author finally states explicitly what he has been implying and attempting to prove throughout the first seven chapters, that the readers have in Jesus a priest whose place is on the throne as well as in the sanctuary, and it is not until this point that our author explicitly connects the concept of throne from Ps. 110:1 with that of priest from Ps. 110:4. In this way, 8:1 serves as the climax of the first section (chs. 1–7), with 8:2 serving as an introduction to the next section (chs. 8–10).

#### *JESUS AS PRIEST AND SON (8:1)*

That Ps. 110:1, 4 play a part in the formulation of the thesis statement of Hebrews is an important affirmation of the notion that Hebrews is most fundamentally a homiletical exposition of these verses. The role of Ps. 110:1 at another strategic point in Hebrews, 1:3, adds to this evidence. The opening chapter of Hebrews is dependent on the psalm in two places, v. 3 and v. 13. In vv. 1–4 there are two subjects, grammatically speaking: God and the Son. Each of them has done several things, as indicated by relative clauses and participles, but one main action is attributed to each. God “spoke to us in a Son”, and the Son “sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high”. God’s act focuses the reader’s attention onto the Son, and this focus is sharpened by the subordinate clauses “whom he made heir of all things, through whom also he made the ages”. The Son’s act, in association with its subordinate clauses, brings the reader’s attention to his own nature, position and ministry, and launches the author into his first comparison, between the Son and the angels. As for the reason that the angels figure so prominently in the author’s line of argumentation at this point, one need look no further than the involvement of the angels in the establishment of the Mosaic covenant and in the Exodus. Hebrews is clearly very interested in the Exodus and its players, among whom angels had a part,<sup>8</sup> so it is not at all strange that it singles them out for discussion, as it does Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and the people of Israel. This comparison between angels and the Son is developed in two stages: the first in 1:5–14 argues that the Son

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. A. Nairne, *Hebrews*, p. 81.

<sup>8</sup>Exod. 3:2; 14:19; 23:20, 23; 32:34; 33:2.

is superior to the angels because he is divine, the second in 2:5-18 argues that he is superior because he is human. The first half of this argument is developed with the quotation of several Scriptural texts, beginning with Ps. 2:7 affirming the Son's sonship, and ending with Ps. 110:1 as the climax of the catena, to summarise the Son's sovereign superiority.

The catena of verses quoted in ch. 1 is framed front and back by references to Ps. 110:1. The discussion of the Son's superiority to the angels is introduced in conjunction with the allusion to Ps. 110:1 in v. 3, with the Son's superiority seen as evidenced by his position at the right hand of God. Even the author's choice of material for quotation in ch. 1 may have been influenced by Psalm 110, according to a principle, similar to that followed by the rabbis, by which Scripture passages were collected and interpreted together on the basis of verbal links between them. This method is referred to in the third and fourth of Hillel's seven middoth or hermeneutical rules:

3. *Binyan ab mikkathub 'ehad*: constructing a family from one text. When several passages form a group around a common topic, the teaching in one applies to all of them.

4. *Binyan ab mishshene kethubim*: constructing a family from two texts. The rules in number three above can be applied on the basis of two passages, instead of one.<sup>9</sup>

In Hebrews 1, it seems that Psalm 110 stands as the parent text, with other scriptural passages built around it on the basis of verbal parallels, and with still other passages connected to these quotations on the basis of new parallels.

For example, in the first quotation, Ps. 2:7 in 1:5, there is a clear verbal connection with Ps. 110:3 since both contain the word *γεννάω*. The next quotation, still in v. 5, comes from 2 Sam. 7:14 and can be connected to the Ps. 2:7 quotation since the word *υἱός* occurs in both. It is not possible to connect the quotation of Deut. 32:43 in 1:6 with Psalm 110, but it is here that the author introduces the first quotation containing the word "angel". The next quotation in 1:7, from Ps. 104:4, also contains the term "angel" and is therefore verbally connected to the Deut. 32:43 quotation. These two quotations seem to introduce a second

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<sup>9</sup>J.E. Wright, "Relationships Between the Old Testament and the Rabbinic Literature", pp. 18-20. Cf. Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, p. 22 and P. Birnbaum, *A Book of Jewish Concepts*, pp. 331-32.

family of texts that are brought into juxtaposition with the Ps. 110:1 family to provide a scriptural basis for the author's argument for the inferiority of the angels, just as the Psalm 110 family does for the superiority of the Son. After the Deut. 32:43/Ps. 104:4 couplet, the author quotes Ps. 45:6, 7 in 1:8, 9. The verbal link in this quotation is with Ps. 110:2, both using the term *ῥάβδος*. Incidentally, there is also a strong conceptual link between these two passages with the reference to the throne of God in Ps. 45:6 and the right hand of God in Ps. 110:1, which Hebrews understands as being synonymous to God's throne (cf. 8:1 and 12:2). The next quotation, Ps. 102:25-27 in 1:10-12, shares a verbal connection with Ps. 110:3 with the use of *ἀρχή*. Admittedly, the use of *ἀρχή* in Ps. 110:3, where it means something like "sovereignty", is a different usage than that in Ps. 102:25, where it means "beginning", but I am not arguing primarily for a conceptual link between these passages but for a verbal link that may explain what drew our author to these particular passages. The plausibility that the verbal connection between Ps. 102:25-27 and Ps. 110:3 is significant increases in the light of what seem to be clearly significant links throughout the rest of the chapter, establishing the pattern of the author's *modus operandi*.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, this kind of apparently arbitrary connecting of two passages for interpretive purposes on the basis of the coincidental usage of the same word is not out of step with early rabbinic methods, wherein the seeming conceptual unrelatedness of the passages became a feature of the method almost as important as the feature of the verbal link itself. So it seems that Ps. 110:1-3 influences the author's choice of quotations in ch. 1 along the lines of rabbinic practices. More importantly, Ps. 110:1 is

<sup>10</sup>This practice of building a family of quotations in Hebrews based on verbal links with Psalm 110 probably continues at least through ch. 10, since there are other passages quoted in Hebrews that seem to have a verbal connection to Psalm 110 or to another passage quoted which can be traced back to the psalm through verbal links:

<i>Quotation</i>	<i>Verbal Connection</i>	<i>Parent Text</i>
Ps. 8:4-6 in 2:6-8	<i>ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν</i>	Ps. 110:1
Ps. 95:7-11 in 3:7-11	<i>ἡμέρα, ὁδός, ὤμοσεν</i>	Ps. 110:5, 7, 4
Jer. 31:31-34 in 8:8-12	<i>ἡμέρα, λέγει κύριος</i>	Ps. 110:5, 1
Ps. 40:6-8 in 10:5-7	<i>ἁμαρτία</i>	Jer. 31:34
Hab. 2:3-4 in 10:37, 38	<i>ἦκω, εὐδοκέω</i>	Ps. 40:6, 7

For example, Hab. 2:3-4 has a verbal link with Ps. 40:6-8, which is linked to Jer. 31:34, which is finally linked to Ps. 110:1, 5.

prominent in ch. 1 with the allusion in v. 3 and the quotation in v. 13, framing the catena of quotations and providing substantial support for the assertion that the Son is superior to the angels. In this way, Ps. 110:1 is used to express the main point of the first chapter as well as to introduce the concept of Christ's superiority to the book as a whole.

Another important use of Psalm 110 in Hebrews is to provide a reason or justification for assigning the role of priest to the Son. Although the subject of priesthood is introduced long before our author makes any allusion to Ps. 110:4, it is made clear by his development of the Melchizedek motif in ch. 7 that Ps. 110:4 provides the scriptural and logical foundation for the treatment of the priesthood theme in Hebrews. It is the author's unique interpretation of Psalm 110:1, 4 among NT writers that forms the main theological point of Hebrews: Jesus is at once divine king and eternal priest. The argument through 5:10 is designed to highlight Jesus' unique priestly qualifications as a result of his being a Son. After the parenthesis of 5:11–6:20, ch. 7 outlines Jesus' priestly qualifications as a result of his being in the order of Melchizedek. Both of these themes are spawned by Psalm 110, the first primarily by v. 1 and the second by v. 4.

The significance of this for understanding Heb. 8:1, 2 is that it affirms and intensifies the notion that Psalm 110 is the central building block upon which the message of Hebrews rests, and therefore it shows that 8:1, 2, alluding to Psalm 110, does indeed provide the reader with a statement of the main point of the book as a whole, reflecting the most fundamental thought structures of the homily.<sup>11</sup> At the heart of what our author is trying to accomplish is that his readers understand and live according to the implications of Psalm 110 when interpreted in the light of the Christ-event. He wants his readers to realise that in Jesus they have a sovereign priest ever in the presence of God who would not only

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<sup>11</sup>While rejecting the notion that "the whole of Hebrews is a midrash on Ps. 110", Attridge does say that "this scriptural text is of capital importance both for the literary structure and for the conceptuality of Hebrews" (*Hebrews*, p. 46). Manson (*Hebrews*, pp. 117-18) says, "The survey we have now concluded will have made plain the extent to which the Epistle to the Hebrews is dominated by one great Old Testament oracle—Psalm 110. . . . In view of the frequency with which this Psalm appears and re-appears in Hebrews, like the sun's light seen through the trees, it is idle to put down the doctrine of Christ's eternal high priesthood to 'a flash of inspiration' on the part of the writer, or to 'a gnosis' to which he has come, an ingenious mental exercise of the order of Philo's speculations on the Logos, a biblical student's lucubrations on the Old Testament hierarchy."

have all things subjected to him in the end, but who is willing and able to help them now.

### *Priestly Reference in Hebrews 8:1*

When our author says in 8:1, “we have *such* a high priest”, he is pointing the reader back to the last seven chapters, and especially to his discussion of Jesus and Melchizedek in ch. 7, where he quotes Ps. 110:4 twice and where the topic of Melchizedek’s priestly line itself derives from Ps. 110:4 as well as Gen. 14:17-20. The term *ἀρχιερεύς* (“high priest”), then, is a reference to the author’s previous discussion, but more fundamentally it is an allusion to Ps. 110:4, which is quoted most completely in 5:6; 7:17 and 7:21 (see figure 4). Although the LXX and MT speak of the “Lord” being a priest, *ἱερεύς* and *יְהוָה*, Hebrews uses the term *ἀρχιερεύς* in 8:1, indicating a degree of interpretation in the allusion. Interestingly, Hebrews uses *ἱερεύς* with reference to the levitical priests and Melchizedek, but only twice does our author refer to Jesus as *ἱερεύς*: once speaking hypothetically about Jesus’ relationship to the priesthood while he was on earth (8:3) and once with the adjective *μέγας* (10:21). Every other time, Jesus is called *ἀρχιερεύς*, which is consistent with the author’s conviction of Jesus’ superiority, and his

Hebrews	Psalm 109:4	Psalm 110:4
5:5; 7:17 Σὺ ἱερεύς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ	ὤμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται Σὺ εἶ ἱερεύς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν	נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה   וְלֹא יִנְחַם אֶת־הוּא כֹהֵן לְעוֹלָם עַל־דְּבַר־הוּא מֶלֶךְ־צְדָק:
7:21 Ὁμοσεν κύριος, καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται, Σὺ ἱερεύς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα	Μελχισεδεκ	
5:5; 7:17 “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”	The Lord swore and he will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”	Yahweh swore and he will not be sorry, “You are a priest forever, according to the manner of Melchizedek”
7:21 The Lord swore and he will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever”		

Fig. 4

conception of the nature of Jesus' sacrifice. Chapter 9 indicates that our author views the sacrifice of Christ as corresponding to several, if not all, of the sacrifices of the Mosaic system, and as such, Jesus is privileged to enter the holy of holies in heaven in a way that corresponds to the ministry of the levitical priests on the day of atonement. Since only the levitical high priest was permitted to enter the holy of holies, it follows that Jesus must also be high priest in his own order. The author's conception of Jesus as high priest, then, is more complex than a simple application of Ps. 110:4 to Jesus, since the introduction of the concept of *high priest* must have come from another source.

#### *Kingly Reference in Hebrews 8:1*

There are enough similarities between 8:1b and Ps. 110:1 to make it clear that the one alludes to the other. The differences, however, are most instructive. In Hebrews, Ps. 110:1 is first quoted in 1:13, which provides a point of reference, indicating the text with which our author is working. As shown in figure 5, our author's text agrees with both the LXX and the MT. There is also a near quotation of Ps. 110:1 in 10:12, 13, ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκδεχόμενος ἕως τεθῶσιν οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτοῦ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ ("he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting since then until his enemies will be made a footstool for his feet"). There is no reason here to suspect that there is any divergent textual influence, only that the author has adapted the text to fit smoothly into his own sentence structure. All of this indicates that our author has in mind a LXX text with which we are familiar

Hebrews 1:13	Psalms 109:1	Psalms 110:1
πρὸς τίνα δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἶρηκέν ποτε, Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου;	Εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου.	נָאִם יְהוָה לְאַדְנִי שֵׁב לְיְמִינִי עַד-אֲשֵׁית אֲיָבֶיךָ תַּחַם לְרַגְלֶיךָ:
But to which of the angels did he ever say, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"?	The Lord said to my lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet".	A declaration of Yahweh to my lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet".

Fig. 5

and which follows the Hebrew text very closely.

Having established this, it is possible to identify the changes he introduces and to assess their importance as indicators of his understanding of this passage. The first change is of *κάθου* ("sit down") to *ἐκάθισεν* ("he sat down"), which indicates that the author understands this command as having been fulfilled by Christ—a similar allusion to Ps. 110:1 in Heb. 12:2 indicates that the order of events was Jesus enduring the cross and then sitting down at the right hand of God, with the author assuming resurrection and ascension between the two (cf. 13:20). This interpretation of Ps. 110:1 in 8:1 shares certain characteristics with contemporary Jewish methods of interpretation, in particular, the bold application of Scripture to the interpreter's own time.<sup>12</sup> This is exemplified in some of the Qumran scrolls such as the commentaries on Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and others. For example, the Psalm 37 commentary:

*The steps of the Man are confirmed by the Lord and He delights in all his ways; though [he stumble, he shall not fall, for the Lord shall support his hand] (23-24)*

Interpreted, this concerns the Priest, the teacher of [Righteousness . . . whom] He established to build for Himself the congregation of . . .<sup>13</sup>

Our author applies what he sees as an eschatological text, "sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet", to his own time by seeing it as having been fulfilled in Christ (*τοιοῦτον ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα* and *ἐκάθισεν*). (Though the second half of Ps. 110:1 is not directly alluded to in 8:1, it was included in the earlier quotation, so it is reasonable to understand it as being part of the author's and readers' overall understanding of the passage.) This indicates that our author sees the Christian community as participating in the benefits of the end-time, while at the same time being in a position to anticipate end-time fulfilment (cf. 2:8, 9; 6:9-12; 10:35, 36; 12:7-11, 26-29; 13:13, 14), which is not unlike the "already, not yet" tension characteristic of Pauline literature. Our author deals with this "already, not yet" problem in 2:8-11 where he gives his explanation of a phrase from Psalm 8, which is very similar to Ps. 110:1b, *πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν*

<sup>12</sup>Cf. J.A. Fitzmyer, "The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and the NT", pp. 309, 315-16.

<sup>13</sup>G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, pp. 230-43.

ποδῶν αὐτοῦ (“having subjected all things under his feet”). Even a casual observation of life points out the problem, that all things are not currently subjected to Christ. The author answers this by explaining that for a little while Jesus had been made low to “taste death for the sake of all” and to “bring many sons to glory”. In fact, Ps. 110:1 itself implies a gap between the exaltation and the subjection of all enemies, “Sit at my right hand, *until* I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”.<sup>14</sup> The present and future implications of Christ's exaltation and entry into the throne room/sanctuary underpin the whole argument of Hebrews, and the contribution of 8:1 to the readers' understanding of this flows from an interpretation of Ps. 110:1 which is consistent with contemporary Jewish practices.

Another characteristic of early Jewish interpretation was the incorporation of the interpretation of a text into the quotation itself. For example, the Qumran commentary on Hab. 2:17 re-quotes the section which says, “because of the blood of men and the violence done to the land, the city, and all its inhabitants”, as “because of the blood of the city and the violence done to the land”. This is a minor change, but it does show a willingness to combine the author's interpretation with the quotation of the biblical text, in this case by equating the terms “men” and “city”.<sup>15</sup> By changing *κάθου* to *ἐκάθισεν* our author is also making the interpretive statement that the event described in Scripture had finally taken place, and that it was Christ who had fulfilled the Lord's command to sit down at his right hand.

The author continues this practice by expanding the concept of *μου* from the phrase in the LXX, *ἐκ δεξιῶν μου* (“at my right hand”), to *ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* (“at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens”). Since it is *ὁ κύριος* (“the Lord”) or יהוה (“Yahweh”) speaking in Ps. 110:1, it follows in our author's thinking that the Lord would be sitting on his throne in heaven. The divinity of the speaker also gives rise to his being described as “the majesty”. (In 12:2 there is another interpretive paraphrase of Ps. 110:1 where the phrase *τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* is replaced by the simple title *θεοῦ*.)<sup>16</sup> The concept of the throne of God is important in the argument of Hebrews and is found

<sup>14</sup>Paul makes a point of this in 1 Cor. 15:25.

<sup>15</sup>Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, p. 242.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 180; S. Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, pp. 215-16.

three times, apart from its use in 8:1. The first of these is in the quotation of Ps. 45:6 in 1:8, which establishes the Son as a righteous and eternal sovereign. The second occurrence is in 4:16 where the readers are encouraged to approach the throne of grace with confidence. The last use of *θρόνος* in Hebrews is in 12:2, another allusion to Psalm 110. In the light of this passage, the author's reference to the throne of God in 8:1 as an interpretation of the sitting motif in Ps. 110:1 is all the more significant since this indicates that the term "throne" almost becomes a standard way of describing the meaning and significance of "the right hand" for our author. This is important because the connection of the throne of God with the mercy seat of the holy of holies supports one of the main concepts in Hebrews,<sup>17</sup> that God has provided a sovereign-priest in Jesus. Hebrews 4:14-16 describes the readers' great high priest who is able to help those in need, and within all of this priestly imagery the injunction to the readers is to confidently approach the throne. That the sanctuary is seen as the location of the throne is confirmed by 10:19-25 where there is a great deal of verbal similarity to 4:14-16—the great high priest, holding fast to the confession, confidence, approaching—but in this case the readers are being encouraged to enter the heavenly sanctuary. This mixing of the imagery of priest and king is fundamental to the message of Hebrews, which is what makes the author's interpretation of "the right hand" so important. In the way the author offers this interpretation he is clearly combining a reference to and an interpretation of a scriptural passage in his allusion to Ps. 110:1. We can be very confident of this in this case: knowing the form of the biblical text with which he begins—since he quotes it elsewhere—we can easily plot the interpretive changes.

### *Psalm 110 and the Christ-Event*

Another important concern is the logic of identifying Jesus as the Lord of Psalm 110. If the author of Hebrews shared the assumptions of the Synoptics<sup>18</sup> and Acts,<sup>19</sup> that the psalm was written by David and that Jesus was the Christ, then it is not hard to imagine him making a similar

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<sup>17</sup>Cf. Isaacs (*Sacred Space*), who says, "At 9:5 the mercy seat (*ἰλαστήριον*) of the earthly tabernacle is explicitly referred to, by which time it has become clear that for our author the 'throne of grace' where we may receive 'mercy' (4:16) is the heavenly antitype of the ark and its 'mercy seat'."

<sup>18</sup>Mt. 22:44; 26:64; Mk. 12:36; 14:62; Lk. 20:42-43; 22:69.

<sup>19</sup>I.e. Peter's sermon in Acts 2:33-35.

decision to apply the psalm to Jesus, simply on the basis of what he saw as its messianic quality. However, it is also probable that the belief that Jesus applied Psalm 110 to himself opened the way for our author to make the same application and then to develop even further the connections between Jesus and the "Lord". This is in line with C.H. Dodd's now familiar statement:

What forgotten geniuses may lurk in the shadows of those first twenty years of Church history about which we are so scantily informed, it is impossible for us to say. But the New Testament itself avers that it was Jesus Christ Himself who first directed the minds of His followers to certain parts of the scriptures as those in which they might find illumination upon the meaning of His mission and destiny.<sup>20</sup>

This application of the psalm to Jesus, then, is based on the tradition of Jesus' own application of it to himself as well as its prophetic and messianic quality—if David is seen to have written the psalm, then the "Lord" must refer to someone between David and Yahweh in standing, the Messiah, and therefore the psalm as a whole would be an example of messianic prophecy.<sup>21</sup>

To say that the author of Hebrews applies Psalm 110 to Jesus on the basis of its messianic and predictive qualities, however, does not preclude the involvement of typology in the interpretation of the psalm.<sup>22</sup> There is some question as to whether Psalm 110 referred initially to David himself or was taken as a reference to the Messiah right from the start. The solution to this depends largely on one's view of the authorship of the psalm.<sup>23</sup> If David or a successor of his was understood to

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<sup>20</sup>C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, p. 110. Cf. also Shires, *Finding the Old Testament in the New*, p. 86.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. F.C. Synge, *Hebrews and the Scriptures*, pp. 12, 58.

<sup>22</sup>It is generally accepted that a type and its antitype cannot, by definition, refer to the same individual or entity (cf. L. Goppelt, *Typos*, p. 18). Therefore, if Psalm 110 is a messianic psalm, it would not be possible to describe its messianic interpretation in Hebrews as typological.

<sup>23</sup>C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch (*Commentary on the Old Testament: Psalms*, vol. 5, p. 189) argue from the unusual position and significance of יהוה יְהוָה in v. 1 that David must have been the author, and that he was writing about the Christ. Alternatively, H.J. Kraus (*Psalms 60–150*, p. 346) believes the author is "a prophet active and probably even official in the state sanctuary who at a solemn occasion addresses the king". W.O.E. Oesterley (*The Psalms*, p. 461) understands the psalmist to be writing in the prophetic mode about the king, and sees no messianic allusion in the psalm itself.

have written it from his own perspective about someone other than himself, then it probably would have been taken as referring to the Messiah from the start. If, however, David or his successor wrote the psalm about himself from the perspective of a third person, or if the king really did not compose the psalm but one of his courtiers wrote it for him, then it may well have constituted a description of David or another king, which would provide only for a later typological reference to the Messiah. It appears that by the first century the Jewish leaders understood Psalm 110 as written by David about the Messiah or Son.<sup>24</sup> This perspective may reflect the true origin of the psalm,<sup>25</sup> but if it does not, then our author would simply be standing in a tradition—with the rest of the NT<sup>26</sup>—of interpreting Psalm 110 typologically as a reference to the Messiah. Even if David did write the psalm originally about the Messiah,<sup>27</sup> which is most likely what our author would have believed, it is possible to conceive of typology as involved not in the psalm's interpretation but in its composition. Beyond the psalm's association with David, bringing to mind the close relationship between David and his messianic line, its imagery is obviously derived from the experiences of an earthly king—offering sacrifice, drinking from the brook along the way, lifting up the head in triumph. E.E. Ellis describes such typological prefiguring of Jesus in the Psalms:

In a typological correspondence oriented more specifically to Jesus, the royal and the servant Psalms are applied to the Messiah who represents or incorporates in himself God's servant people and who is the heir to David's throne.<sup>28</sup>

This typological correspondence is normally understood as being recognised and developed by later interpreters, but what would hinder the psalmist himself from setting up a typological relationship as part of the very fabric of the composition, making it a piece of typological interpretation in itself? This is especially viable in the light of the typological interpretations developed within pre-Christian Judaism—if later Hebrew interpreters could do it why not the earlier Hebrew writers? Therefore, no matter how the psalm is understood in terms of its mes-

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<sup>24</sup>Cf. Mt. 22:44; Mk. 12:36; Lk. 20:42-43.

<sup>25</sup>W. Manson (*Hebrews*, p. 92) takes this view.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. B. Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 80.

<sup>27</sup>C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, p. 189.

<sup>28</sup>E.E. Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*, p. 107.

sianic reference, this reference can be seen as typologically based. The difference is whether it was the psalmist himself who initiated the typological connection in the original process of composing the psalm, or whether a typological significance for the psalm was first conceived by its later interpreters.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the concern of the writer in Heb. 8:1 is not so much to interpret Psalm 110 as it is to interpret the Christ-event in the light of Psalm 110. When he says, "The main point of what is being said is, we have such a high priest", he shows that his main concern is the readers' perception of Jesus. It is as if he were saying, "Look at what Jesus is really like, according to Scripture". H. Shires is correct when he says, "without the OT Christians would have found it almost impossible to explain the person of Jesus or the meaning of his acts, especially his death and resurrection".<sup>29</sup> A purely exegetical treatment may have been primarily concerned with the interpretation of the scriptural passage, but this is not the foremost concern of our author. Instead, our author wants to offer a persuasive interpretation of the Christ and his work that will convince the readers to remain faithful to him.<sup>30</sup> Certainly, interpreting Scripture in the light of the Christ-event is foundational to our author's work, but even more fundamentally, he is attempting to interpret the Christ-event in the light of Scripture. This distinction is more than simply one of focus or emphasis; it affects the way the author uses and deals with Scripture at a basic level. For example, he exhibits no sense of obligation to deal with scriptural passages in a systematic manner, either in his quotation or interpretation of them. As long as the general sense of a passage is maintained and its role in the development of his thinking clear, then its authority will be added to his own message and the persuasive force of his work will be increased. This is illustrated to a lesser degree in 8:1 where the author feels free to expand the concept of "my right hand" in his allusion to Ps. 110:1. Goppelt's observation with respect to typology in particular is applicable here in a more general sense:

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<sup>29</sup>H. Shires, *Finding the Old Testament in the New*, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. S. Ruager (*Hebräerbrief*, p. 144), who states: "So, the central message of the epistle to the Hebrews is brought to clear expression, 'We, that is the Christian community, have a high priest, whom we need, namely one who <sup>4</sup>ever lives and pleads for us' (7:25)" (my translation). Cf. also L. Sabourin (*The Bible and Christ*, p. 141), who says, "It should be noted immediately that the NT authors are first of all witnesses to Christ, not exegetes of the Old Testament."

NT typology is not trying to find the meaning of some OT story or institution. It compares Jesus and the salvation which he has brought with the OT parallels in order to discover what can be learned from this about the new and then, perhaps, what can be learned also about the old.<sup>31</sup>

For the author of Hebrews, it is not so important that his readers follow the steps that brought him to his understanding of Scripture, but rather that they understand the steps that led him to his understanding of Jesus.

#### *THE HEAVENLY TABERNACLE (8:2, 5)*

Not only is Jesus seen as sitting at the right hand of the Father next to the throne or mercy seat in the holy of holies, but he is also seen as having an active priestly ministry in heaven. In 2:8-10 our author explains that although all things do not appear to the readers to be subject to Jesus, what they could see was Jesus crowned with glory and honour as a result of his death, that is, they could “see” Jesus seated at the right hand of the throne. Christ is seated, his earthly work complete, and now it is up to the Father to subject all things to him—“sit at my right hand *until I* make your enemies a footstool for your feet” (Ps. 110:1 in Heb. 1:13). The earthly ministry of Christ was finished, but his heavenly work, his eternal priesthood, had just begun.<sup>32</sup> To explain Jesus’ priestly ministry, our author draws an analogy with the ministry of the priests under the OC, for which he seems to rely primarily on the account in Exodus. In this analogy he works from a very highly developed view of the relationship between the old and the new systems, and understanding this analogy should make a significant contribution toward understanding the author’s view of the relationship between the two systems. The first comparison in this analogy of the two priesthoods is between the levitical tabernacle and what our author calls the true tabernacle.

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<sup>31</sup>Goppelt, *Typos*, p. 201.

<sup>32</sup>Westcott (*Hebrews*, p. 216) draws a distinction between the “session” (*ἐκάθισεν*) of Christ and his “serving” (*λειτουργός*). Ebrard (*Hebrews*, p. 246), however, understands v. 2 as repeating the “principal idea” of v. 1 with “more distinctness”. Westcott’s perspective seems to make better sense.

*Comparison of the Two Sanctuaries*

The first connection in Hebrews 8 with Exodus is in v. 2 with the description of the heavenly tabernacle “which the Lord pitched, not a human”.<sup>33</sup> The author refers to the heavenly sanctuary in v. 2 as τῶν ἁγίων (“the holy place”)<sup>34</sup> and τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς (“the true tabernacle”),<sup>35</sup> and in v. 5 as τῶν ἐπουρανίων (“the heavenly things”). The first description, “the holy place”, indicates a level of continuity between the heavenly and earthly sanctuaries since it is common to both (cf. Heb 9:1, 24, 25, which refer to the earthly sanctuary). The next term, “the true tabernacle”, indicates both continuity and discontinuity between the two since the term “tabernacle” is common to both, but only the heavenly sanctuary is described as “true”. The third term, “heavenly things”,<sup>36</sup> indicates an obvious contrast with the earthly tent. The continuity and discontinuity expressed by these three phrases is consistent with our author’s general conception of the relationship between the old and new.

The term τῶν ἁγίων (“the holy place”) may be a shortened form of τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων (“the holy of holies”, cf. 9:3, 12; 10:19, 20), a hebraism meaning “the holiest place”.<sup>37</sup> If this is the case, by saying that Jesus is a minister of the holy place the author would not only be describing his role as priest, but he would also be accentuating his superior position as high priest. Just as the levitical high priest alone was allowed into the holy of holies each year, Jesus is privileged to minister in the holy place before God, not just periodically but continuously. Alternatively, τῶν ἁγίων may be understood as a reference to the tabernacle as a whole, since the LXX typically uses it in this way (e.g.

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<sup>33</sup>Buchanan (*Hebrews*, pp. 133-34) sees v. 2 as an allusion to Num. 24:6, 7, but this is not convincing since the tents in the Numbers passage refer to the people’s own tents and not to the tabernacle. See Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, pp. 20-24) for a description and evaluation of the view that the tent mentioned here refers to the body of Christ.

<sup>34</sup>Cf. 9:3, 8, 12, 24; and especially 10:19, 20.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 218) for a discussion of the view that τῶν ἁγίων and τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς should be understood as a hendiadys, and Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, pp. 18, 19) for the opposing view.

<sup>36</sup>Isaacs (*Sacred Space*, p. 210) posits, along with others, that Hebrews understands heaven to consist entirely of the heavenly sanctuary, that is, that they are one and the same. This seems to contradict the evidence. Surely a heavenly city and heavenly Jerusalem would involve more than a sanctuary (11:10, 16; 12:22).

<sup>37</sup>Cf. Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 216; Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, p. 210.

Lev. 16:16, 20).<sup>38</sup> In any case, Jesus is not just minister of τῶν ἁγίων (“the holy place”), he is minister of τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς (“of the true tabernacle”).<sup>39</sup> Our author uses parallelism<sup>40</sup> in this phrase, τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς (“a minister of the holy place and of the true tabernacle”), in which both terms refer to nearly the same entity—in this case one may refer to a part, the other to the whole.<sup>41</sup> A modulation or increase in intensity from the first element to the second is evident with this pair.<sup>42</sup> The term “holy place” would be a natural expression for the earthly tabernacle while the phrase “true tabernacle” introduces the notion of another tabernacle, and heightens the distinction between the old and new by claiming superiority for this other tabernacle. The writer has already established that Jesus is a priest, so for him to say that he is a minister of the holy place would not be too shocking to his readers. As he continues, however, his message becomes more surprising: not only does Jesus’ ministry take place in another holy place, but Hebrews calls the other holy place “the true tabernacle”. This parallel introduces a comparison that he will develop in ch. 9.

### *Relationship between the Two Sanctuaries*

The use of such a characterisation as “true tabernacle” raises an important question: if the heavenly tabernacle is the true one, what was the earthly? The opposite of true is usually false, but for our author, in this case, the true is the heavenly, and its opposite is the earthly, a copy

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<sup>38</sup>Lane, *Hebrews*, p. 205; Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, p. 222; Moffat, *Hebrews*, p. 104.

<sup>39</sup>The use of τὸ ἅγιον and ἡ σκηνή may be an allusion to Leviticus 16, where these terms play an important role. Wis. 9:8 also uses both of these terms, and calls the earthly temple and altar an imitation of the eternal, holy tabernacle:

εἶπας οἰκοδομῆσαι ναὸν ἐν ὄρει ἁγίῳ σου  
καὶ ἐν πόλει κατασκηνώσεώς σου θυσιαστήριον,  
μίμημα σκηνῆς ἁγίας, ἣν προητοίμασας ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς.

(You said to build a temple on your holy mountain  
and in the city of your habitation an altar,  
an imitation of a holy tent, which you prepared from the beginning!)

<sup>40</sup>Cf. A. Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, pp. 29, 96-99.

<sup>41</sup>Isaacs (*Hebrews*, p. 79) takes this phrase as “somewhat of the nature of a hendiadys”.

<sup>42</sup>This is also characteristic of parallelism in the Hebrew Bible; cf. R. Alter, “The characteristics of ancient Hebrew poetry”, pp. 611-24.

(ὑπόδειγμα) and a shadow (σκιά)<sup>43</sup> of the heavenly (v. 5).<sup>44</sup> The true is true because it is the original and enduring, and the other is not true because it is simply a temporary representation and substitute for the true. Interestingly, ὑπόδειγμα is used most often outside Hebrews with the sense of example or pattern,<sup>45</sup> but according to the RSV, the NASB and the NIV the author uses it in 8:5 to refer to something that is patterned after or follows the example of something else, hence a “copy”. The grammar of 8:5—coupling the two words of the same case with καί, the placement of the verb after both words and the use of one modifier to refer to both words—demands that the terms ὑπόδειγμα and σκιά be understood as complementing one another and that both describe the earthly tabernacle, οἵτινες ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσιν τῶν

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<sup>43</sup>The use of “shadow” here to describe the earthly tent may show the influence of the Platonic philosophy of Philo (cf. Philo, *Leg. All.* 3.103; *Post C.* 112; *Migr. Abr.* 12; *Som.* 1.188, 206; *Plant* 27 for examples of his use of σκιά with and without reference to the tabernacle, and *Det. pot. ins.* 160-61 for thoughts on the tabernacle). Hebrews, however, does not slavishly follow the Platonic/Philonic outlook, which identifies everything physical as shadow and everything real as non-physical, since the physical sacrifice of Christ is part of what Hebrews would consider true or the opposite of shadow. This indicates that the thought of Hebrews as a whole is not Platonic, but that the author’s understanding of Platonism may have contributed to his development of the relation between the new and the old. See Williamson, *Philo*, pp. 142-59; Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought*, p. 42; Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 223-24; Strobel, *Hebräer*, pp. 93, 94; Thomas, “The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews”, p. 309. The use of τεχνίτης and δημιουργός (used together some 15 times in Philo) with reference to God’s creation of a heavenly city in Hebrews 11:10 indicates that the author is, at least at some points, opposed to a Philonic philosophy (e.g. *Congr.* 105, 3-4; *Op. mund.* 146, 7), but that he is willing to use terminology associated with it. Lindars (*The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, pp. 51, 54) is correct when he says, “We should thus be wary of accepting the common assumption that Hebrews uses a Platonic model, in which present earthly phenomena are shadows of eternal realities. . . . The language may be Platonic, but the idea is strictly temporal in accordance with Jewish and Christian eschatology.” He points out that it is not necessary to trace Hebrews’ conception of the two sanctuaries back to Platonism exclusively, since “the idea that earthly temples are copies of God’s heavenly dwelling was widespread in the religions of the ancient near east”. Bruce (*Hebrews*, p. 184), Goppelt (*Typos*, pp. 166-67), Lane (*Hebrews*, p. 207), Weiß (*Hebräer*, pp. 437-38) and others agree; Héring (*Hébreux*, p. 10) would not.

<sup>44</sup>Cf. Riggenbach (*Hebräer*, p. 220), who says, “The σκηνή in heaven is ἡ ἀληθινή, it is the real and substantial, what the earthly tent of meeting was only in a shadowy and imperfect way” (my translation).

<sup>45</sup>See Philo, *Ebr.* 132-33; Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 219.

ἐπουρανίω<sup>46</sup> (“who serve in a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things”).<sup>47</sup> The earthly tent cannot be both the shadow of and the pattern for the heavenly, so ὑπόδειγμα must mean something like “copy”. Apart from Heb. 8:5, ὑπόδειγμα is also used in 4:11 and 9:23. In the first occurrence the meaning is surely something like “example” (“in order that no one should fall by the same *example* of disobedience”). But in the last occurrence, in 9:23, ὑπόδειγμα must mean something like “copy”, since it is placed in contrast to the heavenly (“therefore, it is necessary on the one hand for the *copies* of the things in heaven to be cleansed by these, but the heavenly things themselves by better sacrifices than these”).<sup>48</sup> In both 9:23 and 8:5, then, our author uses ὑπόδειγμα in an unusual way. Whereas he uses it in the more typical sense of “pattern” in 4:11, it means something like “copy” in 9:23 and 8:5. In these later passages, the author has turned the meaning of ὑπόδειγμα on its head, making it mean the opposite of what it normally would, signifying that which imitates rather than that which is imitated. Therefore, in 8:5 the OC tabernacle is called a “copy and shadow” of the heavenly. In fact, Attridge is probably correct in calling ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ a hendiadys, translating it “shadowy copy”.<sup>49</sup>

The word σκιά (“shadow”) is only used twice in Hebrews. At 10:1 it is the opposite of εἰκόν (“the law has but a *shadow* of the good things to come, not the *form* of the things itself”). In 8:5 it is the opposite of the true, or the thing itself. The notion of shadow is meant to indicate both a continuity and a discontinuity between the two sanctuaries, since the form of the earthly tabernacle was determined by the heavenly. The earthly tent was meant to represent the spiritual meaning and significance of the heavenly, but it could never be more than a representation of the real tabernacle.

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<sup>46</sup>Because of the case and number of τῶν ἐπουρανίων it seems that it should be understood as a shortened form of τῶν ἐπουρανίων τῶν ἁγίων (“heavenly holy place”). Ebrard (*Hebrews*, pp. 248-49), who denies that Hebrews speaks of a heavenly tabernacle, argues against this, but his is a very difficult position to defend.

<sup>47</sup>Ebrard (*Hebrews*, p. 247) observes, “Λατρεύειν with the dative of the person whom one serves is frequent; it more rarely occurs with the dative of the thing in which one serves (beside this passage, comp. chap. xiii. 10). To take the dative in an instrumental signification would yield no sense.”

<sup>48</sup>Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 183.

<sup>49</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 219; Moffat (*Hebrews*, p. 105) says, “the phrase is practically a hendiadys”. Lane (*Hebrews*, p. 201) agrees.

The last characterisation of the tabernacle in 8:1-6 is the term *τύπος* in v. 5b, which is part of a quotation, or near quotation, of Exod. 25:40, which may also be influenced by Exodus 25:9; 26:30 and 27:8 (see figure 6).<sup>50</sup> Upon comparing the texts it is clear that Heb. 8:5b is not a word-for-word reproduction of Exod. 25:40, and that it may be influenced by other verses in Exod. 25–27. The most obvious deviation from Exod. 25:40 is the addition of *πάντα*, which comes from either 25:9 or a variant form of 25:40.<sup>51</sup> The only other deviation, except for our author's introduction of the quotation (*γάρ φησίν*), is *δειχθέντα*, which is an aorist rather than the perfect *δεδειγμένον* as in the LXX. Phrasing similar to 25:40, including the word *δείκνυμι* and its derivative *παρδείκνυμι*, is repeated several times in this context in the LXX (e.g. the texts cited above). In this repetition there is little consistency in the grammatical form of these two words, with two perfect passive participles and a present indicative of *δείκνυμι*, and an aorist passive participle of *παρδείκνυμι*. In the light of this, it may be that the divergence of Hebrews from the LXX in v. 5b simply reflects the practice in the LXX of varying the wording as it repeats this phrase. If this is the case, it would indicate that our author is aware of the broader context of the material he is quoting, and that the quotation serves as a pointer text designed to include the larger story in this section of Exodus.<sup>52</sup> This perspective is plausible since Hebrews so obviously assumes the readers' knowledge of the exodus at several points, an assumption quite understandable for anyone communicating to a Jewish audience. On the other hand, it is also possible that our author is offering his own translation of the Hebrew *הַסֵּוֹף*, but since the rest of the quotation follows the LXX so closely, and since the aorist form in Hebrews, *δειχθέντα*, can be explained by the broader context of the LXX text, this is less likely. Whether or not this quotation is influenced by the broader context of Exod. 25:40, which remains unsettled, there may also be a theological reason for the writer of Hebrews choosing an aorist form over the perfect here. The perfect ("which *has been shown* to you") could be

<sup>50</sup>Lane, *Hebrews*, p. 207.

<sup>51</sup>Codex Ambrosianus (F) reads *ποιήσεις πάντα*. . . . This version of the LXX may be attested by Philo (*Leg. All.* 3.102), who says, *διὰ τοῦθ' εὐρήσεις τὴν σκητὴν καὶ τὰ σκεύη πάντα αὐτῆς πρότερον μὲν ὑπὸ Μωϋσέως* ("on account of this you shall find the tent and all its vessels made first by Moses.")

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Lane, *Hebrews*, p. 207.

Hebrews	Exodus	Exodus
8:5b Ὅρα γάρ φησίν, ποιήσεις <u>πάντα</u> κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν <u>δειχθέντα</u> σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει.	25:40 ὄρα ποιήσεις κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν <u>δεδειγμένον</u> σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει.	25:40 וְרָאָה וַעֲשֵׂה כַּתְּבִינְתֶם אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּה מְרָאָה בְּהָרִ: .
For, “see,” he says, “you shall make <u>all things</u> according to the model <u>shown</u> to you on the mountain”.	see, you shall do according to the model which <u>has been shown</u> to you on the mountain.	And see and make [them] in their pattern which you were shown on the mountain.
	25:9a καὶ ποιήσεις μοι κατὰ πάντα, ὅσα ἐγὼ σοι δεικνύω ἐν τῷ ὄρει	25:9a כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר אָנִי מְרָאָה אוֹתְךָ אֵת תְּבִנֵית הַמִּשְׁכָּן
	And you shall do for me with respect to all things, as many things as I show to you on the mountain	Like everything which I show you according to the pattern of the tabernacle
	26:30 καὶ ἀναστήσεις τὴν σκηνὴν κατὰ τὸ εἶδος τὸ δεδειγμένον σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει.	26:30 וְהִקְמַתְּ אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן כַּמִּשְׁפָּטוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִרְאִיתָ בְּהָרִ:
	And you shall set up the tabernacle according to the vision which has been shown to you on the mountain.	And erect the tabernacle like its plan which you were shown on the mountain.
	27:8 κοῖλον σαιδωτὸν ποιήσεις αὐτό· κατὰ τὸ παραδειχθέν σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει, οὕτως ποιήσεις αὐτό.	27:8 נְבוֹב לַחַת תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ כְּאֲשֶׁר הִרְאָה אֹתְךָ בְּהָרִ כִּן יַעֲשֶׂוּ:
	A hollow frame you shall make it; according to that which was exhibited to you on the mountain, thus you shall make it.	Hollow boards you shall make it; like that which he showed to you on the mountain, thus they shall make [it].

Fig. 6 (Differences between the above texts are underscored.)

construed to imply or even emphasise the continued validity of what was revealed on the mountain, while the aorist (“which *was shown* to you”) would not provide for this understanding of *δείκνυμι*.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, the author may be using every opportunity, including the way in which he quotes Scripture, to contribute to his point that the old system is obsolete.

Concerning our author's reference to this passage Lane contends, “The choice of Exod. 25:40 seems to have been influenced by the term *τύπος*, ‘pattern, model, illustration,’ which attests the ‘shadowy’ character of the earthly sanctuary and its liturgy”.<sup>54</sup> This thought has some merit since, in the LXX, *τύπος* is used only in Exod. 25:40 and Amos 5:46. But whether or not our author was drawn to this passage by its use of *τύπος*, he does not understand *τύπος* in 8:5 as a technical term with the meaning given to it by modern scholars, and neither is it used in Exod. 25:40 (LXX) with this meaning. The use of *τύπος* in the NT is quite varied, being used, for example, with reference to a statue (Acts 7:43), a pattern (Rom. 6:17), a moral example (Phil. 3:17) and a type in the more technical sense (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 10:6). In Hebrews 8:5 *τύπος* is used with reference to the heavenly, the true, the ultimate, in contrast to the way many have come to define typology with the type referring to the temporary and lesser element. Here, the *τύπος* represents the element which is the genuine and the historical culmination, while in modern theological usage it is the antitype which is the historical culmination or the climactic element and the type is the lesser and anticipatory element. There is, however, a correspondence between the use of *τύπος* in 8:5 and the modern concept, since in both the type refers to that which is earlier.<sup>55</sup> Interestingly, in the case of the two tabernacles, it is the earlier which determines the nature and form of the later, while from the perspective of modern typology it is the later antitype that serves as the basis for recognising preceding types.

The only use of the term *τύπος* in Hebrews is in 8:5, but it is clear that the author has accepted *τύπος* as an appropriate description of the heavenly sanctuary's relationship to the earthly since he refers to the earthly tent in 9:24 as the *ἀντίτυπος* of the heavenly. Our author uses

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<sup>53</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 220; Nairne, *Hebrews*, p. 82; Thomas, “The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews”, p. 309.

<sup>54</sup>Lane, *Hebrews*, p. 207.

<sup>55</sup>Cf. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, pp. 403, 406.

several other terms to describe the relationship between the old and the new, including *σκιά* (“shadow”, 8:5), *ὑπόδειγμα* (“copy”, 8:5; 9:23), *παραβολή* (“symbol”, “type”, 9:9; 11:19) and *εἰκῶν* (“form”, 10:1). All of these terms, including *τύπος* and *ἀντίτυπος*, are used in the context of typological relationships.<sup>56</sup> So, although the term *τύπος* in 8:5 is not used in the same way as the theological term “type”, it does describe a relationship that is fundamentally typological.<sup>57</sup> This typological relationship is unique in one way, however, since the type, the earthly tabernacle—speaking in modern terms—does not predate its corresponding antitype, the heavenly. This is due to the unique nature of the heavenly tabernacle as an antitype, in that it is eternal. But, even though the heavenly tabernacle predates its earthly type, the heavenly is not in full operation until the time of Christ’s entrance into it after his death, when the correspondence between the two tents is consummated. Therefore the typological relationship between the two tabernacles is not really established until the priestly ministry of Christ begins.<sup>58</sup> In all other ways this typological connection is not exceptional, and because of this, much can be learned from it about the use of typology in Hebrews.<sup>59</sup>

If the typological relationship between the two tabernacles is characteristic of the use of typology in Hebrews generally, then the terms the author uses to describe that relationship are very instructive. First, the antitype (speaking now in modern terminology) is described as “true”, which indicates that in some sense the type is not the real thing. This does not mean that the type does not really exist or that it has no validity in its own right, but that in its role as type it is not equal in status to the antitype, but relates to it as illustration, foreshadowing, and representation. It means that there is a certain reality which is suggested by the type, and it is this reality which is the point of focus. Secondly, the heavenly tabernacle was “pitched by the Lord”, and was not a

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<sup>56</sup>This is the case since all of the relationships described by these terms fit an accepted definition of a typological relationship; cf. Goppelt, *Typos*, pp. 17, 18.

<sup>57</sup>Cf. Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 19.

<sup>58</sup>Cf. Williamson, *Philo*, pp. 157-59.

<sup>59</sup>Goppelt (*Typos*, pp. 161-62) observes, “Of all the NT writings the Epistle to the Hebrews draws most extensively from the OT for the development and support of its exposition. . . . the meanings which Hebrews directly attributes to the OT message can largely be defended in the light of the modern historical interpretation of Scripture as typological interpretation.”

human creation. It was also “heavenly” and not earthly. Other types/antitypes cannot be distinguished by an earthly/heavenly dichotomy, or even on the basis of human/divine creation. Rather, the characteristic that the terms “true”, “heavenly” and “pitched by God” describe and that the heavenly tabernacle has in common with other antitypes is that of being an ultimate spiritual reality. This is not to say that antitypes cannot be physical; they are—if Christ is seen as an antitype, and surely he is (e.g. 10:1-10), then he is an example of a physical antitype, but even in his earthly, physical state he was seen as the embodiment of spiritual reality (1:3). So, while in Hebrews an antitype may be physical, it always constitutes an ultimate spiritual reality. Thirdly, the earthly tabernacle is called a “copy and shadow” of the heavenly, which is the pattern, with God requiring the copy to be constructed according to this heavenly pattern. A meaningful connection between type and antitype can be established only because both represent the work of God in history.<sup>60</sup> It is the continuity of the working of God throughout the ages, if not his deliberate foreshadowing, that enables the establishment of a type/antitype connection. With the two tabernacles it would have been clear to our author that God was orchestrating a typological relationship from the beginning, which was consummated at Christ’s entrance into the heavenly sanctuary, illustrating a profound continuity within biblical history. In some sense, whether enabled by design or by divine consistency, all typological connections can be seen as the work of God, and this is certainly how Hebrews represents them. In this way, all types are patterned after their “real” counterpart, a shadowy copy of a spiritual reality.

### *Significance of the Two Sanctuaries*

Reading the detailed description of the tabernacle in Exodus, recorded as representing the very words of God, it is difficult to imagine a biblical author understanding the tabernacle as anything other than a

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<sup>60</sup>Goppelt (*Typos*, pp. 17, 18; cf. also pp. 3, 12, 16) explains, “The concept of typology with which we begin may be defined and distinguished from other methods of interpretation as follows: Only historical facts—persons, actions, events, and institutions—are material for typological interpretation; words and narratives can be utilised only insofar as they deal with such matters. These things are to be interpreted typologically only if they are considered to be *divinely ordained representations* or types of future realities that will be even greater and more complete” (italics mine).

true or real sanctuary. However, as tangible and concrete as the instructions in Exodus are, the author of Hebrews is willing to afford it no more than the status of shadow. For him, the real sanctuary is the heavenly sanctuary, and the fact that it is heavenly is precisely what makes it more real and better. With the discussion of the true, heavenly tabernacle the author has introduced a new and very important concept to his work, a comparison of the new and the old which describes the one as true and the other as something other than true. In the previous chapters, the notion of superiority was anchored to the personal qualifications of Christ, whereas in 8:2 it is the inherently more real nature of that which is heavenly and which God himself has created that undergirds the superior quality of the new. The problem with the earthly sanctuary is the same as the problem with the law, as expressed in 10:1: they are both merely shadow, and not the real thing (itself). This is characteristic of the author's view of the old system as a whole; he sees even the sacrifices offered by the levites as incapable of bringing true and permanent restoration and therefore as necessarily repeated year after year. The old system, then—and especially the earthly tent—was merely an imitation of the true.

Our author connects the concept that the earthly tent was a mere imitation of the true tabernacle in heaven to the fact that it was made by human hands. Even though, according to Exodus, God gave very detailed instructions as to the design and building of the tabernacle (Exodus 25–27) and also provided wisdom and skill to the workers (Exod. 26:1, cf. 28:3), in the view of our author the tabernacle was still, in one sense, a human product. On the other hand, the heavenly sanctuary is understood as not only divinely inspired but also divinely created in its entirety. This introduces another important concept to the flow of Hebrews' argument: the superiority wrought by the direct and exclusive working of God apart from the involvement of mere human beings. The roots of this can be found as early as 3:1–6, where Jesus' faithfulness is considered to be of more import than Moses' simply because Moses was a servant and Jesus a Son. Interestingly, this paragraph on the comparative faithfulness of these two mediators is woven together with a building motif, which asserts that it is the builder of a house that is worthy of more honour than the house itself. This perspective may explain why our author thought it important to establish that the "true" sanctuary was in fact built exclusively by God, for there would have been some sense, from this perspective, in which the builders of the levitical tabernacle

would have been responsible for the glory of that structure. One way, then, in which the heavenly tabernacle is truer and superior is that, since it is exclusively God's creation, he alone can take credit for it; thus it more perfectly reflects the glory of God.<sup>61</sup> Of course, the heavenly tabernacle being "pitched" by God and not by his people also highlights its enduring nature, since its establishment and maintenance are dependent upon God alone.

This shift of responsibility from the people of God to God himself is not limited to the building of tabernacles. Within the covenant language of Scripture there is a similar shift of responsibility. Jer. 31:33, quoted in Heb. 8:10, records God's intent to write his law on the hearts and minds of his NC people, while Exod. 24:12; 31:18 and 34:1 indicate that although God himself wrote at least part of the Mosaic Covenant, at this earlier point it was on tables of stone rather than on the hearts of his people. Later, in Deut. 6:6-9, the people are told to write the commandments on their own heart and doorposts, etc. Deuteronomy 6, containing the *shema*, would have been very familiar to the readers, so they may well have perceived the contrast in the way the two covenants are represented as they encountered the Jeremiah quotation in Heb. 8:8-12: the people were to take responsibility for their own assimilation of the elements of the OC, while under the NC that responsibility falls upon God alone. God doing in the new situation, in some respects, what the people would have done in the old is part of the difference between the two systems which our author perceives, and interprets as an indication of the superiority of the new. In Hebrews this distinction is not exclusive to our author's treatment of the relationship between the two sanctuaries, but it is expressed most emphatically in that context.

According to Exod. 25:40 Moses was shown a "pattern" of the heavenly temple while he was on Mt. Sinai. It is impossible to tell from the Hebrew word, תְּבַנֵּיִת, or the Greek *τύπος*, whether this "pattern" refers to an actual heavenly temple, as spoken of in Hebrews, or whether it refers to a representation of the heavenly, or whether it refers simply to a model for the express purpose of showing Moses what his tent should look like.<sup>62</sup> Braun thinks it possible that Hebrews equates Mt.

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<sup>61</sup>Cf. Peterson, "The Prophecy of the New Covenant in the Argument of Hebrews", p. 75.

<sup>62</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 220; Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, pp. 33, 34. Ebrard (*Hebrews*, pp. 248-49) contends that Moses was shown a "draught or plan which, beyond his vision, had no existence." He continues, "The question now presents

Sinai and heaven, as Exod. 19:3 and 20:22 seem to do.<sup>63</sup> Whether or not this is the case, it is clear that the author of Hebrews takes it as a revelation of the existence of a heavenly sanctuary when Exodus speaks of Moses seeing an archetypal tabernacle on Mt. Sinai. With the description in Exodus of the presence of God on the mountain, it is possible that Hebrews may understand Moses as having witnessed the heavenly tabernacle itself. However, there is no indication in the language of Exodus that Moses (or God) had entered any structure other than that offered by the mountain, e.g. being hidden in the cleft of the rock (Exod. 33:21, 22). Furthermore, God's glory on the mountain was not associated with his throne or the heavenly sanctuary—as it was with the earthly tabernacle—implying that God's visit to the mountain probably did not involve the “real” sanctuary. It is clear from Exodus that Moses at least saw a pattern that he was to follow, but the text of Exodus does not necessitate even that there be a heavenly counterpart, and it never states that what Moses would build would correspond to a heavenly tabernacle; that must be derived from elsewhere.<sup>64</sup> The characterisation

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itself, whether our author understood the passage in this, the right way, or whether he misunderstood it in the manner of the later Rabbis.” Ebrard, believing that our author did get it “right”, is a bit too confident of his view that Hebrews did not understand Moses as having seen the actual heavenly sanctuary, in the light of the limited evidence. Whatever the case, it is clear that Hebrews envisions the real existence of a heavenly tabernacle (8:2; 9:11-14; 10:19-22).

<sup>63</sup>Braun, *Hebräer*, p. 235.

<sup>64</sup>By the first century the concept of a heavenly temple being shadowed by an earthly one was fairly widespread, e.g. *1 En.* 14:9-25; *T. Levi* 3:1-9; *Wis.* 9:8; *2 Bar.* 4:1-7; *Rev.* 3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5; 16:1, 17. According to Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 222), “The notion that the earthly temple is constructed according to a heavenly pattern is an ancient Semitic one”, and Lindars (*The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 54) claims that many religions of the first century would have included an understanding of an earthly copy of God's heavenly dwelling. Montefiore (*Hebrews*, p. 135) says, “The idea of a heavenly temple, with an earthly temple as its counterpart, is very ancient indeed”. He goes on to cite the Hammurabi Code (2:31) of Babylonia and Josephus (*Antiq.* 3,7,7) as examples. He also says that the use of *τύπος* in Exod. 25:40 (LXX) suggests the notion of the earthly/heavenly tabernacle comparison. Goppelt's suggestion (*Typos*, p. 167) is very instructive: “The contrasting of upper and lower worlds is found in Hebrews only in the concept of the heavenly sanctuary (and the heavenly Jerusalem, 12:22; the same analogy applies to it). This idea, which can be traced to Exod. 25:40, is not unique in Philo; it was already widespread in Judaism at an early date.” See Attridge (*Hebrews*, pp. 222-24) for an excellent treatment of “The Heavenly Temple and Its Significance”; and Buchanan (*Hebrews*, pp. 132-33) on the conception in early Judaism that the

of Exod. 25:40 in Heb. 8:5, *καθὼς κεχρημάτισται Μωϋσῆς μέλλων ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν σκηνήν, Ὅρα γάρ φησίν, ποιήσεις πάντα κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν δειχθέντα σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει* (“just as Moses has been warned when he was about to complete the tent, for he says, ‘see that you make all things according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain’”), indicates that our author takes very seriously Moses’ responsibility to get every detail of the tabernacle just right (the instructions in Exodus for the construction of the tent are quite detailed).<sup>65</sup> This would be of vital importance if the earthly tent were supposed to be a representation or reflection of another sanctuary,<sup>66</sup> otherwise it would seem reasonable enough for Moses to build a nice or even glorious structure, but following a general plan, not one so detailed as to specify everything down to the type of material to be used. There is also a strong theological reason for Hebrews asserting the existence of a heavenly tabernacle. If the OC rest, priests, sacrifices, and even the OC itself had a New, heavenly counterpart, it would be strange for the earthly tabernacle to be left out of this. For instance, where would a heavenly priest offer a heavenly sacrifice were there not a heavenly sanctuary?<sup>67</sup> So, our author’s theology moves him to recognise a heavenly tabernacle, and the text of Exodus at least allows it.<sup>68</sup>

For Hebrews, then, the earthly tabernacle is strictly constructed to reflect the spiritual characteristics of the heavenly. In this way the heavenly situation is being reconstructed on earth, but the heavenly situation in its most complete state is not antecedent to or even contemporary with the construction and operation of the wilderness tabernacle, but is completely realised only in the relatively distant future and only anticipated by God. For, as our author sees it, it is only with the death of Christ and his entrance as the eternal high priest and the presentation of his once-for-all sacrifice (Heb. 9:12) that the heavenly sanctuary finally fulfils the typological relationship suggested by its earthly counterpart.

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earthly and heavenly sanctuaries were closely related, and that the presence of God was in both.

<sup>65</sup>Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. 183-84; and Montefiore, *Hebrews*, pp. 116-17.

<sup>66</sup>Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, pp. 225-26.

<sup>67</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 218.

<sup>68</sup>Hughes (*Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, pp. 105, 106) properly recognises that the application of Scripture in Hebrews is not necessarily required by the meaning of the scriptural text, but allowed by it, and that the application of Scripture in Hebrews depends on and reflects the author’s Christian presuppositions.

The heavenly tabernacle provides the pattern for the earthly tent, and conversely, the earthly tabernacle affords a connection to the heavenly sanctuary. As an imitation, the earthly tabernacle was manifestly inferior to the original. On the other hand, being an imitation made the earthly tabernacle immensely valuable as a reflection of the original, heavenly sanctuary.<sup>69</sup> The earthly tabernacle was understood by Exodus to offer a profound connection to the spiritual domain, the very presence of God. In this tabernacle God took up a dwelling place on earth that made his presence more accessible and more enduring than ever before. Our author asserts a profound connection between the earthly tabernacle and its heavenly counterpart when he claims that the levitical priests were serving in a copy and shadow of heavenly things (8:5). This perspective flows from his understanding that “Moses was warned” that he was to build the earthly tent “according to the pattern” he saw on Sinai. By the Lord’s design, the earthly was to be a reflection of heavenly things, but the levitical priests were only related to the heavenly sanctuary by association, since they served in nothing better than a shadowy copy of the true tabernacle, at least from Hebrews’ point of view. There was a sense in which, for the exodus generation, God was there in the physical holy of holies where his physical throne, the mercy seat, stood. This is evident from the descriptions of the manifest glory of God that filled the tabernacle (Exod. 29:43; 40:34, 35), as well as the bread of the presence (Exod. 25:30). Hebrews does not deny this, but for our author the earthly copy could not be considered the “true” and permanent dwelling place of God and therefore was inferior, just as the ministry of the levitical priests was inferior.

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<sup>69</sup>The English translation of Héring (*Hebrews*, p. 66) says, “The opposition between the ‘heavenly’ and ‘earthly’ things is used to *denigrate* the levitical cult, which is only a copy and shadow of the true cult” (italics mine). The word “denigrate” is used to translate the French “rabaïsser”. This should not be interpreted to mean that Héring understands Hebrews as stripping the old system of any value whatsoever, since he says later (*Hébreux*, p. 76), “For our author, there was evidently a time when the first covenant was not yet old and senile [v. 13]. Nevertheless, its inferiority is congenital” (my translation). Although the inferiority of the old system is vigorously sustained, Hebrews does see the old system as God-given and worthy of the respect and commitment of those to whom it was given, even though it sees it as “obsolete” and “about to pass away” in the light of the NC initiated by Christ. The old, levitical system is seen by our author as having value even for his Christian readers, since he uses the old as a means of understanding the new.

## A NECESSARY SACRIFICE (8:3, 4)

Sacrifice is central to the role of the priest, as indicated by Hebrews 8:3, *πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰς τὸ προσφέρειν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας καθίσταται· ὅθεν ἀναγκαῖον ἔχειν τι καὶ τοῦτον ὃ προσενέγκῃ* (“for every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary also for this one to have something which he might offer”). The priestly book of Leviticus begins with a detailed discussion of offerings and sacrifice, indicating that it sees sacrifice as central to the function of the levitical priests. The priests were to represent the people before God, and this necessarily involved making offerings to God from the people (cf. Lev. 1:2-5). Hebrews understands the priestly role of Jesus in this way as well, with him interceding for the people of God, not with animal sacrifices as central to that intercession, but with his own sacrifice.

There is some debate as to the function of v. 3 in Heb. 8:1-6. Some contend that it is no more than parenthetical;<sup>70</sup> others disagree. Delitzsch outlines the argument of these verses with a clear and convincing scheme, which shows that it is best not to take v. 3 as parenthetical:

The chain of the argument appears to be as follows: Christ is Priest in the heavenly archetypal sanctuary (v. 1, 2); for there is no priest without some sacrificial function (v. 3); and if here on earth he would not be a priest at all (v. 4), where there are priests already who serve in the typical and shadowy sanctuary (v. 5).<sup>71</sup>

So, as Delitzsch shows, both v. 3 and v. 4 play an integral role in the argument of Heb. 8:1-5.

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<sup>70</sup>E.g. Narborough (*Hebrews*, p. 112) thinks that v. 3 represents a parenthesis, but this is probably a stronger separation of the verse from the context than necessary in the light of the reference to sacrifice in v. 4. However, the *οὖν* at the beginning of v. 4 probably does harken back partly to v. 2, as Narborough says.

<sup>71</sup>Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 25. The observation of Weiß (*Hebräer*, p. 434) also stands against the notion that v. 3 is a parenthesis: “The introductory *γὰρ* in v. 3 indicates—just as in 5:1 in the connection with 4:14-16—in any case, that the following details in this respect are an integral part of the argument, since they clarify the christological statement of v. 2, and indeed in the sense of heightening the necessity of the heavenly priesthood” (my translation).

*Levitical Gifts and Sacrifices*

The appointment of the levitical priests is stressed by our author, probably because Jesus' appointment as priest is foundational to the argument of Hebrews (cf. ch. 7).<sup>72</sup> "In a pattern similar to 9:6, the author first explained what the custom was for the priests in general. He then applied it to Jesus in particular."<sup>73</sup> The purpose of the high priest's appointment is the offering of gifts and sacrifices, according to v. 3, which is probably an allusion to the account of the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly ministry in Exodus 29. The consecration ceremony described by Exodus 29 revolves around the offering of several sacrifices. The broader context, the plans for the tabernacle, establish that sacrifice was to be a permanent element of the Mosaic system with its description of the brass altar at the beginning of ch. 27. Sacrifice, then, is indispensable to the role and function of the Aaronic/levitical priest.

With the emphasis in Hebrews on the obsolescence of the OC and its trappings it is easy to forget that our author not only upholds, but also relies on, the acceptance by his readers of at least the pre-Christian validity of the old system.<sup>74</sup> His continual use of the old both theologically and paraenetically as illustration and argument in the new situation depends upon a respect for the old as having been given by God and as valid for its time.<sup>75</sup> That our author views the old system with such respect is established as early as 1:1, where he describes the prophetic word to the fathers of old as coming from God. As a part of the old system which came from these fathers of old, "gifts and sacrifices" were offered by the levitical priests for sins (5:1, 3).<sup>76</sup> They

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<sup>72</sup>Ebrard (*Hebrews*, pp. 246-47) sees vv. 3, 4 as an argument for the necessity of the existence of a heavenly tabernacle. Jesus was a priest, he needed to offer sacrifice as a priest, and he could not do so on earth. Therefore, there must be a heavenly tabernacle in which he could minister. This view seems to have a great deal of merit, but these verses are also designed to establish the typological relationship between Jesus' death and the levitical offerings.

<sup>73</sup>Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, p. 134. Cf. also Weiß, *Hebräer*, p. 434.

<sup>74</sup>The readers also wanted to maintain a *post*-Christian enforcement of the Mosaic covenant, one of the fundamental problems addressed by Hebrews.

<sup>75</sup>Montefiore, *Hebrews*, p. 135.

<sup>76</sup>Both *περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν* and *ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν* ("for sins") are used to indicate the purpose of the offerings, with the two prepositions used interchangeably (see F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 121 and

were required by God, and were able to avert the judgment of God, at least for the high priest inside the Holy of Holies (9:7-10). Hebrews also sees these sacrifices as effective in cleansing the earthly tabernacle and its utensils (9:23). Nonetheless, with everything that the levitical sacrifices could accomplish, they could not do what ultimately needed to be done, the permanent perfection of the people (10:1-5).

According to 8:4, the levitical sacrifices were offered according to the Mosaic law, and being a part of the law they had fundamental limitations. As 10:1-4 explains, the Mosaic law was but a shadow of spiritual realities to come; therefore, the accomplishments of its sacrificial system were equally shadowy. Like a shadow, the effect of the levitical offerings was temporary, so that they had to be repeated over and over again, some daily (7:27) and others yearly (10:1). And like a shadow, they could not change the substance of everyday life, the condition of the worshipper: they could not take away sin (9:9; 10:4). Another weakness of the old system, as seen by our author, is the variety of levitical offerings, illustrated by such language as "gifts and sacrifices" (e.g. 8:3; 9:9), and by the different descriptions of levitical offerings, daily and yearly (e.g. 7:27; 10:1). In contrast, Christ's self-sacrifice was a single, "once-for-all" occasion that was effective for all time, and so would never need to be repeated (7:27; 9:12, 26; 10:10).

### *Christ's Sacrifice*

For Jesus to fulfil his appointment as priest, he would need to have something to offer as a sacrifice (8:3b), but since his appointment was of a higher order than that of the levites, his sacrifice would have to be something quite different from theirs (8:4). In fact, since Jesus' priesthood was of a heavenly order (9:23, 24),<sup>77</sup> his sacrifice would have to be of a heavenly nature. While Jesus was ministering on earth, the levitical priesthood was still in effect, and Jesus' priesthood had not yet been inaugurated—having the two priestly orders in operation simultaneously is a logical impossibility to our author,<sup>78</sup> because Jesus' priesthood renders the levitical priesthood obsolete. According to 8:4, if Jesus were still on earth (when Hebrews was written) he would not be a priest: *εἰ*

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Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, p. 270). In fact, *περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν* had even become a technical term for the sin offering.

<sup>77</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 218-19 and Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 183.

<sup>78</sup>Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, p. 206; Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, p. 182; and Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 218.

μὲν οὖν ἦν ἐπὶ γῆς, οὐδ' ἂν ἦν ἱερεὺς, ὄντων τῶν προσφερόντων κατὰ νόμον τὰ δῶρα (“therefore, if he were on earth, he would not be a priest, there being those who offer gifts according to the law”). This is the case since his priestly ministry required the unique sacrifice of himself, i.e. his own death. Jesus’ sacrifice was not according to the law; there were already priests making those offerings. Jesus’ priesthood was unique and so was his sacrifice, and this sacrifice necessarily removed him from earth and brought him into heaven. Jesus, as the readers’ sovereign high priest, serves in a heavenly sanctuary (8:1, 2), and like the levitical priests he has an offering to make, but unlike them his offering is not according to the Mosaic law (8:3-5). It is clear in Hebrews that the only sacrifice Jesus offers is himself (7:27; 9:14, 25, 26), and that this offering involves his death (10:10; 13:12). Therefore, Hebrews sees Jesus’ priesthood as beginning at the time of his death and entry into the heavenly sanctuary, and sees the validity of the levitical priesthood as ending at this same point.<sup>79</sup>

Some take 8:4 as indicating that Jesus’ priesthood did not begin while he was on earth. This brings up an interesting question: Was Jesus acting as priest when he died on the cross, since when he did this he was still on earth? It is important to remember that the old, levitical system is mere analogy, metaphor, or more specifically, a type of the new.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, the relationship between the two cannot be pressed in every detail, and Hebrews certainly does not. For instance, it was the levitical priest who killed the animal sacrifice, yet, although Jesus is portrayed as having offered himself, this does not imply that he killed himself. Jesus’ priesthood is unique, since he is both the one who offers and the one who is offered. But does our author see Jesus as offering himself *as a priest* while on earth, on the cross? According to Riegenbach he does not:<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>For Braun (*Hebräer*, p. 231), the priesthood of Jesus was of a heavenly nature, saying that his cross was not “on earth”, but belonged rather with his ascension.

<sup>80</sup>Cf. Moffatt, *Hebrews*, p. 105.

<sup>81</sup>Riegenbach, *Hebräer*, p. 226; cf. also Ruager, *Hebräerbrief*, p. 145. Ebrard (*Hebrews*, pp. 246-47) reads “earthly tabernacle” where Hebrews says “earth”, so that Jesus could not be a priest “in the earthly tabernacle”, not generally on “earth”. Héring (*Hébreux*, p. 76) does not sense any difficulty here at all, saying that Jesus simply did not offer sacrifice on earth “in the usual sense” (my translation).

Then since v. 1f speaks exclusively of the priesthood, which Christ performed in heaven, v. 3 cannot deal with an offering brought on the earth, but rather a subsequent offering in heaven must be envisioned.<sup>82</sup>

However, this is difficult to sustain in the light of passages such as 7:26-28 and 10:8-14. In fact, 8:4 does not say that “*while* he was on earth he was not a priest”, but “*If* he were on earth he would not be a priest”.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, the operative question is: If he were on earth *when*? Our author certainly cannot mean that if Jesus were ever on earth he could not be a priest, and in fact, he could not have in mind any time when Jesus actually was on earth, since either of these meanings would disqualify Jesus from being a priest at all. Therefore, this phrase must refer to some time after Jesus was on earth, most likely the time when the phrase was written. Kistemaker rightly interprets the grammar of the conditional sentence:

In 8:4 the author continues his use of contrast with a conditional sentence that is contrary to fact. That is, the two parts of the sentence demand counterparts which are implied.

“If he were on earth”—but he is in heaven  
“he would not be a priest”—but he is our priest<sup>84</sup>

Therefore, the meaning of this phrase is that if Jesus were still on earth, if he had not died, then he could not be a priest. This would be the case because the only acceptable sacrifice Jesus could make as a priest on

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<sup>82</sup>Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, pp. 222-23 (my translation). See the following material in Riggenbach, pp. 223-24 and see also Isaacs (*Hebrews*, p. 79), who states, “the reference [*προσφέρειν* in v. 3] is not to Calvary but to our Lord’s entrance into heaven”.

<sup>83</sup>Vos (*The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 113) takes this verse as indicating that the “centre” of Jesus’ priesthood was in heaven and not earth: “If we take this as a bald geographical statement, then the priesthood of Christ is entirely removed from earth. But the meaning is rather that if Christ had the *centre* of His priesthood, that is, His *sanctuary*, on earth, He would not be a priest at all.” This interpretation seems to import the notion of sanctuary into the text without warrant.

<sup>84</sup>Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, p. 218. He goes on to say, “The sanctuary in which Christ serves as high priest is in heaven, not on earth. During his ministry on earth he could not be a priest at all because he belonged to the tribe of Judah, rather than the tribe of Levi. However the writer of the epistle does not state or imply that Christ could not bring his once-for-all offering on Calvary’s cross. He only notes that those who are part of the Levitical priesthood offer gifts that are ‘prescribed by the law.’ Jesus did not belong to the priestly clan of Levi and therefore could not serve at the altar. Instead he serves in the true tabernacle in the presence of God.”

earth, other than himself through death, would be those prescribed by the law, and there are already those assigned to make those offerings. A priest must make sacrifices (8:3), and so there would be no room for Christ as a priest on earth, apart from his self-sacrifice and death. If he were still on earth when Hebrews was written, he would not (yet) have made his self-sacrifice through death, and therefore, he could not (yet) be a priest.

Hebrews 8:4 is meant to show that Jesus' priesthood is a heavenly priesthood.<sup>85</sup> This, however, does not preclude his death on the cross as being part of his priestly ministry. It was this sacrifice that facilitated his departure to heaven, and must be seen as an integral facet of Jesus' priestly ministry. Hebrews does see Jesus as having offered his body on the cross as a priest, but it also sees Jesus as making an offering that was a spiritual sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary (9:25, 26). Although I would not agree with every significance that he attaches to this, Calvin also accepts that Jesus' priestly sacrifice had both an earthly and a heavenly dimension:

We must always hold this truth, that when the Apostle speaks of the death of Christ, he regards not the external action, but the spiritual benefit. He suffered death as men do, but as a priest he atoned for the sins of the world in a divine manner; there was an external shedding of blood, but there was also an internal and spiritual purgation; in a word, he died on earth, but the virtue and efficacy of his death proceeded from heaven.<sup>86</sup>

And again, Delitzsch gives a remarkably concise and forceful distillation of the issue:

the whole paragraph (vv. 3-6) consists of two syllogisms: (a) A priest's office is to offer sacrifice; Christ is a priest (*λειτουργός*); therefore Christ must have something to offer. (b) The sphere in which Christ's priestly office is discharged must be either an earthly one or not; an earthly one it cannot be, in as much as on earth (in the material tabernacle) there are other priests officiating according to the law; therefore Christ's sphere of priestly operation must be an unearthly, *i.e.* heavenly one.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, p. 206.

<sup>86</sup>Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, pp. 181-82.

<sup>87</sup>Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 26.

*Jesus' Earthly Ministry*

Hebrews 8:4, along with other references, indicates that Hebrews takes Jesus' earthly experience very seriously. The suffering of Jesus on earth is clearly of particular importance in Hebrews, with his experience on the cross mentioned in 2:9, 10, 14-18; 6:6; 10:10; 12:2, 3 and 13:12, 20. Among the other references to Jesus' earthly life, 1:6 tells of his birth and the angels' worship of him at this occasion; 2:3 refers to the Lord's teaching ministry; 4:15 is possibly primarily an allusion to the story of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, and secondarily an allusion to temptation in Jesus' life in general; 5:7-10 is an allusion to the story of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane; and finally, 13:20 mentions the resurrection of Christ for the first and only time in Hebrews.

In the view of our author, the earthly experiences of Christ were a necessary prelude to his successful and superior priesthood. In 2:9 there is a general assertion that Jesus was "crowned with glory and honour"—a description of his heavenly and thus priestly state—as a result of his suffering and death. The path of Jesus' glorification, as described in 12:2, includes his earthly experience, indicating that before he could sit down at God's right hand he had to endure the cross, and this he did with a view to the joy that it would ultimately bring. In fact, the experiences of Jesus leading up to and including the cross are part of what makes him a priest superior to the levites. According to 2:10 he was perfected by his suffering, and 7:28, summing up the chapter on Jesus' priestly appointment, presents Jesus' perfection as being at the core of his superior priestly nature. Along the same lines 5:7-10 claims that Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered, and 7:26, 27 describe Jesus the priest as sinless, and therefore without the need to offer sacrifice for his own transgressions as did the levites. The perfection of Christ through suffering is also mentioned in 5:9, and is closely linked by the grammar of the passage to the appointment of Jesus by God as a priest.<sup>88</sup> This shows again that Hebrews sees a close relationship between the suffering of Christ and his priestly role.

Jesus' human experience of suffering and temptation as described in 2:14-17 also contributes to his priestly effectiveness. In this case it is not the unique experience of Christ suffering on the cross for the sins of

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<sup>88</sup>Both the verbal describing his perfection (*τελειωθείς*) and the verbal describing his appointment as priest (*προσαγορευθείς*) are aorist, passive participles, and both modify the same (main) verb (*ἐγένετο*) in the clause.

humankind that the author has in view, but the everyday struggles common to all human beings that enable him to be a “merciful and faithful high priest”. The point of this passage is that since Jesus was like those to whom and for whom he seeks to minister, he is able to relate to their hardships and struggles. And since he was tempted, he can help those who are themselves going through temptation. In this regard he is like the levitical priests who were also able to relate to the weaknesses of the people, since they were beset with weaknesses themselves (5:2). Christ, however, is in a better position to help, because his death was powerful enough to actually destroy Satan, the bringer of death. This concept of Jesus’ ability to sympathise with the readers is developed further in 4:15, where Jesus’ nearness to the struggles of the readers is asserted, even though he is seen to have passed through the heavens. His power to help is explained here in another way: he has been tempted in every way just like the readers, but he did not give in, he did not sin. Jesus’ priesthood, then, is seen to bridge a gulf between humanity and divinity, heaven and earth, temptation and sinlessness. So, because of Jesus’ ultimate success and his exaltation to a priestly station at the right hand of God, his suffering can be an encouragement to the readers, and 12:3 exhorts them to follow the example of Christ. He may have endured the most atrocious treatment from sinners, yet for him there awaited a grand and heavenly triumph. The implication is that the readers could expect a similar joy.

Finally, in 10:10 the readers are told that they are sanctified through the offering of Christ’s body, while at 9:14 and 10:29 it is the blood that does the cleansing and sanctifying, and in 9:24-26 it is the heavenly sacrifice of Jesus that “put away sin”. In the end it is difficult to completely separate the offering of Jesus’ body and blood from the offering of himself in the heavenlies. Jesus’ offering of himself as a priest in heaven assumes that there was a previous offering of flesh and blood, for he would not have been in heaven unless he had died, and “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins”. In fact, it is only the heavenly priestly ministry of Christ and his spiritual sacrifice that can finally consummate the redemptive power of his death on the cross. According to Hebrews, the readers were sanctified by the offering of the body and blood of Jesus, but that offering was not complete until Christ had entered the true holy place and offered himself. This is shown by 10:12, which treats the earthly and heavenly events as one: *οὗτος δὲ μίαν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν προσενέγκας θυσίαν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς*

ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ (“but after he offered one sacrifice for sins forever he sat down at the right hand of God”). The heavenly ministry of Christ could not have taken place without his death on the cross, and the sacrifice of the cross was not complete apart from Christ's consummating, spiritual offering in heaven.

The intention of the wording [of v. 4] is therefore aimed at proving that the service of Jesus has reached fulfilment finally only in a heavenly place. As he needed his own offering, so he also needed his own place of offering.<sup>89</sup>

There is only one sacrifice. Hebrews does not understand the offering of the body and blood of Christ on the cross as being a different sacrifice from the sacrifice Jesus made in the heavenlies.<sup>90</sup> The two are simply parts of the same whole, with the distinction between the two being somewhat blurred at times (cf. 10:12). Because of this, Jesus' offering of himself in the true tabernacle can be seen as the spiritual aspect and the offering of Christ on the cross can be seen as the physical aspect of the same event, the sacrifice of Christ.

### THE NEW COVENANT (8:6-13)

The NC is the legal basis for all of the religious changes associated with the Christ-event in Hebrews.<sup>91</sup> Just as the new age inaugurated by Christ is an improvement over the old, so the NC is superior to the OC. Hebrews 8:6-13 describes the NC largely by means of an extended quotation from what is now the well-known NC passage in Jeremiah 31, setting this quotation in a context which defines its significance for the readers' circumstances and their understanding of the Christ-event.

#### *Superiority of the New Covenant*

The δέ near the beginning of v. 6 is anticipated by the μέν in 8:4: “Therefore if he were on earth he would not be a priest . . . But now he has obtained a superior ministry”.<sup>92</sup> There is a particular logic to 8:6, which describes a relationship between the superiority of the NC and its

<sup>89</sup>Strobel, *Hebräer*, pp. 93, 94 (my translation). See also Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, p. 222.

<sup>90</sup>Cf. Weiß, *Hebräer*, p. 435.

<sup>91</sup>As shown by the use of νομοθετέω in 8:6, cf. 7:11. See also 8:10; 10:28, 29.

<sup>92</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, p. 208; Weiß, *Hebräer*, p. 439.

undergirding promises, and the ministry of Christ.<sup>93</sup> According to our author, the *λειτουργία* (“ministry”) of Christ is better (than that of the levites) because he is the mediator of a better covenant, and this covenant is better because it was enacted on better promises. Verse 6 is offered as a contrast (*νυνὶ δέ*) which focuses on the priestly ministry of Christ as compared to that of the levites described in the previous verses. The terms used to refer to priestly service in Hebrews are interesting. In ch. 8 the author uses *λατρεύω* to describe the service of the levites (v. 5) and *λειτουργία* (v. 6) to describe the ministry of Christ. Both terms, and their cognates, are used extensively outside the NT, with a similar history of usage in that both are used in classical sources to refer to both religious<sup>94</sup> and non-religious<sup>95</sup> service. In the LXX *λατρεύω* is used numerous times to refer to religious service, but it is always used of general religious service and never of priestly service in particular. In contrast, *λειτουργία* is typically used to refer to priestly service, rather than general religious duty.<sup>96</sup> In the NT both word groups are used exclusively with reference to religious service,<sup>97</sup> including the service of a priest.<sup>98</sup> In Hebrews, words related to *λατρεύω* and *λειτουργία* are used most often to refer to priestly ministry, whether that of Christ or that of the levites. In ch. 8 it is clear that these terms are being used almost in a technical sense as a reference to priestly service, and there is probably no significance in the author’s variation of vocabulary to describe the priestly ministries of the levites and of Christ in this instance, since throughout Hebrews there is no consistent distinction made between the old and new priesthoods by the use of these terms.

In v. 6 the “service” (*λειτουργία*) of Christ is characterised as “better” (*διαφορώτερος*) than that of the levites—with similar terminol-

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<sup>93</sup>The Moffat translation of v. 6 asserts a causal link: “As it is, however, the divine service he has obtained is superior, *owing to the fact* that he mediates a superior covenant, enacted with superior promises” (italics mine).

<sup>94</sup>E.g. Plato *Ap.* 23c (*λατρεύω*) and Arist. *Pol.* 1330a,13 (*λειτουργία*).

<sup>95</sup>E.g. Aeschylus *Pr.* 968 (*λατρεύω*) and Isoc. 19.36 (*λειτουργία*).

<sup>96</sup>See 2 Sam. 19:19 (LXX) as an exception to this.

<sup>97</sup>Passages which use *λειτουργία* and its cognates with reference to financial service or giving to other Christians may not be as far from the “public service” concept as the other more strictly religious uses in the NT (e.g. Rom. 15:27; 2 Cor. 9:12; Phil. 2:30). However, even these usages are describing a (primarily) religious act of giving to the needy.

<sup>98</sup>Cf. Diod. *Sic.* I, 21, 7 for an example of *λειτουργία* used with reference to the Egyptian priesthood in the first century BCE.

ogy in v. 2 he is described as a “servant” (*λειτουργός*) of “the holy place and of the true tabernacle”. Christ’s superior priestly ministry is not only the fundamental point of the first five verses of ch. 8, the author describing the superior position of Christ as priest in 8:1, the superior location of his ministry in 8:2, 5 and finally his superior sacrifice in 8:3, 4, but the theme of Christ’s superior ministry is sustained throughout the chapter by the author’s articulation of the legal support for Jesus’ ministry in 8:6-13, which is the NC.<sup>99</sup> The beginning of v. 6, then, picks up this theme of the superiority of Jesus’ priesthood, pressing forward to explain the fundamental reason for its supremacy: a new and better covenant had been brought into force, and Jesus’ priestly ministry mediates that new and better covenant.

According to our author, the ministry of Christ is superior to that of the levites to the degree that the NC is superior to the OC, *νυν[ι] δὲ διαφορωτέρας τέτυχεν λειτουργίας, ὅσω καὶ κρείττονός ἐστιν διαθήκης μεσίτης* (“but now he has obtained a superior ministry, by as much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant”). This language from 8:6 is reminiscent of 1:4, *τοσοῦτω κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων ὅσω διαφορώτερον παρ’ αὐτοῦς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα* (“having become as much better than the angels as he has inherited a name superior to theirs”). Not only is the structure of the two clauses very similar—with the use of the same relative pronoun—but the vocabulary is strikingly similar as well—with the use of *κρείττων* and *διαφορώτερος* in both. In both of these clauses the author is making a comparison of degree, so that if the readers accept the superior nature of the first element—the Son (1:4) or the NC (8:6)—then they should accept the superior nature of the second—the personal qualifications of Christ (chs. 1–7) or the ministry of Christ (chs. 8–10).

Mention of the NC is surprisingly rare in the literature which we refer to as the New Testament. The reason for this can only be surmised, but it may be because the concept of the NC is so fundamental to Christian teaching that it is mostly assumed by both the authors of the NT and its earliest readers<sup>100</sup>—as is the case with the notion of God’s existence, for example. There are, however, several places in the NT

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<sup>99</sup>A covenant is a binding agreement, and provides an established basis for interaction between its parties. Hebrews (8:6; 10:28, 29) sees the NC as a legal agreement.

<sup>100</sup>Cf. Hughes, “Hebrews ix 15ff. and Galatians iii 15 ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure”. p. 92.

where the topic of the NC does come to the surface,<sup>101</sup> but nowhere is it as prominent as in Hebrews 8–10. Teaching about covenant plays a critical and foundational role in these chapters, and the author writes as if the readers would be well versed in the matter of the Jewish/Mosaic covenantal system and uses this construct as a prominent background for his work. There is more material in this section on the NC, including the very substantial quotation from Jeremiah in ch. 8, and on the explanation of its logic than in any other place in the NT.

The term covenant (בְּרִית, *διαθήκη*) as used in biblical literature has a variety of usages. In the MT and LXX it is used to describe a treaty or agreement between two people, as in Gen. 21:27, 32, where Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant with each other. It can also be used to indicate an agreement or constitution between a king and his people, for instance between Zedekiah and the people in Jer. 34:8 (41:8 LXX), an alliance of friendship as with David and Jonathan in 1 Sam. 23:18, and an alliance of marriage as in Mal. 2:14, but, of course, its primary usage is to describe a covenant between God and his people. In all of these usages the relationship between the parties plays an essential role in determining the nature and meaning of the covenant, and a particularly important aspect of that relationship is whether the parties are equal or whether one is subordinate to the other.<sup>102</sup> In the case of a covenant between God and his people, the people always have a subordinate role, which may explain the preference in the LXX for *διαθήκη* as a translation of the Hebrew בְּרִית instead of *συνθήκη*. In Classical Greek *διαθήκη* is generally employed to describe a will or testament—a one-sided disposition—while *συνθήκη* is used to describe a covenant or treaty—a mutual agreement between two parties.<sup>103</sup> When בְּרִית is used in the MT for a covenant between God and the people its meaning falls between that of a testament or will and that of a covenant involving two equals. When God makes a covenant with his people, like other examples of covenant making, there are benefits and responsibilities incumbent upon both sides. However, following the pattern of the will or testament, the terms of the covenant are dictated by God alone and are not negotiable,<sup>104</sup> and in some cases even the fulfilment of the covenant is unilat-

<sup>101</sup>E.g. Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8; 9:15.

<sup>102</sup>Harris, Archer, Waltke, *TWOT*, s.v. 282a בְּרִית.

<sup>103</sup>Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 107

<sup>104</sup>Cf. Barclay, *Hebrews*, pp. 98, 99; Rendall, *Hebrews*, p. 64.

eral, depending solely on God's initiative, quite apart from the faithfulness of the human party.<sup>105</sup> This agrees with the position of Vos:

That the preference [in the LXX] given to *διαθήκη* as a rendering for berith actually arises out of consideration for God as the principal factor in the transaction appears from the following: where the berith is made between man and man and consists in mutual agreement, the translators do not employ *διαθήκη* but *συνθήκη*, a word exactly corresponding to the word covenant; on the other hand, where the berith lies between God and man, even though it possesses equally the character of a mutual agreement, they never employ *συνθήκη* but always *διαθήκη*. Plainly, then, their avoidance of the former is due to the thought that it connotes something that cannot be properly predicated of God.<sup>106</sup>

In the NT, *συνθήκη* is never used, but *διαθήκη* is used some 33 times, 17 of these in Hebrews. Both the notion of covenant and the notion of will are expressed in the NT using *διαθήκη*. For instance, Gal. 3:15 and Heb. 9:16 use *διαθήκη* to describe a will or testament, but Rom. 9:4 and Heb. 9:20 use the term to refer to a covenant. It is impossible to determine simply on the basis of terminology, then, whether the NT writer has will/testament or covenant in mind when he uses *διαθήκη*. What the NT as a whole means when it speaks of a NC is outside the compass of this study, but there is some indication that Hebrews is communicating a concept that incorporates elements of both covenant and testament when it uses the phrase *καινή διαθήκη*;<sup>107</sup> at the very least this is true in the context of 9:15-22.<sup>108</sup>

Mediating a better covenant is at the heart of Jesus' superior priestly service.<sup>109</sup> In fact, it would be accurate to describe the work of a biblical priest as being all about mediating the covenant between God and his people, that is, representing God before his people, and the people before God, in both the establishment and continuation of the covenant. Moses, in his priestly role, is an example of this type of

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<sup>105</sup>Cf. the Abrahamic Covenant described in Genesis 15-17.

<sup>106</sup>Vos, "Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke", pp. 603, 604; see also p. 597; cf. also BAGD, s.v. *διαθήκη*; Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, p. 117.

<sup>107</sup>Cf. Riggensbach, *Hebräer*, p. 227.

<sup>108</sup>Cf. Vos, "Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke", pp. 587-632.

<sup>109</sup>Hebrews (chs. 1-7) has already compared Jesus to Judaism's earliest and most important mediators—angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron and the levites—and found him to be superior to all of them by nature—he is a Son.

mediator,<sup>110</sup> communicating the OC to the people of Israel, and at times persuading God on behalf of the Israelites. Moses is not referred to as a mediator as such in biblical literature, but many passages of Scripture make it clear that he fulfils such a role (Exod. 32:30-32; 33:11; Leviticus 16; Num. 12:6-14; Deut. 5:4, 5).<sup>111</sup> The word used in Heb. 8:6 to describe Jesus' role as mediator is *μεσίτης*, a word not used in Classical Greek and found in the LXX only in Job 9:33. In Hellenistic and later times *μεσίτης* was used to describe a "mediator, arbitrator, one who mediates between two parties to remove a disagreement or reach a common goal".<sup>112</sup> This term may imply a situation of compromise between the two parties, which would contradict the non-negotiating nature of covenant making between God and his people as set out above. It is inconceivable, however, that Hebrews would entertain the idea that God's covenant was the result of a negotiation between God and his people, or that his covenant represents in any way a compromise between the two parties involved. This is evident from the way in which our author treats the NC as a testament/will in ch. 9, since a testament/will is not something that can be negotiated or arbitrated.

The noun *μεσίτης* is used three times in Hebrews (8:6; 9:15; 12:24) and the verb *μεσιτεύω* is used once (6:17). Our author's use of *μεσιτεύω* is quite helpful for uncovering how he may be using *μεσίτης* in the phrase "mediator of a new covenant". It is in 6:17 that God is said to have "intervened with an oath" (*ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκῳ*) to show that his promise made to Abraham was reliable.<sup>113</sup> According to this, God intervened as a guarantor of the promise or covenant with Abraham, a role

<sup>110</sup>Cf. Ruager, *Hebräerbrief*, p. 147; Strobel, *Hebräer*, p. 95.

<sup>111</sup>Gal. 3:19 may refer to Moses as a *μεσίτης*. Cf. also Philo, *Somn.* 1, 142, 3 and *Vit. Mos.* 2, 166, 2.

<sup>112</sup>BAGD, s.v. *μεσίτης*. Cf. also Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 221; Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. 185-86.

<sup>113</sup>Lehne (*The New Covenant in Hebrews*, p. 19) makes the observation that "Heb. as a whole shows the hand of a careful theologian, and the terminological distinction between *διαθήκη* and *ἐπαγγελία* may be deliberate. The former is reserved for the old covenant at Sinai and for the new covenant foretold by Jeremiah and inaugurated by Jesus. Without entering into the long-standing debate about the applicability of the term covenant (in its various translations) to unilateral and/or bilateral agreements one might say that Heb. avoids any possible ambiguity by referring to the Patriarchal covenant as *ἐπαγγελία*."

which he took upon himself<sup>114</sup> for the purpose of communicating to the heirs of that promise its secure and reliable nature: ἐν ᾧ περισσότερον βουλόμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιδείξει τοῖς κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκῳ (“by which God, wishing to show all the more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable nature of his resolve, intervened with an oath”). God’s role as guarantor (μεσιτεύω) of the covenant does not imply that the nature or content of the covenant was negotiable. Quite the opposite, his intervention was intended to affirm the one-sided, unconditional nature of the Abrahamic promise, and in this there is no implication of any compromise at all. Far from wanting to open up some kind of negotiation, God was acting as guarantor of his covenant or promise with a view to affirming its unchangeable nature and his determination to carry it out. Therefore, on the basis of 6:17, it is clear that Hebrews is able to use the concept of intervention or mediation (μεσιτεύω and μεσίτης) in a way that does not include an aspect of negotiation or arbitration.<sup>115</sup> Instead, our author understands Jesus, the divine/human mediator, as representing the divine position before the people, for the benefit of both parties.

Our author thinks of Jesus as a mediator of the NC because in this role he brings together the two parties, God and his people. Jesus represents God before the people by offering a relationship with God on the basis of his (new) covenant,<sup>116</sup> and he represents the people before God by interceding for them in his priestly role according to the provisions of the (new) covenant. The terms of the covenant, however, are never in dispute or up for discussion. Jesus does not act as a mediator, then, in the sense of bringing two parties together to hammer out an agreement.

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<sup>114</sup>In the suzerain-vassal treaty form (see Mendenhall, “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition”, p. 60), the treaty contained a section wherein the gods served as witnesses to the covenant. Hebrews 6:13 says that, because there was no one greater to which God could make an oath, he swore by himself.

<sup>115</sup>Moffatt (*Hebrews*, p. 107) recognises that Hebrews uses μεσίτης in a way that is distinct from its most common meaning: “Μεσίτης commonly means an arbitrator or intermediary in some civil transaction, but this writer’s use of it, always in connection with διαθήκη and always as a description of Jesus, implies that it is practically a synonym for ἔγγυος” (cf. Heb. 7:22). Cf. also Barclay, *Hebrews*, pp. 96, 97; Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 121; Strobel, *Hebräer*, p. 95.

<sup>116</sup>Weiβ (*Hebräer*, pp. 441-42) sees a close relationship between the meanings of the two terms μεσίτης and διαθήκη, and offers a helpful treatment of the mediator/covenant concepts in Hebrews.

On the contrary, his role is to represent the two parties as they interact on the basis of their covenant, a covenant upon which they have both agreed, but which is conceived and consummated by God alone.

It is necessary for Jesus to mediate a new covenant because the old one is inadequate, or at least, the new one is an improvement over the old. According to our author, the NC is an improvement because it was enacted on better promises, yet he never spells out specifically of what these better promises consist. To determine what promises the author refers to here, it is necessary to identify clearly what Hebrews means by the “old” or “obsolete” covenant, since there are many covenants in Scripture to which he could be making reference. The general thrust of the first ten chapters of Hebrews indicates that it is the covenant made with Moses and Israel during the exodus, the Mosaic Covenant, to which our author refers as the old, and to which he compares the NC. This is clearly indicated by his continual reference to things related to the Mosaic Covenant—its priesthood, sacrifice, the exodus, etc.—as well as people associated with that covenant—Moses, Aaron, Joshua and the priests. The quotation from Jeremiah also makes it clear that it is the Mosaic Covenant that is being compared to the NC, “not like the covenant which I made with their forefathers at the time when I took their hand to lead them out of Egypt”.

With the identity of the “old” covenant clearly established it is possible to make a comparison of the promises undergirding each covenant. However, the only promises specifically connected to the NC in Hebrews are those that make up the covenant itself, those outlined by the passage from Jeremiah.<sup>117</sup> Unless these are the promises referred to by the author as providing the basis of the NC, the nature and identity of these promises remains unsure. As we shall see, it does make sense to take the details of the NC itself, as described by Jeremiah, as giving an indication of the promises which form the backbone of the NC: ἥτις ἐπὶ κρείττοσιν ἐπαγγελίαις νενομοθέτηται (“which was enacted on better promises”).<sup>118</sup> There are three main promises sketched in 8:10-12;<sup>119</sup> by a strict reckoning of the grammar, however, the last promise has two “sub-parts” that deserve a significant amount of separate attention. The

<sup>117</sup>Cf. Hagner, *Hebrews*, pp. 121-23; Snell, *New and Living Way*, p. 105.

<sup>118</sup>Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 186; Héring, *Hébreux*, p. 77; Ruager, *Hebräerbrief*, p. 147; Weiß, *Hebräer*, pp. 440-41.

<sup>119</sup>Ruager (*Hebräerbrief*, p. 147) also recognises three main promises: inscription of the law on the heart, full knowledge of God and forgiveness of sins.

first two of the promises are found in v. 10, while the last one can be found in vv. 11, 12:

10b διδοὺς νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν· 11 καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πολίτην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων, Γνωθὶ τὸν κύριον, ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσίν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν, 12 ὅτι ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι

("Iob I will give my laws to their mind, and upon their heart I will inscribe them, and I will be a God to them, and they will be to me a people; 11 and they will certainly not teach each one his neighbour and each one his brother saying, "Know the Lord", because they will all know me, from their least to their greatest, 12 because I will be merciful with respect to their injustices and I will no longer remember their sins").

Since we are attempting to determine how Hebrews may conceive of the promises of the NC as better than those of the OC, we must determine whether the new promises mark a change from the Mosaic Covenant. To do this, we must make the quite warranted assumption that both the author and his readers were familiar with the elements of the Mosaic Covenant as put forth in Scripture.

The first promise is that the Lord would write his law on the hearts of the people. The imagery of this promise immediately brings to mind a passage of Scripture that would have been very familiar to the first-century Jew, especially with its proximity to the *Shema*, Deut. 6:6-9:

6 And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; 7 and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (RSV).

In this passage, the law was to be internalised, taken into the heart and mind, just as in the NC passage. There is, however, a fundamental difference. In the NC promise this internalisation would be accomplished by God,<sup>120</sup> while in the Mosaic context the internalisation was to be accom-

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<sup>120</sup>Cf. Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 81.

plished by the people themselves.<sup>121</sup> Unlike the NC *promise* of internalisation, the internalisation spoken of in Deut. 6:6-9 does not amount to a promise at all, but a duty. Many see the distinction between the Old and New Covenants as being that the NC involves the internalisation of the law, while the OC did not.<sup>122</sup> This view betrays a misunderstanding of both covenants. First, the Mosaic Covenant was all about producing an internal, heart change in the people, which involved the internalisation of the law—obedience from the heart (e.g. Deut. 26:16; 28:45-47; 1 Kgs. 3:6; Ps. 40:6-8; Prov. 3:1-5; Isa. 51:7). There is no difference between the two covenants at this point. Secondly, the uniqueness of the NC lies not in the hope of internalisation, but in how and by whom this would be accomplished—by God, apart from human effort. Under the old system, the assimilation of the elements of the OC was the responsibility of the people, while under the NC that responsibility falls upon God alone. In the NC arrangement, God does, in some respects, what the people would have done in the old, and this is part of the difference between the two systems which is perceived in Hebrews as an indication of the superiority of the new. This distinction is also seen in 8:2 in the treatment of the relationship between the two sanctuaries, with God himself pitching the heavenly tent. So, in both covenants the intended result is the same, internalisation of law, but the way in which this is accomplished in each is radically different.

The second promise is that the Lord would be God to his people and that the people would be a people to the Lord. The same or very similar language can be found in Lev. 26:12; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 29:13, which seems to indicate that there is nothing different in this point of the NC from the old.

The third promise is that there would no longer be teaching among the people to know the Lord. There are two reasons given for this: first, that all of the people would already know the Lord, and secondly, that the Lord would have been merciful and forgotten the sins of the people. The cessation of the teaching of the people to “know the Lord” is a defi-

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<sup>121</sup>That this is the thrust of Deut. 6:6 is shown first by the fact that the verb “shall be” in v. 6 is one of several imperatival futures in vv. 6-9: “they shall be . . . you shall teach . . . talk . . . bind . . . they shall be . . . you shall write”, indicating that all of these things were the responsibility of the people. Secondly, the instructions on how the people were to continually interact with God’s commandments (vv. 7-9) were all about the people getting these commandments into their heart (v. 6).

<sup>122</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, p. 209.

nite change from the old economy. Not only are Deut. 6:7 and Hos. 6:3 examples of this kind of teaching under the Mosaic system, but Jer. 31:34 itself implies that this teaching was being done at the time of its composition, "And *no longer* shall each man teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord'" (RSV). It is evident, then, that Hebrews (and Jeremiah) understands the NC economy as incorporating a divinely-accomplished, universal knowledge of the Lord among his people, while it does not see this as being the case under the OC.

The first reason given for this change is an obvious one: all of the people already know the Lord, which was apparently not the case under the old system. And all the people know the Lord because he has forgiven their sins, the second reason for the change. As for the concept of knowing God, the difference between the two covenants is not one of substance, but one of degree. Under the NC, knowledge of God is universal among the people of God ("from their least to their greatest"), while under the OC it is not. In the matter of forgiveness of sins, on the surface there does not seem to be any difference between the two systems. The concept of God forgiving the sins of his people can be found throughout Scripture (e.g. Lev. 4:20; 2 Chr. 7:14; Ps. 32:5; Isa. 6:7), and in the later writings of the Hebrew Bible the concept of God not remembering the people's sin is not at all unusual (Ps. 25:7; 79:8; Isa. 43:25; 64:9; Jer. 14:10; 31:34; Ezek. 3:20; 18:22, 24; 21:24; 33:13, 16; 36:31; Hos. 7:2; 8:13; 9:9; Hab. 3:7, 17). Even though the concept of forgiveness, mercy, and not remembering sins is rife in Scripture, there are numerous examples in the Hebrew Bible of certain individuals and groups among the people of God, and indeed the people in general, falling under the Lord's judgment (Lev. 10:1, 2; Josh. 22:17; 1 Chr. 21:22; Isa. 1:4-10). This, however, does not necessarily indicate a distinction between the old economy and the new, for our author himself speaks of God judging his people in the NC economy (Heb. 10:28-31). In fact, if there is any difference between the two, judgment under the NC would be even more severe than under the old, or at least the NC people of God would be *deserving* of greater punishment for disobedience: *πόσῳ δοκεῖτε χείρονος ἀξιωθήσεται τιμωρίας* ("how much more do you think they will be worthy of even worse punishment?"—10:29).

Though there seems to be the same forgiveness on God's part under both covenants, the result of that forgiveness in the people is quite distinct. First, God's forgiveness under the NC produces a universal knowl-

edge of God, and as a result of this, a cessation of teaching among the people to “know the Lord”. Although there is forgiveness in both covenants, the difference in result does lead one to ask whether our author might not see some difference in the nature of forgiveness in the two systems. There is a hint that this is the case in Heb. 10:1-4. Forgiveness came through sacrifice under both covenants, but the sacrifices of the Mosaic system, and their effectiveness, were inferior to the sacrifice of Christ, which is part of the new system. More specifically, the old sacrifices were not able to bring perfection to the ones offering them, and they were not able to take away the memory of sin for the worshippers, since they continually acted as a memorial to sin. Finally, in 10:4, our author clearly states, *ἀδύνατον γὰρ αἷμα ταύρων καὶ τράγων ἀφαιρεῖν ἁμαρτίας* (“for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins”). So, there is no indication that the quality of the forgiveness itself, as it relates to the attitude of God toward the sins of the forgiven, is any different in the two systems, but the effect of the forgiveness/sacrificial process on the people is dramatically different and superior under the NC, actually transforming the people from within. This, of course, is not at odds with the notion that God himself would write his law on the hearts of the people, also a description of internal transformation.

These three promises and the two promises that support the third show an interesting progression when their organisation is viewed from a conceptual rather than a strictly grammatical perspective. The first promise, that God would internalise his law, facilitates the second promise, establishment of the God/people relationship. This second promise facilitates the third, no more teaching the people to know Yahweh. Then the progression is reversed, in that the third promise is made possible by another promise, that all the people would already know Yahweh, and this is made possible by the last promise, mercy and forgiveness of sin.<sup>123</sup> In this scheme, the pivotal promise is that there would no longer be any need to teach the people to know God. The others facilitate and lead up to this.

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<sup>123</sup>Cf. Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 42.

1. I will write my law on their hearts
2. I will be their God, they will be my people
3. *They will no longer teach one another "Know the Lord"*
4. They will all know me
5. I will be merciful and forgive their sin

Laid out in this way, it is easy to see the parallel structure, with the third promise at the apex, the second and fourth leading to the third and parallel in thought to one another,<sup>124</sup> and the first and fifth leading to the second and fourth respectively and also parallel in thought to one another.<sup>125</sup> In other words, these promises can be understood as being arranged logically in a chiasmic structure.

These promises, forming the foundation of the NC, reveal two main differences between the Old and New Covenants. The first is that God, instead of the people, would do the internalising of his law. The second is that forgiveness would have a transforming, internal effect, since it would cause the knowledge of the Lord to be universal among his people and, therefore, the teaching of the people to know the Lord to cease. The main differences in short: God himself would make knowledge of himself and his law internal and universal among his people. The heart of these differences, and that which makes the NC promises better, is not difficult to ascertain. The fundamental improvement of the new over the old is that the Lord himself does under the NC, in some crucial instances, what was left to the people to do under the OC.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, when our author says that the covenant mediated by Jesus is better because it was enacted on better promises, he means that Jesus' covenant is better because as a result of it God undertakes to accomplish certain key,

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<sup>124</sup>There will be no teaching (3) because knowledge of the Lord is universal (4), which firmly establishes the God/people relationship (2).

<sup>125</sup>The law written on the peoples' hearts (1) marks the people out as belonging to God and facilitates the practical functioning of the God/people relationship (2). Universal knowledge of God (4) comes as a result of his forgiveness of the peoples' sin (5)—note the *ὄτι* at the beginning of v. 12. There is an inherent relationship between law (1) and sin (5), but it is unclear whether the sins forgiven (5) are committed before the writing of the law on the heart (1), or whether they are sins (5) committed in spite of the writing of the law on the heart (1), or both. In any case, both law and forgiveness are issues related to the behaviour of the people, and their acceptability to God.

<sup>126</sup>Jesus' priesthood is based on an oath, not a law (7:16, 28), indicating that his appointment was God's responsibility to carry out, and not human responsibility.

internal, spiritual transformations, and since it is God who does the work, the success and security of the covenant is assured. The end result of this is that the relationship between God and his people, "I will be a God to them, and they will be to me a people", is seen to be more secure. In fact, the anticipation is that it would be universally and permanently consummated.

So, the NC was enacted (*νενομοθέτηται*) on the basis of these "better promises". The word *νομοθετέω* is a legal term that indicates that Hebrews sees the NC as legally based, as it does the OC according to 7:11 (cf. also Exod. 24:12).<sup>127</sup> Hebrews 7:12 says that a change in priesthood requires a change in law, and 8:10, part of the Jeremiah quotation and reiterated in 10:16, indicates that under the NC the law would be written on the people's hearts. This shows that our author conceives of the NC as involving a law,<sup>128</sup> but not the same law as the OC, and not a law written on stones or any inanimate material, as was the OC. These two concepts would have been quite radical in a Jewish context: that the law associated with the NC is written only on human hearts and minds, and that God would establish a different law from the Mosaic law. However, as shown above, the final result and intent of the NC is identical to that of the OC. Hebrews 10:1, *Σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν* ("for the law has but a shadow of the good things to come"), implies that the same is true of the goal and intent of the NC, over against the Mosaic law.<sup>129</sup> The use of the shadow imagery in 10:1 to compare the two systems suggests that our author's view of the relationship between the NC and the OC is similar to his view of the relationship between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries, where he also employs the shadow image, as described earlier. There is both a continuity and a discontinuity between the two systems, and it is this that drives the book as a whole. Hebrews is all about persuading its readers to recognise the changes wrought by the Christ-event, particularly his priesthood and inauguration of a new covenant, yet to do this the author relies on aspects of the new situation that remain unchanged in relation to the old. He uses these unchanged elements to encourage the readers (e.g. 13:5, 6) as well as to spur them on to greater commitment (e.g. 4:1-

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<sup>127</sup>Cf. Montefiore, *Hebrews*, p. 139. Héring (*Hébreux*, p. 77) thinks *νομοθετέω* as used in 7:11 and 8:6 in the passive may represent a semitism, possibly with the hophal form of  $\text{נָתַן}$  lying behind it.

<sup>128</sup>Cf. Ebrard, *Hebrews*, p. 252.

<sup>129</sup>Cf. Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, p. 185.

3), and perhaps most importantly, he also relies on the continuity between the two systems as the basis for his interpretation and application of Scripture. All of this verifies that our author does indeed understand the relationship between the Old and New Covenants to be one of continuity and discontinuity, and that he wants his readers to accept the new with courage and faith. However, he does not intend for them to reject many of the old categories (priesthood, covenant, law, forgiveness, etc.) which he sees as valid for their Christian experience.

### *Replacement of the Old Covenant*

The main proof put forward by our author that the NC was superior to the old is that even during the time of the OC the Lord (v. 8) was already anticipating the arrival of the NC, *εἰ γὰρ ἡ πρώτη ἐκείνη ἦν ἄμειπτος, οὐκ ἂν δευτέρας ἐζητεῖτο τόπος* (“for if that first one were not less than perfect, a place<sup>130</sup> for a second one would not have been sought”—8:7).<sup>131</sup> By this the author not only argues for the superior nature of the NC, but he is also pointing to the failure of the OC. This failure of the Mosaic system is a fundamental point in Hebrews, and not recognising the failure of the Mosaic covenant is one of the main problems of the readers, from the perspective of our author. If Hebrews is to accomplish its goal of helping the readers to sever their ties and to end their commitment to the Mosaic system, it must be successful in convincing them that the OC is imperfect and made obsolete by a new covenant, which is fundamentally better, and to which they have become connected through Christ.

<sup>130</sup>For a similar idiom cf. 12:17.

<sup>131</sup>Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 37) says, “We might also translate, *if that first had been irreproachable, a place would not have been sought*, etc.; but in Greek neither *protasis* nor *apodosis* is so conceived (otherwise the latter would have been a pluperfect): comp. viii. 4”. However, Blass and Debrunner (*A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 182) observe that the imperfect in unreal conditional clauses is “temporally ambiguous”. Robertson (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, p. 921) affirms the possibility that the imperfect can refer to a past action, and gives Heb. 11:15 as an example. However, Dana and Mantey (*A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 289-90) and Turner (*A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, p. 91) are more rigid and would be in agreement with Delitzsch that the imperfect indicates present action. Nevertheless, if Blass and Debrunner, and Robertson are correct, and I think they are, this would leave plenty of room for my translation, which seems best in the light of the context. It was in Jeremiah’s day that a place was sought for a NC, and it is precisely to this that our author refers.

In Heb. 8:7, our author states that the first covenant is not “without blame” (*ἄμεμπτos*), one of his most derogatory statements of the inferiority of the Mosaic covenant, along with 8:13. The term *ἄμεμπτos*, when used to describe an inanimate object, means something “perfect in its kind”.<sup>132</sup> So, what the author is saying by this is simply that the first covenant was not perfect. Perfection is an important theme in Hebrews, a quality which is applied to Jesus (e.g. 5:9), the results of Jesus’ priesthood (7:11), the heavenly tabernacle (9:11), potentially to his readers (6:1). On more than one occasion our author states that the success or effect of the OC was less than perfect (7:11; 9:9; 10:1), at least in the light of what the ministry of Christ would accomplish in connection with the NC. The use of *ἄμεμπτos* in v. 7, then, is in concert with other statements that express the limitations of the OC, but perhaps it is a bit more pointed and intense than the author’s usual treatment of the old.

Even so, our author seems to back away to some degree from such a strident criticism of the first covenant in his introduction to the Jeremiah quotation in v. 8, *μεμφόμενος γὰρ αὐτοῦς λέγει* (“for finding fault with them he says”). Here, the focus of criticism for the failure of the OC is turned toward the people of Israel and away from the covenant itself, to some degree.<sup>133</sup> It seems that, although for the writer the first covenant was never as good as the second, and it was never able to accomplish for the people what the new could do, the first covenant was seen in Hebrews as valid for its time and adequate for the purpose for which it was inaugurated<sup>134</sup> (Hebrews is quite clear that Israel was rightly held responsible for its faithfulness or lack of faithfulness to the

<sup>132</sup>LSJ, *s.v.* *ἄμεμπτos*.

<sup>133</sup>Lane (*Hebrews 1–8*, p. 202) puts forth an interesting suggestion, preferring the reading *αὐτοῖς* instead of *αὐτούς* in 8:8 (as does Milligan, *Hebrews*, p. 228). “If *αὐτοῖς* is taken with the verb *λέγει* (he says), instead of with *μεμφόμενος* (finding fault), the logical connection with the preceding verse is sustained. God found fault not simply ‘with them’ (i.e., the people) but with the first covenant.” There are two problems with this. First, the pericope containing the NC text, Jer. 31:23–40, is not directly addressed “to them”, but refers to Israel in the third person. But, admittedly, one could argue that in an ultimate sense it was addressed to Israel. Secondly, the Jeremiah text does not find fault with the first covenant, but with the people. These problems with Lane’s suggestion are by no means decisive, but it does seem best to stick with the alternative suggested by the UBS text. Braun (*Hebräer*, p. 239) says that the accusative reading is probably the right reading, but in any case the sense would be the same, since either the accusative or the dative may be used with *μέμφομαι*. Cf. Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 38; Hagner, *Hebrews*, pp. 124–25.

<sup>134</sup>Cf. Ebrard, *Hebrews*, p. 253; Rendall, *Hebrews*, p. 65.

Mosaic covenant—e.g. 3:7-19). In Hebrews, the *blame* for the failure of the OC falls squarely on the shoulders of the people, and not on the covenant itself or God.<sup>135</sup> This is the point of the warning passages: the individual is responsible before God for responding positively or negatively to the covenant of God, whether under the Old or New Covenant. Yet at the same time, Hebrews recognises a certain inherent inability in the OC to deal with the depth of the people's depravity. Though our author consistently holds the OC people responsible for their own infidelity, he also asserts the failure of the OC to overcome the people's tendency toward infidelity. In Hebrews, the people and the covenant fail in different ways. The people fail morally to live up to their obligation to the covenant, and are therefore culpable. The covenant fails practically by not providing for the weakness of the people, and is therefore improvable. A phrase used by Lehne, "the inherently imperfect nature of the Sinai covenant due to human nature's inability to fulfil it", accurately describes Hebrews' understanding of the failure of the people and the covenant.<sup>136</sup>

The quotation in 8:8-12 is taken from a section of Jeremiah known as the Book of Consolation<sup>137</sup> or Comfort.<sup>138</sup> Though most of Jeremiah is quite negative in tone, describing as it does the invasion and exile of Judah, "about ten percent of the book of Jeremiah may be said to be devoted to expressions of future hope for the community",<sup>139</sup> and our quotation is taken from this ten percent. The divine judgment of God upon Judah (chs. 2-25) forms the main backdrop for Jeremiah's NC prophecy (31:31-34), with the book ending in a description of the fall of Jerusalem, the sacking of the temple and the exile of the people to Babylon (ch. 52).

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<sup>135</sup>Cf. Calvin (*The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, pp. 186-87), who gives an answer to what some see as a contradiction when our author first calls the OC imperfect and then says it was the people who were at fault. He says that the people are rightly blamed for departing from God through their own disloyalty, while the weakness of the OC in not being written on the heart is also pointed out.

<sup>136</sup>Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, pp. 33, 34.

<sup>137</sup>Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, p. 128.

<sup>138</sup>Kaiser, W.C. Jr., "The Old Promise and the Old Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34", p. 110.

<sup>139</sup>Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant*, p. 201.

Our author characterises the thrust of the Jeremiah quotation as being the Lord's criticism of the people's lack of fidelity to their covenant responsibility, and his anticipation of the age of a new covenant. In this quotation there are several interesting textual issues<sup>140</sup> (see figures 7a and 7b.) Interestingly, most of the differences between the Hebrews quotation and Rahlfs' Jeremiah text can be found in various other LXX versions of Jeremiah. This opens the possibility that the differences in the Hebrews quotation are a result of the author relying on a text that varied from the standard texts used today. Of course this is also possible with regard to differences for which we can find no witness of a similar reading in the textual traditions of the LXX, since it is probable that there is not an extant witness to every text type that may have been known to a first century author. Still, the lack of textual evidence makes it less likely that a reading to which there is no known textual witness arises from a variant text. Inversely, finding the same reading in another septuagintal text does not necessarily explain the source of a variation in Hebrews, since similar readings may arise in different contexts merely by coincidence.

The first deviation in Heb. 8:8-12 from Rahlfs' text of the LXX is in v. 8, where Hebrews uses λέγει instead of φησίν in the translation of the phrase יהוה אלהינו ("a declaration of Yahweh"), a reading which can also be found in Codices Alexandrinus (A), Sinaiticus (S) and Marchalianus (Q). The same variation occurs twice again, in Heb. 8:9, 10, but in these instances they do not match any alternative text of the LXX. Whether or not any or all of these three variations are influenced by the textual variant which matches the first example—the author having used λέγω in the first instance chooses for some reason to continue using λέγω instead of φημί—is difficult to ascertain. What is certain is that our author continually prefers λέγω over φημί throughout his work, using the former over 30 times and the latter only once, and this one use of φημί, interestingly nearby, is in 8:5 in the introduction to the quotation of Exod. 25:40. To offer confidently a reason for the author's preference of λέγω would be virtually impossible, but this preference does seem to indicate that the variation in the Jeremiah quotation from λέγω to φημί may be a simple matter of style. In any case, it would be difficult to show that these variations had very much exegetical significance.

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<sup>140</sup>See McCullough, "The Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews", pp. 364-67; Thomas, "The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews", pp. 310-13.

Hebrews 8:8b-12	Jeremiah 38:31-34	Jeremiah 38:31-34
<p>8b Ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, <u>λέγει</u> κύριος, καὶ <u>συντελέσω ἐπὶ τὸν</u> <u>οἶκον</u> Ἰσραὴλ καὶ <u>ἐπὶ</u> <u>τὸν οἶκον</u> Ἰούδα διαθήκην καινὴν, 9 οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην, ἣν <u>ἐποίησα</u> τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου, ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου, <u>καὶ γὰρ</u> <u>ἠμέλησα</u> αὐτῶν, <u>λέγει</u> κύριος· 10 ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκείνας, <u>λέγει</u> κύριος· <u>διδούς νόμους</u> μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν <u>ἐπιγράψω</u> <u>αὐτούς</u>, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν· 11 καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πολίτην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων, Γινώθι τὸν κύριον, ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσίν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν, 12 ὅτι ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι.</p>	<p>31 Ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, <u>φησὶν</u> κύριος, καὶ <u>διαθήσομαι τῷ</u> <u>οἴκῳ</u> Ἰσραὴλ καὶ <u>τῷ</u> <u>οἴκῳ</u> Ἰούδα διαθήκην καινὴν, 32 οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην, ἣν <u>διεθέμην</u> τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου, ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου, <u>καὶ</u> <u>ἐγὼ ἠμέλησα</u> αὐτῶν, <u>φησὶν</u> κύριος· 33 ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκείνας, <u>φησὶν</u> κύριος <u>Διδούς δώσω</u> <u>νόμους</u> μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν <u>γράψω</u> <u>αὐτούς</u>· καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν· 34 καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πολίτην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων Γινώθι τὸν κύριον· ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσίν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ <u>αὐτῶν</u> καὶ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν, ὅτι ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι.</p>	<p>31 הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאֲמֵי־הוָה וְכִרְתִּי אֶת־בְּרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־בְּרִית יְהוּדָה בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה: 32 לֹא כַּבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אֶת־אֲבוֹתְכֶם בְּיוֹם הַחֲזִיקִי בְיָדְכֶם לְהוֹצִיאֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר־הִקְמָה הִפְרוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וְאֲנֹכִי בַעַלְתִּי כִּם נֹאֲמֵי־הוָה: 33 כִּי נֹאֲת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר אֶכְרַת אֶת־ בְּרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶחָרִי הַיָּמִים הָהֵם נֹאֲמֵי־הוָה נִתְתִּי אֶת־תּוֹרָתִי בְּקֶרְבְּכֶם וְעַל־לִבְכֶם אֶכְתַּבְנָה וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים וְהִקְמָה יְהוָה לִי לְעָם: 34 וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו לֵאמֹר דַּעוּ אֶת־ יְהוָה כִּי־כֹלֵם יִדְעוּ אוֹתִי לְמַקְשָׁנָם וְעַד־גְּדוֹלָם נֹאֲמֵי־הוָה כִּי אֶסְלַח לְעֹנָם וְלִחַטְאֹתָם לֹא אֶזְכְּרֵם־עוֹד:</p>

Fig. 7a (Differences between the above texts are underscored.)

<p>8b “Behold, days are coming”, <u>says</u> the Lord, “and I will <u>consummate</u> a new covenant <u>over</u> the house of Israel and <u>over</u> the house of Judah,</p> <p>9 not in accordance with the covenant that I <u>made</u> with their fathers in the day I took their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not remain in my covenant, <u>and I neglected</u> them”, <u>says</u> the Lord;</p> <p>10 “because this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days”, <u>says</u> the Lord; “putting my <u>laws</u> into their mind, I will write <u>them</u> upon their heart, and I will be God for them, and they will be a people for me;</p> <p>11 and they will no longer ever teach each his fellow citizen and each his brother saying, ‘Know the Lord’, because they will all know me, from <u>the</u> least to their greatest,</p> <p>12 because I will be merciful with regard to their injustices and their sins I will no longer remember at all”.</p>	<p>31 “Behold, days are coming”, <u>says</u> the Lord, “and I will <u>make</u> a new covenant <u>with</u> the house of Israel and <u>with</u> the house of Judah,</p> <p>32 not in accordance with the covenant that I <u>made</u> with their fathers in the day I took their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not remain in my covenant, <u>and I neglected</u> them”, <u>says</u> the Lord;</p> <p>33 “because this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days”, <u>says</u> the Lord; “I will <u>surely</u> put my <u>laws</u> into their mind, and I will write <u>them</u> upon their heart, and I will be God for them, and they will be a people for me;</p> <p>34 and they will no longer ever teach each his fellow citizen and each his brother saying, ‘Know the Lord’, because they will all know me, from <u>their</u> least to their greatest,</p> <p>because I will be merciful with regard to their injustices and their sins I will no longer remember at all”.</p>	<p>31 “Behold, days are coming”, declares Yahweh, “and I will cut a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,</p> <p>32 not like the covenant that I cut with their fathers in the day I took their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, and I <u>proved myself to be Lord over</u> them”,<sup>141</sup> declares Yahweh;</p> <p>33 “because this is the covenant that I will cut with the house of Israel after those days”, declares Yahweh; “I will put my <u>law</u> into their inward parts, and I will write <u>it</u> upon their heart, and I will be God for them, and they will be a people for me;</p> <p>34 and they will no longer teach, a man his neighbour and a man his brother saying, ‘Know Yahweh’, because all of them will know me, from their least to their greatest”, declares Yahweh,</p> <p>“because I will forgive their crooked behaviour and their sin I will no longer remember at all”.</p>
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Fig. 7b (Differences between the above texts are underscored.)

<sup>141</sup>The RSV has “though I was their husband, says the LORD”; the NIV “though I was husband to them, declares the LORD”.

The next variant, also in 8:8, is the change from *διαθήσομαι* to *συντελέσω*, for which there are few matching variants in the texts of the LXX.<sup>142</sup> In this case it is possible that there is a theological motivation behind the variation.<sup>143</sup> The term *διατίθημι* is not uncommonly used with *διαθήκη* to speak of the making of a covenant—in fact the two words are etymologically related. The LXX rendering, *καὶ διαθήσομαι . . . διαθήκην* (“and I will make . . . a covenant”) is a perfectly idiomatic and expected translation of the Hebrew *וְכָרַתִּי . . . בְּרִית* (“and I will cut [or make] a covenant”). Hebrews’ use of *συντελέω*, on the other hand, is much more creative and less expected, even if it is a perfectly acceptable representation of the meaning of both the Hebrew and the Greek.<sup>144</sup> The term *συντελέω*, used in Hebrews only here, has a general meaning of bringing something to completion or to an end.<sup>145</sup> Elsewhere in the NT<sup>146</sup> it always has this meaning, but is never used in connection with the concept of covenant. Unlike *διατίθημι*, used in Acts 12:19 as well as Heb. 8:10; 9:16, 17; 10:16 with the meaning of making a covenant, *συντελέω* is not a word that would typically be used as our author has used it, so it is reasonable to conclude that he has chosen his terminology thoughtfully, as an attempt, at least, to shift the meaning of the LXX passage. The deliberate nature of the change is affirmed when our author repeats this part of the Jeremiah quotation in 10:16, 17, and reverts back

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<sup>142</sup>For example text 41, according to Thomas, “The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews”, p. 310.

<sup>143</sup>Thomas (“The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews”, p. 310) puts forth a possible motivation for this change: “The striking fact is that *συντελέω* is used in Jer. xli. 8 and 15 in instances in which the covenant is kept or accomplished and *ποιέω* is used in Jer. xli. 18 in an instance in which the covenant is spoken of as broken. The only other occurrence of one of these words with *διαθήκη* in the LXX is the use of *ποιέω* in Isa. xxviii. 15, also an instance in which the covenant is broken or annulled. These usages correspond with those in Heb. viii. 8f.: the Lord will establish (*συντελέσω*) a covenant with Israel and Judah; it will not be like the previous covenant he made (*ἐποίησα*), which was broken by their fathers”. McCullough (“The Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews”, p. 366) rejects Thomas’ analysis of the Jeremiah passages and the notion that his analysis would be relevant to Hebrews even if it were correct.

<sup>144</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 227) points out that the phrase *συντελείν διαθήκην* “has scriptural precedent”, and cites Jer. 41:8 (LXX) as an example.

<sup>145</sup>LSJ, s.v. *συντελέω*. Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 227) says that this use of *συντελέω* “recalls the prominent motif of Christ’s perfection”.

<sup>146</sup>*Συντελέω* is used only six times in the NT: Mk. 13:4; Lk. 4:2, 13; Acts 21:27; Rom. 9:28; Heb. 8:8.

to the wording of the septuagintal text, using *διατίθημι* instead of *συντελέω*.

If our author is attempting to change the meaning of this Scripture passage, what shift of meaning does his choice of vocabulary produce? Using *συντελέω*, our author brings a richer, more colourful sense to the passage. Rather than being content with the straight-forward language of “I will make a covenant”, he prefers something more forceful, “I will consummate a covenant”. There is a theological significance in the Hebrews quotation not present in the LXX version, which is meant to fortify the author’s own theological position as well as his persuasive powers. The first significance of the author’s choice of wording is that it emphasises God’s own role in completing the covenant, over against the responsibility of the people for the success or failure of the first covenant. This is in line with the author’s conception of better promises upon which the NC rests, according to which God himself would do what the people were expected to do under the OC—especially the promise that God would internalise his law in the people. Secondly, the assured success of the NC is implied by the author’s choice of language.<sup>147</sup> God is not just going to *make* a covenant with his people, but he is going to *complete*, or *consummate* a covenant with them. The NC is a covenant that the people will not be able to frustrate.<sup>148</sup> Thirdly, the wording of the Hebrews quotation at this point implies that the NC represents God’s last and best effort to establish a successful relationship with Israel. God would “consummate” (*συντελέω*) his covenant with his people and in the process he would consummate his redemptive programme. In the view of our author, Christ is the fulfilment of God’s redemptive efforts and the consummation of his covenantal plan. Christ, as mediator of the NC (8:6), “has appeared *once for all at the end of the*

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<sup>147</sup>Riggenbach (*Hebräer*, p. 232) does not see this shift of vocabulary as contributing to the author’s argument.

<sup>148</sup>This is not to say that Hebrews would see the success of the readers as NC believers as individually guaranteed (cf. 6:1-12), but that the continued existence of a faithful NC people is guaranteed, and as a result, there would never be an occasion for the replacement of the NC. There is some reason to believe that Hebrews may see the final fulfilment of the NC promise as eschatological, since Jer. 31:31 as quoted in Heb. 8:8 indicates that the NC would be made with “the house of Israel”, but this is not actually addressed in Hebrews. Schröger (*Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 167) says, “then the author of Hebrews could not have believed that the benefits of the prophecy were all already in the full possession of the community” (my translation).

age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26, RSV). This indicates that Christ's ministry and the NC fulfil or consummate (*συντελέω*) the plan and programme of God, in the mind of our author.

It appears, then, that our author blends the process of interpretation with the process of quoting the Jeremiah passage, interpreting the establishment (*διατίθημι/תָּקַד*) of the NC in the light of his understanding of the Christ-event.<sup>149</sup> Hebrews' understanding of the NC, as indicated by its use of *συντελέω*, parallels its understanding of the ministry of Christ in all three of the characteristics outlined above. The ministry of Christ and the NC are both seen to be 1) the accomplishment of the work of God by God, 2) entirely successful and 3) the consummation of God's programme. This is shown most clearly by the author's reiteration of the fundamental promises of the NC, from his perspective, in 10:16, 17, to show that the work of Christ and the NC work of God are co-extensive. In this context (10:14-18), Jesus' perfection of those being sanctified is understood as fulfilling the promises of the NC on at least three levels. First, the NC involves God in the working out of covenant details in unprecedented ways, and in Hebrews the working out of these details is accomplished through his Son.<sup>150</sup> It turns out to be Jesus who provides for inner sanctification (9:14; 10:14, 22), who administers the relationship between the people and God (10:12; 3:1-6) and who provides forgiveness of sin (9:26; 10:18). Since Christ is seen to be a unique divine agent (1:3), when he is at work, God is seen to be at work (13:21). This is why the work of Christ can be seen to fulfil God's NC promises to act on behalf of the people. Secondly, both the NC and Christ's work are assured success and fulfilment, "by one offering he *has* perfected forever those *being* sanctified" (10:14, cf. also 6:19, 20).<sup>151</sup> Thirdly, both the NC and Christ's work are accepted as the culmination of God's plan for ruling and redeeming the world, "but this one, having offered one sacrifice for sins *forever*, sat down at the right hand of God" (10:12; cf. also 1:3, "In these *last* days he has spoken to us in a Son" and 1:8, "to the Son [he says], 'Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever'"). In the light of this, therefore, our author's treatment of this quotation in this way can be understood as an example of a christological interpretation,

<sup>149</sup>Schröger (*Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 168) says, "This passage is already in the OT directly messianic" (my translation).

<sup>150</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 227; Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, p. 208.

<sup>151</sup>This is something different from saying that every person associated with the NC is assured success.

since Hebrews, seeing the accomplishments of the NC and the ministry of Christ as co-extensive, projects the qualities of Christ's ministry onto the NC.

The next variant is related to the *διατίθημι/συντελέω* variant, since it is a phrase that modifies the *διατίθημι/συντελέω* variant. At issue is the change from *τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰούδα* ("with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah") to the phrase *ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰούδα* ("over the house of Israel and over the house of Judah"). Since there is no known equivalent to this reading in the LXX tradition, and since the LXX rendering is a closer representation of the Hebrew text (אֶת־בַּיִת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־בַּיִת־יְהוּדָה), it seems likely that this is also a deliberate and possibly theologically motivated variation. It is possible that it is part of the same interpretive enterprise as the verbal variation before it, designed to integrate the author's understanding of the ministry of Christ with Jeremiah's elucidation of the NC particulars. A covenant is not made *with* Israel, from Hebrews' perspective, but *over* Israel, wording which may be meant to emphasise the reduced role of the people and the increased role of God in the implementation of the NC. On the other hand, when Jeremiah uses a similar phrase, quoted in 8:10, our author follows it verbatim, *ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ* ("because this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel"). This may indicate that the addition of the preposition and the change of case in v. 8 may be grammatically motivated in the face of the verb change—although *ἐπί* does not routinely follow *συντελέω*.<sup>152</sup> It is really impossible to come to a certain conclusion, but in either case, the meaning of the text is essentially unaltered.

In v. 9 our author again uses a verb other than the LXX *διατίθημι*, preferring to use *ποιέω* to speak of making a covenant. This reading, *ἐποίησα*, can also be found in Codex Marchalianus, which may explain its appearance in the Hebrews quotation. It is also quite possible that our author chose to vary from the text he knew simply as a matter of style. But, whatever the reason for the variation, it has little theological significance, since *ποιέω* is used as a synonym of *διατίθημι* in this context.

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<sup>152</sup>However, *ἐπί* does appear routinely in Hebrews with *οἶκον* as its object (an alternate reading of 2:7, then 3:6; 8:8; 10:21), with the meaning "over" in the sense of power or rule (BAGD, s.v. *ἐπί* III, 1, b, a).

Further, *ποιέω* is a perfectly reasonable translation of *כָּרַת* in the light of its connection to *כָּרַת*.

At the end of v. 9 there are three more textual issues. The first is the very insignificant crasis of *καὶ ἐγώ* to form the term *κἀγώ*. The third, the use of *λέγει* instead of *φησίν*, has been dealt with above. The second, *ἠμέλησα* (“I neglected”), does not represent a change from the LXX, but an unexpected and interpretive translation of the Hebrew *בָּעַלְתִּי* (“I proved myself to be Lord”) by the LXX, which is followed by our author.<sup>153</sup> This is, first of all, an indication that Hebrews is relying on the Greek Scriptures at this point, rather than the Hebrew Bible. Another issue is that, on the surface, it seems as though the LXX (and Hebrews) says the opposite of what the Hebrew Bible claims. If one understands the Hebrew as translated above, “I proved myself to be Lord over them”, one might expect that God proving himself to be Lord would be a very active and involved pursuit, yet the Greek texts understand God as being very uninvolved, “I neglected them”. This problem can be resolved, however, by recalling how Scripture describes God’s act of asserting his lordship over Israel in the light of their disobedience. Jer. 11:14 says, “Therefore do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer on their behalf, for I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their trouble” (RSV). This passage indicates that Scripture understands the “punishment” of Israel by God as partly involving his neglect and lack of protection, allowing other nations to over-run God’s covenant people and take them into exile. This may be what lies behind the LXX rendering. The Lord shows that he is in fact lord by pulling away from his disobedient people and leaving them to their destruction.<sup>154</sup> However, if one understands the Hebrew as does the RSV, “though I was their husband, says the LORD”, then it is much more difficult to explain the LXX rendering, unless the translators of the LXX used a text that read *גָּעַלְתִּי* (“abhor”, “loathe”) instead of *בָּעַלְתִּי*. This is a possibility suggested by the editors of BHS in the light of the LXX, but there is no other textual support for it. In favour of the notion that the Hebrew *Vorlage* used something other than *בעל* is the occurrence of *בָּעַלְתִּי* in Jer. 3:14, where it is translated in the LXX by *κατακυριεύσω*. But divergent Greek renderings provide very slim evidence in this case that the Hebrew *Vorlage* was not the same in each instance, since it is

<sup>153</sup>Cf. Nairne, *Hebrews*, p. 84.

<sup>154</sup>Cf. Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, pp. 225-26.

possible to explain the validity of both Greek translations. Therefore, the translators of the LXX may have understood  $\text{בָּעַלְתִּי}$  as meaning something like “I proved myself lord over them”, or their Hebrew text may have read  $\text{גָּעַלְתִּי}$ . Whatever the case, our author simply accepts the LXX text at this point.

Heb. 8:10 contains at least five textual problems. The first, the change of  $\phi\eta\sigma\acute{\iota}\nu$  to  $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\iota$ , has already been dealt with above. The next issue is the omission of  $\delta\acute{\omega}\sigma\omega$  (“I will give”) in the phrase  $\delta\iota\delta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \delta\acute{\omega}\sigma\omega \nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \mu\omicron\upsilon$  (“I will surely give my laws”). This omission is witnessed in the LXX’s textual tradition in Codices Alexandrinus and Marchalianus, and is repeated in the requotation of Jer. 31:33 in Heb. 10:16. This omission also follows the Hebrew text,  $\text{נָתַתִּי}$  (“I will give”), more closely. In the light of this, and since it is difficult to imagine any reason for the author of Hebrews deliberately making such a change, unless he is attempting to adjust the text to be more faithful to the Hebrew (which is unlikely), it may well be that our author is following a version of the LXX which does not include the term  $\delta\acute{\omega}\sigma\omega$ . The use of  $\nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \mu\omicron\upsilon$  (“my laws”) in both Greek texts for the singular  $\text{תּוֹרָתִי}$  (“my law”) is the next issue.<sup>155</sup> The use later in v. 10 of the plural pronoun  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  (“them”) to refer to  $\nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  can be dealt with here as well. It is hard to explain this change, except that it may be the result of some bias with the translators of the LXX. Westcott observes:

The rendering of  $\text{אֲתֵּתֶנְךָ}$  by the plural  $\nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  is remarkable. It may have been chosen to dissociate the general idea of the divine ‘instruction’ from the special Mosaic code with which it had been identified. The plural occurs again in the same quotation c. x. 16, but not elsewhere in the NT; nor does the plural appear to be found in any other place of the LXX as a translation of the  $\text{תּוֹרָה}$ . It is found for the (Hebr.) plural in Dan. ix. 10. Conversely,  $\acute{o} \nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\varsigma$  is used to express the plural; Ex. xviii. 20; Lev. xxvi. 46 (הַתּוֹרָה).<sup>156</sup>

There is some difficulty with believing that the translators of the LXX would have wanted to distance the NC from the law of Moses. This sentiment does fit with the thrust of Hebrews, but our author is simply following the text of the LXX at this point. Therefore, apart from showing, again, that Hebrews follows the Greek version of Scripture, little can be made of these variations, since they do not clearly represent a significant

<sup>155</sup>Codex Sinaiticus uses the singular  $\nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\nu$ .

<sup>156</sup>Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 225.

change in meaning from the Hebrew text. The next variant is the use of *ἐπιγράψω* (“I will write on”) in Hebrews in place of *γράψω* (“I will write”). This variant, also witnessed by Codex Marchalianus, may be seen to make little difference to the meaning of the text, since in both Hebrews and the LXX the preposition is provided in the phrase *ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν* (“upon their heart”). However, Thomas observes:

*γράφω* is the general word for “write”, while *ἐπιγράφω*, particularly in the NT, is used for the more permanent types of writing, such as inscribing or engraving (cf. Mark xv. 26; Acts xvii. 23; Rev. xxi. 21, the only other NT instances). *Ἐπιγράφω* is particularly appropriate here, as it emphasises the permanent nature of the laws of the new covenant.<sup>157</sup>

This variant may be the result of a different septuagintal text, but, in the light of Thomas’ observation, it is more likely a theologically motivated variation originating with our author.

There is one more variant in the Hebrews quotation of the Jeremiah passage. It is the omission of *αὐτῶν καί*, near the end of v. 11, from the phrase *ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν καὶ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν*. The LXX text of Swete omits the *καί*, and Codex Alexandrinus<sup>158</sup> also omits the *αὐτῶν*. Neither of these words are syntactically necessary, and the omission of either or both has little to no effect on the meaning of the passage; however, the LXX is closer to the Hebrew text. This variant is typical of most of those found in this quotation, in the sense that its effect on the meaning of the text is quite insignificant, and in the sense that it may reflect an alternative textual tradition, or it may simply be an invasion of our author’s own style. Two sets of variants in this quotation, however, do seem to be deliberately introduced by our author to make a subtle but significant theological point: the change from *διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰούδα* to *συντελέσω ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰούδα*, and the change from *καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν γράψω αὐτούς* to *καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς*.

Having looked at the variants in Hebrews’ quotation of Jeremiah’s NC passage, there are still some important issues with which to grapple. The first is the identity of the people with which the NC is made.

<sup>157</sup>Thomas, “The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews”, pp. 312-13.

<sup>158</sup>Moffatt (*Hebrews*, pp. 109-10) surmises that Hebrews usually follows Codex Alexandrinus, though it may be more accurate to say that it follows a text much like Codex Alexandrinus. Cf. also Weiß, *Hebräer*, p. 445.

Jeremiah clearly identifies them as Israel,<sup>159</sup> and our author nowhere contradicts this: *καὶ συντελέσω ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰούδα διαθήκην καινὴν* (“and I will consummate a new covenant over the house of Israel and over the house of Judah”—8:8), and *ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ* (“because this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel”—8:10). Since Hebrews describes its readers as participating in the NC, does this mean that the author would identify his readers as part of Israel? Hebrews makes much of the similarities between the two peoples and their responsibilities before God, especially in the warning passages (e.g. 3:12–4:3; 12:1, 2). At the same time, in Hebrews there is a clear distinction made between those under the OC and the Mosaic Law, and those under the NC and the ministry of Christ (e.g. 2:1–4; 10:28, 29; 11:39, 40; 12:18–24; 13:10). Hebrews 3:1–6 describes two houses, one with the servant, Moses in charge, the other with the Son, Jesus in charge (“whose house we are”), indicating that our author sees his readers as making up a group of people distinct from those under Moses. Chapter 13 is very enlightening on this subject. Here, the author claims that his readers have an altar that is unavailable to “those who serve in the tabernacle” (v. 10), further defining his readers as a distinct entity, at least distinct from mainstream Israel. However, it is 13:11–16, and especially v. 13, which may give the clearest answer to this question. In this verse the readers are instructed to follow Jesus outside the camp. The context makes it clear that the camp is Jerusalem, which they can abandon because the city they are seeking is not the earth-bound Jerusalem, but a heavenly city (v. 14, cf. also 11:14–16). In effect, the readers are being encouraged to break with the religious community of Israel, and to abide religiously, at least, “outside the camp”. This seems to indicate that our author sees his readers as comprising an entity separate from the Israel of his day.

Nevertheless, there is good reason to believe that, although Hebrews depicts the readers as religiously distinct from contemporary Israel, it also understands them as Israel’s spiritual heir.<sup>160</sup> This must be the case since Hebrews depicts the work of Christ as both the fulfilment

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<sup>159</sup>Kaiser (“The Old Promise and the Old Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31–34”, p. 110) says, “The whole context meticulously connects the new covenant strophe with a literal restoration of the Jewish nation. . . . On this point almost all commentators are agreed; at least initially so.”

<sup>160</sup>Cf. Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, p. 190.

of God's promises to Israel and the typological consummation of God's system of relating to Israel (ch. 8),<sup>161</sup> and since it sees its readers as partakers in and benefiting from this same work of Christ (10:19-25; 11:39-40).<sup>162</sup> In other words, through Christ, the readers enjoy the fulfilment of God's promises and plan for Israel, even though they are not themselves Israel. Therefore, there is a sense in which our readers have, at least for a time, supplanted Israel as the people of God. Jeremiah, however, promises the NC to Israel.<sup>163</sup> Whether or not Hebrews sees its readers in a spiritual sense as the true Israel or a new Israel, as opposed to the mainstream Israel of the day, or as something entirely other than Israel is not clear from this context alone. Hebrews never answers the question of the complete or final fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy, which expects the establishment of the NC to be with Israel proper. What is clear is that Hebrews sees its Jewish readers, above all else, as followers of Christ.

Hebrews 8:9 reasserts another important perspective, held by both Jeremiah<sup>164</sup> and Hebrews, that it is the Mosaic Covenant that is identified as the OC and that is replaced by the NC. This is a reassertion because this point has already been made throughout the first seven chapters (e.g. 3:1-6). It is important, however, to recognise the implications of this. Hebrews never asserts that the NC replaces any of the scriptural covenants other than the Mosaic Covenant. In fact, our author affirms the continued validity of the Abrahamic Covenant in 6:13-19,<sup>165</sup> and in a fascinating way he shows how God's unchanging promise to Abraham can be a spiritual encouragement to his readers. By recognis-

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<sup>161</sup>Cf. Weiß, *Hebräer*, pp. 439-46; Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, vol. 2, p. 232.

<sup>162</sup>Cf. Ruager, *Hebräerbrief*, p. 149.

<sup>163</sup>Kistemaker (*Hebrews*, pp. 226-29) understands the reference to Israel and Judah in the Jeremiah passage very broadly, including both Jew and Gentile believers, and not as a specific reference to the nation of Israel. But this seems to stretch the meaning of these terms beyond reason. Hebrews obviously sees its readers as participating in the NC, but it simply does not interact with the issue of the relationship of the nation of Israel to the NC. Nevertheless, a literal fulfilment of the NC promise with the house of Israel and the house of Judah at a later time would contradict nothing in Hebrews (cf. Montefiore, *Hebrews*, pp. 140, 141; Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 125).

<sup>164</sup>Even the Jeremiah text says that the Lord would make a NC not like the one made with the exodus generation, indicating that even Jeremiah was anticipating the replacement of the Mosaic Covenant.

<sup>165</sup>Cf. Swetnam, "A Suggested Interpretation of Hebrews 9,15-18", p. 383.

ing the unchanging stability of the Abrahamic Covenant, the readers can be encouraged and emboldened to grasp hold of the hope that lay before them, hope which comes from Christ's entry into the heavenly sanctuary as a forerunner. In other words, God's promise that the readers would one day follow Jesus into the heavenly tabernacle was as sure as his promise to bless and multiply Abraham, the fulfilment of which the readers themselves could verify, even by their own existence as Jews. Confidence in the God of Abraham would allow the readers to connect to their "anchor for the soul" in Jesus, who sits at the right hand of the throne of God in the heavenly holy of holies. So, Hebrews does not see the NC as replacing the Abrahamic Covenant, and this is why the author can make such a connection between his readers and Abraham (cf. 2:16).

Neither does Hebrews see the promise/covenant made with David as having been replaced. In 1:5 our author quotes the first part of 2 Sam. 7:14, which, in its original context, is in the middle of a section promising the eternal establishment of David's kingdom. Our author applies this passage to Jesus, indicating that he sees him as the fulfilment of that promise to David. In fact, Psalm 110, the Scripture passage that stands nearest to the heart of Hebrews' message, is an enthronement psalm that describes "the Lord" taking up his rule from "Zion". This psalm is in line with the kingdom promise to David in 2 Sam. 7:11-16, and our author's reliance on it, along with his application of 2 Sam. 7:14 to Jesus, shows that he sees Jesus as fulfilling God's kingdom promise to David. So, rather than being supplanted, the Davidic promise is fulfilled by Jesus and his ascension to the right hand of God. This leads to an interesting question. The work of Christ is understood by our author as the fulfilment of both the promise to David and the covenant made with Moses, but in the case of the former, the fulfilment is such that it establishes the promise as eternally valid, while in the case of the latter, its fulfilment makes that covenant obsolete and no longer in force. What is the difference in these two fulfilments?

First, the difference begins with the way in which Hebrews views the nature of the two promises. The promise to David itself requires that it be an eternally valid promise, since it provides an assurance that David's kingdom would be eternal. There is no way for this promise to be fulfilled without remaining valid forever. Unlike the promise to David, the Mosaic Covenant could be broken by the people and its validity put into jeopardy, even though it was initially meant to be valid

forever (e.g. Exod. 12:14, 17, 24; Lev. 16:29). The Mosaic Covenant can be discarded if the people refuse to abide by its terms. Undergirding this difference is the fact that the Davidic promise does not carry with it any conditions. God simply states that he would establish David's kingdom forever, and David is not required to do anything more than he has already done, so that the success of the promise does not rest on David's shoulders. On the other hand, the success of the Mosaic Covenant does require that the people abide by the covenant stipulations. It is clear that our author (and indeed Jeremiah) blames the failure of the OC on the people and their failure to live up to the standards laid down in the Mosaic Law (Heb. 8:7-9). Jeremiah's ringing criticism of the OC and its people would have been sufficient evidence to our author that the Mosaic Covenant was different from the other covenants and promises found in Scripture. The language used by the NC passage in Jeremiah would have convinced our author that the Mosaic Covenant was not permanent, and since no language like this is used in relation to the Abrahamic or Davidic promises, he would have no reason to treat these promises as if they, like the Mosaic Covenant, would lose their potency. The success of the Mosaic Covenant, then, was conditioned on the performance of the people with whom the covenant was made,<sup>166</sup> while the success of the Davidic promise was dependent on God alone.

Secondly, though the Mosaic Covenant and the Davidic promise both have their fulfilment in Christ, the two are fulfilled in different ways. The OC is predictive of something else only in an inferential way, and this is seen only with the benefit of hindsight and from a perspective that is able to consider the import of the Christ-event. The OC stands as shadow and type of the work of Christ, so that Jesus fulfils the old by offering the real thing that the old could only foreshadow,<sup>167</sup> and after the offering of the (new) real, the old is no longer relevant. Conversely, the Davidic covenant is predictive by nature, so when Jesus fulfils that promise nothing is set aside, and there is nothing in this fulfilment that surpasses the quality of the original promise. Even if David is seen to be a type of Christ, as the OC can be seen as a type of the NC, the fulfilment of the Davidic promise is not typological, as is the fulfilment of the OC, because it is not David that is being fulfilled but the promise to David, and predictive fulfilments must be considered distinct from typological

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<sup>166</sup>Cf. Nairne (*Hebrews*, p. 84), who cites Ex. 29:5 and Lev. 26:14ff.

<sup>167</sup>Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, p. 210; Manson, *Hebrews*, p. 129.

fulfilments.<sup>168</sup> Therefore, the two fulfilments are by nature fundamentally different. The NC fulfils in the sense of achieving the purpose and intent of the old,<sup>169</sup> but it does so in an improved way—this fulfilment is typological. The fulfilment of the Davidic promise is a simple realisation of a promise and prediction.

It is important to recognise, when considering the use of Scripture in Hebrews, that the author sees only the Old or Mosaic Covenant as coming to an end and as having been replaced by the NC in the new, Christian system which he describes.<sup>170</sup> There is no reason to believe that Hebrews understands the other promises and covenants in Scripture as losing their force for his readers; in fact, it is quite the opposite.

Our author's exegetical comments on this quotation (8:13) are quite brief. This may be because he considers the meaning of the quoted material to be clear enough by itself, or because the point he wishes to make is simple and brief, or, most likely, because ch. 8 serves primarily as an introduction to the subject(s) dealt with in the next two chapters, so he is able to leave a further discussion of these issues to those chapters (e.g. 9:15-22).<sup>171</sup> In fact, the re-quotation of part of the Jeremiah passage in ch. 10 indicates that the message of chs. 9 and 10 as a whole is, in one sense, an elaboration of the concepts introduced by the Jeremiah passage.<sup>172</sup> In the author's short exegetical comment he focuses on one word from the quotation, *καινὴν* ("new"). Hebrews uses two synonyms, *καινός* (8:13; 9:15) and *νέος* (7:24), to describe the NC, with each having a slightly different meaning—since synonyms rarely have *exactly* the same force. In general, *καινός* means something that is new in quality, while *νέος* describes something new in time. Something can have both characteristics, newness of time and quality, and it is probable that our author understands the NC as being new in both of these ways. It is also probable that when the LXX and our author choose the term *καινός* it is because the covenant's qualitative newness is

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<sup>168</sup>Goppelt, *Typos*, pp. 17, 18, 198-202.

<sup>169</sup>Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 226.

<sup>170</sup>The better promises of 8:6 are compared to the promises of the Mosaic Covenant, as the following context suggests.

<sup>171</sup>Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, p. 139.

<sup>172</sup>Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 80; Manson, *Hebrews*, p. 127; Snell, *New and Living Way*, p. 33.

prominent in their thinking at that point.<sup>173</sup> In any case, it is probably best not to overplay this distinction.<sup>174</sup> The covenant spoken of by Jeremiah was “new”, and for our author this terminology creates a contrast with the Mosaic Covenant that shows it to be old and obsolete: *ἐν τῷ λέγειν Καινήν πεπαλαίωκεν τὴν πρώτην* (“by saying<sup>175</sup> ‘new’ he has made the first obsolete”). The logic of this is pressed still further as our author asserts that if the Mosaic Covenant was old and obsolete, then it must be near disappearing: *τὸ δὲ παλαιούμενον καὶ γηράσκον ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ* (“and that which is made obsolete and is old is near disappearing”).<sup>176</sup> According to Caird, “Here is a perfectly sound piece of exegesis”.<sup>177</sup>

However, the tenses and vocabulary used by our author in 8:13 create an interesting question: Does our author mean that the OC is near disappearing from Jeremiah’s perspective, or simply from his own perspective? Hebrews’ use of the perfect, *πεπαλαίωκεν*, indicates that our author sees the language of Jeremiah, calling the NC “new”, as making the Mosaic Covenant old or obsolete. The term *παλαιόω* can have either meaning, “old” or “obsolete”, but its use in the next clause indicates that he is probably using it as a description of the Mosaic Covenant’s obsolescence. Here it is used in conjunction with the synonym *γηράσκω*, and the two words, used together as they are, describe something that is near to disappearing. There seems to be little reason for the author to have used these synonyms together in this way unless he wishes to emphasise a slightly different quality with each. Since the range of meaning for *γηράσκω* is the narrower of the two, “to grow old”, it would make the

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<sup>173</sup>Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, pp. 219-25. Cf. also Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, pp. 44, 45; Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 223.

<sup>174</sup>Kaiser (“The Old Promise and the Old Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34”, p. 110) stresses that the NC in Jeremiah is really a “renewed” covenant, as does Fischer (“Covenant, Fulfilment and Judaism in Hebrews”, pp. 175-87)—see below. Kaiser, however, does not take the notion of the renewed covenant to the extreme that Fischer does, recognising that while there is a great deal of continuity between the two covenants, there is also significant discontinuity.

<sup>175</sup>Or “when he says”. Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 44) says, “*Ἐν τῷ λέγειν* here is like *ἐν τῷ ὑποτάξαι* at ii. 8 and *ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι* at iii. 15.”

<sup>176</sup>Moffatt (*Hebrews*, p. 111) points out that “*ἀφανίζειν* is applied to legislation in the sense of abolition, lapsing or falling into disuetude” in Hellenistic Greek. And Nairne (*Hebrews*, p. 84) points out that this term is used frequently in the “LXX of Jeremiah for sudden violent removal”.

<sup>177</sup>Caird, “The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews”, p. 47.

best sense to take *παλαιόω* as having a meaning within its own range (“to make, be or become old, to become obsolete”) but that is a bit less general, “to become obsolete”. This translation choice is confirmed by the context, since the logic of the clause works best with *παλαιόω* translated as “obsolete”. He says that τὸ παλαιούμενον καὶ γηράσκον is near disappearing. It is easier to see where he gets the notion of disappearance if he is beginning with the concept that the OC is obsolete, and not just old. So, if it is best to translate *παλαιόω* as “obsolete” in the second instance, it is probably best to understand it this way in the first instance as well. Therefore, our author would have considered the OC “obsolete” even from Jeremiah’s perspective.<sup>178</sup> But, in our author’s estimation, was it “near disappearing” back that far? It seems that its disappearance is directly related to its obsolescence, and since it was obsolete when Jeremiah was written, it would have been near disappearing then as well. What he means by near, however, is another question. Is he referring to nearness of time or something else? It does not seem reasonable that Hebrews would consider the covenant near the end if its validity with respect to time in Jeremiah’s day. However, this statement can be taken to mean that, even though the OC was still in force for several centuries after the NC prophecy, from the time of that prophecy the Mosaic Covenant was fated for invalidity, and that it existed from that time “near” the brink of disappearance. In other words, God had already decided that the Mosaic Covenant had failed and that it was in need of replacing,<sup>179</sup> and he could easily do so at any juncture, but *when* he did so was another issue. From the time of the NC prophecy,<sup>180</sup> the OC’s days were numbered—it was near disappearing.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Cf. Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 168. According to Lindars (*The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 82), “the prophecy of the new covenant necessarily renders the old one obsolete”.

<sup>179</sup> Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, p. 208; Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, pp. 235–36; Ruager, *Hebräerbrief*, p. 149.

<sup>180</sup> Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 229; Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 195; Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, pp. 45, 46; Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 126; Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, p. 228; Snell, *New and Living Way*, pp. 105, 106; Weiß, *Hebräer*, p. 447.

<sup>181</sup> If this is true, then this phrase “near disappearing” cannot be construed as a hint that the temple ministry was in the process of disappearing but still current at the time Hebrews was written (as is done by Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 124), since it refers to the situation in Jeremiah’s time. At the time of Hebrews’ writing the process of disappearing may well have been completed, in the author’s view, or he may not see the process as completed even by the time of the fall of Jerusalem.

The persuasive force of this line of argumentation for the readers would have been in the discovery that their Mosaic Covenant had failed and was doomed to obsolescence, even while it was yet in force, and this obsolescence of the Mosaic system came to light merely on the basis of the prophesying of the NC. How inappropriate would it be for them to cling to the old, now that the new had actually arrived and was in force?<sup>182</sup>

There are those who would disagree with the analysis that Hebrews understands the NC as having replaced the OC. J. Fischer, for instance, argues that the NC has fulfilled the OC, but without replacing it.<sup>183</sup> According to Fischer, the NC prophecy of Jeremiah uses irony in describing a “new” covenant that was actually a reinstatement of the old, with the same goals and intent. What Jeremiah is really saying is that when God’s people finally put themselves right with God in their covenant relationship it will be as if they are enjoying something new, a new covenant. This should never have been the case, as the people should have been faithful from the start, and so Jeremiah’s prophecy is a statement of irony: how *new* for God’s people to be faithful to his covenant. Fischer compares the enactment of the NC described in Hebrews with the re-establishment of the covenant for Joshua’s generation in Deuteronomy. Then he goes on to say, “One covenant does not set aside another. One does not invalidate another so as to nullify its stipulations. Rather, it renews, expands, adapts, updates”.<sup>184</sup> The emphasis put forth by Fisher on the unity of purpose and the shared intended result between the two covenants is welcome. And his rejection of the notion that the OC has been set aside in such a way that it could/should no longer be used to teach the church as a “pointer” to Christ is consis-

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There is nothing in this statement for determining the time of Hebrews’ writing. Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 195; Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, p. 228; Montefiore, *Hebrews*, p. 142; Rignbach, *Hebräer*, p. 236.

<sup>182</sup>The Qumran documents indicate that at least one community in Israel before the turn of the eras saw themselves as participating in the NC. This community, however, did not understand the NC as permanently replacing the cultic elements of the OC, “but they looked forward to a new age which would revive the highest ideals of the old age; they looked forward to a renovated temple which would still be a temple made with hands, to a pure sacrificial worship which would still involve the slaughter of bulls and goats, to a worthy priesthood which would still be confined to the family of Aaron. . .” (Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 193).

<sup>183</sup>Fischer, “Covenant, Fulfilment and Judaism in Hebrews”, pp. 175-87.

<sup>184</sup>Fischer, “Covenant, Fulfilment and Judaism in Hebrews”, p. 179.

tent with our author's own use of the OC and its Scripture. The OC is not without its value even to the NC people, but this in no way argues for the continued enforcement, or re-enforcement, of the OC for our author and his readers. The argument Fischer advances indicates that he has not only misunderstood the most fundamental assertion of Hebrews—that in Christ God's people have something new, different and better—but he has also failed to recognise a somewhat subtle but vitally important perspective in Hebrews—that the Scriptures of the OC are just as much Scripture for those under the NC, *even though they are no longer under the OC*.<sup>185</sup> Any view that does not recognise these two foundational characteristics of the argument of Hebrews will never be able to understand or describe adequately either the thrust of the book's message or the hermeneutic that spawned it.

#### *Role of the New Covenant in Hebrews*

Lehne claims that “the *covenant idea*” is the “linchpin” of the structure of Hebrews.<sup>186</sup> “The *covenant idea*” does play an important role in Hebrews, and especially in chs. 8–10 as indicated by the inclusio formed around the doctrinal section of these chapters (8:1–10:18) by the quotation and re-quotation of the NC passage from Jeremiah (8:8–12; 10:16, 17). However, it is not accurate to say that covenant is the main theme of Hebrews, or even of chs. 8–10, as shown earlier in my discussion on the structure of Hebrews. The main idea of the book is that the spiritual needs of the readers are met entirely in *the superior priesthood of Christ*, and the main theme of chs. 8–10 is the superiority of the priestly work of Christ. Indeed, to speak of priesthood necessarily involves the covenant concept, whether or not covenant is explicitly mentioned—of course, in Hebrews it is—since much of the significance of the biblical priest is in his mediation of covenant. Therefore, it should not be surprising to find in a treatise on priesthood that the concept of covenant would provide a significant part of the theological foundation of the argument, and this is the case in Hebrews. Some respond to this as if Hebrews is being innovative in the “marriage of covenant and cult”,<sup>187</sup> not realising that the Mosaic Covenant and the levitical priesthood has been thus wed

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<sup>185</sup>These two points will be substantiated throughout this work.

<sup>186</sup>Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, p. 94; cf. also Vos, “Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke”, pp. 591–92.

<sup>187</sup>E.g. Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, p. 111.

from the start. And it may be that the failure to recognise this inherent “marriage” between the OC (and the NC) and cult has in part led to the notion that covenant is the main idea of Hebrews, since it is true that if the concept of covenant is removed serious damage is done to the logic of Hebrews.<sup>188</sup> However, if the concept of covenant is removed there is also serious damage done to the logic of biblical priesthood, and the damage that would be done to the logic of Hebrews by the removal of the covenant references is due to the theological dependence of the main theme, priesthood, on the covenant concept. Priesthood, covenant, cult, redemption—all of these are inextricably intertwined in biblical theology and in Hebrews, but the *main* theological concern in Hebrews is priesthood.<sup>189</sup>

The covenant concept in Hebrews is like the concept of Son. They are both critical elements of the theological foundation upon which the argument of Hebrews rests. Even the language used to introduce the two concepts is very similar. In 1:4, 5 our author claims that Jesus is as much better than the angels as the name he has inherited, Son (*τοσοῦτω κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων ὅσω διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοῦς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα. Τίμι γὰρ εἶπέν ποτε τῶν ἀγγέλων, Υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε*). In 8:6 he says that the ministry Jesus has obtained is as much better than the levites as the covenant he mediates (*νυνὶ δὲ διαφορωτέρας τέτυχεν λειτουργίας, ὅσω καὶ κρείττονός ἐστιν διαθήκης μεσίτης*). The thought and language parallels here are striking, and it is no accident that the two concepts, better name (Son) and better covenant (NC), play a similar role in Hebrews by energising and giving credibility to the main concept, better priest. It is also no accident that these two similar expressions come in the last part of the author's introduction to the first two main sections of his work, which is one more piece of evidence that it is correct to see 8:1ff as introducing section two of the book. In section one “Son” is the primary concept which the author uses to *support* his thesis that Jesus is, because of his own nature, a superior priest. In section two, “the NC” is the primary concept which the author uses to *support* his thesis that Jesus is, because of his work, a superior priest in

<sup>188</sup>Vos, “Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke”, p. 592.

<sup>189</sup>Cf. Isaacs (*Sacred Space*, pp. 15-22), who admits that most interpreters through the ages understand priesthood as the main theme of Hebrews. Although she does not accept priesthood as the main theme, she does say that “The centrality of the theme of Christ's priesthood for Hebrews is indubitable”.

practice. We should expect to find in chs. 8–10, therefore, that the NC and all its (cultic) trappings are seen as the foundation of Jesus' superior priestly work.

### Chapter Three

## Explanation of Christ's New Covenant Priestly Ministry: Hebrews 9:1–10:18

Hebrews 9:1–10:18 represents the theological core of chs. 8–10, with ch. 8 serving to introduce this section, and 10:19–39 containing the paraenesis that grows out of it. Furthermore, because of the place of chs. 8–10 in Hebrews, this section also represents the theological core of the book as a whole, chs. 1–7 laying the foundation for the discussion of Jesus' high priestly ministry in chs. 8–10 by establishing the fact and nature of Jesus' priesthood, and chs. 11–13 developing the practical implications of the readers' standing and responsibility before God as a result of Jesus' priestly ministry. This section explains, or expands on, the three main topics introduced in ch. 8: the old and new covenants, the old and new sacrifices and the old and new sanctuaries.

#### *THE OLD AND NEW SANCTUARIES COMPARED (9:1–14)*

Hebrews 9:1–14 can be divided into three parts, the first part beginning with *οὐν* (9:1) and containing a cursory description of the tabernacle of the exodus, the second part beginning with *δέ* (9:6) and offering an interpretation of the significance of the tabernacle for the readers and the third part also beginning with *δέ* (9:11) and describing the importance of the heavenly sanctuary. The following will take each of these parts in turn.

#### *Schematic of the Earthly Tabernacle (9:1–5)*

The first verse of ch. 9 develops a theme from ch. 8 (vv. 6, 13) using the term *πρῶτος* ("first"). However, the meaning of this term in

the first verses of ch. 9 is somewhat ambiguous.<sup>1</sup> The use of *πρῶτος* in 9:1 seems to refer to the first covenant, coming after its use in the previous verse (8:13) where it has this meaning, so the reader naturally makes this connection, at least initially. This interpretation of *πρῶτος* works well within 9:1 itself, understanding the first covenant as involving regulations for service and a sanctuary: *εἶχε μὲν οὖν [καὶ] ἡ πρώτη δικαιώματα λατρείας τό τε ἅγιον κοσμικόν* (“therefore, the first was also having regulations for service and the earthly holy place”). But in 9:2 the author goes on to talk about “the first tent”, and then in v. 3 he speaks of a “tent called the holy of holies”. In v. 2, then, *πρῶτος* is used to refer to the first tent over against another (second) tent, so that the use of this term in 9:2 has shifted since its appearance in ch. 8. This may cause the reader to question whether or not the initial understanding of *πρῶτος* in v. 1 as referring to the first covenant holds up under further scrutiny in the light of its usage in v. 2. In fact, there is a shift in the usage of *πρῶτος* from its reference in ch. 8 to the first covenant to its reference in ch. 9 to the first tent, but this shift does not take place until after 9:1. It is clear that *πρῶτος* is used in v. 2 to describe a *σκηνή*, but it would be awkward to understand *ἡ πρώτη* in 9:1 as referring to the tent, since the verse would then read: “Therefore, the *first [tent]* was also having regulations for service and the earthly holy place”. It would be strange to understand the first tent as having an “earthly holy place”, because the first tent is itself an “earthly holy place”. Therefore, on account of the awkwardness created by understanding *πρῶτος* as referring to the tent in v. 1, along with the close grammatical connection between 8:13 and 9:1 (*οὖν*)<sup>2</sup> and the lack of any clue to the reader that the author is shifting his usage of the term until 9:2, it seems best to understand *πρῶτος* as having the same referent and usage in 9:1 as it does in 8:13, relating to the first covenant.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Some manuscripts (e.g. 6<sup>mg</sup>, 47, 73, 74, 80, 81, 104, 137, 139, 326, 365, 629, 630, 2464) add *σκηνή* to specify that the “first” refers to the tabernacle. Buchanan (*To the Hebrews*, pp. 139-40) also understands *πρώτη* as referring to the first tent.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 231.

<sup>3</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 230) says, “‘Covenant’ is clearly implied”. Moffatt (*Hebrews*, p. 112) agrees, as does Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 197; Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 47; Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, pp. 238-39; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 214; Montefiore, *Hebrews*, p. 143; Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, pp. 236-37; Weiß, *Hebräer*, p. 449 and others. Cf. Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 47, for a treatment of the textual history relevant to this issue, including the reading of the *Textus Receptus*, *ἡ πρώτη σκηνή*. Buchanan (*To the Hebrews*, p. 139) reads “first tent”.

When our author uses *πρῶτος* to describe the tent in ch. 9, his usage does not necessarily carry with it the same polemical force as it does when he applies it to the NC. That is, *πρῶτος* is used with *διαθήκη* in the context of one covenant being replaced by another, so that the first belonged to a previous order, while its counterpart, the new, belongs to the present order. In the context of the tents, when the counterpart of the first is the holy of holies, both the first and second belong to the same order. Yet here there is also an aspect of the first tent that makes it inferior to the second tent or holy of holies, just as the first covenant is inferior to the NC (cf. 9:6, 7). This relationship between the first and second, and the use of similar terminology with regard to the covenants and the tents is creatively used to illustrate the relationship between the old and new orders in 9:8, with the author playing on the ambiguities he created at the beginning of the chapter. There will be more on this later.

With v. 2 the author launches into a description of the layout of the tabernacle, focusing on its furnishings.<sup>4</sup> This description relies primarily on the account in Exodus, but incorporates information from other sources as well. There are three issues that challenge the interpreter with regard to the author's agreement with Scripture in his description of the tabernacle. The first is the inclusion of the golden incense altar with the holy of holies,<sup>5</sup> since Exod. 30:1-10 clearly places it within the holy place or first tent.<sup>6</sup> Some modern interpreters highlight this as a mistake, and some even take this as evidence that the author was not personally familiar with the temple service of his day.<sup>7</sup> While our author's seemingly loose treatment of the placement of the incense altar does not seem

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<sup>4</sup>Josephus gives an extended description of Herod's temple in *War* 5, 184-236.

<sup>5</sup>See Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 215, for a treatment of the view that *θυμιατήριον* refers to a golden censor used by the priest to carry live coals into the holy of holies. He rightly rejects this view. Cf. also Snell, *New and Living Way*, p. 108.

<sup>6</sup>Lane (*Hebrews 9-13*, p. 220) points to a liturgical tradition which, according to him, indicates that in the later history of Israel the golden altar was placed within the holy of holies (1 Kgs. 6:20; 2 Bar. 6:7—it is questionable whether these texts can sustain this point of view, but see 1 Kgs. 6:22).

<sup>7</sup>E.g. Montefiore, *Hebrews*, p. 145. Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 55) says, "but even supposing him to have been an Alexandrian Jew, he must have been a monster of ignorance and forgetfulness to be capable of such a mistake". Delitzsch, following Bleek and Tholuck, believes that the author was influenced by his own view that the heavenly sanctuary had no veil, and that the incense rising from the altar symbolises the prayers of the saints coming into the most holy place. This position is interesting, but a bit fanciful—and unrepresentative of the context of the passage.

satisfactory to modern sensibilities, it may not have been such a problem to his earliest readers.<sup>8</sup> In fact, Hebrews is really not as concerned about describing the correct positioning of the tabernacle furnishings as about making a theological point. In the material to come, our author will make a comparison of Jesus' high priestly work and the levitical high priest's service on the Day of Atonement, an event on which our author is keen to focus. Exodus 30:7-10 describes the role of the incense altar in the functioning of the tabernacle, which is primarily one of facilitating the daily burning of incense. However, the incense altar also plays a role in the Day of Atonement ceremonies, as outlined by Exod. 30:10: "Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns. This annual atonement must be made with the blood of the atoning sin offering for the generations to come. It is most holy to the LORD" (NIV). It is possible that Hebrews follows a tradition here that understands the incense altar as placed in the holy of holies, and that our author does mean to say that the altar was in the same chamber as the ark of the covenant.<sup>9</sup> However there is some indication in the text of Hebrews that, following Exod. 30:10,<sup>10</sup> our author may be associating the incense altar with the holy of holies, without saying that it is actually in the holy of holies.<sup>11</sup> When he describes the contents of the first tent he uses phrasing that unambiguously places these things inside that first tent: σκηνην γὰρ κατεσκευάσθη ἡ πρώτη ἐν ἣ ἢ τε λυχνία καὶ ἡ τράπεζα καὶ ἡ πρόθεσις τῶν ἄρτων, ἣτις λέγεται Ἁγία ("for the first tent was prepared, in which was both the lampstand, and the table and the presentation of the loaves, which is called 'Holy'"—9:2). But, when he describes the holy of holies he uses different terminology: μετὰ δὲ τὸ δεύτερον καταπέτασμα σκηνην ἢ λεγομένη Ἁγία Ἁγίων, χρυσοῦν ἔχουσα θυμιατήριον καὶ τὴν κιβωτὸν τῆς διαθήκης... ("but after the second curtain is the tent called 'Holy of Holies', which had a

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<sup>8</sup>However, according to B. Metzger (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, p. 667), there are several witnesses which try to correct the text at this point. Nonetheless, the overwhelming bulk of the witnesses attempt no correction here.

<sup>9</sup>On the basis of passages such as 1 Kgs. 6:22; 2 Macc. 2:4-8; Rev. 8:3, Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 235) says, "That there was a tradition placing the altar of incense in the inner sanctuary is certain".

<sup>10</sup>See Attridge (*Hebrews*, pp. 236-38) for a treatment of "The Anomalies of Hebrews 9:2-4 and Numbers".

<sup>11</sup>Hagner (*Hebrews*, p. 128) takes this view; Kistemaker (*Hebrews*, pp. 238-39) holds a similar position.

golden altar and the ark of the covenant . . .”—9:3, 4). Readers unfamiliar with the tabernacle arrangement as described by Exodus may assume that Hebrews understands the golden altar to have been within the holy of holies. The original readers, however, probably would have been very familiar with the layout of the tabernacle, and would have been able to detect the author's shift of phrasing,<sup>12</sup> noting that he does not actually say that the altar is “in” the holy of holies, but that the holy of holies “has” the altar.<sup>13</sup> Evidently, from our author's perspective, the physical placement of the altar is less important than its functional connection with the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement.<sup>14</sup> However, at the end of this paragraph the author admits that his intent is not to go into great detail on the particulars of the tabernacle layout: *περὶ ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν νῦν λέγειν κατὰ μέρος* (“concerning which [the tabernacle] there is no time to speak in detail”—9:5b). Instead of contemplating the meaning of each detail of the tabernacle arrangement, the author chooses to focus

<sup>12</sup>Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 56), agrees.

<sup>13</sup>According to Bruce (*Commentary on Hebrews*, pp. 201, 202) this explanation “smacks of special pleading”, but then even he goes on to describe “a special connection between the incense-altar and the holy of holies, no matter on which side of the veil the altar stood”, because of its function on the Day of Atonement. Nairne (*Hebrews*, p. 86) asserts that the altar belongs to the holy of holies. Riggensbach (*Hebräer*, pp. 245-46) suggests that the infrequent mention of the incense altar in the LXX may have made it seem less important to the author than some of the other tools of the tabernacle, or he may simply have forgotten about the altar, so that he refers to the incense pan (his understanding of *θυμιατήριον*) instead. This does not seem convincing (cf. Braun, *Hebräer*, p. 251). Guthrie (*Hebrews*, pp. 180-81) claims that “the participle *having* (*echousa*) is intended in the sense of ‘belonging to’ rather than ‘standing within,’” but then he says, “Nevertheless, since the same participle does service as well for the ark, which was quite definitely inside the holy of holies, the preceding explanation is not without some difficulty. Nevertheless it is the most reasonable.” Moffatt (*Hebrews*, pp. 114-15) calls the association of the incense altar with the holy of holies “another of his inaccuracies in describing what he only knew from the text of the LXX”, and finds the explanation above as “quite unacceptable”, since “*ἔχουσα* as applied to the other items could not mean this”. Hebrews also uses a participial form of *ἔχω* in 9:4 to describe the golden jar “having” the manna (*ἐν ἡ στάμνος χρυσοῦ ἔχουσα τὸ μάννα*), which is certainly a way of saying that the manna is inside the jar. Therefore, this use of *ἔχω* in the latter part of v. 4 must be held in tension with the author's shift in terminology from *ἐν* in v. 2 to *ἔχουσα* near the beginning of v. 4. At least, the author's use of terminology creates some ambiguity at this point, which may explain his connection of the incense altar with the holy of holies.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Strobel, *Hebräer*, p. 99; Spicq, *Hebreux*, vol. 2, p. 250.

on the significance, general structure and function of the levitical sanctuary.

The second and third issues are the descriptions of the jar of manna and the rod of Aaron as being in the ark of the covenant (9:4). Both the jar of manna<sup>15</sup> and the rod are described in Exod. 16:33, 34 and Num. 17:10 respectively as being placed "in front of the Testimony" (NIV). Since Exod. 25:16, 21 describe God's instruction to put the "Testimony" into the ark, it is not too great a stretch to imagine that the jar of manna and Aaron's rod, previously associated with the Testimony in location, would have been placed inside the ark as well.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, our author's description of these items as being inside the ark is simply an interpretation of the material in Exodus,<sup>17</sup> albeit not based on any explicit statement.

According to 9:1, the first covenant had its own regulations and place for worship. The first five verses of ch. 9 describe this place of worship, while the next five verses describe the regulations for worship, and all of this is with a view to comparing the old place and regulations with those surrounding the self-sacrifice of Christ depicted in the last four verses.

#### *Significance of the Earthly Tabernacle (9:6-10)*

Verses 6-10 comprise one long, compound and complex sentence. The *δέ* at the beginning of this sentence may cause the reader to remember the *μέν* at the beginning of 9:1, but there is no grammatical connection between these two words<sup>18</sup> since vv. 6-10 are still describing part of what was introduced by the *μέν* in 9:1, the regulations for service.<sup>19</sup> In

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<sup>15</sup>Cf. Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 236), who says, "A final embellishment of the biblical accounts is the note that the jar was golden. Exodus knows only of an ordinary jar, but Philo, too, mentions that the jar of manna was of gold". Presumably Attridge is referring only to the MT, since to say that Exodus is unaware of the jar's supposed golden quality does not take into account that the LXX calls it *στάμνον χρυσοῦν*, and Hebrews does rely on the LXX over against the Hebrew. What is more, the Hebrew term translated by the LXX, *תַּבַּיִת*, is a *hapax legomenon*, so it would be difficult to determine its range of meaning with certainty.

<sup>16</sup>So Ebrard, *Hebrews*, pp. 269-70.

<sup>17</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 236.

<sup>18</sup>Against Spicq, *Hebreux*, vol. 2, p. 247.

<sup>19</sup>Buchanan (*To the Hebrews*, p. 146) and Weiß (*Hebräer*, p. 449) point out that the appearance of *δικαιώματα* in vv. 1 and 10 forms an *inclusio*. This marks out these verses as a unit.

order for this *δέ* to refer back to the *μέν* of 9:1 there would have to be a contrast between these two statements, and there clearly is not. According to 9:1, the first, “on the one hand”, had regulations and a place, and having described the place in vv. 1-5, in vv. 6-10 the author will talk about the regulations, thus still leaving the reader to anticipate the rest of the contrast introduced by *μέν*, which is not introduced until v. 11. Therefore, the *δέ* in v. 6 must be understood as used in a continuative sense, and is best translated “and”.<sup>20</sup> However, *μέν* is also used in v. 6, anticipating the *δέ* at the beginning of v. 7 and setting up a contrast between the priests’ entry into the first tent and the high priest’s entry into the second tent. The priests enter the first tent *διὰ παντός*, and in the light of the contrast between the two situations, with the priest going into the second tent *ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ* (“once a year”), it is probable that the meaning of *διὰ παντός* here is something like “continually” or “daily”.<sup>21</sup> Leviticus 1–7 and 16 represent the closest correspondence in the Pentateuch to the material in 9:6-10, so it is probable that our author relies on these chapters in Leviticus for his description in these verses.<sup>22</sup> In chs. 1–7 Leviticus describes the more common offerings, while ch. 16 describes the Day of Atonement sacrifice.

When the author says that the priests go in *τὰς λατρείας ἐπιτελοῦντες* (“to complete the services”—9:6), he is using a phrase unknown to the LXX. But reading the Pentateuch’s instructions for the offering of sacrifices by the priests, and the penalty for failing to fulfil these demands, it is not surprising that Hebrews would speak in these terms. Under the old system there were certain rituals that the priests

<sup>20</sup>Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 244.

<sup>21</sup>The NIV has “regularly”. BAGD translates *διὰ παντός* “always, continually, constantly”, *s.v.* *διά* A, II, 1. Philo (*Sacr.* 127, 4 and 5) uses this phrase in a temporal sense in contrast with *ἅπαξ* as it is here, as does Plutarch (*Stephanus* 830, E, 8). Josephus (*Ant.* 2, 216, 7) uses the phrase *διὰ παντός τοῦ χρόνου* (“all the time”). Also see *διὰ παντός* used in a cultic context in, for example, Exod. 25:30; 27:20; 28:30, 38; 30:8; Lev. 6:6, 13; 24:2, 8; Num. 4:7; 28:10, 15, 23, 24, 31. Cf. also Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, p. 246.

<sup>22</sup>Actually, it is practically impossible to tell whether our author is relying on his own recollection of Scripture itself, or on teaching based on Scripture but handed down within Jewish and/or early Christian tradition. In either case, since the allusions to scriptural content so far have been largely consistent with Scripture as we have it today, and since Scripture is the ultimate source of these allusions, whether by direct or indirect contact, we can compare the descriptions in Hebrews to Scripture with profit and speak in terms of scriptural allusions.

were required to perform (*τὰς λατρείας* could also be translated “the ceremonies”), which our author refers to as *δικαιώματα λατρείας* (“regulations for service”—9:1), and it is the work of the priests in following these regulations that our author describes as “completing the services”. It is only through the shedding of animals’ blood that the priests were able to fulfil their duty, which is in contrast to the readers’ ability to serve the living God (*τὸ λατρεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι*—9:14), on the basis of the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.

According to 9:7, only the high priest was allowed into the second tent, only once a year, and not without blood. Numbers 29:7-11 gives a short description of the Day of Atonement ceremony referred to in this verse, but Leviticus 16 gives much more detailed instructions. It is in the Leviticus account that we learn of the requirement of the high priest to make an offering for his own sins and for those of his household before he could make atonement for the sins of the people (cf. Heb. 5:3; 7:27). Hebrews uses an interesting term to describe the sins for which atonement is made, *ἀγνοημάτων* (“ignorances, errors”). This term is used in the Pentateuch only in Gen. 43:11 (43:12 LXX),<sup>23</sup> where Jacob refers to the replacing of the silver into his sons’ bags by Joseph as a possible *ἀγνόημα* (“mistake”—NIV). By using this term as he does, our author is probably making a distinction between sins committed in ignorance and deliberate sin, as does Num. 15:22-31—this is especially likely in the light of his reference to wilful sin in 10:26.<sup>24</sup>

The significance of the earthly tabernacle for those under the OC was that it was where they were made right with God, and where their connection with God was maintained on a continual basis as well as on special occasions. After the author’s clear and forceful rejection of the validity of the OC for his readers in ch. 8, one may wonder what possible significance for his readers our author would want to give to the particulars of the OC, including the tabernacle and its ceremony. Nevertheless, in vv. 8-10 the author establishes that the earthly tabernacle does hold

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<sup>23</sup>In the entire LXX, it is only used seven times, and only in Gen. 43:12 in the Hebrew canon. However, the verb *ἀγνοέω* is used in Lev. 4:13, which shows that Leviticus probably does form at least part of the background for this part of Hebrews.

<sup>24</sup>Leviticus 4, 5 also describe what offerings should be made when unintentional sins are committed; Num. 15:30, 31 demand that the person who sins defiantly should be cut off from the people. Cf. Montefiore, *Hebrews*, p. 148; Hagner, *Hebrews*, pp. 129-30.

some significance for his readers. For our author, the tabernacle (*πρώτης σκηνης* —v. 8, the antecedent of *ἥτις* in v. 9)<sup>25</sup> stood as a *παραβολή* (“type, illustration, parable”) for those in the new age. This language is very interesting and the concept conveyed by it is very important to a study of the use of Scripture in Hebrews. Like the term *τύπος* (“type”), *παραβολή* may be used in a non-technical sense in Hebrews, not carrying with it the meaning and significance of its theological heirs, “parable” or “*mashal*”.<sup>26</sup> According to LSJ, *παραβολή* is used in Hebrews synonymously with the term *τύπος*,<sup>27</sup> but there are uses cited outside Hebrews which lie closer to the word's etymology, “comparison, juxtaposition”, and other uses with meanings such as “illustration, analogy”.<sup>28</sup> However one understands the term *παραβολή* in Hebrews, it is clear that our author means to communicate, at least, that there is something in the old to be learned about the new. This, then, is another way of conceiving and expressing the typological relationship between the old and new systems.<sup>29</sup>

Hebrews 9:9 does not contain the only use of *παραβολή* in the book; it also appears in 11:19. In this context the readers are told of the faith of Abraham who offered up his only son. The profound nature of Abraham's faith is illustrated in these verses by the fact that he was willing to slay his son, even in the light of the promise that he would have descendants through Isaac.<sup>30</sup> Our author reconciles the dilemma faced by Abraham by extrapolating that he must have expected God to raise Isaac from the dead. Nowhere does Scripture say that this is what was on the mind of Abraham, but it may be deduced from the facts given in Scripture. If God had promised to give Abraham an offspring through

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<sup>25</sup>Cf., for example, Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 134; Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, pp. 67, 68.

<sup>26</sup>It is interesting to consider the possible relationship between the use of *παραβολή* here and the rabbinic parable or “*mashal*”. Cf. Young, *Jesus and his Jewish Parables*, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup>Also see Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, p. 199; Weiß, *Hebräer*, pp. 458-59.

<sup>28</sup>LSJ, s.v. *παραβολή*.

<sup>29</sup>Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 66) also takes the relationship described by *παραβολή* as typological.

<sup>30</sup>See McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, pp. 164-68 on the Isaac tradition in the Palestinian Targum. According to McNamara, various aspects of levitical sacrifice were connected to the person of Isaac.

Isaac, and if he also instructed Abraham to kill Isaac, then there is only one apparent resolution to these two contradictory purposes, other than for one of the two purposes to be abandoned: Isaac would have to rise from the dead and live on to bear offspring. It is possible that on the basis of logic similar to this our author extrapolates that Abraham had faith in God's ability to raise Isaac from the dead, and because of such faith, in a "parabolic" sense Abraham also received Isaac back (from the dead). Our author sees the receiving back of Isaac by Abraham as standing in a typological relationship to resurrection in general, but more than this, he wants to hold the experience of Abraham alongside the readers' understanding of resurrection so that what they knew about the one they could apply to the other in an illustrative or analogical way. In the case of Abraham, our author expects the readers' theology of resurrection to inform them with regard to the experience of Abraham, because it is the strength and profundity of Abraham's faith that the author is labouring to communicate. But, having established this relationship, it is possible to learn something about each by comparison with the other, so that the typological or parabolic relationship becomes a two-way arrangement. Speaking of this two-way connection with regard to Jesus and the Mosaic system, Hagner correctly observes:

Just as light is shed upon the work of Christ by its anticipation in the old covenant, so a knowledge of the fulfillment brought by Christ illuminates the significance of the tabernacle and the levitical sacrifices.<sup>31</sup>

When speaking of relationships such as those of the "raising" of Isaac and resurrection in general, and the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries, our author could have chosen to use terms more usually associated today with typology, and in fact at times he does (8:5), and even these terms carry with them the implication that the type and antitype each have something to teach about the nature of the other. However, by using a term such as *παραβολή* our author is making explicit what would have been implicit, and is bringing more toward centre stage what may have been taken as merely incidental. He is spelling out in no uncertain terms that not only is there a historical correspondence between the old and the new in general and between at least some of the corresponding details associated with each, but also, and very significantly, he is indicating that there is a conceptual correspondence there as well. In other

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<sup>31</sup>Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 130.

words, with the use of the term *παραβολή* the reader is left in no doubt that, according to Hebrews, there is something to be learned about the new by looking at and understanding the old, and *vice versa*. It is one thing to find continuity in biblical history by showing a typological correspondence between the details of the old and new ages, it is something more to explore the implications of this continuity by attempting to *understand* each age and its details in the light of these points of correspondence. So, for our author, the old is an illustration of the new, and because of this conceptual relationship, the readers' understanding of both their own age and the age gone by can be enhanced.

Surrounding the use of *παραβολή* in 9:9<sup>32</sup> we are given more details as to how our author conceives of this term than in 11:19. Looking at vv. 8-10 it is important to remember that they are grammatically part of one complex sentence stretching from v. 6 to v. 10, and that there are two main clauses, making this a compound sentence as well. The first main clause is in v. 6, *εἰς μὲν τὴν πρώτην σκηνὴν διὰ παντὸς εἰσίσαιν οἱ ἱερεῖς* ("into the first tent the priests enter continually"); the second main clause is in v. 7, *εἰς δὲ τὴν δευτέραν ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ μόνος ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς* ("but into the second only the high priest [enters] once a year"). Everything in vv. 8-10, therefore, is ultimately connected to at least one of these main clauses. The first issue encountered in vv. 8-10 is the role of the Holy Spirit:

8. τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, μήπω πεφανερῶσθαι τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδὸν ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσης στάσιν, 9. ἥτις παραβολή εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα, καθ' ἣν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίαι προσφέρονται μὴ δυνάμεναι κατὰ συνείδησιν τελειῶσαι τὸν λατρεύοντα, 10. μόνον ἐπὶ βρώμασιν καὶ πόμασιν καὶ διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς, δικαιώματα σαρκὸς μέχρι καιροῦ διορθώσεως ἐπικείμενα.

(8. the Holy Spirit making this evident, the way into the holies is not yet revealed while the first tent has a standing, 9. which is an illustration for the present time, according to which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which are not able to perfect the conscience of the worshippers, 10. only touching upon foods and drinks and various washings, fleshly regulations imposed until a time of improvement.)

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<sup>32</sup>Many interpreters do not give enough attention to the fact that 9:8-10 is presented as a *παραβολή*, and that any understanding of these verses should be guided by this foundational observation. Weiß (*Hebräer*, pp. 447-49) and Spicq (*Hebreux*, vol. 2, pp. 253-54) are both exceptions, and their interpretation of these verses is very similar to mine.

According to v. 8, the Holy Spirit has made something evident, but it is not readily evident to the reader what that is. Our author uses a similar concept in 10:15 where he says, *Μαρτυρεῖ δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον* (“and the Holy Spirit bears witness to us”), and then he goes on to re-quote part of the Jeremiah 31 passage which he first used in ch. 8, and to give his own interpretation of the significance of the Scripture passage in the light of what Christ had done. The introduction to the quotation of Psalm 95 in Heb. 3:7 also indicates that Hebrews sees Scripture as equivalent to the words of the Holy Spirit: *διό, καθὼς λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον* (“wherefore, just as the Holy Spirit says”). In 9:8 what the Holy Spirit has made evident is related to the author’s summary of scriptural teaching on the priests’ entry into the inner and outer tents. The phrase in question, *τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου* (“the Holy Spirit making this evident”), is a genitive absolute, and is grammatically unconnected to the two main clauses; however, it is conceptually connected to both main clauses. This conceptual connection lies in how the Holy Spirit makes “this” evident, which is through the scriptural account of the functions and manner of the levitical priests. So, in 9:8 (as in 3:7 and 10:15) the Holy Spirit’s revelation comes through Scripture, indicating that Hebrews sees the message of Scripture as being equal to a revelation of the Holy Spirit. However, Lane is correct in pointing out that our author sees the involvement of the Holy Spirit as going beyond the inspiration of Scripture, and including “special insight which was not previously available to the readers of the OT but which has clarified the meaning and purpose of the cultic provisions for Israel in the light of the fulfilment in Christ”.<sup>33</sup>

What is it that the Holy Spirit has made evident through the practices of the levitical priests? The answer comes in the latter half of v. 8: as long as the first tent stands, the way of the holy of holies is not revealed.<sup>34</sup> At first this does not seem like much of a revelation, but then v. 9 goes on to explain that this is an illustration for the present time. Some have argued that *ἥτις* at the beginning of v. 9 refers to the preceding context as a whole as if its form were *ὅτι*, and that its case has been

<sup>33</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, p. 223. Cf. also Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 240; Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 66; Guthrie, *Hebrews*, p. 183; Milligan, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 249.

<sup>34</sup>Gen. 3.24 (*φυλάσσειν τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς*) and Judg 40.42 B (*καὶ ἐπέβλεψαν ἐνώπιον υἰῶν Ἰσραὴλ εἰς ὁδὸν τῆς ἐρήμου καὶ ἔφυγον*) are examples of the genitive used with *ὁδός* to indicate the way to something.

attracted to that of *παραβολή*.<sup>35</sup> Others argue that *ἥτις* simply refers to *πρώτης σκηνῆς* at the end of v. 8.<sup>36</sup> The latter position seems the most natural way to understand the sentence, but there is really little difference in the outcome of these two positions if *πρώτης σκηνῆς* is a reference to the earthly tent (see below). The earthly tent and its significance for the ministry of the priests cannot be separated in this context, so if *ἥτις* refers to one it naturally includes the other. There is also some debate concerning the reference of the “present”,<sup>37</sup> but it seems best to understand the “present time” as referring to the age of the NC, in which the writer and his readers took part, as Moffatt asserts, since Hebrews avoids reference to the then current practice of Judaism and the temple rites, preferring to speak in scriptural terms.<sup>38</sup> (If this reference does refer to the “present” practices of the temple, and not the age of the NC, then it is unique in Hebrews.) Further, although some relate the “present time” to the practice of Judaism at the time of writing,<sup>39</sup> for our author the NC and the Christian church are the proper concern of the “present time”, not Judaism. So, the author’s “parable for the present time” refers to the way in which the tabernacle functioned under the OC in order to teach his readers something about the nature of the old and new systems. This lesson comes in part in the apparent inability of the levitical offerings to prepare the people to enter the presence of God, that is, the holy of

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<sup>35</sup>E.g. Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 209; Montefiore, *Hebrews*, p. 149.

<sup>36</sup>E.g. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 241; Moffatt, *Hebrews*, p. 118; Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, p. 252.

<sup>37</sup>Moffatt (*Hebrews*, p. 118) sees the “present” as referring to “the period inaugurated by the advent of Jesus with his new *διαθήκη*”, in which the writer and his readers lived. Manson (*Hebrews: An Historical and Theological Reconsideration*, p. 132) uses the phrase “a parable bearing on the present crisis”. Guthrie (*Hebrews*, p. 183) believes the “‘present’ age was that which prepared for the appearing of Christ”. For Lane (*Hebrews 9–13*, p. 224), the “present age” is the age of the earthly tabernacle, superseded by the “age of correction” of v. 10. Rendall (*Hebrews*, p. 70) believes the author is contrasting “the *time being* with the *time of reformation*”. Ebrard (*Hebrews*, p. 277) follows a different textual tradition at v. 9b, which reads *καθ’ ὄν* instead of *καθ’ ἦν*. He understands the antecedent of *ὄν* to be *καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεσθηκότα*, and interprets the “present” as referring to temple worship contemporary with the time of writing on the basis of this grammatical connection with the levitical sacrifice in v. 9b.

<sup>38</sup>With the possible but unlikely exception being 13:10, 11.

<sup>39</sup>E.g. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, p. 224; Montefiore, *Hebrews*, p. 149.

holies.<sup>40</sup> Verses 9 and 10 describe the superficial effect of the levitical sacrifices, which the ritual of the tabernacle makes apparent by its exclusion of the worshippers. If those sacrifices were able to perfect the worshippers, then they would have enjoyed the privilege of entering the holy of holies and the presence of God. The importance of coming into the presence of God was illustrated by the high priest's entry into the holy of holies on behalf of the people, which was the cultic high point of the year. But as it was, the people had to be satisfied with a superficial and temporary cleansing that did not afford them direct and intimate access to God.<sup>41</sup> As long as the OC remained valid, direct access to God was "not yet" (*μήπω*) revealed (v. 8), and this shows that the author conceives the OC as temporary and emphasises the time element in the progression of God's covenant dealings. The OC inherently involved a "not yet" quality that was far more substantial than that of the NC for our author, since the OC left a gap in provision and not just realisation. That there was a greater provision than this to come is clear, because at some point the people would have to be made fit for the presence of God, and for our author the presence of God (heaven) is the destiny of the people of God (10:19, 20; 11:13-16).<sup>42</sup> Within the structure of the old system itself there is an implication that the provisions of the Mosaic covenant are limited and anticipatory, and this becomes most clear from the perspective of the new, Christian age. The age of the NC would incorporate what the OC arrangement could "not yet" (9:8) provide, that is, open access to God.

The above understanding of the author's *παραβολή*, however, does not conclude the issue because it does not exhaust the implications of the use of *παραβολή* or its connection to the present time. These two issues, and the general approach of Hebrews to the relationship between the old and new, indicate that the author is describing a typological relationship at this point.<sup>43</sup> In his "illustration", the author comes back to the ambiguity he has created with the term *πρώτος* ("first") in 9:1, 2.<sup>44</sup> The

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<sup>40</sup>Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 223; Caird, "The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews", p. 50.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 240.

<sup>42</sup>See Isaacs' discussion on "Heaven as the Eschatological Goal of the People of God" (*Sacred Space*, pp. 205-19).

<sup>43</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 240) recognises that our author exploits the typological significance of the high priest's yearly entry into the holy of holies.

<sup>44</sup>Lane (*Hebrews 9-13*, pp. 223-24) follows a similar approach.

illustration or parable works because of the ambiguities of the terminology he uses to describe what the Holy Spirit reveals in v. 8b.<sup>45</sup> Read with one set of definitions, the way of the holy place (the earthly holy of holies)<sup>46</sup> is concealed while the first (outer, earthly) tent is in place. Read with another set of definitions, the way of the holy place (the heavenly sanctuary) is concealed while the first tent (the earthly sanctuary) has standing.<sup>47</sup> Which is the proper way to read this clause? They both are, since the full significance of the *παραβολή* is understood by substituting corresponding referents for the two ambiguous terms. The first, outer tent, in its concealing relationship to the earthly holy of holies, corresponds to the first, earthly sanctuary in its concealing relationship to the heavenly sanctuary, as vv. 9-14 make clear.<sup>48</sup> Even the levitical priests did not have access to the earthly holy of holies as long as the outer tent was in place, and this was true even for the high priest apart from his brief yearly entrance.<sup>49</sup> The *παραβολή*, then, is in the fact that a restriction applied to the heavenly sanctuary similar to the restriction that applied to the earthly holy of holies: as long as the earthly tent had a standing, access to the heavenly tent was denied.<sup>50</sup> Attridge expresses a view very similar to this:

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<sup>45</sup>See Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 216, for a discussion of the disputed meaning of *πρώτης*, for example. Cf. also Brown, *An Exposition of Hebrews*, pp. 385, 386; Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 133; Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, pp. 243-44; Riggensbach, *Hebräer*, p. 249. Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 271) makes a comment with reference to 10:1 that applies equally here: "Our author indulges to the full his penchant for dramatically exploiting the polyvalence of his language."

<sup>46</sup>See Lev. 16:16, 17, 20, 23, 27 for examples of τὸ ἅγιον (ἁγία) as a shortened reference to the holy of holies.

<sup>47</sup>Milligan (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 250) articulates both of these possible "readings" precisely, and comes very close to the view I am espousing of affirming the validity of both readings.

<sup>48</sup>On this point (but not his overall scheme) the position of Ebrard (*Hebrews*, pp. 275-76) is very similar: "As the holy place, in a local respect, stands related to the holy of holies, so does the latter stand related, in respect of time, to the fulfilment of Christ".

<sup>49</sup>Num. 4:20 says that even the non-Aaronic levites were not allowed to see the holy things in the tabernacle, lest they die. They could only go in as part of their express duties related to moving the sacred furniture, and then only after the furniture had been covered by the Aaronic priests.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. Riggensbach, *Hebräer*, p. 249; Petersen, "The Prophecy of the New Covenant in the Argument of Hebrews", p. 76.

The point is that as long as the cultic system connected with the outer portion of the earthly tabernacle “has standing,” the way to both the earthly and heavenly *ἄγια* is blocked.<sup>51</sup>

Lane approaches the issue from a time perspective, and although he defines *τὸν καιρὸν ἐνεστηκότα* as relating to the old age, his interpretation recognises that there is a symbolic significance in the two chambers of the tabernacle that represent an earlier time period superseded by a subsequent time period:

Once the first has been invalidated, the second becomes operative (see 10:9). In the figurative language of the writer, the front compartment of the tabernacle was symbolic of the present age (*τὸν καιρὸν ἐνεστηκότα*), which through the intrusion of the *καιρὸς διορθώσεως*, “the time of correction” (v 10), has been superseded.<sup>52</sup>

The obvious implication of the relationship between the two tents as described by this *παραβολή* is that Jesus' entry into and sitting down in the heavenly tent shows that the first tent, the earthly sanctuary, no longer has any standing.<sup>53</sup>

The significance of the *παραβολή* goes even deeper, as outlined in vv. 9, 10. This further significance comes out of the phrase *καθ' ἣν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίαι . . .* (“according to which both gifts and sacrifices. . .”). The most significant issue here is the identification of the antecedent of the relative pronoun. The relative could refer to *πρώτης σκηνηῆς* in v. 8,<sup>54</sup> but this reading is awkward, with gifts and sacrifices offered *κατά* the first tent. It could also refer to *καιρὸν* in v. 9a,<sup>55</sup> on the basis of an alternate textual tradition in which the form of the pronoun is *ὅν*, but this requires that “the present time” be given an unlikely meaning.<sup>56</sup> The best alternative is to understand *παραβολή* as the antecedent

<sup>51</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 240.

<sup>52</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, p. 224.

<sup>53</sup>Cf. Spicq, *Hebreux*, vol. 2, p. 254. Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 240) understands the “standing” of the tabernacle as not referring to its physical existence but to its “normative status”.

<sup>54</sup>Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, p. 258, n. 52; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, p. 224.

<sup>55</sup>Ebrard, *Hebrews*, pp. 276–77.

<sup>56</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 241) rightly asserts, “nothing could be further from our author's perspective than to see the present time in such a negative light”. See also Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 70.

of ἦν,<sup>57</sup> which indicates that the author is still developing his *παραβολή*. This phrase, *καθ' ἦν*, indicates that what he is about to say builds upon the distinction of the lesser and greater tents and sacrifices described in vv. 7, 8. All year long the levitical priests would offer gifts and sacrifices in the first, outer tent, but these only touched upon the most external needs of the worshippers, things concerning “foods and drinks<sup>58</sup> and various washings, regulations of the flesh”.<sup>59</sup> But the most spiritually significant priestly function had to wait for the Day of Atonement, which, according to Lev. 16:30, would bring atonement and cleansing from sin. In the *παραβολή*, those daily sacrifices, paling in significance before the Day of Atonement offerings, correspond to the entire levitical system, and the Day of Atonement sacrifices, which came but once a year, correspond to the sacrifice of Christ. So, in the same way that the priests offered the daily, lesser sacrifices in anticipation of the Day of Atonement, those under the OC had to make do with the lesser, levitical provision to tide them over until the time when something better would come, the sacrificial ministry of Christ. The difference between the effectiveness of the levitical sacrifices as a whole and the sacrificial ministry of Christ is illustrated by the difference in the significance of the ongoing levitical sacrifices and those performed on the Day of Atonement (which depends partly on the difference in the significance of

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<sup>57</sup>See Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 241; Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 206; Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 70.

<sup>58</sup>E.g. Lev. 11:34. Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 73) rightly understands these terms as “general titles for all the Levitical ordinances concerning such matters”.

<sup>59</sup>Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 74) correctly describes the view of our author when he says that “outward purity” is not “a matter of indifference”, and that some inward blessing accompanied the levitical sacrifices when “performed in a right spirit” (but internal benefit was not inherent to participating in the levitical system, as it is for the participant in the sacrifice of Christ—see p. 95). The point of *Hebrews* as a whole is not that the old was altogether worthless, but that something better has come. The term “better” implies that the old did have some value, albeit a lesser value, and 9:11 uses the comparative forms *μείζων* and *τελειότερος*, indicating that the old had the positive qualities of greatness and perfection (perfection understood in a relative sense). Narborough (*Hebrews*, p. 116) takes this verse as a reference to Gnostic asceticism. This is very unlikely (against Käsemann, *The Wandering People of God*, pp. 7-96, and with Hurst, *Hebrews: Its Background of Thought*, pp. 4, 75), since 1) *Hebrews* was written before Gnosticism was fully developed, 2) Gnosticism does not seem to be a concern of our author in general, 3) this verse can be quite adequately explained over against a levitical background and 4) the context strongly calls for a levitical understanding here.



better understand the division between the old Mosaic system and the new Christian system.

*Significance of the Heavenly Tabernacle (9:11-14)*

The *δέ* at the beginning of 9:11 recalls the *μέν*<sup>60</sup> at the beginning of 9:1,<sup>61</sup> setting up a contrast between the first system with its regulations for service and its earthly holy place, and the new with the work of Christ through the greater and more perfect tent.<sup>62</sup> The levitical priests had a ministry with a significance in the past (as suggested by *εἶχε* in 9:1, for example). Christ “appeared as a high priest” having a ministry with either a present or future significance, depending on which text one reads at this point. Verse 11, *Χριστὸς δὲ παραγενόμενος ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν γενομένων [ἢ μελλόντων] ἀγαθῶν διὰ τῆς μείζονος καὶ τελειότερας σκηνῆς οὐ χειροποιήτου τοῦτ’ ἔστιν οὐ ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως* (“but Christ, after appearing as a high priest of the good things which came about [or will come about] through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation”), contains a significant textual problem. The UBS text chooses *γενομένων* because, according to Metzger, it “appears to have superior attestation on the score of age and diversity of text type”. He goes on to posit that the alternative seems to have been influenced by 10:1 which reads, *τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν*.<sup>63</sup> The choice of the UBS text also conforms best to the argument of the book, since our author’s encouragement to the readers to rely upon Christ in his priestly capacity would be weakened if the good things that resulted from that priesthood were not available for them at that time (e.g. 9:14). Therefore, as is generally accepted, *γενομένων* is the best reading.<sup>64</sup> Whatever reading one chooses, the reference here is to “that heavenly and hidden sphere whose invisible presence in this our earthly one is an object of faith”,<sup>65</sup> as Delitzsch says, so

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<sup>60</sup>The *μέν οὖν* at the beginning of 9:1 is itself a classical construction, but this does not take away from the *μένιδέ* connection established between vv. 1 and 11.

<sup>61</sup>Cf. Ebrard, *Hebrews*, p. 280; Nairne, *Hebrews*, p. 86; Weiß, *Hebräer*, p. 449.

<sup>62</sup>See Peterson (*Hebrews and Perfection*, pp. 140-44) for a treatment of the “perfect” tent.

<sup>63</sup>Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, p. 668.

<sup>64</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 244; Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 211; Ebrard, *Hebrews*, p. 280; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 229. Cf. Moffatt, *Hebrews*, p. 120 and Montefiore, *Hebrews*, p. 151, for example, who prefer *μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν*.

<sup>65</sup>Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 76.

that the good things are both enjoyed by and anticipated by the readers (6:19, 20; 10:19-25; 11:13-16; 12:25-29).

Again, in 9:11-14 the author has used long and complicated sentence structures. These verses consist of two sentences, the first spanning vv. 11, 12, and the second, a conditional sentence, spanning vv. 13, 14. Most of the main clause of the first sentence is in v. 12, with the subject coming early, at the beginning of v. 11, *Χριστὸς . . . εἰσῆλθεν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ ἅγια* ("Christ . . . entered once for all into the holy place"). The rest of vv. 11, 12 consists of five phrases which all modify the main verb: he entered 1) after appearing as a high priest of the good things which have come, 2) through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, 3) not through the blood of goats and bulls, 4) but through his own blood, 5) obtaining eternal redemption.<sup>66</sup> Grammatically, then, Jesus' entry into the holy place stands at the core of these verses, which carry forth the discussion introduced at 8:2, 5 and re-affirm several points made in these earlier verses concerning the superior character, divine constructor, and spiritual nature of the heavenly sanctuary, while affirming a correspondence to the earthly tent. Nonetheless, within the overall structure of a discussion which has the heavenly sanctuary at its core, sacrifice, particularly the element of blood, becomes an important theme, and as we shall see, the next two verses will focus on the notion of blood.

The topic of blood is important because it is the blood that is seen to produce purification, and this purification is what enables the readers to "serve" (*τὸ λατρεύειν*) God. The sanctuary, sacrifice, priests, covenant—it is difficult to speak of any one of these in isolation from the others, but the ability of the readers to "serve" God as a result of Jesus' shed blood would have a particular closeness to the sanctuary concept for our author as indicated by 9:1. In this verse, regulations of service (*λατρείας*) and the earthly sanctuary are treated together, since the significance of each depends to a great deal on its connection to the

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<sup>66</sup>Many (e.g. Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 82) take the action of the aorist participle (*εὐράμενος*) as contemporary with the action of the main verb (*εἰσῆλθεν*). It is possible to understand the time significance of the aorist *εὐράμενος* as either antecedent to or contemporary to Jesus' entry into the heavenly sanctuary, but it seems best to understand the aorist here as used for its punctiliar quality, consistent with the once-for-all nature of Jesus' sacrifice, and not as making any assertion regarding the time of the action described (see 7:27). Cf. BAGD, s.v. *εὐρίσκω* 3, for the significance of the middle voice form.

other. The earthly sanctuary was designed entirely with the priestly service in mind, and the priestly service would have been impossible to execute apart from the sanctuary. Moreover, when the author speaks of the readers' service at the end of this section in v. 14, he is making an allusion to the priestly service of the levites as mentioned in v. 1. This use of *λατρεία* in v. 1 and *λατρεύω* in v. 14 makes at least two contributions to this section, the first literary and the second theological. First, these terms form an *inclusio*,<sup>67</sup> marking out the beginning and the end of the section. This gives a particular thrust to his discussion on the sanctuaries here, showing that the importance of the sanctuary for him goes beyond its architectural space, and lies, at least to some degree, in what happens there. Hence the discussion of blood in the latter verses of the section. Secondly, these terms show that there is a connection for our author between the priestly ministry of the levites and the service of God rendered by his readers.<sup>68</sup> Just as the blood of animals was effective in sanctifying common things used in the priestly service to bring about cleansing with regard to the flesh, so the blood of Christ is able to cleanse the conscience of the readers, and thereby make them fit for a similar service.<sup>69</sup>

In vv. 11, 12 Christ is said to have entered *τὰ ἅγια*, which is clearly a reference to the heavenly sanctuary, but beyond this the meaning is not obvious. In 9:2 the author uses *Ἄγια* with reference to the first, or outer tent, in contrast to *Ἄγια Ἁγίων* which is the second, inner tent.<sup>70</sup> However, 8:2 calls Jesus *τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς* ("a minister of the holy place and of the true tent"), and the term *τὸ ἅγιον* is also used in 9:1 to refer to the whole sanctuary as it is in 9:24, 25; 10:19; 13:11. It seems, then, that the term *ἅγια* is used by our author to signify both the whole sanctuary and the outer part of the sanctuary in particular, but this latter use only occurs twice (9:2—*anarthrous*—and 9:8) and only where there is an overt comparison of the inner and outer tents. It is also worth noting that when this usage occurs in 9:2 the author is reporting what the outer tent "is called". Actually, it is not difficult to understand how these two uses of the same term could come about. The entire sanctuary is called the holy place, and

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<sup>67</sup>Weiβ (*Hebräer*, p. 449) points out that *λατρεία* (vv. 1 and 6) and *κατασκευάζω* (vv. 2 and 6) are used as *Stichwörter*.

<sup>68</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 252.

<sup>69</sup>Scholer, *Proleptic Priests*, p. 90.

<sup>70</sup>Cf. Syngé, *Hebrews and the Scriptures*, pp. 26-28.

within this holy place, if one wishes to speak in a more detailed manner, there is a most holy place. Since the most holy place is accessed only from within the holy place, and since, from the most common vantage point of the normal observer, entrance to the holy place, or outer tent, would have been most visible, the whole can be described using this term, as an example of *pars pro toto*. This does lead to some ambiguity, however, since to say that someone entered the holy place does not specify whether or not that person also entered the most holy place. (But in the case of Christ, it is stated explicitly in 6:19, 20 that he did enter "inside the curtain".) The use of τὰ ἅγια in 9:12, then, indicates simply that Christ entered the sanctuary.

Christ's entry into the sanctuary is used by the author as a reference point for several other concepts articulated in vv. 11, 12. First, his entry came after his appearance as a high priest, which would have occurred, presumably, at least by the time of his sacrifice on the cross. Secondly, his entry into the holy place was through the heavenly tent, distinct from and superior to the earthly tent. Thirdly, he entered not through (διὰ) the blood of animals but through (διὰ) his own blood. The NIV translates διὰ as "by means of", which accurately represents the meaning of the text. The RSV, however, translates it as "taking",<sup>71</sup> which seems to misread and misrepresent the preposition<sup>72</sup> by understanding Jesus as having taken his own blood into heaven.<sup>73</sup> In fact, this translation misses one of

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<sup>71</sup>διὰ can be translated as "with" in an instrumental sense (BAGD, s.v. διὰ A, III), but to use "with" in this context connotes association rather than instrument, and is therefore misleading, since διὰ is not used with the meaning of association.

<sup>72</sup>Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. 213-14; Stott, "The Conception of 'Offering' in the Epistle to the Hebrews", p.67; Weiß, *Hebräer*, p. 467.

<sup>73</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 248) interprets διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος as meaning "with his own blood", saying, "On the level of the Yom Kippur imagery the preposition διὰ obviously means 'with', thus indicating a shift in sense from its use in the preceding verse". Nevertheless, he does not believe that Hebrews sees Jesus as having actually taken his blood into heaven, but that the author is using blood in a metaphorical way. However, unless one forces διὰ into a very unnatural usage—διὰ can mean "with" in an instrumental sense, but for it to be used in the associative sense of "with" would be very strange—there is no need to posit a metaphorical meaning for "blood" in this verse. There are many ways in which Jesus' sacrificial work does not match the corresponding Yom Kippur imagery in detail, and the actual carrying of blood into the sanctuary is only one (Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. 213-14; Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 136). Taking the διὰ in a more normal sense, "by means of", indicates a level of discontinuity between the two sacrifices at this point, but this is not unusual in Hebrews, and it is a more natural way of understanding the grammar

the distinctions between the old and new systems. Whereas under the old system the purifying blood had to be physically present in order to do its purifying work (e.g. 9:19; 13:11), under the new system purification is *by means of* Christ's blood, which is not physically present. This difference in the way Hebrews views the function of the blood of Christ can be seen in 10:19, where the readers are given confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, though they have never been physically near the blood of Christ. Then, 13:12 says that Jesus sanctifies the people through his own blood (*διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος*), though most of them would never have seen his blood. This verse is particularly important since the same preposition is used here to indicate that something has happened on the basis of Jesus' blood. Thirdly, 13:20 entreats God to prepare the readers for good works by the blood of the eternal covenant, though, again, there was never any contact between the readers and the blood. The physical presence of the blood was so important under the Mosaic system because its cleansing was (largely) directed at the "flesh" (9:13). The physical presence of the blood of Christ is unimportant because its cleansing power is spiritual (9:14).<sup>74</sup> What matters under the NC is that the blood of Christ was shed, that he died, and by means of<sup>75</sup> this shed blood he had the right to enter the sanctuary. Just like the levitical high priest, Jesus' entry into the heavenly sanctuary depended on the shedding of blood, but unlike the levitical priest he shed his own blood and he did not take it with him into the holy place. Finally, his entry into the heavenly sanctuary came after he "obtained (found) eternal redemption".

Verses 13 and 14 set up a comparison in the form of a conditional sentence (cf. 2:2), which depends on the continuity between the old and new but also asserts a significant discontinuity. The comparison is between the blood of animals as used to purify common things under the old system and the blood of Christ which cleanses the conscience. The continuity lies first in that both kinds of blood had the power to effect

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as well as a more straightforward way of understanding the significance of Christ's blood.

<sup>74</sup>Cf. Ebrard, *Hebrews*, p. 289.

<sup>75</sup>Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, p. 249; Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 79; Ebrard, *Hebrews*, p. 284. Riggensbach (*Hebräer*, p. 260), for example, takes the *διὰ* as instrumental. Strobel (*Hebräer*, pp. 105, 107) takes it as causal, translating "on the basis of his own blood" (my translation). Spicq (*Hebreux*, vol. 2, p. 257) says that Jesus entered heaven "by means of the virtue of his own blood" (my translation).

some level of purification and cleansing. Secondly, the result of the purifying in both cases is to make something fit for service, whether it be implements used either for the earthly sanctuary or for purity rites “for the cleansing of the flesh”,<sup>76</sup> or Christians who have had their conscience cleansed. The discontinuity is more profound. First, the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse is directed at the spiritual rather than the fleshly, with his offering facilitated by the Holy Spirit (*ὅς διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν*).<sup>77</sup> Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the cleansing power of Christ's blood is directed toward the conscience, and not toward “the flesh”.

The reference to the old in this comparison relies on a variety of Scripture passages. Although the sprinkling of ashes is a particular reference to Numbers 19, which gives instructions for the purifying of unclean persons, the reference to the blood of bulls and goats may be a more general allusion to the animal sacrifices (e.g. Numbers 28, 29), or a specific reference to the Day of Atonement sacrifices (e.g. Leviticus 16). In any case, the protasis, v. 13, focuses on the animal bloodshed involved in the fulfilment of the Mosaic law, which does have power to purify the “common”, but only “toward the cleansing of the flesh”. Under the old system, blood is sprinkled on many things from the tabernacle furnishings (Lev. 16:18, 19) and the priestly garments (Exod. 29:21; Lev. 8:30) to the people (Exod. 24:8). Sometimes the blood is sprinkled on unclean or common things (Lev. 16:19), and sometimes on things that are holy (Lev. 16:14), and sometimes blood is sprinkled as a consecration for service (Lev. 8:30). In 9:13 our author's concern is with blood and ashes sprinkled on the unclean.<sup>78</sup> The distinction between

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<sup>76</sup>According to Lev. 16:18, 19, for instance, the blood of bulls and goats was sprinkled on the altar “to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites”. Num. 19:9 talks about the ashes of the heifer being used “in the water of cleansing”, which may have been seen by our author as the ashes sanctifying common water in preparation for the cleansing rite.

<sup>77</sup>Some see *διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου* as a reference primarily or even entirely to the spirit of Jesus, e.g. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, pp. 188-89; Riegenbach, *Hebräer*, p. 266. Snell (*New and Living Way*, p. 113) relates the “spirit” to Jesus' personal nature as spirit, meaning incarnate God, and Milligan (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 255) to the “divine nature of Christ”. Whether a reference to the Holy Spirit or the spirit of Jesus, the spiritual nature and power of Jesus' sacrifice is affirmed by this phrase, since it asserts the involvement of an enabling spirit. Bruce (*Hebrews*, p. 217) sees a reference to the Servant of the Lord in Isa. 42:1, “I will put my Spirit on him” (NIV).

<sup>78</sup>Cf. Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, p. 89.

common and holy and the distinction between unclean and clean are similar, as Lev. 10:10 implies: “You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean.” In Scripture, that which is holy has been separated out for special use, in contrast to that which is common; that which is unclean is separated out for avoidance, in contrast to the clean. So, both sets of distinctions involve separation, one a positive separation and the other a negative separation. Our author is concerned with both issues, as shown by his reference to the common (τοὺς κεκοινωμένους) being sanctified or made holy (ἀγιάζω) with a view to purity (καθαρότης). But, according to our author, the purity provided by the blood of animals shed under the OC was a purity concerned with the flesh.

That Jesus' sacrifice had a spiritual effect is expressed by our author in the apodosis of v. 14: *πόσω μᾶλλον τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἄμωμον τῷ θεῷ, καθαρῶς τὴν συνείδησιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων εἰς τὸ λατρεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι* (“how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself blameless to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God”). Jesus entered the sanctuary through (*διὰ*) his own blood, and he offered himself through (*διὰ*) the “eternal Spirit”. In both of these cases the prepositional phrase with *διὰ* expresses the means by which the action is accomplished. The involvement of the Spirit in the offering of Christ is probably at least part of what gives his offering its spiritual significance and power, in the mind of our author.<sup>79</sup> It was by means of the spirit that Jesus offered himself blameless (*ἄμωμος*) to God, a description used frequently in the LXX to describe the state of perfection required of the animal to be offered as a levitical sacrifice (e.g. Lev. 14:10; Num. 29:2, 8, 13, 17). For the animals, *ἄμωμος* (“without defect”) refers to their physical condition, but for Christ, *ἄμωμος* (“blameless”) is a moral description, indicating along with other passages (4:15; 5:7; 7:26-28) that our author

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<sup>79</sup>Ebrard (*Hebrews*, pp. 288-90) and others understand the spirit to refer to Jesus' human spirit, indicating that his death was a moral and spiritual choice, over against the unawareness of the animals that were sacrificed, so that Christ's sacrifice is imbued with spiritual power. Either this view or the view that sees *πνεῦμα* as a reference to the Holy Spirit is quite reasonable and in line with the author's way of thinking (see 7:27, where Jesus is said to have offered himself, and 10:29, which asserts the involvement of the Holy Spirit in covenant matters).

understands Jesus to have been sinless.<sup>80</sup> Although Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was fleshy and involved his material body and blood, the significance of that sacrifice reaches past the material to the spiritual, and even his qualifications as a sacrifice are evaluated on a spiritual/moral level rather than on a material level. It is easy to wonder if our author saw or would have seen any significance in this detail in the typological relationship between the Mosaic sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ: just as the levitical sacrifice had to be physically without defect, Jesus had to be morally blameless. He does not make this connection explicitly.

The result of Jesus' sacrifice for the readers is the cleansing of their "conscience from dead works". These *dead* works would make the readers' conscience unclean, just as something *dead* (with the exception of slaughtered meat) would make the Israelites unclean if they came in contact with it (Leviticus 11; Num. 9:6-10; 19:11).<sup>81</sup> Therefore the readers' conscience would need to be purified. According to 6:1, "repentance from dead works" is foundational to being Christian, and their connection with "repentance" in that verse indicates that "dead works" must be a way of saying "sins". Then, once the readers were purified in conscience they would be fit to serve the *living* God, and while previously they were associated with death, now they are associated with life. The tabernacle itself (e.g. Exod. 29:44), and the priests (e.g. Exod. 29:1-43; Num. 8:15) had to be consecrated (*ἀγιάζω* and *καθαρίζω*) before the tabernacle service could be performed. In the same way, the readers had to be cleansed before they could enter the service of God. As described earlier, the use of *λατρεύω* in 9:14 and *λατρεία* in 9:1 forms an *inclusio*, and links the service of the readers with that of the levitical priests. This link is also expressed by the connection of cleansing/consecration with the readers' service of God. For Aaron and his sons, their consecration allowed them to serve as priests in the presence of God, and only they were allowed into God's presence, the earthly holy of holies. It may be that the reason it was necessary for our readers to be cleansed from dead works before they could serve is that their service was seen, in some

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<sup>80</sup>Cf. Ebrard, *Hebrews*, p. 290.

<sup>81</sup>Cf. Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, p. 98; Ebrard, *Hebrews*, p. 287. Buchanan (*To the Hebrews*, p. 149) takes the dead works as deeds done before the readers' baptism into the community, but also links the concept to defilement by a corpse under the old system.

way, as priestly service.<sup>82</sup> Scholer remarks: "Heb., in accordance with the Old Testament, sees the brothers and *παιδία* of the high priest as also entitled to hold the priestly office. As the result of Christ's efficacious sacrifice he has set apart his brothers from the rest of the world for God's service."<sup>83</sup> And along with this service, they were given access to the presence of God, the heavenly sanctuary, *by the blood of Christ* (10:19). In Hebrews, then, at least one thing the blood of Christ did for the readers was to consecrate them as NC priests, allowing them continual and permanent entry into the heavenly tabernacle.<sup>84</sup>

### THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS COMPARED (9:15-22)

#### *Blood of the New Covenant (9:15-17)*

Hebrews 9:15 begins with a strong connection to the previous material with the phrase *καὶ διὰ τοῦτο* ("and on account of this").<sup>85</sup> Because of the power of his shed blood to "cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (9:14), and his appearance in the heavenly sanctuary as a high priest (9:11), Jesus takes his place as the mediator of a new covenant. Recalling the discussion of the NC in ch. 8, the readers would be aware that Hebrews understands Jeremiah's prophecy as at least partially fulfilled by Jesus, and by themselves as beneficiaries of Jesus' work. Then, from 9:15, they learn that as a result of Jesus' mediation of the NC, and on the basis of his death, it is possible for those called (e.g. the readers according to 3:1) to receive an eternal inheritance, and that this provision also applies to those called during the old age. According to v. 15, even the transgressions committed by the readers as Jews under the first covenant were ultimately dealt with through the shed blood of Jesus. Significantly, the provision of "the eter-

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<sup>82</sup>Montefiore (*Hebrews*, p. 155) calls this service "quasi-liturgical". Manson (*Hebrews*, p. 131) and Snell (*New and Living Way*, p. 107) describe the entire Christian life as corresponding to the Day of Atonement ritual. Ebrard (*Hebrews*, p. 287) identifies *λατρεύειν* as "the willing priestly offering of oneself to God". Riggensbach (*Hebräer*, p. 269) thinks it possible that the author ascribes a priestly service to the readers here, but that the question is unsettled. Weiß (*Hebräer*, p. 471) denies any allusion to the readers as a community of priests.

<sup>83</sup>Scholer, *Proleptic Priests*, p. 90.

<sup>84</sup>Cf. 6:19, 20; 10:19-22.

<sup>85</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 254; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 241.

nal inheritance" for those called under the first covenant is made possible by the death of Christ. The exact nature of this inheritance is not divulged in this passage, but the term probably refers to the inheritance of salvation as referred to in 1:14,<sup>86</sup> which the writer connects to the inheritance of the Abrahamic promise in 6:12, 17.

Hebrews 9:16, 17 represents one of the more difficult of the NT passages on the NC. The main question is whether these verses use *διαθήκη* in the sense of covenant<sup>87</sup> or in the sense of will and testament.<sup>88</sup> An argument in favour of taking *διαθήκη* as "covenant" is that it is generally understood this way in 9:15 and 20, and *πρῶτος* in v. 18 is usually taken to refer to the "first" covenant.<sup>89</sup> So, to take *διαθήκη* as something other than "covenant" requires an abrupt and temporary shift in the meaning of the word<sup>90</sup> which could be very awkward.<sup>91</sup> Lane argues that the author is using *διαθήκη* in the sense of covenant in these verses, as in the rest of the book, and takes the references to the death of the covenant maker as being symbolised through the sacrifices performed at the inauguration of

<sup>86</sup>Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, p. 241.

<sup>87</sup>E.g. J.J. Hughes, "Hebrews ix 15ff. and Galatians iii 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure", pp. 27-96; Kilpatrick, "*Διαθήκη* in Hebrews", pp. 263-65; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, p. 242; Ebrard, *Hebrews*, pp. 294-95; Nairne, *The Epistle of Priesthood*, pp. 91, 92; Westcott, *Hebrews*, pp. 267-68.

<sup>88</sup>E.g. Behm and Quell, "*διατίθημι, διαθήκη*", *TDNT*, vol. 2, pp. 131-32; Swetnam, "A Suggested Interpretation of Hebrews 9,15-18", pp. 373-90; Vos, "Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke", pp. 614-16; Braun, *Hebräer*, p. 273; Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. 222-23; Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, p. 151; Guthrie, *Hebrews*, pp. 190-92; Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 142; Héring, *Hébreux*, p. 87; Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, p. 256; Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 95; Moffatt, *Hebrews*, pp. 127-28; Montefiore, *Hebrews*, pp. 156-57; Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, p. 273; Spicq, *Hébreux*, pp. 262-63; Strobel, *Hebräer*, p. 110; Weiß, *Hebräer*, pp. 478-79.

<sup>89</sup>As in the RSV and NIV. The NASB translates *διαθήκη* as "covenant" even in v. 16.

<sup>90</sup>Cf. Hughes, "Hebrews ix 15ff. and Galatians iii 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure", pp. 32-34.

<sup>91</sup>Cf. Campbell ("Covenant or Testament? Heb. 9:16, 17 Reconsidered", p. 108), who says, "The general New Testament usage supports the 'covenant' translation of *διαθήκη*. The literary context of Hebrews is full of 'covenant' in the Old Testament sense; as someone has remarked, Hebrews may be seen as an interpretation of, or commentary upon, Jeremiah ch. 31. The immediate context of the chapter (cf. vv. 1, 4, 15, 18, 20) clearly requires 'covenant'. Moreover, the argumentative purpose of the author here (cf. v. 15, 'for this reason'; v. 16, 'for'; v. 17, 'for'; v. 18, 'wherefore') underlies the fact that the rendering 'testament' in vv. 16 and 17 represents a very radical break in thought, and demands clear and convincing warrant". See also Kilpatrick, "*Διαθήκη* in Hebrews", p. 263.

the covenant. He maintains that the term *φέρεισθαι* is being used in the cultic sense of offering a sacrifice, and that the plural *νεκροῖς* refers to the plurality of animals sacrificed in the inaugural rites.<sup>92</sup> This view requires a somewhat strange understanding of the language of v. 16, with “death” being offered rather than the more usual “sacrifice”. Further, this view must resort to a symbolic reading of some of the phrases in these verses, but it does have the advantage of explaining the plural *νεκροῖς*, which is difficult if one takes the view that the (singular) testator himself actually dies, and it may be that *νεκροῖς* is used in the plural in order to suggest to the reader that there is a symbolic connection between the “death” of the singular covenant maker and the multiple animal sacrifices.<sup>93</sup> Although the author is speaking of covenant makers in general, it may be that he is able to speak so forthrightly about the necessity of the covenant maker dying because his primary focus is Jesus, who did actually die as the mediator of the NC.

On the other hand, the terminology and general thrust of 9:16, 17 taken more literally do suggest that *διαθήκη* is used in the sense of “testament”: *ὅπου γὰρ διαθήκη, θάνατον ἀνάγκη φέρεσθαι τοῦ διαθεμένου· διαθήκη γὰρ ἐπὶ νεκροῖς βεβαία, ἐπεὶ μήποτε ἰσχύει ὅτε ζῆ ὁ διαθέμενος*. The NIV translates these verses as follows: “In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living.” Attridge argues that the characterisations of the *διαθήκη* in these verses do fit very well with the notion of will or testament, and that the author is relying in some way on a legal, Hellenistic understanding of *διαθήκη*.<sup>94</sup> For him, many of the terms used in these verses, *διαθήκη*, *φέρεισθαι*, *διαθεμένου*, *νεκροῖς*, *βεβαία*, and *ἰσχύει*, are used in a legal sense and this shows that the author is alluding to circumstances surrounding the establishment of a will and testament. Milligan understands the author to be using the will and testament concept in 9:16, 17 as an analogy to illustrate his point that Christ’s death was necessary for the provision of

<sup>92</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, pp. 242–43. See also Hughes, “Hebrews ix 15ff. and Galatians iii 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure”, pp. 43, 44; Kilpatrick, “*Διαθήκη* in Hebrews”, p. 265.

<sup>93</sup>Cf. Swetnam, “A Suggested Interpretation of Hebrews 9:15–18”, p. 378.

<sup>94</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 255–56. Cf. also LSJ, *s.v.* *διαθήκη*.

the eternal inheritance.<sup>95</sup> Some go even further and assert that Hebrews uses *διαθήκη* throughout with the meaning of “testament”,<sup>96</sup> yet outside of this one passage there is no evidence that our author uses *διαθήκη* in a way that entirely replaces the concept of “covenant” with that of “testament”.<sup>97</sup>

The issue of whether *διαθήκη* is used with the meaning of “covenant” or “testament” depends largely on whether these verses are full of legal terms as Attridge claims,<sup>98</sup> or cultic terms as Lane asserts.<sup>99</sup> On the surface, it is easy to find legal overtones in vv. 16, 17, but it is also possible to understand the terminology of these verses in a cultic sense. The term *διαθήκη* is used throughout Hebrews in the sense of “covenant”, with the possible exception of this passage. The religious and cultic use of *φέρω* and its compounds in Hebrews is also well attested (e.g. 5:1; 7:27; 8:3; 9:7, 9, 25; 10:1).<sup>100</sup> This, especially in the light of the more usual meaning of *φέρω*,<sup>101</sup> opens the possibility that in 9:16 *φέρεσθαι* may express the symbolic, sacrificial representation of the covenant maker's death.<sup>102</sup> Another well attested use of *φέρω*, “bring by announcing”,<sup>103</sup> would fit well with the legal understanding of the passage, but it is possible to understand *φέρω* as referring to the symbolic announcement of the death of the covenant maker in the covenant's inaugural sacrifices.<sup>104</sup> Regarding the use of *διατίθημι* here, J. Hughes

<sup>95</sup>Milligan, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 259. Cf. also Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, p. 151.

<sup>96</sup>Cf. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 337, and for an argument against this view see Vos, “Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke”, pp. 587-632. Strobel (*Hebräer*, pp. 95, 97, 109-10) frequently uses the term “testament” outside 9:16, 17 in connection with the NC.

<sup>97</sup>Vos, “Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke”, pp. 616-18.

<sup>98</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 255-56. Cf. also Moffatt, *Hebrews*, pp. 127-28; Spicq, *Hébreux*, p. 262; Strobel, *Hebräer*, p. 110; Weiß, *Hebräer*, p. 478.

<sup>99</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, pp. 231-32. Hughes (“Hebrews ix 15ff. and Galatians iii 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure,” pp. 59, 66) has argued that these terms cannot be construed as legal terms associated with wills and testaments, but see BAGD, s.v. *Διατίθημι*, 3.S.

<sup>100</sup>Hughes (“Hebrews ix 15ff. and Galatians iii 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure,” p. 65) says, “*φέρειν* is a Jewish cultic term, not a Hellenistic legal term”.

<sup>101</sup>LSJ, s.v. *φέρω* II, but see IV, 4.

<sup>102</sup>Cf. Hughes, “Hebrews ix 15ff. and Galatians iii 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure,” pp. 42, 43, 65, 66.

<sup>103</sup>Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, s.v. *φέρω*.

<sup>104</sup>Cf. Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 267; Nairne, *The Epistle of Priesthood*, p. 91.

has shown,<sup>105</sup> and Behm and Quell take the same position in their TDNT article,<sup>106</sup> that *διατίθημι διαθήκην* is the LXX equivalent of כָּרַת בְּרִית, which indicates that *ὁ διαθέμενος* can be understood as “covenant maker”<sup>107</sup> as easily as “testator”. The term *βέβαιος* is used in 2:2 in connection with the word spoken by angels, that is, the OC.<sup>108</sup> *Νεκρός* is used several times in Hebrews (e.g. 6:1; 9:14), but only here with any possible legal connection. The use of *ἰσχύω* here is interesting, since it can mean “have force” or “be permanent”.<sup>109</sup> So, v. 17 could be understood to mean that a testament is never in force while the testator lives,<sup>110</sup> or that a covenant is never permanent while the covenant maker lives. However, Bruce convincingly argues against the latter option: “But it is simply not true that ‘where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it’”.<sup>111</sup> In fact, it is practically impossible not to think of the testamentary use of *διαθήκη* in the context of these verses, speaking of inheritance, the death of the *διαθέμενος* and the *διαθήκη* + being in force while the *διαθέμενος* lives.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, it seems best to understand *διαθήκη* in 9:16, 17 as meaning “testament”, and to understand the author as using the term to create an analogy between the two concepts of testament and covenant, an analogy of which he makes use to communicate his own view of the NC. In this

<sup>105</sup>Hughes, “Hebrews ix 15ff. and Galatians iii 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure,” pp. 39, 40.

<sup>106</sup>Behm and Quell, “*διατίθημι, διαθήκη*”, TDNT, vol. 2, p. 105.

<sup>107</sup>Acts 3:25 is a NT example of this usage.

<sup>108</sup>According to Moulton and Milligan (*The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, s.v. *βέβαιος*), *βέβαιος* has a technical meaning “to denote legally guaranteed security”, but this should not force the reader to assume too quickly that this indicates a Hellenistic background here, especially in view of 2:2. The Mosaic Covenant was quite legal in nature, and lends itself readily to association with this word.

<sup>109</sup>LSJ, s.v. *ἰσχύω*, 2, b. If it is possible to understand *ἰσχύω* as meaning “be permanent”, then the criticism of Westcott by Vos (“Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke”, p. 615) may not be valid: “The idea of unchangeableness, irrevocableness of the covenant, on which Westcott would suspend [his exegesis], is foreign to the context.”

<sup>110</sup>According to Ebrard (*Hebrews*, p. 295), “it would be too much to affirm that a testament is *never* (*μήποτε*) valid so long as the testator lives”.

<sup>111</sup>Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 222. Cf. Vos, “Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke”, p. 615.

<sup>112</sup>For those who take this clause as an interrogative, see Nairne, *The Epistle of Priesthood*, p. 92; Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 268.

paragraph, then, our author seems to be blending the concepts of covenant and testament to some degree, as Selb says:

As “covenant” and yet “testament”, as “treaty” and yet “disposition”, as “law” and basis of an “expectation of inheritance”, the notion strikes a balance between OT evidence, LXX citation and NT assertions.<sup>113</sup>

In vv. 16, 17 the author describes the necessity of the death of the *διαθέμενος*, and then goes on to say in v. 18 that this is why the first covenant involved bloodshed. This indicates that he understands both the old and new covenants as involving a testamentary element. In other words, the characteristic of the *διαθήκη* which moves him to exploit the “testament” usage of the word in vv. 16, 17 applies equally to both the old and new covenants. Therefore, it would not be correct to interpret Hebrews as understanding the old system as involving a covenant and the new system a testament.<sup>114</sup> In Hebrews, both the OC and the NC have the essential qualities of a covenant, while incorporating at least some of the characteristics of a will and testament.<sup>115</sup> Regarding the author’s use of *διαθήκη* in this passage, Attridge is probably correct in saying that the author is using a word play “related to paronomasia, but technically an example of *reflexio* or *ἀντανάκλασις*”.<sup>116</sup> This word play is used to communicate a particular aspect of the biblical covenant that the author has come to understand from a Christian perspective.<sup>117</sup> Just as the death of Christ provides for the redemption of the peoples of the old and new covenants, it also assures them of an eternal inheritance. This notion of inheritance is probably what led our author to introduce the testament aspect into his treatment of *διαθήκη*,<sup>118</sup> as Vos says:

The author in speaking of the inheritance is at first still unconscious of the train of thought which it may open up. But no sooner has he written down

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<sup>113</sup>Selb, “*Διαθήκη* im Neuen Testament”, p. 194 (my translation). Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, pp. 101, 102) takes a very similar view.

<sup>114</sup>Cf. Hughes, “Hebrews ix 15ff. and Galatians iii 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure,” p. 38.

<sup>115</sup>Swetnam, “A Suggested Interpretation of Hebrews 9,15-18”, p. 377.

<sup>116</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 255. Cf. also Moffatt, *Hebrews*, p. 127. For an argument against the notion of word play here see Kilpatrick, “*Διαθήκη* in Hebrews”, pp. 263-64.

<sup>117</sup>Cf. Swetnam, “A Suggested Interpretation of Hebrews 9,15-18”, p. 378.

<sup>118</sup>Cf. Gal. 3:17, 18, where the concept of *διαθήκη* is also related to receiving an inheritance.

the word than all at once the possibility of attaching the inheritance to the diatheke in the sense of "testament" suggests itself to him and he is quick to see the striking use that may be made of it in the furtherance of his argument.<sup>119</sup>

Whether or not the author's allusion to the will and testament concept was as spontaneous as Vos imagines, the primary purpose of introducing this aspect is to explain the secure, covenantal basis for the readers' spiritual inheritance. Through his shed blood, Jesus becomes the mediator of a NC, and on this basis he provides both redemption and an inheritance.

It is important to remember that the original readers did not have to answer the question of whether *διαθήκη* meant "testament" or "covenant"; it simply meant *διαθήκη*. This means that it would have been far easier for the original readers to deal with the author's word play, following his reference to the testamentary concept without losing its significance with regard to the covenant idea. In these verses our author develops an understanding of *διαθήκη* that is more complex than either its use in the LXX as a translation of *בְּרִית*, or its legal use in Hellenistic Greek to signify a will or testament.<sup>120</sup> The notion that the NC includes an eternal inheritance has contributed not only to the author's understanding of the nature of the NC, but it has also influenced his understanding of the OC, as seen in vv. 18-22.

#### *Blood of the Old Covenant (9: 18-22)*

In 9:20, the author quotes Exod. 24:8, which comes in the context of sacrifices for the inauguration of the Mosaic Covenant. That the author connects the covenant ritual described in Exodus 24 with the death of the *διαθέμενος* is shown by the flow of his argument from vv. 16, 17 to v. 22. According to v. 18, the necessity of the death of the *διαθέμενος* as described in vv. 16, 17 is the reason (*ὅθεν*) the inauguration of the first covenant involved bloodshed.<sup>121</sup> The connection of the

<sup>119</sup>Vos, "Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke", p. 617. Cf. also Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 223; Milligan, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 258.

<sup>120</sup>Vos ("Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke", pp. 599-605) provides an excellent treatment of the use of *διαθήκη* in the LXX as the preferred way of describing divinely initiated covenants, in relation to its Hellenistic use as a technical legal term. Cf. also Hughes, "Hebrews ix 15ff. and Galatians iii 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure", pp. 30-32.

<sup>121</sup>Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, pp. 242-44.

OC's inaugural sacrifices with the death of Christ through the *διαθέμενος*/inheritance concept in these verses shows that Hebrews sees the inaugural sacrifices as a type of Christ's sacrifice, in the same way as it does the levitical offerings. It is because a *διαθήκη* requires the death of the *διαθέμενος* that even the inauguration of the first covenant involved bloodshed (*ὅθεν οὐδὲ ἡ πρώτη χωρὶς αἵματος ἐγκεκαίνισται*). By the time the reader gets to v. 18 it has become apparent that this section focuses on the inauguration of the old and new covenants over against the continuing practices of covenant stipulations, and vv. 19-22 confirm this observation. Hebrews 9:18-22, then, is designed partly to explain that the Mosaic Covenant also shared some of the characteristics of a will and testament. This, then, is another way in which the OC anticipated certain characteristics of the NC.

There are several difficulties related to the author's use of Scripture in vv. 19-22.<sup>122</sup> The quotation in v. 20 and the subject matter in these verses in general indicate that the main Scripture passage to which the author is alluding is Exodus 24, but these verses also include a large amount of information given in addition to what is found in Exodus 24. The first phrase of v. 19, *λαληθείσης γὰρ πάσης ἐντολῆς κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὑπὸ Μωϋσέως παντὶ τῷ λαῷ* ("for after every commandment according to the law was spoken by Moses to all the people"), seems to follow reasonably from Exod. 24:7, 8. Exodus does not say that Moses read *every commandment* to *all* the people, but this is not an unreasonable interpretation of the text since it does say that Moses read the book of the covenant in the hearing of the people. The substantial additions begin with the next part of v. 19, which says that Moses took "the blood of the bulls [and goats] with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book and all the people" (*λαβὼν τὸ αἷμα τῶν μόσχων [καὶ τῶν τράγων] μετὰ ὕδατος καὶ ἐρίου κοκκίνου καὶ ὑσσώπου αὐτό τε τὸ βιβλίον καὶ πάντα τὸν λαὸν ἐράντισεν*). First, the sacrifices mentioned in Exodus 24 do not include goats, but the words *καὶ τῶν τράγων* were probably not a part of the original text of Hebrews.<sup>123</sup> Secondly, the water, scarlet wool and hyssop are not mentioned in Scripture as a part of the OC's inaugural ceremony, but are a part of the cleansing rites described in Lev. 14:4, 51 and Num. 19:6. This

<sup>122</sup>See Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. 225-27.

<sup>123</sup>Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek NT*, pp. 668-69. Cf. also Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 253; Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 225.

sort of conflation of Scripture passages is not unusual in Hebrews (e.g. 9:13), but if these passages are seen to be the author's source here, it would seem to require that he has understood them in a way that is inconsistent with their original meaning, since they do not deal with the inauguration of the OC but later cleansing rites. Finally, there is no place in Scripture where Moses is said to have sprinkled the book of the covenant.

A further difficulty comes in the deviation from the LXX in the quotation of Exod. 24:8 in v. 20 (see figure 9). The first variation is from *ἰδοὺ το τοῦτο*. The *τοῦτο* reading is found in some LXX witnesses (Sa, T-A<sup>124</sup>), and it is also reminiscent of the words of Jesus at the last supper as recorded in Mt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25. It is possible that these LXX texts and Hebrews were influenced by the traditional account of Jesus' words at the last supper.<sup>125</sup> The next variation, the change from *διέθετο* to *ἐνετείλατο*, is curious since the role of *ὁ διαθέμενος* is so prominent in the context. This, however, is not the first time our author has chosen a replacement where the LXX has *διατίθημι*. In 8:8 he uses *συντελέσω* instead of *διαθήσομαι*, and in 8:9 he uses *ἐποίησα* instead of *διεθέμην*. But in 8:10, with reference to the NC he does follow the LXX with *διαθήσομαι*, and in 10:16, where he re-quotes the material from 8:10, he also follows the LXX. It is difficult to know what to make of this, unless the author is determined to avoid using *διατίθημι* in conjunction with the OC.<sup>126</sup> This may be a way of emphasising that the OC could only anticipate the inheritance-providing, testamentary nature of the NC, in the light of 9:16, 17, but this would be difficult to prove. Another variant is the change of *κύριος* to *ὁ θεός*, along with a change in its placement in the sentence. Again this is difficult to explain with certainty, unless the author is quoting from memory, in which case the switch from *κύριος* to *θεός* is not significant. However, it is more likely that the author is attempting to avoid the

<sup>124</sup>The dialogue of Timothy and Aquila.

<sup>125</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 257-58; Héring, *Hébreux*, p. 87; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 245; Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, pp. 169-70.

<sup>126</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 257. Lane (*Hebrews 9-13*, p. 245) suggests that this change comes as a result of the writer wishing to avoid the implication that it was God that ratified the OC, since Hebrews sees the people as having ratified the OC, which God initiated. Swetnam ("A Suggested Interpretation of Hebrews 9,15-18", pp. 376-77) holds a view similar to Lane's, but wants to see the sacrificial animals as disposing the OC, while Christ disposes the NC.

confusion between Jesus and God which the term *κύριος* might engender, wanting the readers to be certain that it is God and not Jesus to whom Scripture is referring at this point.<sup>127</sup>

Hebrews 9:20	Exodus 24:8	Exodus 24:8
λέγων, <u>Τοῦτο</u> τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης ἧς ἐνετείλατο πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός.	καὶ εἶπεν Ἴδου τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης, ἧς διέθετο κύριος πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων τῶν λόγων τούτων.	וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה דַם־הַבְרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם עַל כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה:
Saying, " <u>This</u> is the blood of the covenant which <u>God commanded</u> to you".	and he said, " <u>Behold</u> the blood of the covenant, which the <u>Lord made</u> with you concerning all of these words.	And he said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which Yahweh made [or cut] with you, according to all these words.

Fig. 9 (Differences between the above texts are underscored.)

Verse 21 introduces to the argument the ceremony surrounding the initial setting up of the tabernacle, which is not difficult to fit into the context of the inauguration of the OC since both events concern initiation rites. The problem is that the scriptural account describes the tent and its vessels as being anointed with oil (Exod. 40:9-11; 30:25, 26; Num. 7:1), while our author asserts that they were sprinkled with blood.<sup>128</sup> The association of blood with the tabernacle initiation may be influenced by the use of blood in the ordination of the Aaronic priests (Lev. 8:30), but there is no explicit indication in Scripture that the tabernacle and all its furniture was sprinkled with blood.<sup>129</sup> There are at least three possible explanations for this and the other examples of the author seeming to go beyond Scripture in vv. 19-22. The first is that these verses represent the author's own understanding and interpretation of Scripture, probably involving the conflation of several passages.<sup>130</sup> The second is that the

<sup>127</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 257; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 245; Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, p. 113; Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 169.

<sup>128</sup>Josephus (*Ant.* 3.206 [8.6]) has the tabernacle sprinkled with oil and blood. Philo (*Vit. Mos.* II, 146) describes the anointing of the tabernacle, its furnishings and the high priest with oil.

<sup>129</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 258.

<sup>130</sup>Cf. Montefiore, *Hebrews*, pp. 157-58; Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, p. 278; Weiß, *Hebräer*, pp. 480-81; Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*,

author is relying on oral tradition or written sources which are no longer extant.<sup>131</sup> If this is the case, he may be using the particle  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$  (לְ in Hebrew) as a rationale for bringing in extra-biblical tradition. Towner describes several rabbinic devices to “prolong the discourse of Scripture to later generations”, one of which is *ribbui* or “extension”. He explains: “the presence of a certain particle such as לְ, הָא, הָא, הָא or a double word, infinitive absolute, or other grammatical feature was held to indicate that a supplementary teaching from tradition should be introduced at that point.”<sup>132</sup> If the author is using the  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$  from the Exodus passage in this way, this could explain his repetition of the term in these verses, as described below. The third possibility is that vv. 19-22 represent an example of hyperbole with a touch of mild dismissiveness toward OC practices.<sup>133</sup> There are several elements in these verses that point to this as a possibility. In three verses, excluding v. 20 which consists almost entirely of the Exod. 24:8 quotation, the author uses the term  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$  five times: “every commandment”, “all the people”, “all the people”, “all the vessels of worship” and “all things”. This may be meant to create a quality of exaggeration in these verses. Then, the pervasive, even monotonous use of blood under the OC, from its inauguration onward, and the complex ritual associated with blood sprinkled and poured all around according to the rites of the covenant are presented to the reader in a seemingly hyperbolic manner in vv. 19-21. Finally, the tone of v. 22 may betray a slight hint of dismissiveness, *καὶ σχεδὸν ἐν αἵματι πάντα καθαρίζεται κατὰ τὸν νόμον* (“indeed, practically everything is cleansed with blood according to the law”), with *σχεδόν* listed in LSJ as used in statements of irony and word play.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, it is possible,

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pp. 126-27. Schröger (*Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 172) says, “The writer, generally speaking, conforms to the text of the LXX, but he deviates from it repeatedly for no discernible reason. These deviations, according to B. Weiss and E. Riegenbach, are to be explained by the fact that the passage is quoted from memory” (my translation).

<sup>131</sup>Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 225; Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, p. 117; Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, p. 122; Strobel, *Hebräer*, p. 113; Weiß, *Hebräer*, pp. 480-81.

<sup>132</sup>Towner, “Hermeneutical Systems of Hillel and the Tannaim: A Fresh Look”, p. 128.

<sup>133</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 261) also sees a degree of negativity toward OC practices in this context, understanding the use of *τούτοις* in 9:23 as “a disparaging reference to the animals’ blood and purifying implements listed in v. 19”. Moffatt (*Hebrews*, p. 132) takes the same view of *τούτοις*.

<sup>134</sup>LSJ, s.v. *σχεδόν*, IV, 2.

though not provable, that these verses are an example of a subtle use of language and literary device—hyperbole and mild dismissiveness—that may have been easily understood as such by the original readers, but whose qualities of exaggeration do not stand out to the modern reader who is somewhat handicapped by distance of language, culture and religious experience. Nonetheless, at the end of v. 22 the author does make a very serious point based on his previous exposition, that the OC practices show, and the ministry of Christ confirms, that forgiveness of sin depends on the shedding of blood (*καὶ χωρὶς αἱματεκχυσίας οὐ γίνεται ἄφεσις*).<sup>135</sup> This statement affirms what the author has said in v. 15, that redemption and inheritance come as a result of death, and specifically the death of Christ, even for those under the Mosaic Covenant.

Whatever one understands to be the source(s) behind vv. 18-22, it is clear that the author goes beyond a strict understanding of the Scripture passages to which he alludes.<sup>136</sup> It is difficult to say whether the “extra” material represents information from other sources, the author’s own interpretation of Scripture or an attempt to make a point through exaggeration and hyperbole. In any case, the author’s point is clear: the inaugural rites of the OC prefigure the testamentary significance of the NC and the death of Christ, and show that at least since the time of the inauguration of the OC, bloodshed has been a requisite to forgiveness. With this our author has prepared the way for his discussion of the superior effect of Jesus’ sacrifice.

### *THE OLD AND NEW SACRIFICES COMPARED (9:23–10:18)*

#### *Sacrifice and Sanctuary (9:23-28)*

Again, a new section is marked out with the use of *οὖν* in 9:23 (cf. 9:1; 10:19) in a way that maintains the flow of the argument. Verse 23 returns to the idea of the earthly copies (*ὑπόδειγμα*) of the heavenly sanctuary first discussed in 8:5, and relates the sacrifice of Christ to the sacrifices used “to cleanse” the earthly sanctuary. This verse asserts both a continuity and a discontinuity between the old and the new: both sanctuaries had to be cleansed, but the cleansing of the heavenly sanctu-

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<sup>135</sup>Lane (*Hebrews 9–13*, p. 246) notices the similarities between 9:7, 18 and 22, which show the vital place of blood in this chapter.

<sup>136</sup>See Moffatt, *Hebrews*, pp. 129-30.

ary involved better sacrifices, ἀνάγκη οὖν τὰ μὲν ὑποδείγματα τῶν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς τούτοις καθαρῖζεσθαι, αὐτὰ δὲ τὰ ἐπουράνια κρείττοσιν θυσίαις παρὰ ταύτας (“therefore, it is necessary for the copies of the things in heaven to be cleansed by these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these”). There are three elements in this verse that point back to the previous material: the conjunction οὖν (“therefore”) and the two uses of the plural of οὗτος (“these”). The conjunction at the beginning of v. 23 indicates that the necessity of the cleansing of earthly copies is a conclusion flowing from the statements of v. 22 that “almost everything is cleansed with blood according to the law and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”. The demonstrative pronouns point back to the OC’s inaugural sacrifices as discussed in 9:18-22, with one used to assert the necessity of those inaugural sacrifices and the other used to assert their inferiority to Christ’s sacrifice.

On the basis of the typological relationship between the earthly and heavenly tabernacles, our author states that the heavenly tabernacle would require a cleansing sacrifice as did the earthly. Unexpectedly, he uses a plural, θυσίαις (“sacrifices”), to describe the heavenly tabernacle’s cleansing sacrifices. Lane explains this plural as being a result of the number of θυσίαις being attracted to τούτοις (“by these means”),<sup>137</sup> possibly indicating that the multiplicity of the inaugural sacrifices of the OC was dominating the author’s thinking at this moment, rather than the singleness and once-for-all nature of the sacrifice of Jesus. Attridge explains the plural as being used for the statement of a general principle.<sup>138</sup> Alternatively, it may be that the author is thinking of Jesus’ one offering in a multifaceted way,<sup>139</sup> perhaps by separating its earthly and heavenly aspects.

The description of the earthly tabernacle in v. 24 as made with hands (χειροποίητα) echoes 8:2, which describes it as pitched by the Lord and not humans. The priestly ministry of Christ, like that of the levitical priests, involves a holy place or sanctuary, but unlike the levitical tent, the sanctuary in which Christ serves is not a part of the earthly creation and does not rely on human participation for its existence. In v. 24 our author continues to use language to describe the earthly and heav-

<sup>137</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, p. 247.

<sup>138</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 261. Moffatt (*Hebrews*, p. 132) calls θυσίαις the “plural of category (like νεκροῖς in v. 17)”, as does Riggenbach (*Hebräer*, p. 282).

<sup>139</sup>Cf. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, p. 196.

enly sanctuaries that combines similar terminology to that of the Greek philosophers (*ἀληθινός*)<sup>140</sup> with the vocabulary of typology (*ἀντίτυπος*): οὐ γὰρ εἰς χειροποίητα εἰσῆλθεν ἅγια Χριστός, ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν, ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν, νῦν ἐμφανισθῆναι τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (“for Christ did not enter into a holy place made with hands, a representation of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear before God on our behalf”). The language used here is quite similar to that used in 8:2, 5, which describes the heavenly tent as the *ἀληθινός* and the *τύπος*, but here, while the heavenly is referred to as the *ἀληθινός*, it is the earthly sanctuary that is referred to as the *ἀντίτυπος*.<sup>141</sup> This indicates that, while in the modern application of typology the terms are reversed (as in Acts 7:43; 1 Pet. 3:21), the author's conception is indeed that the relationship between the two sanctuaries is typological. This is evident in the author's use of the term *τύπος*, but even more so in his juxtapositioning of *τύπος* and *ἀντίτυπος*, indicating that he conceives of the earthly as taking the place of or representing the heavenly (cf. 8:5).<sup>142</sup>

Some take the phrase “into heaven itself” to be an indication that the author conceives of the heavenly tabernacle as being equivalent to heaven.<sup>143</sup> Of course, it is possible to read this phrase in this way, but this is not the only plausible way to understand it. It is also possible to take the phrase “into heaven itself” as describing the location of the true sanctuary and not its extent, as Hurst asserts:

An equation of the heavenly tent in Hebrews with “heaven itself” is based solely on the assumption that in 9:24 *Auctor* intends this phrase to be the precise definition of the heavenly tent. It is more probable, on the other

<sup>140</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 261) observes that the intensive use of *αὐτός* in 9:23, 24 “recalls the standard way in which Plato refers to the ideal or noetic realm”.

<sup>141</sup>Moffatt (*Hebrews*, p. 132) understands *ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν* as meaning “a counterpart of reality”, and sees *ἀντίτυπα* as synonymous with *ὑποδείγματα*, literally “answering to the *τύπος*” which was shown to Moses.

<sup>142</sup>LSJ, *s.v.* *ἀντίτυπος*, 2, “corresponding as the stamp to the die; figuring or representing the true (Heb. 9:24); resembling; counterfeit”. According to Isaacs (*Sacred Space*, p. 73), “In secular Greek both *τύπος* and *ἀντίτυπος* can refer either to the mould from which something (a coin, perhaps) is struck—in which case it is the prototype, pattern, exemplar and model—or to the copy which is produced by the mould—derivative and inferior”. See LSJ, *s.v.* *τύπος* and Moulton and Milligan, *s.v.* *τύπος*.

<sup>143</sup>Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, p. 262; Syngé, *Hebrews and the Scriptures*, p. 28. See also Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, p. 209 and Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, pp. 284-85.

hand, that instead of defining what the tent is, the phrase indicates the general realm in which Christ ministers *as opposed to* the earthly priests.<sup>144</sup>

Jesus' priestly ministry does not take place in the earthly sanctuary, but in a sanctuary which is located in "heaven itself". That Jesus' entry into the sanctuary happens in heaven, and the heavenly holy place, is significant since this indicates that he has entered into the presence of God on a level unknown to the levitical priests. Furthermore, Jesus has entered the heavenly sanctuary as a forerunner (6:19, 20) of the people of God (e.g. the readers), who have as their final destiny a *heavenly* sanctuary and the *heavenly* city (6:19, 22; 11:13-16). So, it is quite plausible to understand 9:24 as emphasising the heavenly location and nature of the "true sanctuary" and not as delineating its extent, as if to say that heaven and the heavenly holy place were one and the same. Many have also had difficulty with the notion that things in heaven need to be cleansed,<sup>145</sup> and therefore some take the references to heavenly things as symbolic.<sup>146</sup> Some see the cleansing as a reference to the expulsion of Satan from heaven.<sup>147</sup> Lane understands this cleansing as a removal of defilement.<sup>148</sup> In both Jewish apocalypse<sup>149</sup> and in Paul<sup>150</sup> both heaven and earth are part of this present evil age, and since our author uses the language of "the ages" in 9:26, this may provide a clue to understanding the significance of heaven being "cleansed". In any case, it seems necessary to understand the cleansing of inanimate objects as something different from the cleansing of a person from sin, in which case it would be better to view the cleansing of things such as the earthly or heavenly sanctuaries as something like a dedication or a marking out for a particular and sacred service, in conjunction with the removal of defilement.

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<sup>144</sup>Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought*, p. 28.

<sup>145</sup>Moffatt, *Hebrews*, p. 132; Montefiore, *Hebrews*, p. 160. Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, p. 124) gives a good overview of the views current in his day.

<sup>146</sup>See Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 261-62; Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. 228-29; Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, p. 262; Milligan, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 262; Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, p. 212.

<sup>147</sup>Héring, *Hébreux*, p. 89. See also Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, p. 283.

<sup>148</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 247. Buchanan (*To the Hebrews*, p. 162) says, "It also seems a little surprising to think of heaven as a place where there would be sin and defilement that needed cleansing. The author of Hebrews found no difficulty with this, however."

<sup>149</sup>E.g. 2 Bar. 59:3; Apoc. Elij. 5:22.

<sup>150</sup>Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, p. 171. See Rom. 8:22, 23; 1 Cor. 8:5; Eph. 1:20, 21.

This cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, then, is probably a reference to its inauguration and purification, in connection to entering the new age of the NC with its power to cleanse. Dunnill suggests:

Perhaps the idea of "purifying" the heavenly sanctuary and its instruments is a mere analogy, describing the *inauguration* of the new covenant in the same terms as Moses' inauguration of the old in the previous verses; at another level, though, the suggestion that evil has entered the dwelling of God has to be taken seriously.<sup>151</sup>

The picture painted by blood sacrifice always relates to the remission of sin, but since something inanimate cannot sin, the cleansing of a thing may be seen as illustrating the solution to human sin, while marking out the thing cleansed as an instrument for dealing with sin. In the case of the sanctuaries, they needed to have a point of inauguration or transition from a common to a sacred status before they could be properly seen and used as sanctuaries.<sup>152</sup> This is not to deny that sin has in some way affected the heavenly realm, but the cleansing of an object must have been distinguished in the mind of our author from the cleansing of people, even though he uses similar terms, since some of the language he uses to describe the cleansing of people (cf. 10:1-4) could not possibly be applied to objects. So, in relation to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, as with the earthly, it is not necessary to understand the sanctuary in some symbolic or metaphorical way, but rather it is possible to take the cleansing itself as a symbol, illustrating the significance of the work that would take place within the sanctuaries and initiating them for sacred use.<sup>153</sup>

In whatever way one understands the nature of the heavenly sanctuary, not only does Jesus' entry into this holy place hold out the

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<sup>151</sup>Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 232. See also Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, p. 153. Spicq (*Hebreux*, vol. 2, p. 267) also associates the concept of cleansing in this verse with inauguration (*ἐγκαθίζω*).

<sup>152</sup>Milligan (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 262) connects the cleansing of the earthly tent, etc. with the notion of cleanness and uncleanness, seeing it as the way of making these instruments acceptable for service to God. Nonetheless, he does not make a similar connection in regard to the heavenly holy place.

<sup>153</sup>Barclay (*Hebrews*, pp. 141-42) calls Christ's cleansing of the heavenly things a "picture of a kind of cosmic redemption that purified the whole universe, seen and unseen". Snell (*New and Living Way*, p. 119) writes: "the point is that the purifying of a sanctuary really means that a purification is made *in* it; it is not the place that is purified, but the ritual is done there to afford sinners access to God".

promise of a *future* benefit for the readers who could look forward to a similar entrance for themselves, but there is also the *present* benefit of Jesus' entry in that he has "now appeared before God" on behalf of the readers. In Jesus' priestly ministry there is an on-going effort of intercession on behalf of the people of God (2:18; 4:15; 7:25), just as the levitical priests continued day after day and year after year to make intercessory sacrifices for the people. Jesus' continuing intercession, however, does not involve any more sacrificing, since his superior, once-for-all sacrifice gives him continual access to God, seated at his right hand.

Having looked at some of the details of vv. 23, 24, it is helpful to stand back and consider the more general implications of these verses. Coming after the discussion of the inauguration of the OC, they are meant to give the reader some indication of the inaugural significance of the sacrifice of Christ, particularly as it relates to its foreshadowing in the old system. One effect of Christ's sacrifice is to provide an inaugural rite for the "cleansing" of the heavenly sanctuary. That which was pictured in the sacrifices and ceremonies performed by Moses in the inauguration of the first covenant and the initiation of its vessels was accomplished truly and eternally in the sacrifice of Christ and his entry into the holy place in heaven. To understand the nature and significance of the offering of Jesus with respect to its role in the inauguration of the NC, or indeed to discover in the first place that the sacrifice of Christ had such a significance, it is necessary to recognise the typological relationship between the two systems/sacrificial events and then to apply one's knowledge of the old, the shadow, to the corresponding categories of the new, the true. On the other hand, to appreciate the contemporary significance of the old, one must recognise its fulfilment in and replacement by the Christ-event, the new. These verses show, then, that Christ's appearance before God accomplished the purification of the true, heavenly holy place in a way corresponding to the cleansing of the earthly tent by the inaugural sacrifices superintended by Moses.

Verse 25 repeats a recurring theme in Hebrews, that whereas the levitical priests continued to offer OC sacrifices,<sup>154</sup> Christ offered himself

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<sup>154</sup>The present tense of *εἰσέρχομαι* used here to describe the entrance of the high priest into the sanctuary cannot be used to prove that the temple sacrifices were still being offered at the time of writing, since the author may be—and probably is—using the present tense to emphasise the durative or continual nature of the levitical high priest's yearly entrance into the holy of holies. The author's use of the present at

only once (cf. also 7:27; 9:6, 7; 10:2, 10). Another recurring emphasis in these verses is that as a priest Christ offered his own blood, and not the blood of animals as did the levitical priests (cf. also 9:12-14; 13:12). Verse 26 explains why Jesus' sacrifice could not be a repeatable sacrifice as were the levitical offerings, *ἐπεὶ ἔδει αὐτὸν πολλάκις παθεῖν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου* ("since it would have been necessary for him to suffer many times from the foundation of the world"). This indicates that Hebrews sees the sacrifice of Christ as having a redemptive significance even before its time, and that the redemption of people in all ages depends in some way on the sacrifice of Christ. For our author, the redemptive power of the once-for-all offering of Christ is not only sufficient for all the future, but also for all the past. Therefore, the author is able to consider the Christ-event as "the summing up of the ages" (9:26), and to reckon his offering capable of doing away with sin. This rejection of sin (*ἀθέτησιν [τῆς] ἁμαρτίας*) by the sacrifice of Christ applies to all sin, whether it occurred before or after the Christ-event, since the Christ-event is the eschatological climax of history.<sup>155</sup> The effect of the Christ-event with respect to sin is not viewed at this point in the usual cause and effect manner which requires a strict ordering of the past, present and future. Instead, all of time points toward the Christ-event as the focal point and climax of history, so that, whether sin occurs before or after the sacrifice of Christ, it is that sacrifice that must ultimately take away that sin.

So, not only does the entry of Christ into heaven provide for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, but Christ's single appearance in the heavenly holy place also provides for the rejection (*ἀθέτησις*)<sup>156</sup> of sin. It is made clear in 9:15-22 that the cleansing of the sanctuary and the forgiveness of sin are the accomplishments of the sacrifices, whereas in the heavenly realm this is accomplished by Christ's entry into the sanctuary. The parallel between the old and new at this point indicates, then, that Hebrews does not see the sacrifice of Christ as completely defined by his earthly death, but as including his entry into the heavenly holy place as well.<sup>157</sup> Just as the priests' entry into the tent with the blood of the animal sacrifices completed the levitical offerings, so Jesus' entry

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this point is in contrast to his use of the aorist *εἰσῆλθον* to describe Jesus' entry as high priest into the heavenly sanctuary, which is not a continual or repeated event.

<sup>155</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 264.

<sup>156</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 265) takes this as legal language.

<sup>157</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 263-64.

into the heavenly holy place on the basis of his own shed blood (9:12) serves to complete his sacrifice. Under the OC the priests represented the people before God, making sacrifices on behalf of the people. They did not, however, entirely take the place of the people in the sacrificial process since they offered animals rather than themselves as sacrifices, so that in this way the animals took the place of the people in a very important respect. The ministry of the OC priests relied on the blood of another in two respects: in an immediate sense it relied on the blood of the animal sacrifices for its continuing practice, and in a final sense it relied on the blood of Christ for its eschatological fulfilment. The fact that the blood of another was used by the levitical priests is partly what made their sacrifice less than perfect for our author (cf. 10:4), and the fact that Christ shed his own blood is partly what makes his sacrifice superior. From this perspective, then, it is possible to see the levitical priests' reliance on the blood of another as betraying its own inadequacy, as it anticipated its own eschatological reliance on another (human) sacrifice, which our author understands to be the sacrifice of Christ.

The once-for-all nature of Jesus' sacrifice is further explained in vv. 27, 28 by comparing Jesus' death to the death of the race in general. Just as it would be impossible for a person to die physically more than once, it would also be impossible for Jesus to offer himself more than once, since his sacrifice involved his death as a human being. The necessity of the singleness of Jesus' sacrifice has already been argued by pointing out that it is unnecessary for him to die repeatedly when he could do it once "at the summing up of the ages", and impractical for him to die repeatedly since, if once is not enough, then the repetition required would be staggering (9:25, 26).<sup>158</sup> But not only is the repetition of Jesus' sacrifice unnecessary and impractical, it is also impossible, just as impossible as for the typical human to die more than once.<sup>159</sup> The importance placed by Hebrews on Jesus' humanity with regard to the value of his sacrifice is evident at this point, since the author leaves no room for any conception of the sacrifice of Christ that is not thoroughly attached to and dependent on his humanity. This concept is paralleled throughout

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<sup>158</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 264; Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 230; Moffatt, *Hebrews*, pp. 132-33.

<sup>159</sup>Moffatt (*Hebrews*, p. 133) takes the concept of Jesus' one-time death as suggesting to the author the idea that all people must die once; however, Hebrews seems to be arguing from the fact that human beings can only die once to show that Jesus could only die once.

Hebrews (4:15, 16; 5:8; 9:12; 10:10; 12:2, 3; 13:12), and is most prominent in the author's comparison of Christ to the angels in chs. 2 and 3—he is superior to the angels both because he is divine and because he is human, and the angels are neither.

When our author says *ἀπόκειται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἅπαξ ἀποθανεῖν, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο κρίσις* (“it is appointed for people to die once, and after this judgment”), he is not only providing an argument for the once-for-all nature of Jesus' death on the basis that people can only die once, but he is also leading into a point about the importance of Christ's offering in relation to the judgment of humankind.<sup>160</sup> Just as it is impossible for a person to physically die more than once, it is equally impossible for anyone to avoid the issue of God's judgment. In the middle of v. 28 there is probably an allusion to Isa. 53:12 (LXX), *καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν* (“and he has taken away the sins of the many”), in the phrase *ὁ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ προσενεχθεὶς εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας* (“Christ was offered once-for-all to take away the sins of the many”).<sup>161</sup> Jesus came once to offer himself for sin; he will come again to offer salvation to those who expect him (*οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ προσενεχθεὶς εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας, ἐκ δευτέρου χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας ὀφθήσεται τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀπεκδεχομένοις εἰς σωτηρίαν*—9:28). In effect, the author is saying here that the one who does not expect Jesus should expect judgment. Whereas the appearance of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary brought about the cleansing of the holy place and the rejection of sin, his second appearance<sup>162</sup> will offer final salvation from judgment. Throughout this pericope the author has made allusion to the Day of Atonement ritual, with Jesus entering the sanctuary to make an offering for sin, and coming out of the holy place, like the levitical high priest, bearing salvation for the people.<sup>163</sup> Nevertheless, the parallel between the two has its limitations (e.g. the singleness of Jesus' offering), and it is where

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<sup>160</sup>Cf. *T. Levi* 3:1-10, which also deals with the concepts of sacrifice and judgment in the same context.

<sup>161</sup>Hagner (*Hebrews*, pp. 147-48) calls it “a conscious allusion to Isaiah 53:12, whence the expression ‘many’ derives”. See also Snell, *New and Living Way*, p. 121.

<sup>162</sup>Though the text does not explicitly state where Christ's second appearance will occur, the comparison in 9:28 of his second appearance with his offering to take away sins at his first advent and the fact that his appearance will be to those who expect him—Christ appearing before them rather than *vice versa*—probably implies that this appearance will take place on the earth.

<sup>163</sup>Cf. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, pp. 200, 201.

the parallel breaks down that Jesus' work is seen to be superior.<sup>164</sup> In v. 28, going beyond the argument for the one-time sacrifice of Christ, the author begins to argue for the end-time significance of his sacrifice. This leads him into a discussion in the verses that follow of the superiority of Christ's sacrifice as compared to the repetitive nature of the OC sacrifices and their ultimate inability to solve the sin problem in any eschatological sense.<sup>165</sup> Thus the author continues to develop the significance of time with respect to sacrifice.

### *Sacrifice and Law (10:1-10)*

The first verse of ch. 10 asserts the inability of "the law" to "perfect" those who approach God by means of the levitical sacrifices: *Σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων, κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ταῖς αὐταῖς θυσίαις ἃς προσφέρουσιν εἰς τὸ διηλεκτὸς οὐδέποτε δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους τελειῶσαι* ("For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, not the true substance of the things, is never able to perfect those who approach [God] with the same yearly sacrifices which they offer continually"). Hebrews has used the term *νόμος* ("law") several times up to this point, signifying for example the law that instructed the levitical priests to extract a tithe from the people (7:5), the law that established the levitical priesthood (7:16, 28), the law that prescribed the sacrificial system (8:4; 10:8), the law that would be put into the hearts of NC believers (8:10; 10:16) and the law that demands cleansing by blood (9:28). In all of these cases, apart from the law put into the heart under the NC, it is clear that the author is referring to the Mosaic law, and this is the case in 10:1 as well.<sup>166</sup>

The main contrast<sup>167</sup> in 10:1 is between *σκιὰ* as used to describe the Mosaic law and *εἰκὼν*, which is seen as the expression of ultimate reality.<sup>168</sup> Col. 2:17 uses *σκιὰ* in a way that is very similar to its use here, *ἃ ἔστιν σκιά τῶν μελλόντων, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ* ("which is a

<sup>164</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 262-63; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 250.

<sup>165</sup>Cf. Manson, *Hebrews*, pp. 141-42; Weiß, *Hebräer*, p. 495.

<sup>166</sup>Ellingworth (*Hebrews*, p. 490) takes the law in this passage in its cultic aspect, presumably meaning the Mosaic law but with primary reference to its regulations about sacrifice.

<sup>167</sup>Although  $\varphi$ <sup>46</sup> reads *καὶ αὐτήν*, virtually equating rather than contrasting *σκιὰ* and *εἰκὼν*, this is almost certainly not the preferred reading.

<sup>168</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 260.

shadow of the things to come, but the body [or reality] belongs to Christ”), where *σκιά* refers to “food and drink . . . a festival or a new moon or a sabbath” (Col. 2:16—RSV). It is not unusual for *σκιά* to be used for a foreshadowing of that which is real, as it is in Heb. 10:1.<sup>169</sup> The term *εἰκών* is often used to describe a likeness or image, that is, something patterned after something else, a concept not dissimilar to that of shadow. There is, however, a use of *εἰκών* in the sense of “pattern, archetype”, and this is closer to the meaning here.<sup>170</sup> BAGD lists the use of *εἰκών* in Heb. 10:1 under the heading “form, appearance”, and suggests that Gen. 1:26f. is a strong influence here.<sup>171</sup> The meaning of *εἰκών* here is surely something like “form”, but there is little reason to connect this verse to Gen. 1:26 except for the use of *εἰκών* itself.<sup>172</sup> The point being made by the author's use of *εἰκών* over against *σκιά* in this verse is that the old system simply did not have the actual form of ultimate reality, as does the new. The old was not immediately connected to the true substance of spiritual reality, but was only an illustration of that reality, or, to put it better, it was a shadow of that reality.

The Mosaic law with its cleansing sacrifices was never able to perfect the people of the OC, a position also expressed in 7:19. The reason for this as given in 10:1 is that the law had but a shadow. The use of the “shadow” concept to describe some part of the OC is also found in 8:5 to describe the earthly tabernacle, indicating that our author considered this concept to be an apt and useful way of depicting the old as compared to the new. By using this metaphor, our author is affirming the continuity and discontinuity between the old and new, as well as defining the nature of that relationship to some degree. As a shadow, the old represents the new and corresponds to it in its general shape and form, but the very existence of the old depends entirely on the new because only the new has any true substance. A shadow is an indication that something other

<sup>169</sup>BAGD, LSJ, Moulton and Milligan, *s.v.* *σκιά*.

<sup>170</sup>LSJ, *s.v.* *εἰκών*. Cf. Ti. Locr. 99d, *μετὰ δὲ τὰν τῷ κόσμῳ σύστασιν ζῶων θνατῶν γέννασιν ἐμαχανάσατο, ἵν' ἡ τέλος ποτὶ τὰν εἰκόνα παντελῶς ἀπειργασμένος* (“and after bringing together the cosmos he devised the production of mortal beings, so that it [the cosmos] might be perfect, being brought to perfect completion according to the pattern”), which gives *εἰκών* a similar meaning as in Heb. 10:1. In his translation of this passage of Timaeus Locrus, Marg (*Timaeus Locrus: de Natura Mundi et Animae*, pp. 138-39) uses the term “dem Vorbild” to render *τὰν εἰκόνα*.

<sup>171</sup>BAGD, *s.v.* *εἰκών*, 2.

<sup>172</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 270-71.

than itself exists, and by appearing first, it may also indicate that something of substance is near to hand.<sup>173</sup> A shadow can disclose something about the nature of the thing that cast it, but a shadow cannot accomplish anything substantive on its own. Therefore, having but a shadow of what is real, the law is incapable of making any substantive or permanent provision for the people of God. This is proven, for our author, by the fact that the same sacrifices had to be offered annually, the same rituals had to be performed year after year, and the same cleansing had to be repeated over and over again.

If the levitical sacrifices had been the final solution to the people's problem, then there would have been no need to offer the same levitical sacrifices more than once, as expressed by the author's question in 10:2, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐπαύσαντο προσφερόμεναι διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν ἔχειν ἔτι συνείδησιν ἁμαρτιῶν τοὺς λατρεύοντας ἅπαξ κεκαθαρισμένους; ("since would they not have ceased to be offered, on account of the worshippers, having been cleansed once-for-all, not having any longer a consciousness of sins?"). For our author, a truly effective sacrifice would not only take care of the sins of the past, but also the sins of the future. Since the sacrifice of Christ is understood in Hebrews as permanently effective and sufficient to deal with sin, then Christ's sacrifice must be seen as able to deal with sins committed both before and after his offering. Unlike the sacrifices prescribed by Moses, which could only affect sins committed before the sacrificial act, Jesus' sacrifice was effective for any sins, whenever they were committed. Another implication that comes out of 10:2 is that, one way or another, the cessation of levitical sacrifice was inevitable. If levitical sacrifices

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<sup>173</sup>Cf. Lane (*Hebrews 9-13*, p. 259), who argues that this term is not being used in a Platonic sense but in an eschatological sense, the "imperfect or incomplete" pointing forward to the "perfect or complete". It is quite possible if not probable, however, that the writer of Hebrews was influenced by Alexandrian philosophers, or even by Philo himself, in his choice of shadow/substance terminology. The use of these terms in Hebrews may also indicate that the author was aware of his readers being under the influence of the Platonic/Philonian philosophers, and that he chose this terminology in order to communicate more effectively with them. However, although Hebrews uses some of the same terms as a writer such as Philo, these terms are not used in Hebrews to convey the platonic ideas found in Philo. Therefore, although the writer of Hebrews may have been influenced by the Alexandrian philosophers on the superficial level of word choice, his writing was far less so influenced on the conceptual level. See also Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, pp. 131-32, 144-45.

had been truly and permanently effective in dealing with sin, then they would have ceased because of the lack of need—just as Jesus does not keep offering sacrifice. On the other hand, if the old, levitical sacrifices were not ultimately sufficient, as Hebrews argues, then they would need to be replaced by something better and therefore would come to an end because of their own obsolescence. There is irony in this. Whereas one might conclude that any ritual that has persisted for several centuries may be destined to continue indefinitely, since it has stood the test of time, in our author's way of thinking the repetition of the levitical sacrifices itself proves that they could not continue forever.

This irony comes to the fore in v. 3, since the more the sacrifices are offered the more the worshippers are reminded of sin: *ἀλλ' ἐν αὐταῖς ἀνάμνησις ἁμαρτιῶν κατ' ἐνιαυτόν* (“but in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins each year”). So, while Hebrews would accept that the levitical sacrifices did afford certain benefits to the worshippers (see 9:10), their continual recurrence also had the negative effect of keeping the issue of the worshippers' sin before them, rather than taking it away as would the sacrifice of Christ (9:28). This paragraph ends with v. 4 in a way very similar to the paragraph ending at 9:22, with a statement that is axiomatic in quality: *ἀδύνατον γὰρ αἷμα ταύρων καὶ τράγων ἀφαιρεῖν ἁμαρτίας* (“for it impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins”). This statement, introduced by *γάρ*, provides the logical starting point on which the first three verses of ch. 10 are based. The remembrance of sin is kept alive by the levitical offerings, because the sacrifices are continually repeated, and this is the case because the law only has a shadow of ultimate reality, since animals' blood was never capable of actually and permanently removing sin.

Having stated plainly that animals' blood can never take away sin, our author proceeds to explain that animal sacrifices were never at the heart of what God really wanted from his people, but rather, what he wanted was the submission of the human heart and will, as exemplified by Christ's self-sacrifice. To do this he introduces a quotation from Psalm 40, which he places on the lips of Christ: *Διὸ εἰσερχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον λέγει* (“Wherefore, coming into the world he [Christ] says”).<sup>174</sup> This introduction to the quotation of Ps. 40:6-8 does not follow

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<sup>174</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 273) notices a shift in the use of *κόσμος* in 10:5 as compared to its use in 9:1, the only other reference to the cosmos. He sees a contrast between the author's characterisation of the “cosmic” sanctuary as external and in the realm of the fleshly and his positive view of Jesus' entry into the cosmos.

a typical formula.<sup>175</sup> In fact, Wilson considers “the use of an Old Testament passage which involves its being placed on the lips of Jesus” as “incongruous”. Several solutions have been suggested and recorded by Wilson: the first is that the Psalm is taken as being prophetic, another that the pre-existent Christ speaks through the psalmist, and yet another that the OT is now embodied in the person of Jesus.<sup>176</sup> Schröger thinks the author interprets the psalm according to the method of *midrash-pesher*.<sup>177</sup> But the simplest and most persuasive suggestion has been put forward by Kraus, who reasons that the use of Psalm 40 here is typological.<sup>178</sup> Since the Psalm claims to be written by David, it would not be surprising if our author did understand there to be a typological relationship between king David and the greater king, Christ.<sup>179</sup> From this perspective, it is easier to see how the words in the middle of the quotation (“Then I said, ‘Behold I come’”) could have given the writer reason not only to assign these words to Christ, but also to place them at the time of his coming.<sup>180</sup> In fact, the words “I come”, along with other details in Ps. 40:6-8, may have been part of what gave rise to the application of this passage to Christ as a messianic reference in the first place.<sup>181</sup> The words of Rissi add one final point regarding the significance of these words applied to Jesus’ coming: “The authentic offering is explained on the ground of the citation of Ps 40:7-9, which is laid in the mouth of Jesus. It explains the point of his ‘coming’.”<sup>182</sup> To give his life in sacrifice and thus provide the means of redemption was indeed the point of his coming, in our author’s view.

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<sup>175</sup>See Heb. 2:12 as a similar example of an OT citation being attributed to Christ.

<sup>176</sup>Wilson, *Hebrews*, p. 178, referring to Manson, Westcott and Hughes, respectively.

<sup>177</sup>Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 176.

<sup>178</sup>Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, p. 427. See also Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 5: *Psalms*, p. 34; Spicq, *Hebreux*, vol. 2, p. 304.

<sup>179</sup>Cf. the Davidic Psalm 110 quoted in Heb. 1:13 and applied to Christ (and, if they are Davidic as well, the anonymous psalms quoted earlier in that chapter), and Psalm 22 in 2:12.

<sup>180</sup>Ellingworth (*Hebrews*, p. 499) argues: “It is probable that this Christ-centred understanding of Scripture was generally accepted in the community to which Hebrews was originally addressed.”

<sup>181</sup>See Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 137; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 262.

<sup>182</sup>Rissi, *Die Theologie des Hebräerbriefs*, pp. 74, 75 (my translation).

Otto maintains that “the attitude which the epistle adopts towards the Old Testament here seems contradictory”. He goes on to explain:

On the one hand, scripture is regarded as a direct revelation of God's will. . . On the other hand, the epistle will not admit that the sacrifices which the Old Testament regarded as having been instituted in accordance with a divine command were really an expression of what God wanted and intended.<sup>183</sup>

Notwithstanding the opinion of Otto, it is not clear that Hebrews contradicts itself here. It is simply exploiting a tension which already exists in the OT itself.<sup>184</sup> The balance in Heb. 10:5-10 between the renunciation of the OC with its trappings and the authoritative use of OC Scripture is precisely why this passage is so instructive on the subject of the use of Scripture in Hebrews. In spite of this, it is a passage not often dealt with outside the commentaries.

The LXX version of Ps. 40:6-8 (39:7-9 in the LXX and 40:7-9 in the MT) follows the MT quite closely; in fact Rahlfs' *Septuaginta* follows it almost exactly. However, the quotation in Heb. 10:5-7 differs in some respects from both the MT and Rahlfs.<sup>185</sup> (The relevant texts are shown in figure 10.) In the first difference, the MT and Rahlfs—who prefers a later, Hebraizing version (*Psalterium Gallicanum*) at this point—both refer to “ears” in v. 7 (אָזְנוֹתַי and ὠτία), while three LXX codices (Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus) as well as Heb. 10:5 use “body” (σώμα). Bruce offers a workable explanation for these differences:

The Greek version cannot well be explained as representing a variant or corrupted Hebrew reading; it is rather an interpretive paraphrase of the Hebrew text. The Greek translator evidently regarded the Hebrew wording as an instance of *pars pro toto*; the “digging” or hollowing out of the ears is part of the total work of fashioning a human body. Accordingly he rendered it in terms which express *totum pro parte*.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup>Otto, *Hebrews*, p. 67.

<sup>184</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 275) speaks of this tension in the psalm and our writer's interaction with that tension in the phrase “he takes away the first that he might establish the second”.

<sup>185</sup>Rahlfs follows the version *Psalterium Gallicanum* against the codices Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, apparently to maintain consistency with the MT.

<sup>186</sup>Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 240.

Hebrews 10:5b-7	Psalm 39:7-9	Psalm 40:7-9
<p>5b Θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, <u>σῶμα</u> δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι·</p> <p>6 ὅλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ <u>εὐδόκησας</u> 7 τότε εἶπον, Ἴδου ἦκω, ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ ἐμοῦ, τοῦ ποιῆσαι <u>ὁ θεός</u> τὸ θέλημά σου.</p>	<p>7 θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, <u>ὥτια</u> δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι·</p> <p>ὅλοκαύτωμα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ ἤτησας</p> <p>8 τότε εἶπον Ἴδου ἦκω, ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ ἐμοῦ· 9 τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου, <u>ὁ θεός μου</u>, <u>ἐβουλήθη</u> καὶ τὸν νόμον σου ἐν μέσῳ τῆς κοιλίας μου.</p>	<p>7 זָבַח וּמִנְחָה לֹא־חָפְצָה אָזְנִים כְּרִיתִי לִי עוֹלָה וְחֻטְאָה לֹא שְׁאַלְתָּ:</p> <p>8 אֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי הִנֵּה־בָאתִי בַמְּגִלַּת־סֵפֶר כְּתוּב עָלַי:</p> <p>9 לַעֲשׂוֹת־רְצוֹנְךָ אֱלֹהֵי חֻפְצָתִי וְתוֹרַתְךָ בְּתוֹךְ מִעֵי:</p>
<p>5b “Sacrifice and offering you did not want, but a body you prepared for me; 6 whole burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire. 7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—in the scroll of the book it has been written concerning me—to do your will, O God’.”</p>	<p>7 “Sacrifice and offering you did not want, but ears you prepared for me; for whole burnt offering and sin offering you did not ask. 8 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—in the scroll of the book it has been written concerning me—9 I desire to do your will, O my God; and your law is within my belly’.”</p>	<p>7 Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have dug out; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. 8 Then I said, “Behold, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll of the book. 9 I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my belly”.)</p>

Fig. 10

Attridge agrees with this analysis, and deems the change from “ear” to “body” as “probably an interpretive paraphrase”.<sup>187</sup> The classical use of the term *σῶμα* supports this view. Moulton and Milligan give one of the uses of *σῶμα* as “‘slaves’, as in Rev. 18:13 and frequently in the

<sup>187</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 274. Some suggest that this difference is the result of a scribal error, substituting *HΘΕΛΗΣΑΣΩΜΑ* for *HΘΕΛΗΣΑΣΩΤΙΑ*; see Schröger (*Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 174) for examples. While this is possible, it forces the final sigma in *HΘΕΛΗΣΑΣ* to serve also as the first letter in *ΩΜΑ*, and in view of the lack of any textual evidence for this it seems best to understand the change as a result of an interpretive paraphrase.

LXX".<sup>188</sup> This usage may have been in the mind of the translators of the LXX when they substituted *σῶμα* for "ears", if they were attempting to give a dynamically equivalent translation of the concept of obedient service implied in the term "ear." The second difference is a matter of vocabulary choice and is of little consequence: in the MT, v. 7 uses the term *רָצִיתָ* ("you desired, asked"), where Rahlfs uses *ἤτησας* ("you asked"). In the Hebrews quotation of this verse in 10:6 the term *εὐδόκησας* ("you took pleasure, chose") is used. The last differences are concentrated at the end of the citation, and involve the change of word order at the end of the quotation, the exclusion of *μου*, and ending the citation before *ἐβουλήθην*. These changes amount to a shortening of the scriptural text, but do not change the essential meaning of the text.<sup>189</sup> Therefore, the meaning of the Psalms texts of the MT and the LXX, and the quotation in Hebrews are all practically equivalent.

Generally, interpretations of Ps. 40:6-8<sup>190</sup> fall into two groups. The first group suggests that the psalmist replaces the animal sacrifices expected in Torah with obedience; the second group understands him to be stressing the offence of offering sacrifice to God when it is not coupled with obedience. Most interpreters I have read fall into the first group. Hagner reasons that "what is important to God is not sacrifices but obedience. . . . The OT itself recognises the inadequacy of the levitical sacrifices."<sup>191</sup> For Kraus these verses are a criticism of sacrifice influenced by prophecy (e.g., Amos 5:22; Isa. 1:11; and Jer. 6:20) and describe the psalmist's substitution of the scroll (v. 9), which was written by him and constituted a thank-offering, for sacrifice.<sup>192</sup> Brown understands these verses to apply to the Messiah alone: "Most certainly David could not say that God did not require of him sacrifice and offering."<sup>193</sup> This interpretation recognises the difficulty generated if the psalmist claims to be free from the obligation of sacrifice while he is yet under obligation to Torah, and so it separates David from the rejection of sacri-

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<sup>188</sup>Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, s.v. *σῶμα*. See also LSJ and BAGD.

<sup>189</sup>Ellingworth (*Hebrews*, p. 492) points out the changes of emphasis and focus that these alterations create, but this does not contradict the point that the core message of the text is maintained.

<sup>190</sup>Verse references follow the English versions.

<sup>191</sup>Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 136.

<sup>192</sup>Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, pp. 424, 427.

<sup>193</sup>Brown, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 439.

fice, which it leaves to the Messiah. The problem with this view is that there are no indications in the psalm itself that this section was intended to be messianic.

Seybold, who offers a creative explanation somewhere between the first and second groups, says: "Actually, [the psalmist] had wanted to bring gifts and sacrifices . . . however, it became clear to him that no burnt offering or sin offering was required of him." Here there is a substitution made for the offering: "instead of animals for the burnt offering he brings a scroll written about himself, in order to proclaim salvation in the assembly: sermon instead of sacrifice, psalm of praise in place of cultic animal offering", but he does not actually do away with Torah sacrifices, since this substitution is only possible because the Law made no claim upon the worshipper at that time.<sup>194</sup>

Representative of the second group, Keil and Delitzsch see these verses as echoing 1 Sam. 15:22, "obedience is better than sacrifice", and as consistent with other OT passages:

When it is said of God, that He does not delight in and desire such non-personal sacrifices, there is as little intention as in Jer. vii. 22 (cf. Amos v. 21 sqq.) of saying that the sacrificial Tōra is not of divine origin, but that the true, essential will of God is not directed to such sacrifices.<sup>195</sup>

Kissane's explanation of these verses is particularly cogent:

This agrees with the common teaching of the prophets, that sacrifice in itself is of no value apart from the disposition of the heart which it is intended to represent (cf. [Ps.] 50:8ff.; 51:18; Is. 1:11ff., Jer. 7:21ff.; Mich. 6:6ff.).<sup>196</sup>

On balance, it seems that the second view represents the best interpretation. To support this, I shall begin by examining the sacrificial terminology used by the psalmist. Keil and Delitzsch give an elaborate explanation for the choice of sacrificial terms in this psalm. They argue for a categorisation of the first couplet, *זָבַח וְזִבְחָהּ*, according to the

<sup>194</sup>Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms*, p. 41.

<sup>195</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 5: *Psalms*, p. 38.

<sup>196</sup>Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, vol. 1, p. 179. See also Anderson (*The Book of Psalms*, vol. 1, p. 317), who also takes this second view: "Those obedient to Yahweh will always offer right sacrifices, but not *all* who bring their offerings to God are faithful to him. In other words, the cultic institutions are ineffective when they are used by those who flagrantly break the Covenant with God."

material of which the offering consists, animal and meal, and the second couplet, עֹלֵה וְחֹטֵאֵה, according to the purpose of the offerings, the gaining of God's good pleasure and the turning away of his displeasure.<sup>197</sup> There is some question as to whether such a detailed explanation is necessary, as Brown proposes: "It would serve no good purpose to distinguish nicely between these different kinds of sacrifice. The meaning is just—the whole levitical service."<sup>198</sup> These two views regarding the meaning of this sacrificial terminology, however, are not mutually exclusive. The description of these sacrifices by Keil and Delitzsch can be accepted without denying the significance of their poetic juxtaposition, that is, that they represent the whole of the levitical system.<sup>199</sup>

So, if the sacrificial terminology used in Ps. 40:7 speaks of the levitical system as a whole, which the psalmist claims that God did not want or desire, is it conceivable that these verses could be an announcement that the entire cult has been abandoned by God, or even that they

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<sup>197</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 5: *Psalms*, p. 37.

<sup>198</sup>Brown, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 442. See also Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, p. 147.

<sup>199</sup>Briggs and Briggs (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, p. 354) make a unique observation regarding the term "sin offering" in verse 7: "Most scholars, ancient and modern, think of *sin offering* here rather than sin. This is tempting in order to complete the enumeration of the great classes of offerings; but the sin offering is not known in the Psalter here; it is not known to the literature upon which this Ps. depends, especially in this verse; the Hebrew word used here nowhere else has that meaning; and even with the sin offering the list of offerings would be incomplete. . . ." BDB disagrees, citing חֹטֵאֵה in Ps. 40:7 as meaning "sin-offering", but according to BDB this is the only time חֹטֵאֵה, which is used several times to mean "sin", is ever used to mean "sin offering".

The interpretation of Briggs and Briggs adds weight to the view that there is no repudiation of the sacrificial system itself in this passage, only a denunciation of the sacrifice offered by worshipers who are concealing sin, but it does pose some difficulties. The first is that this view does not seem to follow the expected parallels. In the first colon of v. 7 the two words "sacrifice and offering" are paired, in the third colon "burnt offering" is paired with חֹטֵאֵה, which the reader would also expect to be a term for sacrifice. It is hard to argue definitively on the basis of parallels, however, because the unexpected pair may be used as a poetic device to communicate the impropriety and shock of the situation, that is, that sacrifice is being offered along with sin. Still, the breaking of the parallel does weaken the argument for חֹטֵאֵה as "sin". Another problem with this view, albeit inconclusive, is the weight of scholarship against it. The final straw may be that the LXX, which the writer of Hebrews follows, seems to stand against this interpretation, as it translates חֹטֵאֵה using *περὶ ἁμαρτίας*, "sin offering". In the light of these problems, it seems best to preserve the parallel: "burnt offerings and sin offerings".

indicate a movement in that direction? It would seem better to understand this passage in a less sensational manner. That it would be improper to make too much of a statement such as Ps. 40:7, as strongly worded as it is, is well argued by Tasker:

We must remember that in the Hebrew language comparisons are often presented as strong contrasts. Thus when we read "Jacob I loved and Esau I hated", it is a Hebrew way of stating "I chose Jacob rather than Esau" [Mal. 1:2-3]. So the statement of Psalm 40 that "God has no pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin" means that God has no pleasure in such sacrifices if they are offered without a change of heart on the part of the worshiper.<sup>200</sup>

The scope of the sacrificial references in Ps. 40:7 argues against the idea that its abandonment is in view. But does this not simply deny what the psalmist has said, that God does not want sacrifice and offering? To answer this question, it is helpful to examine what it is that God does want according to this passage.

The first clue to what God desires is in the second colon of v. 7, אָזְנוֹיִם כָּרַיתָ לִּי ("ears you have dug for me"). The verb כָּרַיתָ, which is variously understood, is the key to understanding this phrase. Some suggest "hast thou opened . . . meaning pricked"<sup>201</sup> and "thou hast pierced",<sup>202</sup> which is seen as a reference to the practice of piercing the slave's ear as a symbol of voluntary and life-long service (Exod. 21:5; Deut. 15:16, 17). BDB prefers "thou hast dug".<sup>203</sup> Another similar option is "didst Thou bore".<sup>204</sup> These interpretations trace the reference back to creation (digging out the ear of man made from the dust of the earth) and they understand the significance to be that God has provided the means and ability to hear and obey.<sup>205</sup> The ear stands for the body and is thus an example of "the part for the whole". Clearly there is an allusion to the Pentateuch here, and recognising this allusion can give some direction in deciding between these two options. It is likely that the ear reference in Psalm 40 is connected to the piercing of the slave's ear in Deut. 15:16,

<sup>200</sup>Tasker, *The Old Testament in the New Testament*, p. 113.

<sup>201</sup>Tasker, *The Old Testament in the New Testament*, p. 114.

<sup>202</sup>Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, vol. 1, p. 179.

<sup>203</sup>BDB, s.v. כָּרָה.

<sup>204</sup>Briggs and Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, p. 355.

<sup>205</sup>The LXX supports this view as it renders כָּרַיתָ by means of *κατηρτίσω*, "to furnish".

17, since “the roll of the book” mentioned in Ps. 40:8 is linked to Deut. 17:14-20, as will be shown later. The possibility of two allusions originating from passages in such close proximity in Deuteronomy makes both possibilities all the more likely, since they are mutually confirming. But, from whichever text this connection originates, the ear piercing symbol or the creation account, it must be a reference to obedient service, since either would depend on the Hebrew connection between hearing and obeying. In fact, it is not unusual for the Hebrew verb שָׁמַע (“to hear”) to be used with the extended meaning of “to obey”;<sup>206</sup> therefore the poetic phrase “ears you dug for me” indicates that what God desires is obedience from his servant. Verses 8 and 9 develop the concept of obedience, and specifically obedience to Torah. Verse 8 clearly describes the obedient response of the psalmist, and shows that it is the will of God expressed in Torah that is the focus of his obedience. This seems to indicate again that the idea that sacrifice and offering, which are a part of Torah, are being repudiated in Psalm 40 is not a valid one.

Finally, it is left to determine the identity of the scroll in verse 8. Some identify the scroll as written by the psalmist and presented as a substitute for levitical sacrifices,<sup>207</sup> others see it as connected to Torah, possibly the book of Deuteronomy,<sup>208</sup> others “the whole of the Old Testament’s prophetic work”.<sup>209</sup> Keil and Delitzsch are more specific in tracing the allusion to Deut. 17:14-20: “The roll of the book is the Torah, and more especially Deuteronomy, written upon skins and rolled up together, which according to the law touching the king (Deut. xvii. 14-20) was to be the *vade-mecum* of the king of Israel.”<sup>210</sup> Deut. 17:18-19 reads as follows:

18 When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. 19 It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees. (NIV)

<sup>206</sup>BDB, s.v. שָׁמַע; cf. Isa. 50:4-5.

<sup>207</sup>E.g. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, p. 424 and Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms*, pp. 40, 41.

<sup>208</sup>Briggs and Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, p. 335; Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 5: *Psalms*, pp. 34, 39; Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, vol. 1, p. 179.

<sup>209</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 274-75.

<sup>210</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 5: *Psalms*, p. 39.

The connection of the scroll (סֵפֶר) in this passage and the scroll (בְּמַגֵּל־סֵפֶר) in Ps. 40:8 is convincing,<sup>211</sup> and represents another allusion to the Pentateuch. And since the king of Israel was to keep and read a copy of the Deuteronomy scroll, it would not be surprising to find passages from Deuteronomy woven into Davidic psalmody. These positive allusions to the Deuteronomy scroll seem to be another confirmation of the view that true levitical sacrifices are not being denigrated by the psalmist, especially since the scroll is associated so closely with the levitical priests (e.g. Deut. 17:18).

The allusions to the Pentateuch in Ps. 40:7-9, then, make it evident that these verses have nothing to do with the rejection of the levitical system, or even a move in that direction. In fact, just the opposite is true. This psalm reflects the perspective that sacrifice for its own sake was never God's plan or desire. God did not have any need for sacrifice for its own sake; it was only a means to an end. The importance of sacrifice was that it was symbolic of the relationship between God and his people. When that relationship was persistently violated by sinful disobedience, sacrifice became a mockery. The psalmist actually sought to strengthen the people's relationship to Torah by encouraging and exemplifying heart obedience to it.

The Dead Sea Scrolls object to the levitical sacrifices on the belief that the Jerusalem temple was defiled.<sup>212</sup> Many Hellenists also objected to the idea of bloody sacrifice, some considering it an attempt to bribe the gods,<sup>213</sup> others unnecessary since deities do not need anything.<sup>214</sup> Although the levitical sacrifices are emphatically rejected by our author, there is no hint of any of this in Hebrews. Our author does not reject the levitical sacrifices because they are improperly performed, neither does he reject them because the notion of sacrifice is offensive to him. Wilson is correct that there is no objection to the concept of sacrifice in itself,<sup>215</sup> only the conviction that Christ's self-sacrifice accomplishes what Torah

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<sup>211</sup>Especially in the light of the other possible allusion to Deut. 15:16 as discussed earlier.

<sup>212</sup>Sutcliffe, *The Monks of Qumran*, pp. 109-10; LaSor, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, pp. 66-70; Thompson, *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 103. See 1QpHab 12:7-9; 1QS 9:3-5.

<sup>213</sup>E.g. Plato, *Laws* 10, 885, B.

<sup>214</sup>Euripides, *Herc.* 1346.

<sup>215</sup>See also Manson, *Hebrews*, p. 145.

sacrifices could not, and therefore replaces them.<sup>216</sup> However, it is evident that Hebrews goes beyond the original meaning of the psalmist's claim that God did not want sacrifice. This claim for the psalmist was not a renunciation of the sacrificial system, but for the author of Hebrews it has a different significance in the light of the Christ-event.<sup>217</sup> The psalm itself establishes that God was not ultimately interested in the levitical sacrifices but in a changed heart in the worshipper, and for the author of Hebrews, these sacrifices could not accomplish this. After the offering of Christ, which is able to effect an internal change, our author takes the statement that God does not desire sacrifice even further. In the light of the sacrifice of Christ, it is no longer sufficient to say that God's ultimate goal is not levitical sacrifice, but it has become evident to our author that God does not want levitical sacrifices at all. This extension of the meaning of the claim that God did not want sacrifice actually reverses the meaning of the OT passage for our author, which is accomplished by reading Scripture in the light of the new revelation of the Christ-event (cf. Heb. 1:1-4).

The goal of Christ's coming, according to Heb. 10:7, was the fulfilment of God's desire or will, and the death of Christ was the ultimate expression of God's will. Again, David is seen to be a type of Christ in this respect since his words, "I have come to do your will", are attributed to Christ. The exposition of this phrase in v. 9, ἀναρῶ τὸ πρῶτον ἵνα τὸ δεύτερον στήσῃ ("He takes away the first that he might establish the second"), is often interpreted as signifying the abolition of the OC ("the first") and the inauguration of the new ("the second"), presumably because of the use of the terms "first" and "second". Käsemann serves as an example:

The time of its validity is over; an earthly continuity to the second *diatheke* does not exist. Rather, the second replaces the first: . . . Neither has a place beside the other.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>216</sup>Wilson, *Hebrews*, p. 177.

<sup>217</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 275) observes: "Although the psalm was probably familiar with the prophetic critique of cult, it did not, in fact, repudiate cultic activity generally. Our author, by focusing the opposition between external cultic acts and interior obedience, sets the stage for just such a repudiation." Lane (*Hebrews 9-13*, p. 263) agrees. Cf. also Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, p. 489.

<sup>218</sup>Käsemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk*, p. 33 (my translation).

This interpretation is also maintained by Kistemaker, who refers to Heb. 8:7, 13; 9:1, 2, 6, 8, 15, and 18, where the terms *πρώτη* (“first”) and *δευτέρα* (“second”) are employed. In all of these cases the forms are feminine because they modify the feminine noun *διαθήκη* (“covenant”). But in 10:9 the forms are neuter. Kistemaker explains this variation of gender in the latter terms as the “neuter to denote collectivity”.<sup>219</sup> This explanation of the use of the neuter gender is possible, but not compelling. Furthermore, this view fails to take adequate account of the grammar of vv. 8-10. The relevant phrases are as follows:

8 ἀνώτερον λέγων ὅτι Θυσίας καὶ προσφορὰς καὶ ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἀμαρτίας οὐκ ἠθέλησας οὐδὲ εὐδόκησας, αἵτινες κατὰ νόμον προσφέρονται, 9 τότε εἶρηκεν, Ἴδου ἤκω τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου. ἀναιρεῖ τὸ πρῶτον ἵνα τὸ δεύτερον στήσῃ, 10 ἐν ᾧ θελήματι ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμέν . . . .

(8 Saying above, “Sacrifice and offering and whole burnt offering and sin offering you did not desire, neither did you want”—which are offered according to the law— 9 then he said, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first that he might establish the second, 10 by which will we are made holy. . . .)

It is most likely that *πρῶτον* (at the end of v. 9) refers to the first sacrifices as outlined in the psalm, and that *δεύτερον* (at the end of v. 9) refers to God's *θέλημα* (will) which required Christ's own sacrifice, and that neither refer directly to the concept of *διαθήκη* (covenant). However, the implication of the “first” being abolished and the “second” being established<sup>220</sup> is the replacement of the OC with the NC, since the clear result of Jesus setting aside the first (levitical) sacrifices by offering his own perfect and obedient sacrifice is the setting aside of the first covenant and the establishment of the new. However, this is merely an implication of the words of this passage which flows from its basic meaning. To skip over the actual meaning of the words used by the author and to focus entirely on their covenantal implications is to risk missing something important in the flow of the passage. That it is not the first and second “covenant” referred to here, is indicated by the fact that

<sup>219</sup>Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 128. See also Omanson, “A Super Covenant: Hebrews 8:1-10:18”, p. 369, and Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 243, n. 48.

<sup>220</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 275) points out that with the use of *ἀναιρέω* and *ἵστημι* “our author again reverts to technical legal terminology for laws and testaments”.

neither the phrase from the psalm which comes before nor the commentary which comes after make any reference to the notion of covenant. Further, if the words *πρῶτον* and *δεύτερον* refer to the covenants (*διαθήκη*), then it is difficult, in spite of the many attempts, to explain why they are both neuter in gender and not feminine. More importantly, however, the sentence structure requires that *δεύτερον* refer to *θέλημα* in the middle of v. 9. In vv. 8-9a the author restates the psalm in summary fashion, highlighting what is most significant to his argument. If the UBS text<sup>221</sup> punctuates these verses correctly, then a new sentence begins at v. 9b, and the relative clause in v. 10 must depend on the first part of this new sentence to which it belongs, and more specifically, to the *ἵνα* clause in v. 9b. In this case the antecedent of *ὃ* near the beginning of v. 10 must be *δεύτερον*, which would require that it refer to a second will. The only other option is to take vv. 8-10 as one long sentence. In this case, the author would be offering a parenthesis after each restated part of the psalm, the first at the end of v. 8 (“which are offered according to the law”), and the second at the end of v. 9 (“he takes away the first that he might establish the second”). Each parenthesis would serve to clarify that which comes before it (which the first parenthesis clearly does) so that the *δεύτερον* which is established must refer to *τὸ θέλημα* in v. 9 which Christ came to do (and the antecedent of *ὃ* in v. 10 is *τὸ θέλημα* in v. 9). Whether vv. 8-10 are taken as one long sentence or two shorter sentences, *δεύτερον* must refer to the will of God, which Christ did by offering himself. For the author of Hebrews, the will of God referred to in this quotation and obeyed by Christ has a primary connection to his self-sacrifice, since according to v. 10, our author and his readers were sanctified by this will through the once-for-all offering of the body of Jesus Christ. This indicates, then, that the sacrifice of Christ was an essential part of God's will for him.

As for the meaning of *πρῶτον*, there is but one thing in the passage that Hebrews sees as abolished: the levitical sacrifices. The advantage of understanding *πρῶτον* as referring to the list of sacrifices in vv. 5, 6 and repeated in v. 8 is that this view explains the neuter gender of *πρῶτον*. Of the four sacrifices listed, three are feminine in gender, but one is neuter, and it is the mixture of genders in this list which justifies the use of the neuter *πρῶτον*. It is indeed a “neuter to denote collectivity”, as Kistemaker suggests, but with reference to the list of sacrifices, not to

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<sup>221</sup>Third Edition (Corrected) and Fourth Edition.

the two covenants. Braun agrees with this view as a whole, taking *πρώτον* as referring to “the animal sacrifice” and saying that *δεύτερον* is “the doing of your will”.<sup>222</sup> Therefore, *πρώτον* and *δεύτερον* in v. 9 juxtapose the sacrifices of the levites and the self-offering of Christ: “He takes away the first (levitical) sacrifices that he might establish the second will of God that requires Christ’s sacrifice.”

So, the author of Hebrews has chosen to use these verses from Psalm 40 because he is able to show by them that abandoning the levitical sacrifices is not as shocking as the readers might believe, since these sacrifices never were the ultimate focus of God’s will or desire anyway. Nonetheless, having established this, he avoids the conclusion that sacrifice in itself is undesirable or ineffective, since he argues that it is through the sacrifice of Christ that the NC is inaugurated and the readers are made right with God. In these verses the author brings his rejection of the levitical sacrificial system to a climax, but he is careful at the same time not to impugn but to affirm the concept of sacrifice itself, since he will go on in the next verses to assert the validity and value of Christ’s sacrifice for the readers. Another reason the author chose to cite from Psalm 40 was probably the use of *σῶμα* in his version of the LXX, since it fits his christological purpose so well. The idea of obedience, which springs from the MT *לְאָזְנֶיךָ יְיָ* (“ears you have dug for me”), still reverberates throughout the quotation in the phrase *σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι* (“a body you prepared for me”) from the LXX. But the re-framing of the concept of obedience using the term “body” gives it particular force in relation to Christ’s obedience in death.<sup>223</sup> According to v. 10, the offering of the body of Christ in obedience to God’s will provides the means for sanctification: *ἐν ᾧ θελήματι ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμέν διὰ τῆς προσφορᾶς τοῦ σώματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐφάπαξ* (“by which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once-for-all”). The body of Christ, then, is vital, if not central, to his sacrificial

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<sup>222</sup>Braun, *An Die Hebräer*, p. 298 (my translation). Bruce (*Hebrews*, pp. 242-43) and Attridge (*Hebrews*, pp. 275-76) agree with Braun.

<sup>223</sup>Omanon (“A Super Covenant: Hebrews 8:1-10:18”, p. 369) says, “He could have used other texts from the Psalms, such as Psalm 50 or 51, or from Amos or Isaiah, to reject the Levitical sacrifices, but no doubt the author used this text because it also indicated to him the way by which God’s favor could be recovered: by the coming of the incarnate Jesus to be obedient to God’s will.”

ministry as described in Hebrews, and this is probably one reason that our author was attracted to these verses from Psalm 40.<sup>224</sup>

Many describe Hebrews' treatment of this psalm as a midrash, and indeed there are midrashic characteristics evident in this passage. This kinship, however, is related more to the mechanics of interpretation than to content or even hermeneutics. This is true of the most obvious example of midrashic style in the passage at hand, the citation of the OT text, followed by exegetical comment which includes the repetition of phrases from that text. (Heb. 4:7 and 8:13 are further examples of this process.) Another characteristic of the midrashim, the use of a base verse and an intersecting verse, may also be employed here.<sup>225</sup> Neusner speaks of the "'classic' form in which the intersecting verse is fully worked out and only then drawn to meet the base verse".<sup>226</sup> This may describe the relationship between Jer. 31:31-34 (the base verses) and Ps. 40:7-9 (the intersecting verses) in Hebrews 8-10. Not only is Jeremiah quoted in ch. 8, but part of it, as our author is prone to do, is requoted in 10:16-17, a few verses after the Psalm quotation; then the two passages are tied together in v. 18. Keeping in mind that the Psalm quotation deals with the sacrifice of Christ, the connection between the two OT passages made by our author in 10:17-18 is easy to understand: *καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθήσομαι ἔτι. ὅπου δὲ ἄφεσις τούτων, οὐκέτι προσφορὰ περὶ ἁμαρτίας* ("and their sins and their lawless deeds I will no longer remember at all; but where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer a sacrifice for sin"). The subject of forgiveness which comes from the Jeremiah passage is brought together with that of sacrifice from the psalm. If this is an example of intersecting texts, which seems quite likely, it would be a classic example of midrashic style.

As well as being woven into the interpretation of Jer. 31:31-34, our author's exegesis of Psalm 40 can be seen as beginning its own midrash-like treatment of the psalm, which sets the pattern for the rest of ch. 10. This pattern is created in part by the repetition of catchwords throughout the rest of the chapter. These catchwords, such as *θυσία* (vv. 5, 8, 26), *προσφορὰ* (vv. 5, 8, 10, 14, 18), *περὶ ἁμαρτίας* (vv. 6, 8, 18, 26), *ἁμαρτία* (vv. 6, 8, 17), *εὐδοκέω* (vv. 6, 8, 38), and *ἤκω* (vv. 7, 9, 37),

<sup>224</sup>Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 262.

<sup>225</sup>See Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, p. 40.

<sup>226</sup>Neusner, *What is Midrash?*, p. 82.

create links back to the psalm. These links not only serve to reinforce the writer's argument by drawing the reader back to the psalm, but they also affirm the notion that the exposition and application of Scripture has a central place throughout this chapter.

The final quotation in ch. 10 comes from Hab. 2:3, 4 and may include an allusion to Isa. 26:20. Catchwords play a particularly important role in these verses, connecting the Habakkuk 2 quotation to the Psalm 40 quotation: ἦκω ("I have come") in vv. 7, 37 and εὐδοκέω ("I delight in, approve") in vv. 6, 38. This connection is probably related to the interpretive principle expressed in Hillel's second rule, *gezerah shewah*, which states that passages may be linked together by virtue of words common to both.<sup>227</sup> Although the two quotations are not in close proximity (consider the string of quotations in ch. 1 which are collected on the basis of the principle of *gezerah shewah*), the link between Habakkuk 2 at the end of ch. 10 and Psalm 40 earlier is evident. Both passages speak of the coming one, who does the will of God (v.7), and who is coming soon (v.37). The doing of the will of God (self-sacrifice—cf. v. 19) and the coming soon are both sources of confidence for believers. Both passages also speak of God's displeasure, which is directed in vv. 5, 6 toward levitical sacrifice and in v. 38 to those who shrink back. On the basis of these links, it seems that for our author shrinking back is equivalent to relying on levitical sacrifices, since both are linked to God's displeasure. It is not until these passages are read one in the light of the other that the reader meets the full impact of the writer's message: because Christ, "the coming one", does the will of God (v. 7), his people can be confident to live by faith before God, and not shrink back (v. 38, cf. v. 19), that is, not fail to move on from the old security of the levitical sacrifices with which God is no longer pleased (vv. 5-6) and therefore bring his displeasure upon themselves (v. 38). The Isaiah/Habakkuk quotation sums up the preceding paraenesis and it concludes chs. 8-10 as a section. If the significance and power of this quotation is to be fully appreciated, then it must certainly be interpreted in the light of its connection to the exposition of Psalm 40 earlier in the chapter.

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<sup>227</sup>Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, p. 94; Birnbaum, *A Book of Jewish Concepts*, pp. 331-32.

Christ was the interpretive key for the exegesis of the early church,<sup>228</sup> and this is reflected in our author's typological use of Scripture. It has already been pointed out that the words of 10:7, "Then I said, 'behold I come'", have prompted a typological interpretation of Psalm 40. Although there is no clear indication in the psalm itself that there should be any application of it to the Messiah, the author of Hebrews does just that. This typological approach grows out of the writers' christological use of the OT,<sup>229</sup> so that applications which would not otherwise be apparent can be made on this basis. Hughes expresses the fundamental importance of the life of Christ for our author's interpretation of Scripture, a view which applies equally well with regard to the entirety of the Christ-event:

But there is an even more important way in which the exegetical work of the writer is subject to an external control, namely the memory of the life and character of Jesus as it is borne along in the church. This is the screen through which the Old Testament is seen at every turning, and by which the meaning of any text is defined and therefore determined.<sup>230</sup>

For the writer of Hebrews, typology is an important facilitator of scriptural exegesis, as it provides a way of reading Scripture in the light of the Christ-event, and therefore produces a new relevance for OC Scripture in the new era. Putting the words of this psalm on the lips of Jesus is a striking example of typological interpretation, and the words "it is written of me in the roll of the book" serve to reinforce this interpretation, once the typological relationship is established.

#### *Sacrifice and Priesthood (10:11-14)*

In 10:11-14 the contrast between the old and new is sharpened all the more. The core of this contrast lies in the use of the two terms ἔστηκεν in v. 11 and ἐκάθισεν in v. 12, with the levitical priests described as having "stood ministering daily" while it is claimed that Jesus "sat down at the right hand of God". The levitical priests are portrayed as continually standing to offer sacrifice: πᾶς μὲν ἱερεὺς ἔστηκεν καθ' ἡμέραν λειτουργῶν καὶ τὰς αὐτὰς πολλάκις προσφέρων θυσίας ("on the one hand, every priest has stood ministering

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<sup>228</sup>See Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 135.

<sup>229</sup>See Longenecker, "Who Is the Prophet Talking About? Some Reflections on the NT Use of the Old", p. 5.

<sup>230</sup>Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, p. 64.

daily and offering the same sacrifices many times"). Jesus is depicted as having finished his sacrificial work and as having taken his place at the right hand of God to anticipate the fulfilment of his sovereign rule: οὗτος δὲ μίαν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν προσενέγκας θυσίαν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκδεχόμενος ἕως τεθῶσιν οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτοῦ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ ("on the other hand, this one, having offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting for his enemies to be made a footstool for his feet"). There is also a dramatic contrast drawn between the effect of the levitical offerings and Jesus' offering. The old was never able to take away sin (*αἵτινες οὐδέποτε δύνανται περιλεῖν ἁμαρτίας*). The new is able to perfect and sanctify (*μιᾷ γὰρ προσφορᾷ τετελείωκεν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς τοὺς ἁγιαζομένους*). The many contrasts set forth in vv. 11-14 can be set out as in figure 11.

Of course, there is a clear allusion, almost a citation, in these verses to Psalm 110:1. This is particularly noteworthy since it comes near the end of the theological part of this section of Hebrews, matching the allusion to Psalm 110:1, 4 in 8:1 at the beginning of this section. This allusion, along with the re-quotation of Jer. 31:33, serves to mark the closing down of the author's theological argument in the fashion of an *inclusio*. This shows that Ps. 110:1 is foundational to the argument of chs. 8-10, and that one of the fundamental reasons that Jesus is seen to be superior to the levitical priests is his close association with and indeed sharing of the sovereignty of God. The eschatological significance of Christ's sacrifice is also brought to the fore by this allusion. Not only does his sacrifice provide for the sanctification of his people (vv. 10, 14), but it has also secured the defeat of his enemies. The image of Jesus seated at the right hand of God, waiting for the humiliation of his enemies, indicates that the battle has already been won and that the score has already been settled for all time through his one-time sacrifice. It is interesting that the humiliation of the enemies of Christ is linked to the perfecting of "those being sanctified" (v. 14; note the author's use of *γάρ*),<sup>231</sup> so that in the end, the success of the people of Christ not only contrasts with but also contributes to the defeat of his enemies. This concept may flow in part from the second and third verses of Psalm 110 which predict the rule of the "Lord" from Zion in the midst of his enemies, and the willingness of his people to take up his cause, presumably

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<sup>231</sup>Cf. Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, p. 149.

LEVITICAL PRIESTLY MINISTRY	CHRIST'S PRIESTLY MINISTRY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many priests</li> <li>• Priests stand daily</li> <li>• Many sacrifices</li> <li>• Many times</li> <li>• Not able to take away sin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Priest</li> <li>• Jesus sits</li> <li>• One sacrifice forever<sup>233</sup></li> <li>• Once</li> <li>• Able to perfect and sanctify</li> </ul>

Fig. 11

in battle. In any case, for the writer of Hebrews the humiliation of the enemies and the perfecting of the believer are both eschatological certainties secured by the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>232</sup>

#### *Sacrifice and Covenant (10:15-18)*

Again in 10:15 the author attributes the words of Scripture to the Holy Spirit (see also for example 9:8). The material from Jeremiah 31 cited here has already been cited in ch. 8, and figure 12 compares these two citations. The re-citation of this material from Jeremiah begins in a word-for-word fashion, but the longer it continues the more the author shortens and summarises the material, replacing “the house of Israel” with “them”, skipping over several lines, and then amalgamating the last two clauses. It is clear, then, that the author is offering a summary of his previous quotation, highlighting the particular elements that are most important to his argument at this point:<sup>234</sup> 1) the promise of a NC, 2) the internalisation of the law and 3) the putting away of sin. The last ele-

<sup>232</sup>Cf. Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, pp. 149-53.

<sup>233</sup>See Ellingworth (*Hebrews*, pp. 509-10), who outlines two different views as to what *διηνεκέσ* modifies: 1) the offering of Jesus' sacrifice, or 2) Jesus' sitting down at God's right hand. He prefers the second option (against his previous position; cf. his Epworth commentary, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 90, 91), as does Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 279-80. Bruce (*Hebrews*, pp. 245-46) and Lane (*Hebrews 9-13*, p. 267) prefer the second option, as do I, since “sit . . . until” seems to limit the time of the sitting. Also, if 9:28 refers to the return of Christ to the earth, then his sitting at God's right hand cannot be conceived as “forever”.

<sup>234</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 281) says that the author “manipulates the text to tease from it a meaning particularly suited to his argument.” But certainly the author is not trying to ignore the original form of the text, since he quotes it fairly accurately earlier on. To be exact, 10:16, 17 is not really a citation at all, but a paraphrase, and paraphrasing is not necessarily manipulation. Lane (*Hebrews 9-13*, p. 268) calls these verses a “free repetition of the oracle”.

ment, the putting away or forgiveness of sin, is the climax of this citation, as made evident by the author's extremely brief but very important exegetical conclusion.<sup>235</sup> If there is forgiveness of sin, or as the Jeremiah passage has it, forgetting of sin, then there is no longer a place for the levitical offerings, which, recalling 10:3, only dredge up the memory of sin.<sup>236</sup> The point that the author sees the Holy Spirit making, then, has to do with the significance of Jer. 31:33, 34 as interpreted in the light of the sacrificial ministry of the levitical priests which continually dredged up the memory of sin. Under the NC God has dealt finally with sin—i.e. he has internalised the law and no longer remembers sin—so there is no longer any need for the repetitive sacrifices of the OC. When our author says that the Holy Spirit *also* bears witness, he is indicating that this is not the first piece of evidence in this context that he has given for the obsolescence of the levitical sacrifices; in fact, it is the fourth and last. First, he has argued that the repetition of the sacrifices argues for their ineffectiveness (10:1-4). Secondly, he has argued the case from Ps. 40 (10:5-10). Thirdly, he has argued through an allusion to Ps. 110:1 (10:11-14). Finally he argues from the NC passage of Jeremiah (10:16-18). With this final piece of evidence the author has concluded his theological argument for the obsolescence of the OC, showing that the arrival of the NC and the putting away of sin is incompatible with the levitical system of sacrifice on account of the two different and opposing ways that the two covenants deal with sin.

The manner in which our author employs the Jeremiah citations is quite instructive with respect to his use of Scripture. This is not the only instance where the author re-quotes a certain Scripture passage (e.g. 3:7, 8 and 15), but in the case of the Jeremiah 31 passage it is evident from 8:8-12 that the author was aware of and used a reading of the passage very similar to our own LXX and even the MT, while in 10:16, 17 he is able to paraphrase the passage (see figure 12), presumably for the purpose of brevity and to focus the readers' attention onto certain key points from the Scripture passage at hand, all the while attributing the citation to the Holy Spirit. This seems to indicate that for our author there is no contradiction in citing a passage from Scripture in a manner

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<sup>235</sup>Schröger (*Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, pp. 178-79) sees the author's interpretation of Scripture here as following the style of the midrash pesher.

<sup>236</sup>Cf. Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, p. 497.

## Hebrews 8:10-12

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

11 καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πολίτην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων, Γινῶθι τὸν κύριον, ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσίν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν, 12 ὅτι ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι.

10 "Because this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days", says the Lord, "I will give my laws into their mind, and upon their heart I will write them, and I will be a God to them, and they will be a people to me,

11 and each one will never teach his fellow citizen and each one his brother saying, 'Know the Lord', because all of them will know me from their least to their greatest,

12 because I will be merciful to their unrighteous deeds and their sins I will certainly no longer remember."

## Hebrews 10:16, 17

16 Αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη ἣν διαθήσομαι πρὸς αὐτοὺς μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας, λέγει κύριος· διδοὺς νόμους μου ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς,

17 καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθήσομαι ἔτι.

16 "This is the covenant which I will make with them after those days", says the Lord; "I will give my laws upon their heart and upon their mind I will write them,

17 and their sins and their lawless deeds I will certainly no longer remember."

Fig. 12

other than word-for-word while at the same time asserting the divine authority of the citation.<sup>237</sup> The question in Hebrews seems to be whether an appropriate understanding of the Scripture passage has been conveyed, rather than an accurate representation of the scriptural text. In other words, our author is not always concerned that the readers follow

<sup>237</sup>Ellingworth (*Hebrews*, p. 514) asserts: "The cumulative effect of these additional changes is to reinforce the application of the text to the readers; there is an increased emphasis (as in 12:20), but no radical change of meaning."

his exegetical path starting from the words of the text through to his theological and then paraenetic conclusions, but he is primarily concerned that they accept his conclusions and are persuaded by his argument. Having said this, the author does at times focus the readers' attention onto the particular words of Scripture, for instance in 8:13, and when he does this he relies on an accurate reproduction of these words from the Scripture passage. Nevertheless, he is also willing to leave out from his argument a few of his steps of exegesis and logic. In fact, he is obliged to do so. The modern reader can imagine the huge scale of the task of attempting to spell out every turn of exegesis and logic, and how the persuasive powers of such a sermon (tome) would soon become diluted by its own massiveness. It is vital to bear in mind that Hebrews, like most sermons, was never meant to conform to modern standards of precision writing, and is therefore able to evoke a religious and emotional response that the latter frequently cannot.

## *Chapter Four*

### Paraenesis Based on Christ's New Covenant Priestly Ministry: Hebrews 10:19-39

Having finished his theological discourse on the priestly ministry of Christ, the author turns once again to his paraenetic task, as always, anchoring the practical firmly in the theological. Whereas in the first main division of the book (chs. 1-7) the author frequently moved between theology and paraenesis, in this division (chs. 8-10) he finishes his theological discussion in one section, and then completes the division with one long paraenetic section. In the light of the strong connection between theology and paraenesis in Hebrews, it is not surprising that the exhortations in 10:19-39 would follow the structure of the previous doctrinal section of 9:1-10:18, revisiting from a practical standpoint the three main topics of 1) sanctuary, 2) covenant and 3) sacrifice, the same three topics introduced in ch. 8.

#### *CONFIDENCE TO ENTER THE SANCTUARY (10:19-25)*

##### *Provision for Confidence (10:19-21)*

These verses are full of sanctuary images, and although these images refer to the heavenly sanctuary, it is the earthly sanctuary from which the author gains his perspective on the nature of the heavenly holy place. So, while these descriptions rely directly on the author's own conception of heavenly realities, they are also indirect allusions to passages of Scripture which describe the earthly sanctuary. (These are Scripture passages which have been discussed in previous chapters of this work.) There is also an implicit contrast in this passage between the

earthly and heavenly orders. In 9:6, 7 the author has described his conception of how the old system functioned, with tight restrictions even on the priests' entry into the holy place. In 10:19, however, he indicates that all of his readers (*ἀδελφοί*) possess a confidence that allows them to enter into the holy place, and this confidence comes through the blood of Christ. This would be bold enough, but 10:20 takes the readers still further, indicating that their entry is not just into the holy place, but into the most holy place. This is indicated by the author saying that the readers have a way through the curtain, which probably refers to the dividing curtain between the holy place and the holy of holies.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of v. 20, the author includes a difficult dependent clause, but one that promises to provide insight into his understanding of the interchange between the cultic imagery drawn from Scripture and the Christ-event as portrayed in Christian tradition. This clause, *τοῦτ' ἔστιν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ* ("this is [through] his flesh"), is difficult because it is not immediately clear what it modifies. It may describe the "way" into the sanctuary opened to the readers, the curtain<sup>2</sup> or the entire previous relative clause.<sup>3</sup> A clause similar to the one in question is used some six times in Hebrews, including 10:20.<sup>4</sup> This provides a basis for characterising the author's use of this device: 1) the clause always begins with the words *τοῦτ' ἔστιν*, 2) the clause always refers back to a particular referent in the same sentence and 3) the noun phrase is always in apposition to a previous referent of the same case. If 10:20 fits into the same pattern, and it seems best to start with the assumption that it does, then *σάρξ* would stand in apposition to *καταπέτασμα*, since there are only two genitives in vv. 19 and 20, *τῶν ἀγίων* and *τοῦ καταπετάσματος*, and it is highly unlikely that *τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ* stands in apposition to "the holy place". Therefore, "his flesh" serves as an alternative to "the curtain" in this sentence, but does it serve as an ordinary appositive, redefining "curtain"? It is possible to understand Jesus' flesh as being equivalent to the veil separating the holy place

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. 250-51. It is impossible to be sure whether or not the author has in mind the Synoptic tradition of the rending of the veil here (Mt. 27:51; Mk. 15:38; Lk. 23:45).

<sup>2</sup>E.g. Dahl, "'A New and Living Way': The Approach to God According to Hebrews 10:19-25", p. 405.

<sup>3</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 285-87.

<sup>4</sup>See 2:14; 7:5; 9:11; 10:20; 11:16; 13:15.

from the holy of holies in the heavenly sanctuary,<sup>5</sup> but the fact that Jesus himself enters the sanctuary (9:12) and goes through the curtain (6:19, 20) may be somewhat awkward. If the veil/flesh metaphor is not pushed too far beyond a comparison of the two as means of access or approach to God, then it is possible to make sense of the verse in this way. Another option is to understand the τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ of the τοῦτ' ἔστιν clause as providing an alternate object of the preposition διὰ: Jesus inaugurated “a new and living way through the curtain, that is, [through the means of] his flesh”. In this construction, the author is giving an alternative object to the preposition, but here “his flesh” does not redefine “the curtain” in the manner of a true appositive, so it does not strictly follow the pattern of the other τοῦτ' ἔστιν clauses in Hebrews. This way of understanding v. 20 requires that διὰ take on a different sense with each of its two objects. In its first function, “through the curtain”, διὰ is used in the sense of going “through” something, while in its second function, “through his flesh”, it has the meaning of the means “through” which something is accomplished.<sup>6</sup> This understanding of

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<sup>5</sup>Moffatt (*Hebrews*, p. 143) takes the view that “he allegorises the veil here as the flesh of Christ”. Kistemaker (*Hebrews*, pp. 286, 287) understands “flesh” as modifying “curtain”, as does Hagner (*Hebrews*, p. 164). Braun (*Hebräer*, p. 308) takes “curtain” and “flesh” as equated in this passage. Cf. Edwards, *Hebrews*, pp. 150-58; Dahl, “‘A New and Living Way’: The Approach to God According to Hebrews 10:19-25”, p. 405.

<sup>6</sup>Attridge (*Hebrews*, pp. 286-87) deals with the possibility that διὰ could be used with two different meanings, saying, “There may be a shift in the use of the preposition διὰ, from the local sense that operates in the image of Christ’s passage through the veil, to the instrumental sense that operates in the referent of that image”. Hofius (*Der Vorhang vor dem Thron Gottes*, p. 81) also takes διὰ as understood before the τοῦτ' ἔστιν clause and having an instrumental sense, while its sense before καταπέτασματος is local. He also takes the implied διὰ phrase as modifying the verb ἐγκαινίζω, but he still sees the fleshly life of Jesus as identified with the heavenly curtain, since Jesus himself is the new and living way through the curtain. Barclay (*Hebrews*, pp. 133-34) takes the διὰ as doing double duty, but as having the sense of “by means of” in both phrases: “by means of the veil, that is, the flesh of Jesus”. For Barclay, the flesh of Christ veiled his “godhead” (he quotes Charles Wesley, “Veiled in flesh the godhead see”), but “it was when the flesh of Christ was rent upon the cross that men really saw God”. Similarly, Snell (*New and Living Way*, p. 128) says: “his flesh is called a veil because it was by the rending of it on the cross that he opened up the way for us”. Lindars (*The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 91 n. 94, p. 102 n. 105, and similarly Weiß, *Hebräer*, p. 525) understands Jesus as having passed through “the veil of his flesh”, but he also accepts the double use and meaning of διὰ. Isaacs (*Sacred Space*, p. 57) takes the

v. 20 creates an interesting parallel with the second half of v. 19: in v. 19 the readers have 1) an entrance 2) into the holy place 3) by the blood of Jesus, and in v. 20 they have 1) a new<sup>7</sup> and living way 2) through the curtain 3) by means of his flesh.<sup>8</sup> This structure revealed by such an understanding of v. 20 makes this view appealing, since it also has the added benefit of being able to make ready sense of the verse.

In v. 20, the concept that the readers would most likely have needed clarified or emphasised, which seems to be the primary function of the *ΤΟΥΤ' ἔστιν* clause not only here but wherever it is used in Hebrews, would be that of the “way” into the sanctuary. The curtain imagery would have been reasonably transparent to the readers, although this would not have stopped the author from re-defining it with a new twist. However, the one thing in the sentence that begs most vociferously for explanation is the “way”. If the readers have this right to enter the heavenly sanctuary, what is the way to get in? The simple answer is, “through the flesh of Christ”, which would immediately put the readers

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veil as allegorised and representing the flesh of Jesus. Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, pp. 172-73) and Buchanan (*To the Hebrews*, p. 168) both take “his flesh” as modifying “the curtain”. Westcott (*Hebrews*, p. 322) takes the “flesh” as modifying the entire clause “a fresh and living way through the veil” as a compound noun. Montefiore (*Hebrews*, pp. 173-74) thinks that using one preposition in two different ways is “stylistically extremely awkward, and quite uncharacteristic of our author”. This evaluation may be too strict in the light of the author's *παραβολή* in 9:8-10. Montefiore's conclusion on the use of “flesh” in this verse is that it explains the “new and living way” and that it is therefore a “correlate of the blood of Jesus”. In the end, this is not far from my conclusion, although he arrives at it by a different reasoning. Dunnill (*Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, pp. 233-34) makes an interesting comment: “Regarded as a system-affirming event, the uniqueness of the access afforded by the Day of Atonement and its occurrence only in the context of the deepest penitence emphasise the normativeness of separation in the old covenant; under the new covenant, the same entry, with a greater claim to uniqueness, serves to establish access which is unrestricted and joyful. To argue on the basis of word order, that in 10:20 Jesus is being described as a ‘veil’ between humanity and God, is to plunge Christian salvation back into the separative state of the old order: on the contrary, his flesh is the ‘new and living way’ *through* the veil into God's presence”.

<sup>7</sup>Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, p. 171) offers a helpful explanation of the term *πρόσφατος*, on the basis of its later Hellenistic usage, as a way “never trodden before”, that is, a “newly made or recent” path. This word reflects the view of Hebrews that the ministry of Christ has provided something new and superior to the old system.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, p. 275; Young, “*ΤΟΥΤ' ἔστιν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ* (Hebr. x, 20): Apposition, Dependent or Explicative?”, pp. 100-104.

in mind of the sacrifice of Christ<sup>9</sup>—a dominant theme throughout this central division of the book—and possibly also his entry as a forerunner as well as other aspects of his ministry. It seems much more effective for increasing the readers' motivation and helping their understanding of this verse if the writer were attempting to explain the connection between the "way" and Christ, rather than attempting to explain the "curtain" as Christ's flesh. It is indeed fascinating to contemplate the significance of equating Jesus' flesh with the veil in the heavenly holy place, especially in the light of such passages as Jn. 1:14, *καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν* ("and the word became flesh and tabernacled among us"). Nevertheless, rather than clarifying 10:20, this interpretation of the *τοῦτ' ἔστιν* clause throws it into a terrible state of confusion and would be prone to distract the readers rather than help them follow the argument. On the other hand, if one interprets the *τοῦτ' ἔστιν* clause in the way described above, then the meaning of the verse becomes more clear, and a very practical question (in this paraenetic section) is answered for the readers. Also, if the "flesh" of Christ is being connected to the "way" into the holy place, this may explain why the author uses the term "living" to describe the way, an allusion to Christ himself as the readers' "way" into the heavenly sanctuary.<sup>10</sup>

In terms of the relationship between the old and new systems there is one more issue of interest in 10:20. The beginning of v. 20 says that Jesus inaugurated (*ἐνεκαίνισεν*) the new and living way through the curtain. This is of significance since this is the same language used by the author to describe the inauguration of the OC in 9:18, *ὅθεν οὐδὲ ἡ πρώτη χωρὶς αἵματος ἐγκεκαίνισται* ("whence the first has not been inaugurated without blood").<sup>11</sup> This affirms again that our author considers the sacrifice of Christ as playing the role of inaugurating the NC, and therefore as standing in a typological relationship to those inaugural sacrifices offered at the inception of the OC. Just as those inaugural sacrifices under Moses put in motion the covenantal system under which the levitical priests served in the wilderness tabernacle, Christ's sacrifice

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 287; Braun, *Hebräer*, p. 308.

<sup>10</sup>Lane (*Hebrews 9–13*, pp. 275–76) comes to the same conclusion as I have on the use of the *τοῦτ' ἔστιν* clause with reasoning that is quite similar. Ellingworth (*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 519, 521) agrees with Lane, saying that access to God by a new and living way "is gained by means of Jesus' self-offering" (italics mine).

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 285.

put in motion a new covenantal system under which all of his people gain open access to the true, heavenly holy place and the presence of God. Further, the sacrificial implications of this term “inaugurate”, as indicated by 9:18, affirm that the connection of the “flesh” or sacrifice of Christ to the “way” he inaugurated is indeed the best way of understanding this verse.

The readers have confidence (vv. 19, 20) and a high priest, and the ministry of that priest constitutes the source of their confidence. If the readers felt insecure with their Christian faith (apart from the practice of Judaism) because it seemed to them to lack any cultic credibility, they could be confident in the knowledge that they, as Christians, did enjoy a sufficient cultic provision with Christ as their “great high priest” (*καὶ ἱερέα μέγαν ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ*—10:21).<sup>12</sup> The phrase *ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ* recalls the discussion in 3:1-6 of the faithfulness of Christ over the house of God (*ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ*) as compared to Moses. The references to the house of God in 3:1-6 may constitute an allusion to the concept of “house” in Jeremiah’s NC passage, but 10:21 certainly represents an allusion to Jeremiah since it comes after the quotation of Jer. 31:31 and 33a: *Ἴδου ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, φησὶν κύριος, καὶ διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰουδα διαθήκην καινὴν . . . ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας* (“Behold, days are coming”, says the Lord, ‘and I will make with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant . . . because this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days’). Jer. 31:31 and 33a are quoted in 8:8, and Jer. 31:33a is re-quoted 10:16, but in the latter citation the author has changed the wording so that the house connection is not preserved at that point, requiring the readers to recall the earlier citation in ch. 8. In any case, 10:21 seems to be an attempt to explicitly compare the role of the readers as the NC house of God to that of their predecessors as the OC house of God (cf. 3:1-6), as well as to implicitly connect the NC concept and the priesthood of Christ through the house allusion. While the focus of this verse is on Jesus, the high priest, this comparison of the readers to “the house” of Israel/Judah reveals their typological relationship with those under the OC, since it has already

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<sup>12</sup>This verse parallels 4:14, *ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν* (“therefore, having a great high priest”). Lev. 21:10 and Num. 35:25, 28 LXX use *ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ μέγας* as a reference to the high priest.

been established that the Old and New Covenants, priests, sacrifices, etc. also stand in a typological relationship. It is not at all surprising that the author would use this sort of typological framework to compare the old and new people in the light of his previous comparisons of the two peoples in, for example, 3:7–4:11.

*Results of Confidence (10:22-25)*

On the basis of the confidence that belongs to the readers through the sacrifice of Christ, and on the basis of the fact that they have such a high priest as Jesus, the author lays out three imperatives for them in the form of hortatory subjunctives: 1) approach [the holy place], 2) hold fast the confession and 3) consider one another. With the first of these imperatives in v. 22, the author continues his cultic allusions with the term *προσέρχομαι*, which he has used in 10:1 to describe the people who bring their sacrifices under the OC.<sup>13</sup> The “approach” that is spoken of in 10:22 clearly describes the Christian’s “entry” (v. 19) into the heavenly holy place, just as the levitical priests entered to fulfil their duties as prescribed by the law. But even though the way into the sanctuary is fully open to God’s NC people, there are still certain expectations for the condition of those who approach. It is interesting to ask whether these expectations are fulfilled by the people themselves or by the work of Christ, or by the people’s recognition of what the work of Christ had done for them. The necessary assurance, *ἀληθινῆς καρδίας ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πίστεως* (“true hearts in full assurance of faith”), is something that the author would see as being accomplished by the readers (see 3:6, 14; 4:16; 10:35). On the other hand, the cleansing of heart and body is something that our author would see as accomplished by the sacrifice of Christ (see 9:13, 14; 10:2, 10, 14). Therefore, the meaning here is that the readers themselves need to approach with assurance, but that they are only able to do so because of, and by recognising, the cleansing which is accomplished for them by Christ’s sacrifice.

Verse 23, central to these three exhortations, expresses a concern that is also central to the message of the book as a whole: *κατέχωμεν τὴν ὁμολογίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀκλινῆ, πιστὸς γὰρ ὁ ἐπαγγελιάμενος* (“let us hold fast the confession of hope without wavering, for the one who promised is faithful”). The main paraenetic concern of our author is that his readers hold fast to their Christian faith,

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<sup>13</sup>See also the various uses of *προσέρχομαι* in 4:16; 7:25; 11:6; 12:18; 12:22.

and the foundation stone of his exhortation is his assertion that God continues to be trustworthy. This perspective also comes to the surface in the author's last group of scriptural citations in 13:5, 6, where he quotes from the Pentateuch and the Psalms: *αὐτὸς γὰρ εἶρηκεν, Οὐ μὴ σε ἀνῶ οὐδ' οὐ μὴ σε ἐγκαταλίπω, ὥστε θαρροῦντας ἡμᾶς λέγειν, Κύριος ἐμοὶ βοηθός, [καὶ] οὐ φοβηθήσομαι, τί ποιήσει μοι ἄνθρωπος;* ("for he himself has said, 'I will certainly never leave you, neither will I ever forsake you', so that we have confidence to say, 'The Lord is a help to me, and I shall not fear. What can any person do to me?'"") These two complementary concepts expressed in v. 23 underlie the entire message of Hebrews: the essential faithfulness of God to his people, and therefore the obligation of his people to be faithful to him. The theological parts of Hebrews are essentially designed to vindicate God as faithful by explaining his NC work through Christ, while the paraenetic parts of Hebrews are essentially designed to motivate the readers to respond to God's continued faithfulness by continuing to be faithful to him.

The last of these three exhortations in vv. 24, 25 requires that the readers strengthen and preserve their allegiance to one another through love and good works, and their commitment to gather together. These three exhortations distil the thrust of the book as a whole: the readers, most essentially, were to have faith in God and be faithful to him (v. 23), and to strengthen them for this calling, they are helped to appreciate the covenantal and cultic significance of the ministry of Christ (vv. 19-22), and exhorted to live out their faith in the context of the mutual encouragement of their faith community (vv. 24, 25).

#### *JUDGMENT FOR REJECTING GOD'S COVENANT (10:26-31)*

As much as 10:19-25 offers the readers a very positive and promising motivation for clinging steadfastly to their Christian commitment, the next six verses paint the darker picture of judgment as the negative side of what should properly motivate the readers to avoid abandoning their faith. It is clear that 10:26-31 is directed at the readers as Christian believers, and that this view alone takes adequate account of the unity and flow of the argument at this point, and allows the author to speak in the unfettered, forthright manner characteristic of the book. This is affirmed first, in that these verses are inseparably connected to 10:19-25 by the use of *γάρ* at the beginning of v. 26. In v. 25 the readers

are exhorted not to forsake their own assembling together, which would be all the more important as “the day” (probably of judgment and redemption)<sup>14</sup> draws near.<sup>15</sup> The *γάρ* in v. 26 specifically connects the next verses to this concept, and probably generally as well to all three exhortations in vv. 22-25. The message is clear: Do not fail to encourage one another and, indeed, to obey all of these exhortations, for the threat of judgment is ever near to hand for those who fall away. Secondly, these verses do no more than apply to the readers as the NC people of God the same standard that has already been applied to the people of God under the OC (3:7-4:13). In fact, 4:1 says “let *us* fear, lest receiving the promise to enter into his rest any one of *you* seem to fall short”. It must be left to a more theologically oriented context than this work to ask how our author may have understood what this falling short or falling into God’s judgment may have meant for the eternal salvation of those unfortunate enough to have this experience. Nonetheless, it does a grave injustice to the message of the book to disallow from the start any part of vv. 26-31 to apply to those addressed in vv. 19-25. Somehow, our author wishes to communicate that even those who have been presented with the privilege of entering the heavenly holy of holies are at risk of falling under God’s judgment if they do not choose to be faithful.

*Certainty of Judgment (10:26, 27)*

The language of vv. 26, 27 also affirms that the author is writing these words for his Christian readers, since he includes himself in the warning by using the first person plural pronoun (as he often does, e.g. 10:20): *έκουσίως γάρ άμαρτανόντων ήμών μετά τὸ λαβεῖν τήν επίγνωσιν τῆς αλήθείας, οὐκέτι περι άμαρτιών απολείπεται θυσία φοβερά δέ τις έκδοχή κρίσεως και πυρός ζήλος έσθίειν μέλλοντος τούς ύπεναντίους* (“for when we willingly continue sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin, but a certain terrible expectation of judgment and a

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<sup>14</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 291. Interestingly, judgment characterises the next paragraph (vv. 26-31) and redemption is a central thrust of the final paragraph in this section (vv. 32-39). Bruce (*Hebrews*, p. 259), who takes Hebrews as written before 70 CE, wonders if the “day” here may refer to the destruction of the temple, but says that in the end it refers primarily to the parousia.

<sup>15</sup>Lindars (*The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, pp. 21, 105) suggests with some merit that this verse indicates that the readers’ expectation of the parousia had not faded.

zealous fire about to consume the adversaries”).<sup>16</sup> This denunciation of deliberate sin most likely reflects a similar concept found in Scripture. For example, Num. 15:22-29 sets out the required sacrifices if the people or individuals “unintentionally fail to keep any of these commands” (NIV), but vv. 30, 31 set out no sacrifice for the one sinning intentionally, and require that that one be cut off from the people:

“But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the LORD, and that person must be cut off from his people. Because he has despised the LORD’s word and broken his commands, that person must surely be cut off; his guilt remains on him” (NIV).

The concept of the consuming fire in 10:27 echoes the words of Isa. 26:11:

*κύριε, ὑψηλός σου ὁ βραχίων, καὶ οὐκ ᾔδεισαν, γνόντες δὲ αἰσχυνθήσονται· ζήλος λήμψεται λαὸν ἀπαίδευτον, καὶ νῦν πῦρ τοὺς ὑπεναντίους ἔδεται.*

(O LORD, your hand was lifted high and they did not know, but when they do know they will be ashamed; zeal will take ignorant people, and now fire will consume the adversaries.)

There seems to be more than a verbal connection here, since in both contexts the enemies of God are those who have an opportunity to accept the “truth”, but who, in the end, “cease” to “learn righteousness” and “do the truth” (Isa. 26:10 LXX, cf. Heb. 10:26). In the view of our author, when the people of God act like the enemies of God, they can expect to be treated by God like an enemy. With respect to intentional sin, then, the demands of the NC are not unlike those of the OC, as indicated by the comparison in v. 28.

#### *Reason for Judgment (10:28, 29)*

Not only is there no sacrifice for deliberate sin, but the one who sins intentionally is deserving of death, under both covenants, as indicated by vv. 28, 29:

*28 ἀθετήσας τις νόμον Μωϋσέως χωρὶς οἰκτιρμῶν ἐπὶ δυσὶν ἢ τρισὶν μάρτυσιν ἀποθνήσκει· 29 πόσω δοκεῖτε χείρονος ἀξιωθήσεται τιμωρίας ὁ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καταπατήσας καὶ τὸ*

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<sup>16</sup>Cf. 2 Bar. 48:39 for the judgment of the unrighteous by a consuming fire.

αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης κοινὸν ἠγησάμενος, ἐν ᾧ ἡγιάσθη, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας;

(28 one who rejected the law of Moses dies without mercy on the basis of two or three witnesses; 29 how much more deserving of punishment do you think the one is who trampled under foot the Son of God, and considered common the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and insulted the Spirit of grace?)

Again the first two of these three characterisations of disloyalty described in 10:29 may roughly represent the first two general topics of the book, with the first seven chapters of Hebrews focusing on the Son and the next three on covenant. It may also be possible to see the last three chapters of Hebrews as an attempt to encourage the readers not to be caught up by the sort of hubris (cf. *ἐνυβρίζω* in 10:29) that could lead them to abandon their faith, since faith in delayed promises (11:1–12:3), endurance in difficult, even humiliating circumstances (12:4–29) and obedience to authority (13:1–19) are all antithetical to hubris and pride. In any case, these verses indicate a high level of continuity between the expectations of the Old and New Covenants for the people of God. Not only is there a similar focus on the state of the sinner's heart (intent) in determining how sin should be dealt with, but our author also relies on the readers' knowledge of the Mosaic attitude toward deliberate sin to show that they, who are not under Moses, would fall under a similar but worse fate if they did not avoid such deliberate sin.

The exegetical method used in these verses, arguing from the lesser to the greater, is referred to as an *a fortiori* argument or, in Jewish terms, an example of *qal wahomer*, arguing from the light to the heavy.<sup>17</sup> For our author, it is axiomatic that the ministry and provision of Christ is superior to anything provided under the OC; therefore, just as the benefits of the NC are greater, the consequences of rejecting the NC are equally more severe. This logic of arguing from lesser to greater, also used in 9:13, 14, is common in the exegesis of the rabbis and can also be found in Philo<sup>18</sup> as well as several NT passages,<sup>19</sup> but it is also a common feature of a wide range of sources, including modern ones.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup>This represents the first of Rabbi Hillel's seven rules of interpretation (*middoth*). See Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*, pp. 87–90.

<sup>18</sup>E.g. *Spec. Leg.* 2. 225.

<sup>19</sup>E.g. Luke 12:28; 2 Cor. 3:7–11.

<sup>20</sup>D. Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric", *HUCA* 22 (1949), pp. 239–64, see especially note 7.

Hebrews 10:30a	Deut. 32:35a	Deut. 32:35a
Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω.	ἐν ἡμέρα ἐκδικήσεως ἀνταποδώσω	לִי נָקָם וְשָׁלַם
“Vengeance is mine; I will repay.”	“In the day of vengeance I will repay.”	“Vengeance is mine”—and <u>he</u> will repay. <sup>21</sup>
Hebrews 10:30b	Deut. 32:36a	Deut. 32:36a
Κρινεῖ κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ.	ὅτι κρινεῖ κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ	כִּי־יִדְוֶין יְדוּהָ עַמּוֹ
The Lord will judge his people.	Because the Lord will judge his people.	Because the LORD will judge his people.

Fig. 13 (Differences between the above texts are underscored.)

Nonetheless, since *qal wahomer* is a particular method of Jewish exegesis, and since Hebrews has such strong connections to Jewish tradition in the light of its reliance on Jewish Scripture and the Jewish identity of the author as well as the readers, it is reasonable to conclude that our author is using *qal wahomer* here because this is a natural way for him to think exegetically and because he expects it to resonate with his readers who would be used to this kind of exegetical reasoning.

#### God of Judgment (10:30, 31)

Deliberate sin is dealt with even more harshly under the NC than under the OC, according to our author, since the Christian has forsaken an even greater grace and provision of nearness to God, and therefore falls all the more directly into the hands of God. Continuing to build on the continuity he established in the preceding two verses, the author quotes and directly applies to the readers two Scripture portions, both from the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 (see figure 13).

<sup>21</sup>Holladay (*Lexicon*, s.v. שָׁלַם) suggests that שָׁלַם be read as אֲשַׁלֵּם, “I will repay” (which agrees with the LXX); BDB suggests שָׁלַם is a noun with the meaning “recompense”, s.v. שָׁלַם I; BHS proposes repointing to שָׁלַם, “and recompense”. It is possible that there has long been some confusion surrounding this passage with regard to the subject of the verb “will repay”, in the light of this problem with שָׁלַם and the rendering of the LXX (see Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 295-96). This may be why Paul emphasises the identity of the speaker by adding the phrase λέγει κύριος after he cites this passage in Rom. 12:19: γέγραπται γάρ, Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω, λέγει κύριος (“for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay’, says the Lord”). Paul’s additional comment is not unlike our author’s introduction of

Unusually, our author's wording is closer to the MT than the LXX in the beginning of his citation of Deut. 32:35a, the LXX adding ἐν ἡμέρα<sup>22</sup> which is not present in either the MT<sup>23</sup> or in Hebrews, but then he agrees with the LXX at the end of his citation.<sup>24</sup> However, if our author was familiar with a Hebrew text<sup>25</sup> that read אֲשַׁלֵּם ("I will repay") instead of אֲשַׁלֵּם (—"and he will repay"), according to Holladay's suggestion,<sup>26</sup> then this entire citation would be an example of Hebrews following a Hebrew text against the LXX. On the other hand, in the citation of Deut. 32:36a,<sup>27</sup> all of the texts agree—even in placing the word "judge" in the emphatic position—except that Hebrews begins its quotation after the initial conjunction of the LXX version. It is very interesting that in applying these verses to the NC situation our author does not sift the text through any hermeneutical grid like typology or christology, as he so often does. Rather, he simply states these Scripture

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the quotation with οἶδαμεν γὰρ τὸν εἰπόντα ("for we know the one who said"). See Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 180.

<sup>22</sup>Ellingworth (*Hebrews*, p. 542) says, "There is in any case no sufficient case for believing that the author of Hebrews, contrary to his normal practice, followed the MT against the LXX". Lane (*Hebrews 9–13*, p. 295) suggests that the author follows a Greek text that had been conformed to the MT. Montefiore (*Hebrews*, p. 179) asserts: "This is the only occasion when our author cites a text closer to the Hebrew than to the LXX version of the scriptures." Buchanan (*To the Hebrews*, p. 172) suggests that the author is quoting from a text no longer extant, especially since Paul uses the same formula. Kistemaker (*The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 46) proposes that "the phraseology which the Targums and the NT writers have recorded, prevailed in an oral tradition, and that the quotation, which was considered divinely spoken, circulated as a proverbial saying". It is really impossible to come to a firm conclusion on this issue, because there are now and probably always will be too many holes in the textual histories of the LXX and the MT to determine whether the author is following a Greek or Hebrew text at this point. In the light of this, the various views cited above can be reconciled, each having a valid point to contribute to the debate.

<sup>23</sup>The Samaritan Pentateuch and Philo, *Leg. All.* 3, 105, 3 follow this reading.

<sup>24</sup>Ode 2 reproduces Deuteronomy 32:35a, 36a with no textual variations.

<sup>25</sup>The author's explanation of the Hebrew titles in 7:1, 2 may indicate that he was familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures at some points.

<sup>26</sup>Holladay (*Lexicon*, s.v. אֲשַׁלֵּם) However, there does not seem to be any textual evidence for Holladay's reading.

<sup>27</sup>Psalm 135:14a in the MT, כִּי־יִרְיֶן יְהוָה עִמּוֹ ("because the LORD will judge his people"), and Psalm 134:14a in the LXX, ὅτι κρινεῖ κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ("because the Lord will judge his people"), are identical to Deut. 32:36a, but it is most likely that our author has the Deuteronomy passage in mind since he has just quoted from the previous verse in Deuteronomy.

passages and applies them directly to his readers, as if they were the intended, original audience.<sup>28</sup> Schröger agrees: "Both citations from Deut. 32:35, 36 have been interpreted in a purely *literal sense*."<sup>29</sup> Many interpret the judgment referred to in Deut. 32:35, 36 as directed toward the enemies of Israel,<sup>30</sup> but this is probably not the best way to understand the passage, as Keil and Delitzsch assert:

Again, these words do not relate to the punishment of "the wicked deeds of the inhuman horde," or the vengeance of God upon the enemies of Israel, but to the vengeance or retribution which God would inflict upon Israel.<sup>31</sup>

It is vital to recognise the change in speaker from the Lord to the narrator between vv. 27 and 28, and from the narrator back to the Lord between vv. 33 and 34, since this shows that vv. 28-33 are actually a narrative aside. In this aside the narrator elaborates on the statement of the Lord in vv. 26, 27 that he would not destroy his people lest the enemy that he used for this purpose think that it was they and not the Lord who had accomplished it. Verses 30 and 31 speak of the Lord in the third person, while v. 34 resumes the speech of the Lord, so what the Lord says he has kept in reserve in v. 34 cannot be connected to anything in vv. 28-33 because these are not his words. In fact, v. 34, beginning again with the words of the Lord, takes up where v. 27 left off, that is, with the discussion of the judgment of Israel; what is kept in reserve (v. 34) is the scattering and blotting out of Israel (v. 27). So, the

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<sup>28</sup>Bruce (*Hebrews*, pp. 264-65) says, "Our author's application of the words is not inconsistent with the original context: God's own people are not exempt from his law that men and women reap what they sow. . . . What was true then remains true for God's dealings with his people now." Accordingly, referring to Deut. 32:36, Snell (*New and Living Way*, p. 131) says that "the word 'judge' may well be intended there in a grim sense, as it certainly is in its application here". Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, p. 191) claims that "there is no need to assume that the writer of this epistle uses the citation in a sense foreign to the original. His meaning may well be, that the Lord will execute judgment on behalf of his people against those who desert the sacred cause, against traitors and blasphemers."

<sup>29</sup>Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 181 (my translation, his italics).

<sup>30</sup>E.g. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, pp. 374-75; Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p. 199. Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 296, and similarly Moffatt, *Hebrews*, p. 152) understands Deut. 32:35 as directed at the enemies of Israel, but this is not the best way to understand the flow of the context.

<sup>31</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1: *The Pentateuch*, p. 487.

vengeance in v. 35 applies to Israel, the people of God, as does the judgment in v. 36. Many commentators take the word “to judge” (יָדַן, MT, κρίνω, LXX) in v. 36 as meaning “vindicate”<sup>32</sup> since it is paired with the concept of compassion. It is unlikely that the LXX understands יָדַן in this way since it renders it using κρίνω, and it is also unlikely that our author understood the concept here as vindication rather than judgment in the light of the context of the quotation in Hebrews. In fact, understanding both the MT and the LXX in terms of judgment and compassion makes perfect sense in the light of the subsequent verses, for example, “I wounded and I will heal” (v. 39b).<sup>33</sup> Therefore, our author does interpret these verses from Deuteronomy in a literal sense, and he applies them directly to his readers.

This passage ends with the author's own response to the Scripture passages he has cited, as he expresses a principle that, as shown by its straight-forward application to the readers, he must see as universal in its scope and timeless in its relevancy: φοβερόν τὸ ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς χεῖρας θεοῦ ζῶντος (“it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”).<sup>34</sup> This brings to the surface again the significant question of how the author can deny the validity of the OC for his readers, and yet use and apply the OC Scripture in such a way as to place his readers under its authority.

#### REWARD FOR ENDURING SACRIFICE (10:32-39)

The first of the three pericopes in this paraenetic section (vv. 19-25) expresses the very positive position of the readers before God as a result of his provision for them through Christ. The second pericope (vv. 26-31) warns of the extremely negative result of the readers failing to live up to their calling by abandoning their Christian commitment and falling into the terrible judgment of God. This third and final pericope (vv. 32-39) strikes a balance between the positive and negative, outlining the past success of the readers, their current (potential) deficiency and the opportunity for the readers to exercise their faith and be rewarded accordingly.

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<sup>32</sup>Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p. 391; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p. 199.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. Cairns, *Deuteronomy*, p. 287.

<sup>34</sup>Cf. 2 Sam. 24:14.

*Past Successes (10:32-34)*

In these verses, the author rehearses the very commendable manner, from his Christian perspective, in which the readers endured certain persecutions. During this time of spiritual success the readers are characterised as “enlightened” (cf. 6:4), and the implication is that now the readers are at least in danger of forsaking their enlightenment. These verses are certainly among the most important in Hebrews for answering the nagging questions concerning the setting and circumstances of the writing, not to mention the questions of the identity of the readers and the writer. It is not possible to tackle these questions in the context of this work, but one implication of these verses along this line is that at the time Hebrews was written the readers were likely enduring some sort of tribulation, either in the form of physical persecution, spiritual oppression or both. Further, it is likely that, at least in the view of the readers, their current tribulation was even worse than that which they had previously endured, for they were obviously not inexperienced or unsuccessful sufferers, and so whatever constituted the current attack, it must have been something quite severe, something that struck at the heart of their Christian confidence.

It seems, then, that our author is probably attempting to provide encouragement and motivation for the readers in an extremely difficult situation by reminding them of their previous success and commitment to faith in Christ at no small price. The readers’ previous identification with those suffering, and especially those “in bonds”, resonates with 13:3, where our author exhorts the readers to “remember those in bonds as fellow prisoners, those suffering as those who are also in the body”.

*Present Imperative (10:35, 36)*

Verse 35 finds the author coming back to the issue of confidence, which he exhorts the readers not to throw away, and which he says carries with it a great reward. At this point the readers would still have fresh in their minds the discussion of confidence just a few verses back (vv. 19-25), and the access to the heavenly holy place that their confidence could afford them. Certainly this is a part of the reward that confidence brings. Nevertheless, in vv. 36b-39 there is a future reward discussed, and it is on this that the author will focus his readers’ attention at this point. It is not just confidence that the readers need, for confidence is not the end to which the author is driving. What he wants

in the end is for the readers to endure, so that they would be able to receive what had been promised to them (v. 36).

*Future Reward (10: 37-39)*

The author closes this section of paraenesis and the middle division of the letter with a Scripture quotation. In this case there is no overt indication that the author is quoting from Scripture. He does not introduce the quotation, but simply fits the words of Scripture into his sentence structure as if they were his own words, although he may have expected (many or most of) his readers to be aware that he cites Scripture here. The first two words are the author's, but the rest of the first phrase could be from Isa. 26:20 LXX (see figure 14), and the rest of the citation comes from Hab. 2:3, 4<sup>35</sup> (see figure 15) with a couple of additions from our author.<sup>36</sup>

Hebrews 10:37a	Isa. 26:20	Isa. 26:20
<p>ἔτι γὰρ μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον</p>	<p>βάδιζε, λαός μου, εἴσελθε εἰς τὰ ταμίειά σου, ἀπόκλεισον τὴν θύραν σου, ἀποκρύβηθι μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, ἕως ἂν παρέλθῃ ἡ ὀργὴ κυρίου.</p>	<p>לְךָ עַמִּי בָּא בַחֲדָרֶיךָ וּסְגֵר דְלִתֶיךָ [דְלִתְךָ] בְּעַרְךָ חֲבִי כְמַעֲטָרִינָע עַד-יַעְבֹּר [יַעְבֵּר-]אֲנֵם:</p>
<p>for yet in a very little while</p>	<p>Walk, my people, enter into your treasuries, close your door, be hidden for a very little while, until the wrath of the Lord passes.</p>	<p>Walk, my people, go into your rooms and close your door behind you; hide for a little while, until the curse passes over.</p>

Fig. 14

There is some question as to whether the phrase *μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον* (“a very little while”) is in fact an allusion to Isa. 26:20, since the “allusion” only involves three words which may simply represent a Greek idiom.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, the repetition of *ὅσον* is distinctive,

<sup>35</sup>Széles (*Wrath and Mercy: Habakkuk and Zephaniah*, p. 30) reckons that v. 4 is “the centerpiece, the heart, of the whole prophecy”.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. Delitzsch (*Hebrews*, pp. 198-201), who offers a good treatment of the textual issues.

<sup>37</sup>*μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον* can be found in Lucian, *Hermotimus*, 60, 1 3; Plutarch, *Demetrius*, 43, 6, 2; and seven times in Philo. As Moffatt (*Hebrews*, p. 157) points

Hebrews 10:37b, 38	Hab. 2:3, 4	Hab. 2:3, 4
<p>37β ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἤξει καὶ οὐ χρονίσει. 38 ὁ δὲ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, καὶ ἐὰν ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ.</p>	<p>3 διότι ἔτι ὄρασις εἰς καιρὸν καὶ ἀνατελεῖ εἰς πέρας καὶ οὐκ εἰς κενόν· ἐὰν ὑστερήσῃ, ὑπόμεινον αὐτόν, ὅτι ἐρχόμενος ἤξει καὶ οὐ μὴ χρονίση. 4 ἐὰν ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται.</p>	<p>3 כִּי עוֹד חֲזוֹן לְמוֹעֵד וְיִפָּח לְקֶץ וְלֹא יִכְבֵּ אִם־יִתְמַקְּמָה חֲכָה־לוֹ כִּי־בָא יָבֹא לֹא יֵאָחֵר: 4 הִנֵּה עֲפֹלָה לֹא־יִשְׁרָה נִפְשׁוֹ בּוֹ וְצַדִּיק בְּאִמּוּנָתוֹ יִחִיה׃</p>
<p>37b The one who is coming will come and will not delay; 38 but my righteous one will live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul will not be pleased with him.</p>	<p>3 “Wherefore, there is still a vision for the time, and it will rise to the end and not to nothing; if it comes late, wait for it, because the one coming will come and will not delay. 4 <u>If he shrinks</u> <u>back, my soul will not be</u> <u>pleased</u> with him; but the righteous one shall live by <u>my faith.</u>”</p>	<p>3 “Because there is still a vision for an appointed time, it will breathe out to the end and will not lie; if it lingers wait for it, because it will certainly come and it will not delay. 4 <u>Behold, puffed up</u> and not <u>upright</u> is <u>his</u> soul within him; but a righteous person shall live by <u>his</u> faith.”</p>

Fig. 15 (Differences between the above texts are underscored.)

and may indicate a connection with the Isaiah passage here on some level.<sup>38</sup> Further, it is possible to find some connection between the context of Isa. 26:20 and the message of Hebrews,<sup>39</sup> not least the coming of the Lord. In the light of this, it is possible that our author had Isa. 26:20 in mind, and was influenced by its wording as he chose his own words, but there is too little here to prove that our author is intending to make any exegetical connection to Isaiah.

On the other hand, vv. 37b, 38 clearly cite Hab. 2:3b, 4, although there is no formal introduction to these words as a quotation either. Our author clearly follows the LXX here, with the citation beginning after the

out, “ὄσον ὄσον is a variant in D (on Lk. 5:3) for ὀλίγον. The phrase ὄσον ὄσον is also used in Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 213 and elsewhere.” Kistemaker (*Hebrews*, p. 302) and Westcott (*Hebrews*, p. 339) agree that the allusion to Isa. 26:20 is debatable, and that the phrase in question may simply be a colloquial expression.

<sup>38</sup>There is probably an echo of Isa. 26:11 in 10:27 as well.

<sup>39</sup>Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, p. 555.

initial ὅτι.<sup>40</sup> The several alterations in this citation begin with the author's inclusion of the article before ἐρχόμενος right at the beginning, but in this instance the use and thrust of the participle is grammatically nearly identical with or without the article.<sup>41</sup> The next change is in the form of χρονίζω, from aorist subjunctive with οὐ μὴ in the LXX to a future indicative with οὐ in Hebrews, two forms with practically identical meanings. Next, our author takes a line out of turn, and changes the order of μου in that clause.<sup>42</sup> This shifts the emphasis of the citation, and changes the possessor of faith from the Lord to the righteous one. However, there are a few texts that agree with Hebrews<sup>43</sup> in its placement of μου, A-26, C and a handful of minuscules, so it is possible that the text our author knew placed the μου after δίκαιος. Finally, our author adds his own transitional καί before the ἐάν, to accommodate his change in the order of the lines. The most substantial textual change, then, is the change of line order, which unambiguously makes ὁ δίκαιος the subject of ὑποστείληται, and allows the implications of the citation to be applied more easily to the readers.<sup>44</sup> The one coming refers to Christ, but the righteous one is the individual believer, who must not "shrink back". So, this change of line order at least contributes to the author's ability to use the text according to his own purpose.<sup>45</sup> In the end, Schröger may well be correct when he says that "the words of Scripture are less interpreted here; they serve rather to give the thoughts of the author an impressive form".<sup>46</sup> However, comparing our author's

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<sup>40</sup>Ward (*Habakkuk*, p. 13) believes that the MT "should probably be corrected after the LXX", but this is not based on any textual evidence.

<sup>41</sup>Lane (*Hebrews 9-13*, p. 304) asserts, probably rightly, that the addition of the article here may sharpen the messianic interpretation of the text, creating a messianic title, "the Coming One".

<sup>42</sup>Some texts of Hebrews follow the main LXX tradition in their placing of μου.

<sup>43</sup>Cf. also Rom. 1:17 and Gal. 3:11, which both leave out the μου altogether.

<sup>44</sup>Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. 274-75. Schröger (*Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 186) suggests that our author has quoted and paraphrased this passage in the manner of the midrash pesher, as in 1 Qp Hab 7:5-8:3.

<sup>45</sup>Bruce (*Hebrews*, p. 273) says, "Our author, then, is but dotting the i's and crossing the t's of the Septuagint interpretation when he applies Hab. 2:3b to the second coming of Christ." Montefiore (*Hebrews*, p. 185) asserts that "our author, although he is nearer to the LXX than to the Hebrew, interprets the text in a sense approximating to that of the Hebrew. He means that the righteous man will be preserved in his life by his loyalty and faithfulness to God."

<sup>46</sup>Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 185 (my translation).

use of the Habakkuk passage to its original context, there may be a fundamental change in meaning introduced by our author. In the MT, the one coming is the revelation from the Lord, which may or may not have a personal, messianic referent. The LXX changes the structure of the passage by using a masculine participle for “the coming one”, which would not correspond to the feminine noun “vision” or “revelation”. Schröger takes the pronoun *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* as a messianic reference.<sup>47</sup> In Hebrews, the one coming is clearly Jesus, but this is not surprising in view of what has come before in the book. First, in Heb. 1:2 the author asserts that in the age of the NC God is speaking through his Son in the same way that he had spoken “to the fathers through the prophets” in the age of the OC. In other words, our author sees Jesus as a revelation from God. There is a great deal in Hab. 2:1-4 LXX that resonates with Heb. 1:1-3 as well as 10:37-39. In Hab. 2:1, 2 the prophet is waiting to hear what the Lord would say, while Heb 1:1 describes how God spoke in the past through the prophets. In Hab. 2:2, 3 the Lord promises a vision that turns out to be a person—the writer uses a masculine pronoun and participle to describe the (feminine) vision in v. 3. Hebrews 1:3 describes the Son as the radiance of God’s glory and the image of his nature. Secondly, it is certainly not unusual for our author to employ a christological or messianic use/interpretation of Scripture, whereby he understands Scripture as speaking of Christ, or indeed speaking for Christ. This is precisely what he has done with Psalm 40 in Hebrews 10:5-10, probably partly on the basis of the theme of coming which he found in the Psalm 40 passage, a theme which he also found in the Habakkuk passage. What is coming in Hab. 2:1-4 is described as a vision, and certainly this coming one/vision represents a revelation from God in Habakkuk. Jesus is also both a coming one and a revelation of God in Hebrews. So, whether or not there is any messianic reference inherent in the words of Habakkuk, our author uses the passage in this way, applying again a christological/messianic approach to the passage.<sup>48</sup>

There are two link words in this citation which create a connection back to the Psalm 40 quotation in 10:5-7: *ἤκω* and *εὐδοκέω*. As discussed in the section of this work on 10:1-10, the common themes of

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<sup>47</sup>Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 187. Lane (*Hebrews 9-13*, p. 304) also sees the text of the LXX as “thoroughly messianic”.

<sup>48</sup>See Attridge (*Hebrews*, pp. 303, 304) for a treatment of the use of this passage from Habakkuk in Qumran literature and Paul.

coming into the world and what does not please God in these two citations create a link between them that gives the Habakkuk material a richer significance than it would have on its own. In 10:37, although it does refer to Christ coming into the world (cf. 10:5), the coming refers to the second coming of Christ, since it comes in the context of receiving “the promise” and the future destiny of the readers (vv. 36, 39). In 10:5-10 the author explains that Christ came into the world the first time to provide a once-for-all sacrifice for the people, but according to 9:28 he will come a second time not to deal with sin but to bring salvation to those expecting him. In 10:36-39 the second coming of Christ will fulfil God’s promise for those who have endured and have done the will of God, while those who shrink back will find that they have displeased God.

The connection of the Psalm 40 and the Habakkuk 2 material through the subject of God’s pleasure is strengthened and informed by the presence of another link word from Psalm 40 in 10:36: *θέλημα*. In 10:7 *θέλημα* is used to describe the purpose of Christ’s coming, which was to do the will of God; in 10:36 the readers are exhorted to do the will of God themselves. The author asserts in 10:5-10 that God’s will no longer includes levitical sacrifices; in fact, he neither wants (*θέλω*) them nor desires (*εὐδοκέω*) them. In 10:38 God will not be pleased (*εὐδοκέω*) if his righteous one shrinks back. Shrinking back for our readers would mean forsaking their NC identity and denying the sufficiency of God’s provision in Christ (cf. 10:29). According to our author, the will of God for his readers did not require them to perform the levitical rituals, and to deny their NC heritage for the sake of those rituals would amount to shrinking back, which would have dire consequences—e.g. not obtaining the promise (10:36) and falling under the judgment of God (10:26-31). Hebrews 10:35-39, then, is designed in part to remind the readers of the example of Christ doing the will of God at his first coming, to remind them of his second coming at which time they could receive the promise, and to emphasise that God would not be pleased with them if they failed to live by faith, shrinking back from their NC life apart from an earthly cult.

It is interesting that the interpretation of Hab. 2:4b in 1QpHab has so much in common with its interpretation in Hebrews. This section of the Qumran material is as follows:

Interpreted, this concerns all those who observe the Law in the House of Judah, whom God will deliver from the House of Judgment because of their suffering and because of their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness.<sup>49</sup>

In both cases the addressees have suffered and are being encouraged to continue in faith. There are also common themes of judgment and reward, which are connected to the faith of the addressees. On the other hand, there are also some stark but predictable differences between the two. First, the object of faith in 1QpHab is the Teacher of Righteousness, while in Hebrews the objects of faith are God and Christ (see 10:19, 20, 23). Secondly, those at Qumran are encouraged to observe the Mosaic law, while the message for the readers of Hebrews is just the opposite: the Mosaic law is no longer necessary, so learn to have faith in God apart from the law. Nonetheless, it is clear that there are certain general similarities between these two applications of Hab. 2:4b, which shows that our author's use of this text has much in common with at least one stream of Jewish thought on this verse.

Hebrews 10:35-39 also creates a transition from the topic of confidence in Christ's priestly ministry to that of faith in God's promise. (The inclusion of the faith concept in these verses does not indicate that they belong structurally with the next section, since the author habitually uses announcement of subject to anticipate the subjects of later sections, and is quite prone to use very smooth transitions between sections.)<sup>50</sup> The promise theme is introduced in 10:36, and will come up again at least a half dozen times in ch. 11. The faith theme, so prominent in ch. 11, comes up in 10:38 and 39. In 10:38 the righteous lives by faith; in 10:39 faith is the opposite of shrinking back (as in 10:38), and the way to save the soul: ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐσμὲν ὑποστολῆς εἰς ἀπώλειαν ἀλλὰ πίστεως εἰς περιποίησιν ψυχῆς ("but we are not of shrinking

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<sup>49</sup>Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, p. 239.

<sup>50</sup>Lane (*Hebrews 9-13*, p. 279) understands 10:19-39 as a unit, and points out that the term *παρησίαν* frames the section as an *inclusio*, marking out its beginning and end in vv. 19 and 35. He also agrees that the last few verses of ch. 10 serve as a transition unit. Vanhoye (*La Structure Littéraire de l'épître aux Hébreux*, pp. 115, 182) also takes 10:19-39 as a unit connected to the preceding material. Attridge (*Hebrews*, p. 19) places a division after 10:25, taking 10:26-12:13 as a unit. Schröger (*Der Verfasser des Hebräerbrieves als Schriftausleger*, p. 179) places 10:19ff with the following material in the structure of the book, as does Moffatt (*Hebrews*, p. 141). Numerous commentators take at least part of ch. 10 as belonging to the next division of the book.

back, but of faith for the saving of the soul"). It may be that faith and confidence are (nearly) interchangeable concepts for our author, since he begins his discussion of reward in 10:35 with the great reward that confidence has, and ends the discussion in 10:39 with faith having the reward of saving the soul. Whatever the case, the author is preparing his way with these verses to commence one of the greatest discourses on faith in the entire Bible.

## Chapter Five

# The New Covenant Use of Old Covenant Scripture in Hebrews 8-10

This study has chosen to focus on chs. 8–10 of Hebrews so as to provide a more in-depth exegetical basis on which to draw its conclusions. Nonetheless, it has been necessary throughout to bear in mind the broad perspective of the book as a whole in order to gain a proper understanding of chs. 8–10. Now, in the task of describing and summing up the use of Scripture in these chapters, it is all the more important to consider their relationship to the whole. Therefore, this chapter will be slightly broader in scope than those previous, building on the exegetical base established from the study of chs. 8–10, and maintaining the centrality of these chapters as a basis for its conclusions, but allowing the author’s use of Scripture in the rest of his work to enter into the discussion where it seems helpful or necessary.

### *TEXTUAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE AUTHOR’S USE OF SCRIPTURE*

“The textual origin of the OT citations in Hebrews has long been an enigma. From the time the texts of the two principal witnesses to the LXX, LXX<sup>A</sup> and LXX<sup>B</sup>, became available in the early part of the nineteenth century, it has been observed that the text of the citations in Hebrews does not exactly correspond to either.”<sup>1</sup> However, it is widely accepted that in Hebrews 8–10, as in the book as a whole, the scriptural citations come exclusively or almost exclusively from some version of the LXX. The only possible exception to this in chs. 8–10 is the citation

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas, “The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews”, p. 303.

of Deut. 32:35 in 10:30, where the author agrees with a Hebrew version against the LXX,<sup>2</sup> as does Rom. 12:19. It is unclear whether this represents the direct influence of a Hebrew text, a Hebraizing Greek text or even the influence of the wording of the Romans citation.<sup>3</sup>

There are several problems related to determining the text type used by the author of Hebrews. First, it is probable that not all textual traditions of the LXX have survived, and since the textual tradition used by the author of Hebrews may not be extant, it is impossible to determine with certainty whether deviations from the critical text represent an alternative textual tradition or a change introduced by our author. That our author did introduce changes in his citation of scriptural texts is made clear by his re-quotation of Jer. 31:33, 34 in 10:16, 17, for example. This first difficulty can be overcome to some degree by considering each variation to determine whether or not the author of Hebrews may have had reason to introduce such a change. But whether or not the author's argument benefits from a textual variation does not finally prove whether or not it originates from him, since he may have chosen a certain text, and possibly even a certain version in some cases,<sup>4</sup> on the basis of the usefulness of the variant words themselves.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, even when variants from a text quoted in Hebrews are attested in various manuscripts of the LXX, suggesting on the surface that the author did not create the variation, it is not always clear whether Hebrews is following the tradition represented by these manuscripts or whether these manuscripts have been corrected to agree with Hebrews.<sup>6</sup> Certain manuscripts would be more likely than others to represent a correction toward Hebrews, and some conclusions can be drawn on this basis, but seldom can one draw absolute conclusions. Thirdly, it is evidently not the case that all the citations in Hebrews 8–10 represent a single text type. If the author quoted from memory or from his own anthology of

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<sup>2</sup>See Howard, "Hebrews and the Old Testament Quotations", pp. 208-216; Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Thomas, "The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews", pp. 315, 319.

<sup>4</sup>Though it is much less likely that the author of Hebrews chose between different versions of the same passage from the LXX.

<sup>5</sup>See Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup>Wevers (*Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*, p. 410) suggests that the manuscripts that add πάντα in Exod. 25:40 (F and two families of miniscules) "are probably based on Heb. 8:5".

passages extracted from various texts,<sup>7</sup> or even from *testimonia*,<sup>8</sup> it is possible that the citations in Hebrews were drawn from texts representing a multiplicity of textual traditions. Even more to the point, the textual history of the LXX varies according to section and even among individual books in the same section. Therefore, the scriptural citations in Hebrews 8–10 probably did not originate from a single text representing a single textual tradition. Nonetheless, it is possible to discuss the characteristics of the text(s) used by our author, if one recognises the probability that multiple text types are represented.

Of the six passages cited in Hebrews 8–10, there are some 24 variations from the critical texts,<sup>9</sup> not including the citation from Jer. 31:33, 34 in 10:16, 17 because this material is already represented in ch. 8 and any further variations must have originated with our author, nor the possible citation of Isa. 26:20 (LXX) in 10:37 since there is significant doubt as to whether or not this phrase should properly be classified as a citation and since in any case there are no variants involved. These variants (tabulated in figure 16)<sup>10</sup> show that the text used by the author of Hebrews was similar in general to the septuagintal tradition represented by the well known codices A and B.<sup>11</sup> The representative sample of textual witnesses appearing in figure 16 also shows that for almost every variant there is some textual witness; however, it is likely that some of these witnesses represent a correction toward Hebrews.

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<sup>7</sup>C.D. Stanley (*Paul and the Language of Scripture*, pp. 73–78) argues that Paul would have copied excerpts from the biblical scrolls in the course of his studies, building up an anthology of passages from which many of the scriptural citations in his letters would have been drawn. Stanley also argues that this practice is referred to in Greek and Latin literature, and may be exemplified by *4Q Testimonia*. The argument of Stanley may apply equally well to the author of Hebrews.

<sup>8</sup>See Syngé, *Hebrews and the Scriptures*, pp. 2, 3, 53, 54.

<sup>9</sup>Rahlfs and the Göttingen edition both suggest the same texts for all the passages cited in Hebrews.

<sup>10</sup>The sigla in figure 16 follow the Göttingen edition of the LXX.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Thomas, “The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews”, p. 303; Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, p. 402.

NO.	REF.	VARIANTS	MSS
EXODUS 25:40 IN HEBREWS 8:5			
1	8:5	πάντα	F, b, s, 85, 126, 127, 129-246, 130, 509
2	8:5	δειχθέντα	O <sup>767</sup> , s, f, 15, 30, 53, 126, 128, 426, 799
JEREMIAH 38:31-34 (LXX) IN HEBREWS 8:8-12			
3	8:8	λέγει	A, S, Q
4	8:8	συντελέσω	4I
5	8:8	ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον	none
6	8:9	ἐποίησα	Q
7	8:9	λέγει	407, 544 (+ λέγει 538, λέγει φήσιν 62, 490)
8	8:10	λέγει	none
9	8:10	δώσω omitted	A, Q
10	8:10	ἐπιγράψω <sup>12</sup>	Q, V, 26-46-86'-106-130-239-534-544-613
11	8:11	αὐτῶν omitted <sup>13</sup>	A, A-106', 567, 239, 534, 544
12	8:11	και omitted	A, B (ex corr. uid.)
EXODUS 24:8 IN HEBREWS 9:20			
13	9:20	τοῦτο	Sa, DialTA (+ τοῦτο f <sup>56*</sup> )
14	9:20	ἐνετείλατο <sup>14</sup>	7I
15	9:20	ὁ θεός	7I
PSALM 39:7-9 (LXX) IN HEBREWS 10:5-7			
16	10:5	σῶμα	A, B, S, rel.
17	10:6	εὐδόκησας	2013, Sa
18	10:7	τοῦ ποιῆσαι ὁ θεός	2013, Sy
DEUTERONOMY 32:35, 36 IN HEBREWS 10:30			
19	10:30	Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ	(cf. Romans 12:19)
HABAKKUK 2:3, 4 IN HEBREWS 10:37, 38			
20	10:37	ὁ	46, 130'
21	10:37	μὴ omitted	V, II-410, 87-534
22	10:37	χρονίσει	II-86-410, 26
23	10:38	καὶ and line order change	none
24	10:38	μου <sup>15</sup>	A-26-49-407

Fig. 16

<sup>12</sup>The Epistle to the Hebrews as attested in codex B reads *γράψω* here, following

From the data represented in figure 16, it can be observed that there is a high degree of correspondence between the variants in the citations of Exod. 24:8 and Ps. 39:7-9 (LXX) and a single minuscule in each case. The only variant in Exod. 24:8 not attested by manuscript 71 is obviously introduced by the author to conform to traditional language related to the inauguration of the NC, and a scribe correcting a LXX manuscript according to a NT citation might not follow a variation obviously introduced by the NT author. So, it is likely that manuscript 71 was corrected to agree with the Hebrews citation of Exod. 24:8. Likewise, it is likely that manuscript 2013 was corrected to agree with the citation of Ps. 39:7-9 (LXX) in Hebrews, since it is the only extant witness that agrees entirely with the text as represented in Hebrews.<sup>16</sup> In these examples there is a far greater probability that Hebrews has influenced the septuagintal witnesses than *vice-versa*, since the chance of Hebrews having contact with such isolated traditions is far less likely than the editors of these LXX manuscripts having contact with Hebrews. The likelihood that the variants in Exod. 24:8 and Ps. 39:7-9 (LXX) are introduced by the author of Hebrews is confirmed by exegetical considerations. With regard to Exod. 24:8, it is likely that our author follows Christian tradition in replacing *ἰδοῦ* with *τοῦτο*, and that he replaced *κύριος* with *ὁ θεός* in 9:20 to avoid the association of Christ with *κύριος*. With regard to Ps. 39:7-9 (LXX), the changes in the last line of the citation probably represent our author's abbreviation of the text to facilitate ending the quotation before the last line of v. 9 (LXX), in which the psalmist speaks positively of the law of Moses.

Another way to describe the textual characteristics of the six passages cited in chs. 8–10 is to plot readings in Hebrews that follow A

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the LXX.

<sup>13</sup>Several less reliable manuscripts of the book of Hebrews add *αὐτῶν*, matching the LXX reading.

<sup>14</sup>The book of Hebrews as attested in Codex C agrees with the LXX here, reading *διέθετο*.

<sup>15</sup>Some manuscripts and Eusebius attest to the placement of the *μου* after *πίστεως* in the book of Hebrews, which would agree with the LXX.

<sup>16</sup>Swete (*An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, p. 479) cites the *σῶμα* variant from Ps. 39:7 in Hebrews 10:5 as an example of the NT influencing LXX traditions.

No.	REF.	HEBREWS	LXX A	LXX B
JEREMIAH 38:31-34 (LXX) IN HEBREWS 8:8-12				
1	8:8	λέγει	†=same as Hebrews	φησίν
2	8:9	καγω	†	καὶ ἐγώ
3	8:10	διαθήκη	†	διαθήκη μου
4	8:10	διδούς	†	διδούς δώσω
5	8:10	καὶ ἔσομαι	καὶ ὄψομαι καὶ ἔσομαι	†
6	8:11	οὐ μὴ	†	οὐ
7	8:11	διδάξωσιν	†	διδάξουσιν
8	8:11	πολίτην	ἀδελφόν	†
9	8:11	ἀδελφον	πλησίον	†
10	8:11	μικροῦ	†	μικροῦ αὐτῶν
PSALM 39:7-9 (LXX) IN HEBREWS 10:5-7				
11	10:6	ὀλοκαυτώματα	†	ὀλοκαυτώμα
HABAKKUK 2:3, 4 IN HEBREWS 10:37, 38				
12	10:38	δίκαιός μου	†	πίστεως μου

Fig. 17

against B and readings that follow B against A (as in figure 17).<sup>17</sup> This evidence shows that when the A and B traditions divide our author favours A over B in three out of four cases in chs. 8–10.<sup>18</sup>

Comparing the data in figures 16 and 17 reveals that the citations in Hebrews 8–10 deviate at times from both A and B. This can be accounted for in the citations of Exod. 24:8 and Deut. 32:35, 36 as changes introduced by our author. This may also account for the deviations from A and B in the citation of Exod. 25:40, but it is more likely that the author of Hebrews has been influenced by other sources, possibly including Philo (*Leg. All.* III, 102, as discussed below), though he

<sup>17</sup>I must acknowledge my debt to the work of Thomas (“The Use of the Septuagint in the Epistle to the Hebrews”, pp. 180–228) for the data in figure 17, which I have verified as accurate.

<sup>18</sup>This is consistent with the conclusion of Thomas (“The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews”, pp. 321–22) with regard to the entirety of Hebrews. Swete (*An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, p. 395) also espouses the view that the NT as a whole has a closer agreement with A than B. See also Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, pp. 247–48.

does not follow Philo verbatim.<sup>19</sup> The citation of Exod. 25:40, then, probably indicates that the text cited in Hebrews was derived from a tradition separate from A or B, indicating that the author of Hebrews gathered material from more than one source, probably over a period of time and over the course of his travels.<sup>20</sup> This evidence is consistent with the theory that our author may have extracted passages from the texts of the LXX that he studied, even texts to which he gained access in a variety of locations, to create his own anthology of Scripture passages.<sup>21</sup>

The textual issues related to the citation of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10 are complex, but it is certain that our author used some version of the LXX, which he modifies at some points. Schröger lists several Scripture passages quoted in Hebrews that he reckons could only serve the author in their septuagintal version, including the citation of Ps. 39:7–9 (LXX), because of the phrase *σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι*, and the citation of Hab. 2:3, 4, because of its messianic overtones in the LXX version.<sup>22</sup> Although the term *σῶμα* does make a significant contribution to the appropriateness of the Psalm 40 citation, perhaps Schröger slightly overstates the case in this instance, since other features of the passage that agree with the MT also contribute to the author's argument and would justify his use of it. Nonetheless, it is clear that the author of Hebrews not only uses the LXX as his scriptural text, but that he wittingly or unwittingly exploits its particular wording to further his theological and paraenetic purpose.

Finally, K.J. Thomas argues that the author of Hebrews had contact with the work of Philo at a limited number of points. Thomas suggests that the author of Hebrews may have followed Philo's citation of Exod. 25:40, which is quoted in *Leg. All.* III, 102, with regard to the addition of *πάντα*,<sup>23</sup> and that he may have deliberately introduced textual changes to contradict Philo's interpretation of Deut. 32:35, which is quoted in *Leg. All.* III, 105. In the latter example Philo argues that God stores up evil instead of releasing it upon humanity, giving the sinner time to repent before exercising vengeance. In 10:26–31 Hebrews argues that God will take vengeance and judge his people for persistent sin. In

<sup>19</sup>See Braun, *Hebräer*, p. 234.

<sup>20</sup>Hebrews 13:19 indicates that our author had at least some occasion to travel.

<sup>21</sup>Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, pp. 73–78.

<sup>22</sup>Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, pp. 263–64.

<sup>23</sup>Philo's quotation of Exod. 25:40 is as follows: ὡς φησι·κατὰ τὸ παράδειγμα τὸ δεδειγμένον σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει πάντα ποιήσεις.

fact, the interpretations of Philo and Hebrews, in my judgment, do not contradict, although the two certainly do have differing emphases, and the interpretations of Philo and Hebrews are starkly different in tone: Philo emphasises the grace and patience of God in delaying judgment, and Hebrews the certainty and severity of God’s judgment. Philo also quotes Num. 12:7 in *Leg. All.* III, 103, which adds strength to Thomas’ contention that our author knew *Leg. All.*, since these three passages cited in such close proximity to one another in *Leg. All.* are also cited in Hebrews.<sup>24</sup>

### TECHNIQUES IN THE AUTHOR’S USE OF SCRIPTURE

#### *Introduction to Quotations*

The author of Hebrews does not always introduce his Scripture quotations, but he usually does. In chs. 8–10 there is only one block of quoted material that does not have a proper introduction. This block begins at 10:37 where the possible citation of Isa. 26:20 and the citation of Hab. 2:3, 4 begin. The rest of the citations in these chapters have introductions, as the following demonstrates:

- 8:5 “just as Moses was warned when he was about to complete the tabernacle . . . for he says”
- 8:8 “finding fault with them he says”
- 9:20 “saying”
- 10:5 “Wherefore, coming into the world he says”

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<sup>24</sup>Thomas, “The Use of the Septuagint in the Epistle to the Hebrews”, pp. 248–316. According to Thomas, there are 16 Scripture citations common to Philo and Hebrews, and eight of these show that the author of Hebrews probably had some knowledge of their context in Philo. See also Schröger (*Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, pp. 291–307), who says, “Philo had a different hermeneutical starting point in the interpretation of Scripture than the author of the epistle to the Hebrews” (p. 306; my translation). Schröger goes on to assert that the many similarities between Philo and Hebrews, which he describes, are more likely the result of their common literary and religious milieu than direct literary dependence. For the most part this view is correct, apart from the possible limited contact outlined by Thomas. According to Schröger, rabbinic and late Jewish interpretation of Scripture developed in two directions, allegorical and salvation-historical, with Philo representing the former and Hebrews the latter.

10:15 “and the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us, for after saying”

10:30 “for we know the one who said . . . and again”

These introductions in chs. 8–10 all lay stress on the fact that the words of the quotation are spoken by someone, and can be placed into one of three categories depending on the attribution our author wishes to make: 1) attribution to the original speaker as indicated by the Scripture passage itself, most frequently God,<sup>25</sup> 2) attribution to Christ<sup>26</sup> or 3) attribution to the Holy Spirit.<sup>27</sup> The author’s use of introductions in chs. 8–10 is very much representative of his practice throughout Hebrews in that few citations in the rest of the book are made without an introduction, virtually all of the introductions emphasise the (place of a) speaker of the words quoted and most fall into one of the three categories outlined above—with the notable exception of 13:6, where the author claims the words of Scripture for himself and his readers. Most often our author attributes the words of the Scripture passages quoted in chs. 8–10, as in the rest of Hebrews, to God. Sometimes, consistent with the original context, he attributes the citation to other characters such as Moses (9:20; cf. 12:21). There are a few instances, however, when our author attributes the words of Scripture to a person not mentioned in the original context, usually Christ or the Holy Spirit. In any case, treating Scripture as a spoken word rather than written has the effect of personalising it, highlighting the presence of a personality, usually God, behind its words, and discouraging an approach to Scripture as a collection of dry and impersonal propositions.<sup>28</sup> It is the personality standing behind Scripture that is important to our author, not just scriptural propositions, as indicated by the introduction to the quotation of Deut. 32:35 in 10:30, “for we know the one who said. . . .” Likewise, Hebrews 10:5 attributes

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<sup>25</sup>8:5; 8:8; 9:20; 10:30.

<sup>26</sup>10:5.

<sup>27</sup>10:15.

<sup>28</sup>Smith (“The Use of the Old Testament in the New”, p. 61), among others, points out that Hebrews never uses the terms *γράφω* or *γραφή* to introduce a citation, which is, as he says, remarkable. This is, however, consistent with such passages in Hebrews as 1:2 and 4:12, 13, which stress the personal and vital nature of God’s word. (See Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, pp. 252–54.) The similarity of Hebrews and some Jewish literature is reflected in the observation of Metzger (“The Formulas Introducing Quotations of Scripture in the NT and the Mishnah”, p. 298): “By far the majority of quotations in the Mishnah are introduced by the verb *אמר*”.

the words of Ps. 40:6-8 to Christ (cf. 2:12), probably on the basis of the perceived typological connection between Christ and the psalmist (David), and on the basis of the author's messianic interpretation of the psalm. For our author, the words of Ps. 40:6-8 match his understanding of the significance of the Christ-event, and the words of the psalm are written in such a way that they correspond to certain aspects of the Christ-event when they are treated as coming from Christ. Placing the words of the psalm on the lips of Christ makes them all the more vivid and personal.

That our author believes the Scripture passages he quotes have the authority of the word of God for his readers is affirmed by his declaration in 10:15 (cf. 3:7) that “the Holy Spirit bears witness to us” through Scripture. This introduction is difficult to understand at one point. At the end of the introduction he says, *μετὰ γὰρ τὸ εἰρηκέναι* (“for after saying”), which leaves the reader looking for a second introduction to what he says afterwards, but it never comes. The implication of this introduction is that there is a before and after to what the Holy Spirit says, but the before and after parts are difficult to identify. It is possible to understand the first element as consisting of vv. 16, 17, and the second element as consisting of v. 18. In this view the *δέ* at the beginning of v. 18 is awkward, but it is feasible to understand it as marking out the second element. If v. 18 is intended to be the second element of what the Holy Spirit says, then it is clear that his “witness” includes the logical implications of the Jeremiah passage interpreted in the new light of the Christ-event. It is also possible that the before and after elements are Jer. 33:33 and 34, since they are separated by an ellipsis. In fact, some manuscripts begin v. 17 (Jer. 33:34) with the words *ὕστερον λέγει* (“later he says”),<sup>29</sup> marking the ellipsis and drawing attention to the connection of the two separate parts of Jeremiah 31. The textual evidence for this is not strong, however, and this addition probably arises from later attempts to solve the difficulty presented by this introduction in the first place. It should be noted that even if one rejects the authenticity of *ὕστερον λέγει*, it is still possible to understand the author as intending this or a similar phrase to be understood here. It probably would have been difficult for the average readers to recognise the ellipsis in this citation between Jer. 33:33 and 34 and then interpret v. 34 as constituting the second element of what the Spirit says without the help

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<sup>29</sup>The RSV, NIV and NASB include these words.

of a verbal marker. However, the *καὶ* at the beginning of v. 17 may serve as such a marker, especially if it is given emphasis.

By assigning the words of Scripture to the Holy Spirit, our author is not only reminding his readers of the authority of the words he is quoting, but he is also evoking the authority of God for his own message. This is especially the case since in 9:8 our author goes beyond merely attributing the words of Scripture to the Holy Spirit, assigning to him at least part of the interpretive process as well. In other words, the Holy Spirit bears witness not only through the words of Scripture, but through the logical implications drawn from Scripture as well. In 10:15–18 the implications of Jer. 31:33, 34 constitute the crux of the Spirit’s witness: there is no longer any need for the continuing, levitical sacrifices (v. 18). This affirms the author’s interpretation of Ps. 40:6–8 (see especially 10:9), and this affirmation is driven home by his use of the phrase from the psalm in v. 18, *περὶ ἁμαρτίας* (“for sin” or “sin offering”).

### *Combination of Sources*

In various places the author of Hebrews seamlessly combines two or more sources in at least two ways: first by simply conflating multiple sources, and secondly by interpreting material from different sources in the light of one another. Examples of simple conflation can be found in Heb. 11:5 with the combining of information from Gen. 5:24; 1 En. 70:1–4; Wis. 4:10 and Sir. 44:16 in the short biography of Enoch, Heb. 12:12 with the possible combination of Isa. 35:3 and Sir. 25:23, and Heb. 13:20 with the possible combination of Isa. 63:11 and Zech. 9:11 with one or more of Isa. 55:3; Jer. 32:40 and Ezek. 37:26. While this method is not uncommon in the book as a whole, it seems to occur with an unusually high frequency in ch. 9. For example, Heb. 9:4, 5 combines material from Exod. 16:30; 25:10–16, 18–22; 30:1–6; Num. 17:8–10 and Deut. 10:3–5 in the description of the layout of the tabernacle. The description of the ministry of the OC priests in 9:6, 7, 10 depends on as many sources as Exod. 30:10; Lev. 11:2, 25; 15:8; 16:2, 14–34; Num. 18:1–7 and 19:13. In Heb. 9:13 the material on the blood comes from Lev. 16:3, 14, 15, while the material on the ashes probably comes from Num. 19:9, 17–19. Finally, Heb. 9:19–21 involves several sources from the Pentateuch (Exod. 24:3, 6–8; Lev. 8:15, 19; 14:4, 51; 17:11; Num. 19:6), and seems to add material from sources outside Scripture as well (see the exegetical section on 9:18–22). However, as I have argued previously, the author may well be using hyperbole in this last example,

which may have included the exaggeration of the scriptural material as well. This example, then, goes beyond the way of using scriptural material in the examples cited above; nevertheless, it does involve the combination of source material.

The second type of conflation in Hebrews involves interpreting two or more passages together. The most important example of this in Hebrews is the author's use of Ps. 110:1, 4. In this case there is exegetical warrant within the psalm itself for connecting these two verses, but the author of Hebrews is the first writer explicitly to make this connection. Another example of this interpretive conflation is Heb. 10:16–18 which interprets Jer. 31:33, 34 and the practices of the levitical priests (see 9:6, 7; 10:1–4, 11) in the light of one another to conclude that because God no longer remembers sin, that is, he forgives it, there is no longer a place for the on-going levitical sacrifices.<sup>30</sup> It is also possible to understand the author's bold interpretation of Ps. 40:6–8 in 10:5–10, "he abolishes the first in order to establish the second", as depending on his understanding that Jesus has fulfilled Jeremiah's NC passage and put an end to sacrifice, as indicated by v. 18. If this is the case, then the exegetical basis for the author's general assertion of the obsolescence of the levitical sacrifices is Jeremiah 31 (see 8:13), and the exegetical contribution of Psalm 40 is to show that it was the sacrifice of Christ in particular that made them obsolete. Therefore, the most significant contribution of Ps. 40:6–8 to the argument of Hebrews is not so much to make the point that the first sacrifices are abolished, but to assert that it is Christ who abolishes them by doing the will of God and sacrificing himself.

### *Influence of Midrash and Peshet*

"It is by now commonplace to complain about the varied and misleading uses of the term 'midrash'".<sup>31</sup> To overcome this problem, it is necessary to clarify at the outset what one means when using such a term. Porton offers this definition:

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<sup>30</sup>Cf. also Hebrews 4:8, which interprets Josh. 22:4 in the light of Ps. 95:8–11 to conclude that the rest Joshua offered was not the final sabbath rest for the people of God.

<sup>31</sup>France and Wenham, *Gospel Perspectives: Studies in Midrash and Historiography*, vol. 3, p. 290.

In brief I would like to define *midrash* as a type of literature, oral or written, which stands in direct relationship to a fixed, canonical text, considered to be the authoritative and revealed word of God by the midrashist and his audience, and in which this canonical text is explicitly cited or clearly alluded to.<sup>32</sup>

Neusner accepts and expands Porton's definition, emphasising the Jewish nature of midrash:

For something to be considered Midrash it must have a clear relationship to the accepted canonical text of Revelation [sic]. Midrash is a term given to a Jewish activity which finds its locus in the religious life of the Jewish community. While others exegete their revelatory canons and while Jews exegete other texts, only Jews who explicitly tie their comments to the Bible engage in Midrash.<sup>33</sup>

On the basis of Neusner's understanding of midrash, what we find in the NT generally and Hebrews specifically can properly be called midrash only if one considers these writers and their readers to be Jewish by religion. It is possible to see the writer of Hebrews and his audience as representing a sect of first-century Judaism, but it is not clear that our author would agree with this in the light of his attitude toward the Mosaic system. Others, such as Porton above, do not define "midrash" so strictly, and leave room for a broader application of the term. If the term "midrash" is applied to the interpretation of Scripture in Hebrews, it is necessary to recognise that the "midrash" in Hebrews can only represent one strand of the genre/method, alongside that found in rabbinic literature and possibly in the Qumran scrolls, for example. Just as it would be improper to equate rabbinic midrash with "midrash" pesher,<sup>34</sup> it would be wrong to think of midrash in Hebrews as equivalent to the non-Christian midrashim. In other words, in the same way that other

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<sup>32</sup>Porton, "Defining Midrash", p. 62. Also see his article in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "Midrash".

<sup>33</sup>Neusner, *What is Midrash?*, pp. 9, 10.

<sup>34</sup>See Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk*, pp. 23-25 on the term "midrash pesher". Ellis ("Midrash, Targum and New Testament Quotations", p. 62) defends the designation "midrash pesher". Others do not accept that the pesharim are a sub-genre of the midrashim, e.g. Aune, "Charismatic Exegesis in Early Judaism and Early Christianity", p. 135; Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books*, pp. 249-52; Rabinowitz, "'Pesher/Pittaron': Its Biblical Meaning and Its Significance in the Qumran Literature", p. 231; Frölich, "Le Genre Littéraire Des Pesharim de Qumrân", pp. 283-398.

manifestations of midrash have been distinguished by sub-categorising the designation (e.g. midrash halakah, midrash haggadah, midrash pesher),<sup>35</sup> so too, if one chooses to use the term “midrash”, Hebrews (or the NT) deserves its own category: possibly NT midrash or Christian midrash.<sup>36</sup> On the surface it is obvious that Hebrews’ (and the NT’s) midrashim are as different from the (rest of) Jewish midrashim as the rabbis’ midrash is from the pesher of the Qumran scrolls, which is to say that there are both significant differences and similarities between the two.

There is another issue relevant to defining what one means by “midrash”. Midrash can be used to describe: 1) a particular method of exegesis, 2) an example of midrashic exegesis or 3) an entire work characterised by midrashic exegesis. These uses represent another way of categorising midrash, and Neusner has offered the terms: 1) midrash-process, 2) midrash-exegesis and 3) midrash-compilation.<sup>37</sup> For the present discussion the first category, dealing with exegetical method, is the most important since the appropriateness of applying the other two categories is determined by the extent of midrashic exegetical method employed, and the other categories are more helpful for describing the general character of a work than for defining how it is constructed.

More important than the question of whether or not the interpretation of Scripture in Hebrews can be *classified* as midrashic is the fact that Hebrews does utilise some of the interpretive techniques common in the midrashim. There are several instances in Hebrews 8–10 where the use of Scripture parallels that of the rabbis.<sup>38</sup> Although some of the methods employed in these examples are more distinctly rabbinic than others, all of these examples together suggest the probability that our author was influenced by contemporary Jewish uses of Scripture.<sup>39</sup> First,

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<sup>35</sup>Cf. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, p. 44.

<sup>36</sup>See Ellis (“Midrash, Targum and New Testament Quotations”, p. 65), who uses the term “Christian midrash”. Bruce (*Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, p. 81) uses the term “Christian ‘pesher’”. Part of this distinction is based on differences of content, but it is impossible to separate genre entirely from content.

<sup>37</sup>Neusner, *What is Midrash?*, pp. 8, 9.

<sup>38</sup>For a fuller treatment of the use of these methods in these passages, see the previous exegetical sections of this work.

<sup>39</sup>Though all rabbinic literature in its written form dates from the end of the second century CE at the earliest, it is reasonable to conclude that much of this literature reflects practices current at the turn of the eras, and where the practices of the NT

in Heb. 8:13 and 10:8, 9 the writer uses a method common in rabbinic exegesis when he re-quotes, within his own exegesis of the passage, words and phrases from the passage he has just cited.<sup>40</sup> Secondly, in 9:19, 20 our author may be using a method particular to the rabbis, taking the particle  $\pi\alpha\tilde{\alpha}\varsigma$  (לְ in Hebrew; the rule also applies to the particles הִנֵּה, הִנֵּה, הִנֵּה) “to indicate that a supplementary teaching from tradition should be introduced at that point.”<sup>41</sup> Thirdly, the rabbinic method of using intersecting texts (two passages interpreted together) is probably employed in 10:5-10 and 10:16-18 with citations from Ps. 40:6-8 and Jer. 31:33, 34.<sup>42</sup> Fourthly, the citations of Ps. 40:6-8 in 10:5-10<sup>43</sup> and Hab. 2:3, 4 in 10:37, 38 may be considered an example of linking two texts together on the basis of them containing the same word, akin to Hillel’s third *middah*, constructing a family from a single text. Fifthly, the author’s argument from the lesser to the greater in 9:13, 14 and 10:28, 29 is akin to the rabbinic practice of arguing from the lesser to the greater and *vice versa*, described by Hillel’s first rule, *qal wahomer* (cf. 2:1-4; 7:9, 10; 12:3, 4). What is true with many midrashic interpretive practices, that they represent logical principles found in many other

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writers show an affinity with practices in rabbinic literature, this conclusion is validated.

<sup>40</sup>See, for example, Gen. R. 44:17, 18; 55:8; Lev. R. 13:5; *Sifré to Numbers* 58.

<sup>41</sup>Towner, “Hermeneutical Systems of Hillel and the Tannaim: A Fresh Look”, p. 128. Cf. the first and third of R. Eliezer’s 32 *middoth*; Gen. R. 1, 14; Mek. on Exod. 18:18.

<sup>42</sup>See Neusner, *What is Midrash?*, p. 82; Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, p. 159.

<sup>43</sup>The alleged use of Ps. 40:8 by R. Isaac (around 300 CE) in Ruth Rabbah (Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah on Ruth* [vol. 8], p. 93) is interesting when compared to its use in Hebrews, although it comes too late to be of any substantive value. Ruth R. 8 says: “R. Isaac opened his exposition with the verse *Then said I: Lo, I am come* (Ps. 40:8). I ought to have sung a song that I have come, since the word *az* (lo!) refers to song, as it is said, *Then (az) sang Moses* (Exod. 15:1). I was included in the verse *An Amonite and a Moabite shall not come into the assembly of the Lord* (Deut. 23:4), but I have come *with the roll of a book which is prescribed for me* (Ps. 40:8). ‘*With the roll*’ refers to the verse, *Concerning whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thy congregation* (Lam. 1:10). ‘*In the book*’, as it is said, ‘*An Amonite and a Moabite shall not come into the assembly of the Lord*’ (Deut. 23:4). And not only have I been allowed to enter, but in the roll and the book it is written concerning me. ‘*In the roll*’—Perez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David; ‘*in the book*’; *And the Lord said: Arise, anoint him; for this is he* (1 Sam. 16:12).”

traditions,<sup>44</sup> is especially true here. Finally, the author's placement of his exegetical comment in 10:31 after the citation of Scripture (in this case Deut. 32:35)<sup>34</sup> is typical of rabbinic method.

The use of two more rabbinic methods found outside chs. 8–10 are worth mentioning. The catena of citations in ch. 1 seems to be constructed in line with the later rabbinic practice of building families of texts around one or two passages of Scripture (cf. Hillel's rules 2–4).<sup>45</sup> Then, in 7:3, our author asserts that Melchizedek had no father, mother or genealogy, had no beginning of days or end of life, and like “the Son of God” was a priest forever.<sup>46</sup> This kind of argument from silence, according to Bruce, “plays an important part in rabbinical interpretation of Scripture where (for exegetical purposes) nothing must be regarded as having existed before the time of its first biblical mention.”<sup>47</sup> Strack and Billerbeck confirm this and cite the saying “quod non in thora, non in mundo.”<sup>48</sup>

Examples of rabbinic interpretive methodology are not difficult to identify in Hebrews,<sup>49</sup> and it is sensible to accept the likelihood that our author would have been influenced by (pre-)rabbinic uses of Scripture in the light of these examples, especially if his readers were in fact Jewish and familiar with these methods. However, there is a danger in over-emphasising the connection between Hebrews and (pre-)rabbinic uses of Scripture, since it is evidently the case that there are many characteristics in Hebrews that distinguish its use of Scripture from theirs. One such characteristic is its similarity at some points to midrash pesher as found in some of the Qumran documents.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup>Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, p. cxxi. Daube (“Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric”, pp. 239–264) claims that the interpretive methods employed by the rabbis are derived, at least to a very large extent, from Hellenistic rhetoric.

<sup>45</sup>See Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, p. 22. Hillel's seven *middoth* can be found in *Aboth D'Rabbi Nathan*, A 37 (Soncino).

<sup>46</sup>For examples of argument from silence in rabbinic literature see B. Mes 87a, Gen. R. 60:12; 65:9.

<sup>47</sup>Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 159.

<sup>48</sup>Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash*, vol. 3, pp. 694–95 (“If it is not in Torah, it is not in the world”). See also Towner, “Hermeneutical Systems of Hillel and the Tannaim: A Fresh Look”, p. 103.

<sup>49</sup>See also Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, pp. cxix–cxxiv.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, p. 185.

It is common for writers to refer to some of the exegesis in Hebrews as *peshet*, but, as with the use of the term *midrash*, there is some question as to whether this is appropriate.<sup>51</sup> In fact, it is more difficult to justify the application of the term “*peshet*” to Hebrews than the term “*midrash*”, since the *pesharim* always exhibit a particular form which never occurs in Hebrews. Every instance of *peshet* in Daniel (2:36; 4:18; 5:17; 7:16), where the genre/method evidently originates,<sup>52</sup> and in Qumran (e.g. 1QpHab) manifests three formal characteristics: there is 1) a citation of a divine message which needs to be interpreted, 2) a transition connecting the message and its interpretation that consistently uses the word “*peshet*” (פִּשְׁרָא in Aramaic)<sup>53</sup> and 3) the divinely enabled interpretation of the message.<sup>54</sup> There are instances in the Dead Sea Scrolls where Scripture is interpreted in a manner similar to the *pesharim* and where the term itself is not used (e.g. CD 4:2-4), but these can be explained as examples of *peshet*’s influence on non-*peshet* texts since these texts lack the formal structure and overall character of the true *peshet* texts. Regarding the example of CD 4:2-4, Patte says, “This *peshet*-like interpretation looks almost ‘accidental’”, and later he says that “*peshet* interpretation is presupposed by several other uses of Scripture which we have found in the Dead Sea scrolls”.<sup>55</sup> Bruce comments concerning the Zadokite Documents:

It might be said that, after all, the Zadokite work is not a *peshet*, and that accordingly we need not expect to find its application of Scripture following *peshet* principles. It is doubtful, however, if we should take this con-

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<sup>51</sup>For a definition of *peshet* see Brownlee, *The Midrash Peshet of Habakkuk*, pp. 25-28.

<sup>52</sup>See Elliger, *Studien zum Habakuk-Kommentar vom Toten Meer*, pp. 156-57, 164; Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, pp. 67-74; Brownlee, *The Midrash Peshet of Habakkuk*, pp. 28-31; Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, p. 42.

<sup>53</sup>See Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books*, pp. 230, 242. Horgan cites three examples of *peshet* interpretations that do not incorporate the term “*peshet*”, but two of these three texts have been reconstructed due to lacunae where the term would normally occur. This leaves one sure example, 4QpIs<sup>b</sup> 2:6-7, indicating remarkable consistency in including the use of the term פִּשְׁרָא in the form of the *pesharim*. See also Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 277.

<sup>54</sup>See Aune, “Charismatic Exegesis in Early Judaism and Early Christianity”, p. 135.

<sup>55</sup>Patte, *Early Jewish Hermeneutic in Palestine*, pp. 244-45, 299.

sideration too seriously; it may be that the Zadokite writer did think of his exegesis as being in the true *peshar* style.<sup>56</sup>

Even Bruce, who argues that the exegesis of the Zadokite material follows *peshar* principles, is reluctant actually to call the work a true *peshar*, saying instead that it is “in the true *peshar style*”.<sup>57</sup> Aune “distinguishes three types of *pesharim*”:

(1) “Continuous *pesharim*” (i.e. verse-by-verse commentaries on entire books, e.g. 1QpHab), (2) “Thematic *pesharim*” (i.e. quotations from various biblical books grouped around a theme, e.g. 4QpIsa<sup>e</sup>; 4Qflor 1–2 i 14; 11QMelch 12, 17), and (3) Isolated *pesharim*, the use of one or two verses from the Hebrew Bible interpreted using the *peshar* method and terminology, but within the framework of a larger composition (e.g. CD 19:5–13 on Zech. 13:7; IQS 8:13–15 on Isa. 40:3).<sup>58</sup>

It is significant that even in the last category Aune includes the use of *peshar* terminology as a necessary element in his definition of *peshar*. In the light of this, it seems reasonable to use the designation “*peshar-like*” for exegesis that has some hermeneutical affinities with the *pesharim* but does not adopt their formal characteristics.<sup>59</sup>

Along with the formal structure of the *pesharim*, their conceptual framework probably derives from Daniel,<sup>60</sup> and has few if any exact parallels in the rest of Jewish literature. According to Bruce, the primary characteristic of *peshar* interpretation is its contemporary nature.<sup>61</sup> In other words, the exegete interprets a prophetic passage of Scripture in the light of the exegete’s own time and community rather than those of the prophet who wrote the Scripture passage. For the *peshar* exegete the Scripture passage is a mystery (מִסְתֵּר), even to its author, and this mystery

<sup>56</sup>Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, p. 32.

<sup>57</sup>Bruce also qualifies his use of *peshar* at one point in this context by placing it in quotation marks.

<sup>58</sup>Aune, “Charismatic Exegesis in Early Judaism and Early Christianity”, p. 133.

<sup>59</sup>Patte, *Early Jewish Hermeneutic in Palestine*, p. 244. Ellis (“Midrash, Targum and New Testament Quotations”, p. 65) uses the term “Christian *peshar*-type midrash”.

<sup>60</sup>Cf. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, p. 67; Elliger, *Studien zum Habakuk-Kommentar vom Toten Meer*, p. 164; Aune, “Charismatic Exegesis in Early Judaism and Early Christianity”, p. 132; Frölich, “Le Genre littéraire des *Pesharim* de Qumrân”, p. 395.

<sup>61</sup>See Bruce, “Biblical Exposition at Qumran”, pp. 77–96, for a full description of the exegetical method of *peshar*.

can be unlocked by him only because the Teacher of Righteousness has been given the interpretive key.<sup>62</sup> In the pesher, Scripture is often applied directly to the Teacher of Righteousness and other contemporary figures. The description “this is that” has often been used to describe the essence of pesher exegesis.<sup>63</sup>

The eschatological mind-set along with the charismatic application<sup>64</sup> of Scripture in the pesharim have elements in common with the NT at some points, and this is particularly the case in Hebrews. (Even the christological interpretation of Scripture in the NT has some affinity with the application of Scripture to the Teacher of Righteousness.<sup>65</sup>) There are at least three examples of this in chs. 8–10.<sup>66</sup> The first, and most obscure of the three, is in 9:6–10, where our author assigns a contemporary significance to the tabernacle ministry of the levitical priests, saying that it is an “illustration” for the present time. This example is more obscure because it does not attempt to interpret a specific passage of Scripture. Also, unlike most examples of pesher-like exegesis in Hebrews, the Scripture alluded to in this example is not from the Psalms or the Prophets, the typical scriptural sources for the pesher of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Nonetheless, some of the same interpretive conventions are employed here as in the pesharim. The second example is the quotation and application of Ps. 40:6–8 in Heb. 10:5–10.<sup>67</sup> In this most overt of the three examples, our author interprets his Scripture passage in the light of his own time, that is, the Christ-event, and with reference to his own community, instead of in the light of the text’s original temporal and community context. This approach is at the heart of the hermeneutical method of the pesharim. Most interpretations of sacred texts, including the pesharim from Qumran and the midrashim of the rabbis, seek to exegete the text with a view to engaging and

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<sup>62</sup>Bruce, “Pesher”, in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, cols. 331–33. See also Elliger, *Studien zum Habakuk-Kommentar vom Toten Meer*, p. 154. On the concept of mystery (רִיז) see Patte, *Early Jewish Hermeneutic in Palestine*, pp. 226–27.

<sup>63</sup>E.g. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, p. 75.

<sup>64</sup>Cf. Aune, “Charismatic Exegesis in Early Judaism and Early Christianity”, pp. 126–50.

<sup>65</sup>But see Brownlee (*The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible*, pp. 143–51), who draws several contrasts between the presentation of Jesus in the NT and that of the Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran literature.

<sup>66</sup>Cf. Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 258.

<sup>67</sup>Cf. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 87, 88.

enlightening the community's contemporary experience.<sup>68</sup> The interpretation of the pesharim and our author's here take this a step further by understanding the text as if it were a part of their own community's contemporary context. In other words, rather than bringing together the two historical and community contexts of the text and the interpreter, peshar-style exegesis *replaces* the former with the latter. Though something similar to this seems to be in operation here, this is not the most fundamental principle guiding our author's understanding of Psalm 40. Rather, our author is clearly practising here what has come to be called christological interpretation, with these peshar-like qualities playing a part in that more fundamental hermeneutic. That is, this is an interpretation that stems more specifically from typological connections and the author's view of the relationship of Christ to Scripture than it does from insight into a mystery that comes by applying an interpretive code.<sup>69</sup> A christological interpretation is an even more thorough-going and radical paradigm shift than the peshar hermeneutic, because for our author not only is the meaning of Scripture finally and fully revealed, but its institutions are also set aside as a result of the Christ-event.<sup>70</sup> While it may be easy to imagine that, on some level, our author sees Jesus and the Christ-event as the key to unlock the mystery of OC Scripture, even so, he does not apply this principle in a way that completely ignores or replaces the text's original context and meaning, since the same levitical offerings are in view in both contexts. The third example is the application from Hab. 2:3, 4 of "the coming one" to Christ and the "righteous one" to the readers in 10:37-39.<sup>71</sup> Here again, as in the pesharim, a prophetic text is interpreted and applied in the light of the author's historical context rather than that of the prophet.<sup>72</sup> While 1QpHab does not equate "the coming one" with the Teacher of Righteousness, it does interpret the "righteous" as applying to the writer and his community.<sup>73</sup> Finally, it is not an uncommon practice in the

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<sup>68</sup>Towner, "Hermeneutical Systems of Hillel and the Tannaim: A Fresh Look", p. 101.

<sup>69</sup>Cf. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 89.

<sup>70</sup>Cf. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, p. 76 and Bruce, "Biblical Exposition at Qumran", p. 97.

<sup>71</sup>Kistemaker (*The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 74) calls 10:37-39 an example of midrash peshar, as does Ellis (*Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, p. 193).

<sup>72</sup>See Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 24.

pesharim, as in other forms of midrash, for the interpreter to “adjust” the scriptural text to fit his purposes,<sup>74</sup> which is what our author does with Hab. 2:3, 4.

Even though there are points at which the interpretation of Scripture in Hebrews and that in Qumran pesher seem to share some hermeneutical if not ideological characteristics, it would be wrong to make too much of these similarities since they are far outweighed by the many differences. For example, Brownlee derives thirteen hermeneutical principles from 1QpHab which demonstrate that there are substantial differences between the use of Scripture in the Habakkuk pesher scroll and Hebrews.<sup>75</sup> The most important of these differences include the presence in 1QpHab of the interpretation of orthographic peculiarities, the use of allegory, making use of more than one textual variant to assist the interpretation and treating the biblical text as if it were a code. Furthermore, while it is possible to find affinities with both rabbinic midrash and midrash pesher in Hebrews, where these affinities exist, they centre primarily around the author’s exegetical method rather than the overall character of his work or its content. This is in contrast to the Platonic/Philonic influence which many find in Hebrews, which is primarily confined to terminology and largely excludes exegetical method.<sup>76</sup> Whether the similarities between Hebrews and the Judaism represented by some of the rabbinic and Qumran literature demonstrate any direct connection between them, or whether they are simply the result of sharing a common religious and interpretive milieu, is difficult

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<sup>73</sup>Ellis (“Midrash, Targum and New Testament Quotations”, p. 66) says, “Hab. 2:3f. . . . appears to be the concluding text of a homiletic midrash (? Heb. 10:5–38). In view of its affinities with 1QpHab, however, Heb. 10:37ff. could also well illustrate a Christian *peshar*-type midrash.” He also cites the use of Psalms 8 and 110 in Hebrews as examples of a “similar phenomenon”.

<sup>74</sup>Cf. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 70, 72, 74.

<sup>75</sup>Brownlee, “Biblical Interpretation Among the Sectaries of the Dead Sea Scrolls”, pp. 60–62.

<sup>76</sup>For example, there is a conspicuous lack of allegory in Hebrews as compared to Philo. As Goppelt (*Typos*, p. 161) says, “There is much [in the exposition of Hebrews] that is reminiscent of Philo, but unless a person is fascinated by superficial matters of form, he will discover fundamental differences in the way individual Scripture passages are interpreted”. See also Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 576.

to determine.<sup>77</sup> Whatever the case, it seems that even with his radical rejection of OC practices our author's understanding and application of Scripture was influenced by the Judaism of his day.

The Jewish influence evident in Hebrews is certainly natural given the (probable) Jewish identity of the readers and author. The exegetical method and expressions associated with the use of Scripture in Hebrews would have been familiar to the readers and they would have been natural for our author. The readers of Hebrews certainly had a deep respect for the institutions and practices of Judaism, and the author of Hebrews consistently treats the OC and its trappings with respect, even maintaining a gentleness in asserting its obsolescence. The readers evidently had deep spiritual and emotional ties with the Jewish faith, and their separation from Judaism, for whatever reason, caused them considerable distress. The author of Hebrews attempts to encourage the readers in their distress, and even to relieve that distress, by demonstrating from Scripture the authority and sufficiency of the NC provisions in Christ. In this process our author speaks in terms that would have been familiar to his readers, using OC categories such as priest, sacrifice and sanctuary.<sup>78</sup> But more than this, he also uses exegetical methods that would have been familiar to the readers, those represented in rabbinic and Qumran literature, possibly unconsciously, but possibly as an attempt to establish common ground with his readers, since the message he derives from Scripture may have been (relatively) new to them. The use of these exegetical methods, then, may well have had the effect of helping the readers to feel less threatened by the radical content of Hebrews.

### *Reproduction of the Biblical Text*

In chs. 8–10 there are two instances where our author seems to base his argument on an aberrant representation of the biblical text. (There are many places where his application of a Scripture passage goes beyond the original meaning of the text, but this is a hermeneutical issue and will be dealt with below.) In 9:20 our author cites Exod. 24:8. Though this citation accurately represents the biblical text, the material surrounding the citation does not. The problem is that the historical information the author gives to provide a context for the words of Moses

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<sup>77</sup>Hurst (*The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought*, pp. 65, 66) concludes that there is no direct connection between Hebrews and Qumran.

<sup>78</sup>Cf. Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, pp. 102, 103.

as found in Exodus does not correspond to the context as described in Scripture. Some of the material seems to come from Scripture passages describing unrelated events (i.e. Leviticus 14 and Numbers 19). Some of the material does not seem to come from Scripture at all. This may be due to the author relying on extra-biblical tradition, or it may be the result of his use of sarcasm or hyperbole (see the exegetical section on 9:15-22). Nevertheless, the author implies that some of the material in this passage comes from Scripture, and more specifically the account of the inauguration of the Mosaic Covenant, when it clearly does not.

Then, in 10:16, 17 the author cites or alludes to Hab. 2:3, 4, where he reverses the order of two lines. It may be a presumption here to assume that the author intends this material as an alternative version of the text of Hab. 2:3, 4, since there is no introduction to mark it out as a citation, and there is a possible combination of material here with Is. 26:20 LXX. So, following Schröger,<sup>79</sup> it is quite possible to understand our author in Heb. 10:37, 38 not as representing a citation of biblical material but as alluding to it—quite like 10:12, 13 which alludes to Ps. 110:1—in order to add force to his own thoughts (see the exegetical section on 10:19-39). Nonetheless, whether or not one understands these verses as quoting Habakkuk, our author does rework the order of the scriptural text for his own exegetical purposes here.

#### THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE AUTHOR'S USE OF SCRIPTURE

“Perhaps more than any other figure the unknown author of Hebrews deserves the title of the Old Testament theologian of the New.”<sup>80</sup> Describing the basic pattern in Hebrews’ use of Scripture, many scholars use the terms “continuity” and “discontinuity”.<sup>81</sup> This is to say that the interpretation and application of Scripture in Hebrews reflect the view that the OC and its writings have much in common with the NC situation, while at the same time the OC is obsolete and its Scripture speaks originally of and to a bygone age.<sup>82</sup> This view represents one of the most basic of our author’s theological (presup)positions. Therefore, to under-

<sup>79</sup>Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 185.

<sup>80</sup>Smith, “The Use of the Old Testament in the New”, p. 61.

<sup>81</sup>E.g. Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, p. 102; Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, pp. 12, 13; Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, p. 69.

<sup>82</sup>Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 30. Cf. Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, pp. 69-70.

stand better the use of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10 it is necessary to explore the theological framework surrounding and supporting this position.

### *Revelation of God*

It is significant that our author begins his work with a statement of God's revelatory activity, saying that God spoke first to the fathers in the prophets and then finally in a Son. Thus he lays the foundation for both his argument and his use of Scripture. The argument for the superiority of Christ and the NC depends on the assertion that the Son is himself the supreme revelation of God (see 1:2, 3), and it is on account of this that the Christ-event carries a greater authority than any past revelation to define (or redefine) the nature of God's interaction with his people. On the other hand, it is the author's recognition of the divine origin of the prophetic message of OC Scripture (see 1:1) that allows him to use it with such assurance and authority. If there is one concept that underlies both the argument and the use of Scripture in Hebrews it is that the Son embodies the ultimate progression in revelation from God.<sup>83</sup> God speaks through both the OC prophets and the Son, but the final revelation in the Son is superior because the Son is divine.

There is a tension held throughout the book of Hebrews: the author's teaching affirms, on the one hand, that the NC is superior to and in fact replaces the OC, while the author's use of OC Scripture affirms its validity as an authority for those under the NC.<sup>84</sup> The Christ-event opens to the people of God a new dimension in revelatory history, and places them in a relationship with God inconceivable to those who had gone before. Nevertheless, there is also a sense in which the NC people of God remain firmly connected to the past OC revelation of God. The achievement of Hebrews is remarkable in that the author is able firmly and with authority to assert the inferior nature and obsolescence of the OC (e.g. 8:13; 10:1-4), while maintaining respect for the OC and upholding its validity in redemptive history (e.g. 1:1; 2:2; 4:1-3; 11:4-40).<sup>85</sup> This stance can best be explained, in the light of 1:1-3, as founded on the principle that there is progress or advancement in divine revelation

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<sup>83</sup>This is not to say with Hughes (*Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, pp. 3, 4), however, that hermeneutics is the central question of the book.

<sup>84</sup>See Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 47.

<sup>85</sup>See Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 229; Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, p. 69.

as a result of the Christ-event. The Christ-event, for our author, had a unique significance for many reasons, one of which is that it represents a watershed in the revelatory activities of God (see for example 1:1-3; 2:3, 4; 10:29; 12:18-24). As never before, God is directly revealed in Christ (e.g. 1:2, 3), and thus the ministry of Christ is itself at the heart of spiritual and ultimate reality (10:11-14, 19, 20). It is an important concept underlying the use of Scripture in Hebrews, then, that the Christ-event marks a radical leap forward in the revelation of God and his purposes.

Another foundational concept related to this is that it is the same God who reveals himself in both the OC and NC.<sup>86</sup> Though the mode and extent of revelation in Christ are superior to past revelation, the central focus of what is being revealed, namely God, remains the same. First, Hebrews assumes at every turn that the God of the NC is the same in *identity* as the God of the OC,<sup>87</sup> but this surfaces in passages such as 1:1, 2, where the same God speaks in both the old and new situations, and in 11:39, 40, where the same God works out his unified purpose with both old and new covenant peoples. Secondly, God is still the same in *character*. This point is made overtly twice in Hebrews with respect to Christ, first in 1:11, 12, then in 13:8, which is significant in the light of 1:3, where Christ is described as divine. If, therefore, Christ as divine is unchanging in nature, then the same applies to God. Furthermore, the unchanging nature of God is assumed throughout Hebrews, providing a basis for asserting the consistency of his interaction with humanity. For example, what God swore to the exodus generation is still relevant to the readers of Hebrews (3:7-4:11), God became his own security for the promise to Abraham in order to assure future generations of his unchanging purpose (6:13-17),<sup>88</sup> he swears and will not change his mind (7:21 from Ps. 110:4), he is faithful to his promise (10:23), he still judges his people (10:30), and he is still a help to his people (13:6). All of these assertions rely on the assumption that God remains essentially the same.

There are, therefore, two principles that describe the view of Hebrews concerning the revelation of God. First, in both the old and the new situations it is the same God who reveals himself and his purposes. Secondly, the Christ-event, a unique watershed in the history of God's

<sup>86</sup>See von Rad, "Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament", p. 36.

<sup>87</sup>Lindars (*The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 29) says, "The Jewish understanding of God is one of the things that is taken for granted".

<sup>88</sup>See Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, pp. 249-51.

revelatory activities, gives the believer unprecedented and direct access to spiritual realities and even to God himself. These two foundational principles are determinative for our author's use of Scripture, as shown in the last main section of this chapter.

### *People of God*

It is clear that Hebrews sees the people of the OC and the people of the NC as distinct, that is, they possess a different corporate identity. This is reflected in several passages. For example, the two communities look to a different source of security in God's saving message (2:1-4), they are part of a different house (3:1-6), they are described using "us" and "them" language (4:2), they have a different priesthood (7:1-28) and sacrificial system (9:23-10:18), they are under different covenants (8:7-13), they are part of different ages (9:9), the NC people are not under the law (10:1-10), NC believers enjoy a new approach to God (10:20), the NC people are at risk of a stricter judgment (10:29), the two communities have a different place in the fulfilment of the purpose of God (11:39, 40), they have a different experience with regard to the glory of God (12:18-24), the NC people receive a more significant warning (12:25), they have a different altar (13:10) and the description "outside the camp" implies a disjunction between the two peoples (13:12, 13). The Old and New Covenant communities are distinct primarily because they belong to two different economies, that is, they are under different covenants. The obvious consequence is that they relate to God and God relates to them differently. Some of the most essential differences are expressed in the quotation of Jer. 31:31-34 in 8:8-12, but much of the message of Hebrews focuses on the differences between the two peoples.

Equally important is the author's conception of the similarities between the Old and New Covenant people. For example, both are confronted with God's revelation (1:1, 2) and are held accountable for their response (2:1-3), both are described as the house of God (3:1-6), both are offered rest (3:7-4:11), both have a tendency toward sin (3:13, 16), both have good news preached to them (4:2), both stand in the tradition of Abraham's faith (6:12-17), both respond to God through a priestly (7:1-28) and sacrificial system (9:23-10:18), both need a solution for their sin (10:1-10), both are judged by God (10:30), both are expected to evidence faith in God (11:4-12:3), both are part of the same purpose of God (11:39, 40), both are warned by God against infidelity (12:25-29)

and both are helped by God (13:6). In fact, our author seems to see the OC and NC people in general as having essentially the same spiritual needs and tendencies; they clearly share the same humanity. Any distinction in the place of the two peoples in redemptive history stems from the nature of their particular covenantal relationship with God (as shown above), and not from any essential difference in the nature of the people themselves. So, the OC and NC communities have a distinct corporate identity, covenantal arrangement and religious experience, but share the same nature, spiritual shortcomings and religious needs. They are different people, and yet partake of the same humanity. This continuity and discontinuity between the OC and NC people of God is also determinative for our author's use of Scripture, as shown in the last main section of this chapter.

#### *Relationship between God and his People*

As with most of the NT, a primary concern of the book of Hebrews is the relationship between God and his people, but in Hebrews this topic is perhaps nearer to the central thrust of the book than in any other NT writing. One of the purposes of Hebrews is to assure the readers that God still remains faithful to his covenant people (4:14, 15; 6:12, 13; 7:21; 8:8-12; 10:23, 37; 11:39, 40; 13:5, 6). That God can be trusted to keep his covenant/promise is a vital doctrine for the author of Hebrews, since he understands covenant and promise as central to God's relationships with humanity.

Probably the most foundational divine promise in Hebrews is that given to Abraham, since it is the earliest of the dispositions mentioned and since it establishes a people or offspring with whom the rest of God's covenants could be executed. The importance of Abraham in the thinking of our author is demonstrated by the fact that more space is devoted to Abraham and Sarah in ch. 11 than to any other characters, including Moses, and although there are many promises implied behind the various examples of faith in this chapter, most of them can be seen as extensions of the Abrahamic promise (cf. 11:9).<sup>89</sup> This promise is described in 6:14, *εἰ μὴν εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ σε* ("surely, I will abundantly bless you and I will abundantly multiply you"), and the readers are identified as heirs of this promise in 6:17, 18. For our author the promise to Abraham is valid for both the OC

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<sup>89</sup>Cf. Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, pp. 172-73.

and NC people, and finds ultimate fulfilment in Christ (6:18-20). Unlike Christ's fulfilment of the OC, replacing it with the NC, its real, eschatological counterpart, Christ fulfils the Abrahamic promise in a way that affirms its eternal, unchangeable validity. Both dispositions are fulfilled in Christ, but the Abrahamic promise is fulfilled in the sense of being kept, with its eschatological significance and validity affirmed, whereas the OC is fulfilled in a way that makes it obsolete. In other words, our author sees the Abrahamic promise as fulfilled like a promise, and the OC as fulfilled like an obligation. It is on this basis that the readers can be described as heirs of the Abrahamic promise, while they are no longer seen as governed by the covenant with Moses.

Nonetheless, Hebrews does make a connection between Abraham and the old system in the process of showing the superiority of Christ's priesthood to that of the levitical priests in ch. 7. Melchizedek is superior to Abraham, the forefather of the levitical priests, so Christ must be superior to the levitical priests since he is a priest in the order of Melchizedek. Abraham, then, is identified with the old, Mosaic system as the "father" of Levi, but this does not require that the Abrahamic promise be understood as standing in a similar relationship as the OC to the New. First, ch. 7 focuses on comparing persons, establishing the superiority of Melchizedek and Christ to Abraham and Levi, and this by itself does not prove the superiority of the NC over the Abrahamic promise, since it is the person and not the promise that is at issue. Of the four parties involved in this discussion, only Abraham is *not* a priest, which means that he is not compared to the others as a mediator of the promise made to him, so when he is linked to Levi it is not as a representative of the Abrahamic promise but simply as Levi's ancestor. In fact, it is evident from 6:17 that Hebrews sees God himself as the mediator of the Abrahamic promise, so that a comparison between the OC and the Abrahamic promise could be inferred from ch. 7 only if it contained a comparison between Melchizedek and God. Secondly, even if the NC is seen to be superior to the Abrahamic promise, this does not require that the Abrahamic promise be viewed as superseded or made obsolete. The Son, as the supreme revelation of God, does not make *all* of God's previous revelation (in Scripture) obsolete, and the same may be true with the NC in relation to the other promises/covenants of Scripture. In fact, this is likely since Hebrews does not present the NC as corresponding in detail and intent to the Abrahamic promise as it does to the OC. For example, there is no priestly element in the Abrahamic promise that

would be made obsolete by the new. Thirdly, it is the dependence of the levitical priests on Abraham that is an issue in Hebrews 7, and this dependence is never reversed. Abraham is not dependent on the Mosaic system in any way, so that the criticisms levelled against the OC do not necessarily apply to the Abrahamic promise. Therefore, the connection between Abraham and Levi, although it is held to say a great deal about the Mosaic system, says nothing about the nature of the Abrahamic promise. It is the relationship between Melchizedek and Abraham that is significant to this issue, and even this does not require that the Abrahamic promise be placed in the same position as the OC in relation to the NC. Finally, the difference in language used in Hebrews to describe the two dispositions shows that the author conceives the two differently. The author never uses the term “covenant” with reference to the Abrahamic promise, which makes no demand on Abraham apart from trusting the promise, and which our author describes as relying entirely on God for its fulfilment (6:17).<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, the “covenants” which our author describes do make demands on the human participants, and do rely, at least to a degree, on the faithfulness of the people for their success (see for example 8:8, 9; 10:36, 39). A promise (from God) must be kept, but the people can break a covenant. The discussion of Abraham in ch. 7, then, does not require that the Abrahamic promise be seen as obsolete along with the OC, although it may allow for such a view. However, in the light of the discussion of the Abrahamic promise in 6:13–20 where it is clearly held to be in force for the readers, it would be wrong to push ch. 7 in the direction of placing the Abrahamic promise and the OC on the same footing. For our author then, the NC fulfils the Abrahamic promise in a way that affirms its eschatological validity.

The concept of covenant is far from ubiquitous in the NT, and though it plays a more important role in Hebrews than in any other NT book, there are great stretches of text even in Hebrews where the notion of covenant plays no overt role. In fact, the term appears only three times outside chs. 8–10.<sup>91</sup> The relatively confined use of the term “covenant” in Hebrews is, however, out of all proportion to its importance in the book. Clearly, for our author the covenant concept is foundational to the Christian faith, so much so that its force and importance

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<sup>90</sup>See Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, p. 19.

<sup>91</sup>7:22; 12:24; 13:20.

is assumed throughout the book.<sup>92</sup> This is similar to the concepts of priesthood and sacrifice which are not mentioned in chs. 11–13 until 13:10, where the reintroduction of these cultic ideas shows that they actually serve as a background for the author’s previous practical discussion. Likewise, the concept of covenant in Hebrews is foundational to the author’s understanding of God’s relationship to his people, and colours his perception of what it means to be Christian. For example, the ministry of Christ is usually described using covenantal terms such as “priest”, “mediator”, “sacrifice”, “sanctuary”, and the most important role of Christ in Hebrews is that of priest or mediator, a role which is inherently linked to and dependent on the concept of covenant. Even faithfulness and endurance are concepts that have strong links to covenant in Hebrews, with covenant fidelity, or the lack of it, as a recurring theme throughout the book.<sup>93</sup> Most of the warning passages in Hebrews also have covenantal overtones or use covenantal language.<sup>94</sup> Hence, the importance for Hebrews of the change from the OC to the NC can hardly be over-estimated, and it is in this light that a comparison of the two covenants finds its true value.

The beginning point for comparing the OC and the NC in Hebrews must be a recognition that both covenants are portrayed in Hebrews as *bona fide*, authoritative and from a divine source.<sup>95</sup> Hebrews is not about exposing the OC as fraudulent or misconceived in any way, but rather about viewing it as superseded by a new and better covenant. The OC is seen as God’s revelation no less than the NC, and it was just as valid in its time.<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, the OC is described as the mere shadow of the NC. The OC has always been severely limited in terms of what it could accomplish spiritually, and thus it could never have been anything but temporary (e.g. 7:18, 19; 10:1–4).<sup>97</sup> By its very nature it fails to measure up to the spiritual needs of the people of God (e.g. 10:2) and falls short of the spiritual character of their destiny (see 11:13–16), because it

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<sup>92</sup>Cf. Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, pp. 11, 12, 93.

<sup>93</sup>E.g. 3:7–4:11; 8:7–13; 10:23; 13:15, 16, 20, 21.

<sup>94</sup>E.g. the blessing and cursing language of 6:7, 8, the covenant reference in 10:29 and the covenant inauguration motif in 12:18–24.

<sup>95</sup>Cf. Smith, “The Use of the Old Testament in the New”, p. 61.

<sup>96</sup>Cf. Dunnill (*Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 230), who rightly stresses that Hebrews sees the OC as good and gracious.

<sup>97</sup>Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 51.

was never more than a dim reflection of spiritual realities.<sup>98</sup> The OC sanctuary, priesthood, sacrifices, and indeed the OC itself all point to a corresponding and greater spiritual/heavenly reality (8:1-6).<sup>99</sup> On account of this it cannot achieve the final fulfilment of God's purpose (11:39, 40). Neither is the OC the final word in God's revelation, nonetheless, it still remains an important and abiding revelation from God. The OC is at best merely a representation of spiritual reality, yet its best contribution is precisely in its concrete representation of this reality. For NC as well as OC people, the OC stands as a portrait of spiritual and heavenly realities, painted on the canvas of this material world (9:8, 9). So, on one level, the OC does for NC people precisely what, according to Hebrews, it did for the OC people, namely, it serves as a physical illustration of spiritual and heavenly realities. For the OC people, this illustration/revelation of spiritual and ultimate reality through the OC was realised through their submission to the OC, actualising its institutions (see 3:9, 10; 9:6-8; 10:1-3; 12:18-21). For NC people this illustration/revelation comes through the example of the history and experiences of the OC people as portrayed in Scripture. For example, the NC believer can have an understanding of the meaning and significance of the heavenly sanctuary as well as Christ's priesthood and sacrifice to a large degree as a result of comparing them to their earthly, OC counterpart. In other words, certain spiritual realities are more clearly comprehended when the OC institutions designed to represent them in the material world are allowed to perform their function as analogies (see 3:14-4:3; 8:1-5; 9:9-14; 10:1, 28, 29; 12:25).<sup>100</sup>

For Hebrews, while the OC stands merely in an analogous relationship to spiritual and ultimate reality, the NC provides a direct connection to these realities. The sacrifice of the NC is the sacrifice of Christ, the one sacrifice that can actually and finally deal with the problem of sin (10:1-18). The OC sacrifices, together a pale illustration of Christ's one true sacrifice, point forward to the future and superior sacrifice of Christ (e.g. 9:6-14). In the same way, the priest of the NC is Christ, with the levitical priests serving as temporary substitutes until the time of Christ, but unable to achieve his standard of sinlessness, depth of empathy or permanency (2:17, 18; 4:14-16; 7:22-28). Finally, the sanctuary of the

<sup>98</sup>Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 82.

<sup>99</sup>See Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, p. 118.

<sup>100</sup>See Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 55; Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, pp. 225-43.

NC is the eternal, heavenly tabernacle, not merely a man-made, earthly copy. The OC sanctuary, though it brought God to the people, stood as a barrier between the people and the immediate presence of God, whereas the heavenly sanctuary of the NC gives the people open, spiritual access to God in a way previously denied under the OC (8:2, 5; 9:8; 10:19, 20). The OC employed material substitutes to establish and maintain the spiritual relationship between God and his people. This furnished the OC believer with concrete aids for understanding and for relating to spiritual realities.<sup>101</sup> The NC does away with those material substitutes, bringing the people of God into direct contact with the spiritual realities themselves. And while the material substitutes employed by the OC remain valuable to NC believers for understanding the nature of NC spiritual realities (e.g. 9:9), they do not play a part in their response to these spiritual realities, since their spiritual relationship is direct and mediated only by Christ.

Since the NC connects the people of God directly to the ultimate, spiritual realities illustrated by OC institutions, it is reasonable for our author to see the inauguration of the NC as making the OC obsolete.<sup>102</sup> However, the superior nature of the NC alone is not sufficient to warrant the replacement of the OC. For the OC to be made obsolete it is also necessary for the NC to fulfil the same essential purpose as the OC—in the same way that a superior product can only make another product obsolete if both are designed to do essentially the same thing. Accordingly, our author does understand the purpose of both covenants as being essentially the same—broadly, the perfecting of God’s people—as indicated most explicitly in 11:39, 40, but also implied by the countless points of continuity recognised between the two systems throughout the book. But there is continuity between the old and new systems not only because they have a common purpose, but also because they have a common focal point in the Christ-event. For our author, the OC anticipates the Christ-event, while the NC emerges from it. The OC was designed to prefigure the spiritually significant elements of the Christ-event, serving an interim, sustaining function until the time of Christ (10:1-4)<sup>103</sup> and serving as a preparation for the coming of Christ by providing categories (e.g. priesthood, sacrifice) appropriate for describ-

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<sup>101</sup>Cf. Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, pp. 229-30.

<sup>102</sup>Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 82.

<sup>103</sup>Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, pp. 51, 52.

ing Christ and his ministry. The author of Hebrews, then, is able to employ these categories to describe the NC institutions established by the Christ-event, categories that, having played a familiar and similar role in the previous revelation of God, are able to bear the weight of meaning and significance ascribed to the NC institutions.<sup>104</sup> Though the categories of the OC remain useful to our author for describing NC realities, the worn out, obsolete state of the OC itself allows for its disappearance (8:13). The book of Hebrews clearly teaches that the NC believer is not under the OC. Christian faith does not require obedience to OC regulations because God has replaced the OC. God no longer relates to his people on the basis of, nor through the OC, and as a result the OC no longer has any authority over them. Rather, the Christian is under the authority of the NC, which derives its validity from the Christ-event itself (8:6).

Since the NC grows out of the Christ-event, and the OC looks forward to it,<sup>105</sup> the Christ-event serves as the theological and revelatory centre of God's dealings with humanity for our author.<sup>106</sup> Christ is the ultimate revelation of God (1:1-3), but more than this, all revelation from God ultimately centres around Christ (9:26). OC revelation anticipates and prefigures Christ and his ministry (e.g. 9:6-14), NC revelation (in the Son) announces and explains the same (e.g. 10:5-10). To be sure, Scripture itself predicts a Christ-like figure, providing for a messianic hope, e.g. Ps. 110:1. But even where Scripture is not overtly messianic or intending to be predictive, it is still seen by the author of Hebrews as bearing witness to Christ. This is because Christ, his ministry, the covenant he mediates, are all seen as embodying true spiritual realities, while previous revelations are seen as prefiguring and establishing analogies of these realities (see for example 8:5, 6; 9:13, 14; 10:1). The Christ-event is understood in Hebrews as the focal point of redemptive history and the centre-piece of God's revelatory activity, and this is what drives our author's christological interpretation of apparently non-christological passages of Scripture.

That the Christ-event is viewed in this way is also reflected in the author's use of "perfection" language. Perfection is an important concept virtually throughout the argument of Hebrews. Christ is perfected

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<sup>104</sup>Cf. Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, p. 105; Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 261.

<sup>105</sup>Cf. Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 31.

<sup>106</sup>Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 53.

(2:10; 5:9; 7:28), as are believers (9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23) and faith (12:2) and, significantly, our author claims that the levitical system could not bring perfection (7:11, 19) and calls the heavenly tabernacle “greater and more perfect” than the earthly (9:11). Without attempting to solve finally the problem of the meaning of perfection in Hebrews,<sup>107</sup> it seems that the above uses of this concept share the idea that the perfect represents a final and complete state of being.<sup>108</sup> The concept of perfection, then, is similar to that of fulfilment, that is, fulfilling God’s ultimate design, intention or goal for someone or something.<sup>109</sup> This implies progress toward a goal, and provides another way of conceptualising the continuity/discontinuity between the old and new in Hebrews. The old order does not achieve completion or perfection, but it does exist as a point on (or a section of) a trajectory that extends to perfection. This can be seen most clearly in the author’s portrayal of the heavenly sanctuary as more perfect than the earthly in 9:11.<sup>110</sup> The heavenly tabernacle is the final, complete and ultimate sanctuary. In this case, the heavenly sanctuary itself has not changed—as do Christ or believers in their being perfected—but as concerns the experience of the people of God, their sanctuary has changed since they now worship at the “true” tabernacle. And having access to this ultimate spiritual reality they also have access to the very presence of God. The Christ-event, then, updates the old order, replacing its institutions with their perfect NC counterpart. It also provides for the perfection of both the OC and NC people (11:39–12:3). So, another way in which the Christ-event is established in Hebrews as the culmination of redemptive history is by portraying Christ as the only source of perfection for all believers and as the unique agent for perfecting God’s covenant institutions.

The perfected relationship of God with his people, as a result of the fulfilment of the Old Covenant in the New, is also determinative for our

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<sup>107</sup>For a history of interpretation see Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, pp. 1-20 and Scholer, *Proleptic Priests*, pp. 187-95.

<sup>108</sup>See Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 86, 87.

<sup>109</sup>See Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, pp. 161-63; Scholer, *Proleptic Priests*, p. 200; Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, pp. 70-73, 186-87.

<sup>110</sup>On the surface, using a term like “perfection” as a comparative seems strange; either something is perfect or it is not. Looking at other uses of the comparative form in Hebrews (1:4; 3:3; 7:22; 8:6), it is clear that the author uses this form because he is making a comparison between two entities, and that the entity described as “better” is actually the *best*. See Petersen, *Hebrews and Perfection*, p. 144.

author's use of Scripture, as shown in the last main section of this chapter.

*HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE AUTHOR'S  
USE OF SCRIPTURE*

“Perfection” terminology represents one of the means through which the author of Hebrews describes the new situation over against the old.<sup>111</sup> When this is considered along with the author's language of typology,<sup>112</sup> illustration,<sup>113</sup> sequence,<sup>114</sup> superiority<sup>115</sup> and reality,<sup>116</sup> a pattern begins to emerge. It is clear that our author sees a significant level of continuity between the old and new. They employ the same categories, they share the same essential purpose, the old looks forward to the new and the same God stands at the centre of both. At the same time Hebrews affirms a significant discontinuity between the old and new, describing the new in heightened and intensified terms. Only the new is able to deal finally with sin, to perfect, to provide unmediated access to God and to give ideal help and reassurance to the believer. So, although the old and new share the same purpose of God, only the new is finally able to fulfil that purpose.

G. Hughes asks a question similar to that pursued by this study: “How in one context can the scriptures of the Old Testament function so immediately as a vehicle for the Word of God while in other contexts the covenant which those same scriptures enshrine is unceremoniously dismissed as outmoded?”<sup>117</sup> He designates his answer to this “the hermeneutic of eschatological existence”:

The determinative word now seems to be “context”. It depends on which context or from what perspective, eschatologically speaking, the scriptures of the Old Testament are being approached—if with reference to the

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<sup>111</sup>Cf. Moule, “Fulfilment-Words in the New Testament”, pp. 317–18.

<sup>112</sup>E.g. “type, copy, shadow” (8:5), “antitype” (9:24).

<sup>113</sup>E.g. “parable” (9:9).

<sup>114</sup>E.g. “first, second” (8:7), “new, old, obsolete, disappearing” (8:13).

<sup>115</sup>E.g. “superior, better” (8:6), “not blameless” (8:7), “faulted” (8:8), “greater” (9:11).

<sup>116</sup>E.g. “true” (8:2), “earthly” (9:1), “of the flesh” (9:10), “not made with hands, not of this creation” (9:11), “heavenly” (9:23), “the very image of things” (10:1), “living” (10:20).

<sup>117</sup>Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, pp. 35, 71.

difficulties, the conditionedness and responsibilities, within historical existence, then the Word of God in the Old Testament may be as meaningful to Christians as to its original recipients. But from the point of view of what is now considered to have taken place in the advent of Jesus Christ, those words can only be seen as preparatory, witnessing, some of them at least, to their own futurity and hence unfinality. . . .

. . . From the point of view of the Christian conviction that the events that comprise the life and death and exaltation of Jesus represent God's finally effective self-disclosure, the Old Testament forms, which are then so clearly anticipatory, may all be regarded as having been outmoded. This in fact is regularly the attitude adopted in the theological-Christological sections of the letter, which, we saw, just as uniformly adopt a "realised" eschatological stance. But when the Christian community is forced to reckon with its own unfinality, as being still very much enmeshed in the processes of history, it then discovers a real and existential continuity between itself and the community of the old covenant.<sup>118</sup>

It is an insightful observation by Hughes that the eschatological focus of the context in which scriptural material appears, that is, whether the context is one of realised or futuristic eschatology, is generally consistent with whether or not our author treats that material as made obsolete by the Christ-event. Hughes infers from this that the eschatological perspective of the context in which Scripture is used determines whether or not that Scripture is treated as "outmoded". If this were the case, then the same scriptural material could be treated as outmoded in a context with a focus on realised eschatology and directly applicable where the context focuses on futuristic eschatology. That Hebrews never treats the same scriptural material as both outmoded and directly applicable does not prove the inadequacy of Hughes' "hermeneutic of eschatological existence", but it does deny it one source of confirmation. In Hebrews, the character of the scriptural material used in the two types of eschatological contexts is always consistent with those contexts. For example, Hebrews does not use passages related to OC rituals in contexts which focus on the "not yet" of futuristic eschatology. Furthermore, when one seeks to define the context of a passage in Hebrews, the scriptural material itself often plays a deciding role in the eschatological perspective of the passage. For example, in 10:26-31 the realised and futuristic perspectives are mixed, speaking of impending, "futuristic" judgment, but also of the finished, "realised" aspect of the NC work of Christ. In this

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<sup>118</sup>Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, pp. 71, 108.

context, the author applies Exod. 32:35 directly to the readers, which is evidently consistent with the futuristic elements in this passage, but this can only be determined on the basis of the content of the Exodus material. The content of the scriptural material, then, contributes a great deal to the character of the context in which it is used. So, the eschatological significance of the scriptural material used in a given context plays a role in determining the eschatological perspective of that context, and not the reverse. In fact, it is the author's *choice* of scriptural material that the eschatological inclination of a given context in Hebrews determines, not his *interpretation* of scriptural material.

For Hughes, “from the point of view of the Christian conviction that the events that comprise the life and death and exaltation of Jesus represent God’s finally effective self-disclosure, the Old Testament forms, which are then so clearly anticipatory, may *all* be regarded as having been outmoded” (*italics mine*), whereas from the perspective of the NC community as “enmeshed in the processes of history”, scriptural material regains its relevance. The difficulty with this view is that it does not give enough attention to the role of the content of the scriptural material itself in determining its relevance to the NC community. In fact, the view of Hughes lends itself to an abuse, which is to say that the author of Hebrews may have treated the same scriptural passage or concept as obsolete when using it in a context focusing on realised eschatology and directly applicable in a context focusing on non-realised eschatology. It is difficult to sustain that how the author of Hebrews wished to use a passage of Scripture would have determined whether he would treat it as outmoded and obsolete or directly applicable and authoritative for his readers. In fact, it is not the context of Hebrews or the eschatological perspective of the author that determines whether or not a scriptural concept or passage is seen as obsolete in the new situation. Quite the opposite, it is whether a scriptural concept or passage is seen as obsolete that determines the context in which it will have relevance. Scriptural material that foreshadows the finished work of Christ will necessarily be outmoded, and since the finished work of Christ represents the part of his eschatological work that is “realised” in the new situation, the foreshadowing passages will always be associated with realised eschatology. On the other hand, scriptural passages or concepts that relate to the work of Christ yet future from the perspective of Hebrews will necessarily remain relevant in the NC situation as described in Hebrews, and thus

will always be associated with non-realised eschatology. So, if the eschatological perspective of the NC interpreter is not the interpretive grid that determines the relationship of a particular passage of Scripture to the NC situation in Hebrews, the question still remains: What determines whether or not the author of Hebrews sees a passage or concept from Scripture as obsolete?

In general, the author of Hebrews would have understood a given scriptural concept or passage as relating to one aspect of Christ's work, realised or future, but not both, and to which aspect it is related is determined by the content of the scriptural material and the author's understanding of its eschatological fulfilment in the Christ-event, not by the author's or the context's changing, eschatological perspective. Old Covenant Scripture predicts and foreshadows the NC situation, and because there are similarities in the earthly circumstances of Old and New Covenant believers, OC Scripture retains a certain relevancy to NC believers. Furthermore, the "not yet" element that is part of both the old and new situations provides a connection between the old and new communities which allows some OC Scripture to be applied directly to NC believers. Therefore, Hughes is correct to observe that the author of Hebrews uses Scripture that he understands as outmoded in contexts that focus on realised eschatology, and Scripture that he understands as directly applicable in contexts that focus on futuristic eschatology, but this observation does not answer the question of how these passages are distinguished in Hebrews, that is, why some are connected to the NC situation on the basis of the realised work of Christ and others on the basis of his future work.

For the author of Hebrews, the old is fulfilled in the new, and this, I submit, is the overarching principle in his understanding and use of Scripture in chs. 8–10.<sup>119</sup> To identify the term "fulfilment" as describing the heart of the use of Scripture in these chapters is fitting for several reasons. First, it recognises the eschatological significance of the Christ-event in relation to Scripture. Secondly, it expresses the balance of continuity and discontinuity between the old and new. Thirdly, it expresses the element of heightening and intensification from the old to the new. Fourthly, it expresses the superior nature of the new. Fifthly, it expresses

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<sup>119</sup>Against Barth, "The Old Testament in Hebrews: An Essay in Biblical Hermeneutics", p. 61, but cf. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 89.

the certainty of success for the new. And lastly, it expresses the finality of the provisions of the new. This term, then, seems sufficient to describe our author's understanding of the relationship between the old and new, and thus is useful for outlining his approach to Scripture. For the author of Hebrews, OC Scripture is fulfilled in the NC situation, but not all Scripture is fulfilled in the same way, and it is precisely the differences in the way Scripture is fulfilled in the new situation, in the view of our author, that determine its application in Hebrews. There are three principal methods in chs. 8-10 by which the author of Hebrews demonstrates the fulfilment of OC Scripture in the age of the NC.<sup>120</sup> The first is by prophetic fulfilment, which provides the foundation for the development of the other two. The second is by typological fulfilment, the most productive for our author. The third is by universal fulfilment (direct application), where the author re-applies certain universal principles from OC Scripture directly to the NC situation.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>Isaacs (*Sacred Space*, pp. 69, 70) offers a slightly different perspective. She says, "Hebrews stands firmly within the New Testament tradition which seeks to emphasize the continuity of God's word in the past with its expression in Jesus of Nazareth. Among New Testament writers we find three principal means of doing this: (1) by an appeal to the fulfilment of prophecy; (2) by interpreting Scripture allegorically; (3) by presenting events of the past as 'types' of the future". She goes on to attribute all three methods to Hebrews, and in my view, wrongly asserts that Hebrews interprets Scripture allegorically. As Spicq (*Hebreux*, p. 61) says, "one never finds with our author the slightest trace of this allegorical exegesis" (my translation). The treatment of Melchizedek in 7:1-3 is often cited as an example of allegory in Hebrews (e.g. Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, p. 70), but while our author employs exegetical methods that may be unfamiliar or even unacceptable to the modern exegete, such as argument from silence, etymological interpretation of names, typology, this does not justify the description of the exegesis in this passage as allegory. Apart from his typological connection to Christ, Melchizedek is not made to represent any other entity or concept in Hebrews, which is a characteristic practice of allegorical exegesis (see Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, p. 7).

<sup>121</sup>Synge (*Hebrews and the Scriptures*, pp. 58-64) says that the key word for understanding the Old Testament is "promise". Promise is, of course, closely related to the concept of "fulfilment" as I am using it here. In fact, it is possible to understand these two terms as describing the same approach to Scripture from complementary perspectives; that is, they are two sides of the same coin. Promise and fulfilment are clearly at the heart of prophecy and typology, and even the direct application of Scripture in the NC context affirms certain foundational and eternal spiritual principles so as to hold out the promise of their perfect realisation. See also Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, p. 102 and Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, pp. 174-75.

*Prophetic Fulfilment*

Scripture makes certain predictions which the author of Hebrews sees as fulfilled by the NC and the Christ-event. (To avoid unnecessary complication, the fulfilment of promise is included in the category of prophetic fulfilment since, for our purposes, there is little distinction between the two.) Some of these predictions relate to the Son, or Christ, and others relate to the people of God. Ps. 110:1, 4 is arguably the most important prophetic passage for the book of Hebrews, since it establishes the priesthood of Christ.<sup>122</sup> On the surface, the only apparently predictive element in Ps. 110:1, 4 is the promise in v. 1 to make the Lord's enemies a footstool. But Ps. 110:1 also expresses a predictive and messianic intention in the phrase "the Lord [Yahweh] said to my Lord". The LXX refers to two Lords due to the translators' unwillingness to use the term "Yahweh" (*Εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου*), but even here, assuming Davidic authorship as our author would have, the first "Lord" clearly refers to God, and the second to another Lord of David. (The MT makes it clear that the one making the declaration is Yahweh, יְהוָה לַאֲדֹנָי.) On the basis of simple logic, "my Lord" must be a figure superior to David whom God can address, and so this figure can reasonably be understood to be the messiah. Our author and his readers certainly would have understood Psalm 110 as messianic,<sup>123</sup> and would not have been alone in this view, as the synoptic Gospels (cf. Mt. 22:41-46; Mk. 12:35-37; Lk. 20:41-44) and even the rabbis testify.<sup>124</sup> Allen states:

Mark 12:35-37, which reflects the contemporary Jewish understanding of the psalm as messianic and of the heading in terms of authorship, may represent an *argumentum ad hominem*. The insertion of the psalm into the Psalter, either beside a pair of Davidic psalms, Pss. 108, 109, or subse-

<sup>122</sup>Cf. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 37.

<sup>123</sup>Cf. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 27.

<sup>124</sup>It is important to recognise the danger of anachronism in using rabbinic sources to shed light on the NT, but used along with other evidence the views of the rabbis are of some value since they tend to reflect traditional views. Many rabbis took "my Lord" as a reference to Abraham, but the view that this phrase refers to the messiah is also put forward. See Braude, *The Midrash on the Psalms*, vol. 2, pp. 205-207.

quently attracting them to it as a cluster, already reflects a messianic understanding.<sup>125</sup>

An important principle behind our author's use of Scripture is that he interprets it in the light of Christian presuppositions, for example, that Jesus is the divine Christ (Messiah).<sup>126</sup> So, taking Psalm 110 as messianic, our author would have understood it as inherently predictive,<sup>127</sup> and pointing to Christ. For this reason, our author could use the predictions of Psalm 110 that the messiah would sit at the right hand of God, that God would defeat his enemies and that he would be a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek, as the cornerstone of his appropriation of Scripture. Furthermore, the use of Psalm 110 in Hebrews demonstrates that for our author scriptural predictions involve elements of both realised eschatology (Jesus as a priest forever at God's right hand) and non-realised eschatology (the defeat of Christ's enemies).

Jer. 31:31-34 is another predictive passage of foundational importance in Hebrews 8–10. As our author points out, the prediction of a new covenant implies the passing away of the old.<sup>128</sup> Jeremiah's prediction of the forgiveness of sin is also important here, since it shows that the OC evidently fell short of this in some way. In the light of Jer. 31:33, "I will be their God and they will be my people", the principle from Deut. 32:35, 36, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay . . . the Lord will judge his people" can be applied to the readers of Hebrews since they are identified as God's NC people. Finally, the prediction of the coming one from Hab 2:3, "the one coming will come and he will not delay", how-

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<sup>125</sup>Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, p. 79.

<sup>126</sup>Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, pp. 103, 104; Bultmann, "Prophecy and Fulfilment", p. 50.

<sup>127</sup>Allen (*Psalms 101-150*, p. 83) says, "A sizeable group of scholars have refused to associate the psalm with any activity of the human Davidic king and regard it as eschatological and messianic from the outset." See also Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 3, p. 161; Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 317.

<sup>128</sup>Some argue that Jeremiah does not predict a *new* covenant but a *renewed* covenant (e.g. Kaiser, "The Old Promise and the Old Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34", p. 110; Fischer, "Covenant, Fulfilment and Judaism in Hebrews", pp. 175-87; see also Anderson, "Who Are the Heirs of the New Age in the Epistle to the Hebrews?", pp. 268-74), but this is difficult to sustain in the light of the phrase *οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην, ἣν διεθέμην τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν* ("not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers"). The renewed covenant view is certainly not the view of Hebrews.

ever one works out the textual problems involved here, adds impetus to the author's warnings and encouragement to faithfulness, along with the prediction from Psalm 110:1 (see for example 10:13) that the enemies of the messiah would be humiliated—encouraging the readers not to put themselves in the position of Christ's enemies by being unfaithful (see 10:27).

These predictions from Scripture serve as the foundation or starting place for our author's application of Scripture to Christ and the NC situation.<sup>129</sup> Merely from the predictive passages used in chs. 8–10,<sup>130</sup> a foundation of christology and soteriology has been laid on the basis of prophetic fulfilment:

- The messiah will sit at the Lord's right hand.
- The messiah will rule over his enemies, whom God humiliates.
- The messiah will be a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.
- God will make a new covenant with his people, replacing the Mosaic covenant.
- The messiah will come soon.

The foundational quality of these basic prophetic themes in chs. 8–10 can be illustrated by tracing the argument that the author builds upon the messianic predictions of Psalm 110, showing how the argument logically begins with these predictions and depends on the identification of Christ as a priest in the order of Melchizedek. Along with several other NT writers, our author holds the presupposition that Jesus is the messiah, identifying him as the figure “my Lord” in Ps. 110:1.<sup>131</sup> By reading Ps. 110:4 in its context, our author was also able to identify Jesus as the eternal priest in the order of Melchizedek. In the first seven chapters, the author shows that as a priest, Jesus was by nature a superior mediator to any that came before (angels, Moses, Aaron and his sons), save Melchizedek. Then in 8:3, 4 he begins to build a case for the sacrifice of Christ replacing the levitical sacrifices. If Jesus is a priest, he must have a sacrifice, and this sacrifice must be something other than the levitical sacrifice because the levitical priests were adequately performing those rites already. Heb. 9:12 makes the first connection (in the

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<sup>129</sup>See von Rad, “Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament”, p. 26.

<sup>130</sup>See Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 256.

<sup>131</sup>See for example Mt. 22:44; Acts 2:34; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20.

book) of Jesus' death with ritual sacrifice on the basis of his entering the heavenly sanctuary. The typological relationship between Moses' sanctuary and the heavenly one has been made in 8:5 on the basis of Exod. 25:40, which uses *τύπος* in the LXX to describe the heavenly tent, or its representation.<sup>132</sup> Jesus, already described as a high priest in Melchizedek's order, enters the heavenly tabernacle in order to take his seat at the right hand of the throne of God, equivalent for our author to the mercy seat in the heavenly tabernacle.<sup>133</sup> The reason Jesus is able to enter the holy place in heaven is because he has died, shedding his blood, an event upon which the early church had already placed redemptive significance. Like that of the levitical high priest, Jesus' priestly entry into the holy place must indicate that he made a sacrifice, and his own death on the cross is the most reasonable candidate for this designation. Once Jesus' death is identified as constituting his high priestly sacrifice, its relation to the levitical sacrifices can be explored and its superiority demonstrated. After showing by their very nature the limitations of the levitical sacrifices (see 9:9–14; 10:1–4), our author asserts the obsolescence of the levitical sacrifices in the light of the superior demand of the NC, which only the sacrifice of Christ can fulfil (see 10:15–18).

So, the author is able to develop a sophisticated theology of the relationship between the old and new on the basis of his application of the messianic prophecies in Psalm 110 to Christ. These prophecies, then, provide the logical and exegetical justification for the author's application of Scripture to Christ and the NC situation. Once the priestly significance of the Christ-event is recognised, certain passages of Scripture take on an entirely new significance. This treatment does not deal with all of the predictions of Scripture that the author of Hebrews uses to found his argument, and its intent is to focus on chs. 8–10, but it does show that the use of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10 at least begins logically with certain of Scripture's prophetic predictions which are seen as fulfilled in Christ and the NC. From this perspective, the use of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10 simply explores the implications of identifying Christ as messiah and priest, and identifying the NC as his covenant.

### *Typological Fulfilment*

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<sup>132</sup>See Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, p. 25; D'Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews*, pp. 225–26.

<sup>133</sup>See 8:1; 12:2.

“With the present historical reality of redemption as its starting point, Hebrews holds to the historicity of Scripture and is committed in principle to the literal sense of Scripture. Therefore, the meanings which Hebrews directly attributes to the OT message can largely be defended in the light of the modern historical interpretation of Scripture as typological interpretation.”<sup>134</sup> There are several terms in Hebrews that the writer has associated particularly with his typological application of Scripture, yet there is no indication that any of these terms are used with a technical force.<sup>135</sup> The most obvious typological terms are *τύπος* (8:5, from Exod. 25:40) and *ἀντίτυπος* (9:24). Interestingly, the use of these terms in Hebrews is reversed as compared to the NT in general and modern usage,<sup>136</sup> referring to the copy as the *ἀντίτυπος* and the real as the *τύπος*. This is due to the fact that, uniquely in the case of the tabernacles, the real, heavenly precedes the earthly in time. These terms are used to signify that the image of the earthly tabernacle corresponds to that of the heavenly, but that this correspondence does not extend to the essence or substance of the sanctuaries. Another term used in relation to the tabernacles is *ὑπόδειγμα* (8:5; 9:23; cf. 4:11). This term, used in conjunction with *σκιά* (8:5), conveys the idea that the earthly, although patterned after the heavenly, is merely a copy of it (in 8:2 the author calls the heavenly tabernacle *ἀληθινή* or “true”, and pitched by God and not a human being). The term *σκιά* is also associated with the Mosaic law (10:1) in an assertion that the law has the outline form of spiritual realities, but not their actual substance (*εἰκῶν*). Finally, the author uses *παραβολή* (“illustration”, “comparison” or “analogy”) to describe the levitical system of sacrifice and the arrangement of the wilderness tent (9:9). Here the author draws a comparison between the old and new that, by using this term, brings to the fore what is always present in his use of typology: it is designed to teach NC believers something about the nature of their NC relationships and the nature of the fulfilment of the old by

<sup>134</sup>Goppelt, *Typos*, pp. 161–62. Barr (*Old and New in Interpretation*, pp. 103–107) argues against the “conception of revelation through history” (p. 103), but this would not find support in Hebrews’ understanding of revelation.

<sup>135</sup>For examples of the different yet probably non-technical use of typological terms in Philo see *Op. Mund.* 19, 34; *Vit. Mos.* II, 76; *Spec. Leg.* III, 207. Von Rad (“Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament”, p. 17) observes that the use of typology is not limited to theological study or Oriental thought processes, but it is “an elementary function of all human thought and interpretation”. See also Eichrodt, “Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?”, p. 229.

<sup>136</sup>Lampe and Woolcombe, *Essays on Typology*, pp. 61, 62.

the new.<sup>137</sup> Typology in Hebrews 8–10, then, explores the relationship of continuity and discontinuity between the old and new, and is intended to teach something about the nature and character of the new.

Considering typological terminology provides a basis for an understanding of the use of typology in Hebrews, but this does not go far enough. It is also necessary to consider the conceptual framework which engages such terms. Davidson has discovered five essential characteristics of typology in the six occurrences of *τύπος* and its cognates in NT passages in which the writers are interpreting Scripture. These characteristics can be summarised as follows:

- *Historical*: the historical reality, historical correspondence and escalation of the OT *τύπος* are assumed.
- *Eschatological*: OT persons/events/institutions find their fulfilment in NT realities.
- *Christological-soteriological*: Christ is presented as the ultimate orientation point of the OT *τύποι* and their NT fulfilments, which are soteriologically charged.
- *Ecclesiastical*: the experience of Israel happened as *τύποι* for the NC community.
- *Prophetic*: OT *τύποι*, superintended by God, necessarily prefigure corresponding NT realities, giving them the force of predictive foreshadowings.<sup>138</sup>

Though Davidson's study is limited in scope, considering only passages in which the term *τύπος* and its cognates occur, I believe it has led him to a full and adequate description of typology in the NT. And although the description of typology summarised above derives from the NT in general, its description also seems to fit the use of typology in Hebrews

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<sup>137</sup>Cf. von Rad, "Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament", p. 39.

<sup>138</sup>Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, pp. 398–403. For a discussion of the distinctiveness of typology compared to other methods (e.g. allegory) see Goppelt, *Typos*, pp. 17, 18; Eichrodt, "Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?", pp. 226–29. Barr (*Old and New in Interpretation*, pp. 103–11) argues against distinguishing between typology and allegory, while Lincoln (*Paradise Now and Not Yet*, p. 199, n. 21), disagreeing with Barr, argues for the validity of this distinction. See also R.P.C. Hanson (*Allegory and Event*, p. 7) who soundly defines typology and allegory as follows: "Typology is the interpreting of an event belonging to the present or the recent past as the fulfilment of a similar situation recorded or prophesied in Scripture. Allegory is the interpretation of an object or person or a number of objects or persons as in reality meaning some object or person of a later time, with no attempt made to trace a relationship of 'similar situation' between them."

in particular,<sup>139</sup> in the light of what this study has shown so far.<sup>140</sup> Further, the concepts of fulfilment and the prophetic nature of typology, as put forward by Davidson, have particular force for understanding the use of typology in Hebrews particularly, and in the NT generally:

The origins of typology are to be found in the way the New Testament writers handled the Old Testament prophecies. Search of the Scripture and discernment of the signs of the times, both of which were fundamental elements in the evangelist's study of the fulfilment of prophecy, were adopted as the fundamental elements in typological writing and exegesis. Again, just as the recapitulative nature of the saving acts of God in Christ is at the heart of the fulfilment of prophecy, so it is at the heart of typology.<sup>141</sup>

Eichrodt goes even further when he says:

There is certainly a very close relation between . . . typology and the interpretation of the Old Testament as prophecy of the fulfilment which is found in the New . . . for each of them sees in the Old Testament the announcement, in a preliminary form and in a time of waiting, of the completion of salvation by God himself. . . . From this point of view one might designate typology as "objectivised prophecy".<sup>142</sup>

Typology in Hebrews 8–10 is concerned primarily with the fulfilment of the OC in the NC, and consequently focuses on the inaugural events surrounding each.<sup>143</sup> With respect to the OC, it is the exodus

<sup>139</sup>Though this general description of Davidson's does not fit the use of the term *τύπος* in Hebrews, as he would agree, since Hebrews uses *τύπος* to describe what is usually called an "antitype" and *ἀντίτυπος* to describe what is usually called a "type".

<sup>140</sup>Eichrodt ("Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?", p. 229) claims that in Hebrews "we have the first case of something approaching a constant typological method".

<sup>141</sup>Cf. Lampe and Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology*, p. 49.

<sup>142</sup>Eichrodt, "Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?", p. 229. See Pannenberg ("Redemptive Event and History", pp. 328–29), who expresses a very similar view. Cf. Clement's typological use of the Rahab story in *1 Clem.* 12, where he connects typology and prophecy, concluding on the basis of his typological connection that there is a prophetic element in the story. See also Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 312.

<sup>143</sup>Smith ("The Use of the Old Testament in the New", p. 60) says, "There are several important typologies in Hebrews . . . . They all, however, seem to revolve about the basic typology of the Old and New Covenants."

experience of Israel that holds our author's typological interest,<sup>144</sup> and in the case of the NC it is the Christ-event.<sup>145</sup> In Hebrews, typology has a strong connection with elements of realised eschatology as experienced in the NC situation, and thus relies on scriptural material that our author would consider obsolete. This is consistent with the characteristic heightening or modulation of the antitype as compared to the type.<sup>146</sup> It is within this typological framework that Hebrews compares Christ to Moses (3:1–6).<sup>147</sup> In chs. 8–10, the typological interest of the author narrows, concentrating on the cultic provisions of the two covenants, showing how the OC provision from its inauguration at the exodus anticipates the NC and is fulfilled by it.<sup>148</sup> In Hebrews 8–10, then, the typological use of Scripture is primarily aimed at expressing the contemporary significance of the Old, Mosaic Covenant, with a view to shedding light on the nature of the Christ-event and the NC. In Hebrews typology is not as concerned with interpreting Scripture as it is with interpreting the Christ-event. The primary purpose of our author is not to clarify the meaning or significance of Scripture, but to apply Scripture in such a way as to clarify for his readers the meaning and significance of the Christ-event, including their NC situation.

In contrast to the Mosaic Covenant, the promise made to Abraham is not interpreted typologically (6:13–20), but seems to be fulfilled directly by Christ and his entry into the heavenly tabernacle. The Christ-event fulfils the Abrahamic promise literally by providing its ultimate realisation (6:18–20). The account of Abraham meeting Melchizedek is essentially interpreted literally as well (7:1–10),<sup>149</sup> but Abraham's expe-

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<sup>144</sup>Daube (*The Exodus Pattern in the Bible*, p. 11) rightly identifies the exodus as the most important pattern of deliverance in the Bible.

<sup>145</sup>This interest in the typological relationship between the two covenants and therefore the relationship between the exodus/wilderness wanderings of Israel and the Christ-event may be another reason that our author refers strictly to the scriptural account of OC cultic practices and does not refer to contemporary Jewish practice.

<sup>146</sup>See Goppelt, *Typos*, pp. 16, 18.

<sup>147</sup>Cf. Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, p. 54.

<sup>148</sup>See for example 9:15–22.

<sup>149</sup>Some identify an allegorical use of Scripture in the Melchizedek material in ch. 7 on the basis of the etymologising of his name. This is unwarranted since names in Scripture are often given etymological significance (e.g. Abraham: father of a multitude, Gen. 17:5; Jacob: heel catcher, deceiver, Gen. 27:36), which may be understood as a literary device, the interpretation of which would not necessarily constitute an allegory (cf. Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation*, pp. 107, 108). See

rience offering Isaac provides a *παραβολή* or type of final resurrection (11:17–19). The Christ-event also fulfils the OC, not in the same way that it fulfils the Abrahamic promise, but by completing, perfecting and replacing it. The OC is seen by its very nature to have anticipated something greater, since its institutions had such inherent limitations. The concept of the fulfilment of the old in the new asserts both the continuity and discontinuity between the two covenantal systems, as seen throughout this study. It is on the basis of this balance of continuity and discontinuity, as contained in the concept of fulfilment, that the typological relationship between the old and new is established. The essential elements in the typology of chs. 8–10 of continuity and discontinuity under the rubric of fulfilment are consistent with the view that the typological use of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10 grows out of the concept of prophetic fulfilment (including the fulfilment of promises), and that typology itself also involves a certain kind of fulfilment.<sup>150</sup>

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Bruce, *Hebrews*, pp. 27, 28; Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 189; Lampe and Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology*, p. 67; against Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, pp. 71, 72.

<sup>150</sup>Goppelt, *Typos*, pp. 162–63. In the view of Eichrodt (“Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?”, pp. 234–35), a connection between prophecy and typology is made in Scripture itself, for example in Hos. 2:14 and Jer. 23:7. See also Lampe and Woollcombe (*Essays on Typology*, pp. 22–27), where Lampe continually couples the concepts of prophecy and typology and then says, “In such passages as Isa. 51:9–11, the prophetic interpretation of the pattern of history assumes a form which may fairly be called typological. The creation struggle finds its antitype in the Exodus and both alike are in turn recapitulated and fulfilled in the future act of deliverance from the Exile” (p.27; cf. also p. 39). The significance of this statement for the subject at hand can hardly be overestimated, since it shows that OC Scripture itself provides a basis for linking the concepts of prophetic and typological fulfilment, and that this has been recognised by scholars for decades. Goppelt (*Typos*, p. 57) concludes that typology in Jewish literature is used “almost exclusively in the shaping of their eschatology”. Smith (*A Priest Forever*, pp. 4, 5, 29–65) observes that “typology is often, perhaps invariably, found in connection with eschatology in the bible” (p. 4), and eschatology is, of course, closely related to prophecy. But then he goes on to espouse what he calls an “allegorical typology” based on Barr’s *Old and New in Interpretation* (see pp. 103–48).

Lindars (*The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, pp. 53–55) recognises the prophetic foundations of our author’s use of Scripture, but he concludes from this that the interpretation of Scripture in Hebrews is not typological, but literal and involved entirely in demonstrating the fulfilment of prophetic statements from Scripture. While Lindars has rightly identified the foundations of the use of Scripture in Hebrews, prophecy, his unwillingness to recognise the typological use of Scripture that is built on this foundation is unjustified. In Hebrews, the development of typological relationships involves more than the fulfilment of prophetic state-

The aim of Hebrews is to encourage the readers to persevere and have confidence in their NC relationship with God apart from OC practices. In the first ten chapters the author's primary means of accomplishing this is to show that, in their superiority, Christ and his NC fulfil the OC and its institutions in a way that makes them obsolete. The author's conception of this fulfilment, at least in chs. 8–10, is based on the prophetic fulfilment in the Christ-event of certain passages of Scripture, but his development of this fulfilment is primarily accomplished through typology. That is to say, our author develops and extends the notion of the fulfilment of the old in the new to the greatest degree through the use of typology, and he uses typology to a greater extent than any other method. In view of this, it is correct to claim that typology is the central and most productive use of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10.

In 8:1–10:18, the author develops the typological relationship between the cultic institutions of the OC and NC, but in 10:19–39 he focuses on the typological relationship between the OC and NC people. Here he uses priestly imagery to describe the spiritual privileges of NC believers (vv. 19–25), and compares the responsibility of the NC community to that of the people under the law of Moses (vv. 26–31; cf. 3:1–4:13). It is clear, then, that the people of the NC stand in a typological relationship to the people of the OC, and that for our author, the role of the people of God played by OC believers is successfully and finally fulfilled only by the NC community.<sup>151</sup> Nonetheless, it is with regard to the people of God that our author has the greatest tendency to apply Scripture directly, apart from the use of any method such as typology, indicating that he sees the role of NC believers as quite similar at some points to that of God's OC people, and this corresponds to the author's periodic focus on eschatological elements “not yet” fulfilled in his own time.

### *Universal Fulfilment (Direct Application)*

Fulfilment is clearly associated with scriptural prophecies coming true, and though there is no explicit prediction involved in typology, there is also a sense in which the arrival of an antitype fulfils a typologi-

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ments of Scripture, and includes the correspondence of historical entities such as the levitical priests and their sacrifices and Christ's priesthood along with his offering, as well as the Old and New Covenant people of God.

<sup>151</sup>Cf. Lampe and Woolcombe, *Essays on Typology*, p. 29.

cal relationship. The use of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10, then, can be understood in terms of prophetic and typological fulfilment, but there is also a more direct use of Scripture that, although it does not fit into a prophetic or typological category, can also be understood in terms of fulfilment. The direct application of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10 represents another kind of fulfilment of Scripture since, in the NC context, it involves the ultimate application and expression of certain universal spiritual principles. There are certain universal principles that flow necessarily from the nature of God and his people, and these principles are reiterated in Scripture in association with different covenantal (promise) arrangements. In other words, these principles seem to be valid in the context of any relationship between God and his people, and hence they are reiterated in Scripture both in connection with and apart from the OC. An important aspect of the relevance of such universal principles is their application in the new situation at points where the “not yet” of the Christian experience is in focus, that is, points where elements of realised eschatology are not in focus, and where the old and new communities would have the most in common on the basis of their earthly existence.

The fulfilment of universal principles of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10 involves the direct application of OC Scripture, but that which is applied in this way has already been expressed in Scripture in a broader context than the OC, relates generally to the “not yet” of Christian experience and finds its ultimate expression and final reiteration in the context of the NC. There are two ways in which the direct application of universal scriptural principles in Hebrews can be considered fulfilment. First, the expression of such principles in the eschatological context of the NC community constitutes their ultimate and final expression.<sup>152</sup> In this sense Scripture is fulfilled, or brought to a culmination, by its application to the eschatological community of NC believers at the end of the age. Secondly, the assertion of the validity of certain scriptural principles in the new situation in some cases (e.g. “the just shall live by faith”) obligates the NC community to affirm them and abide by them, that is, to fulfil the demands made by them, while in other cases (e.g. “God will judge his people”) the community is exhorted to live in the light of cer-

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<sup>152</sup>To say that these principles are universal is not to say that they are eternal. For example, the principle from Exod. 32:35 that God will judge his people is universal because it applies to all of God’s people, but it is not necessarily eternal, if one understands there to be a final judgment.

tain principles, the fulfilment of which they will experience in their own situation. In the fulfilment of such universal scriptural principles, the NC believers stand in continuity with their OC counterparts, among whom these principles would also find fulfilment.<sup>153</sup> So, on the one hand, just as an obligation is fulfilled, whether on the side of God or his people, these universal principles can be seen as fulfilled in both the old and new situations. On the other hand, they are uniquely fulfilled in the eschatological context of the NC where they find their final and ultimate application.

There are several examples of this “universal fulfilment” in Hebrews, where the author applies Scripture directly to his readers.<sup>154</sup> The most obvious example of this in chs. 8–10 is the use of Deut. 32:35, 36 in 10:30. Though they originally occur in a prophetic context, the words of this citation in particular seem to express a general principle about the way God relates to his people, rather than a specific prediction, and this is the way our author seems to have taken them.<sup>155</sup> In a similar way, our author applies directly to his readers the statement from Hab. 2:4 LXX, “If he shrinks back, my soul will not be pleased with him; but the righteous one shall live by my faith”. This passage is included in the list of prophetic passages above, since it predicts the coming one. But the prophetic context of the passage does not fully explain its application to the readers, since it is not the prophetic element of the passage that the author applies to them. Our author seems to take Habakkuk as expressing a general spiritual principle that the righteous person lives by faith, which he applies directly to the readers in 10:39. Of course, the author’s direct application of Scripture is not confined to chs. 8–10. He also applies Ps. 95:7 directly to his readers in 4:1, 11,<sup>156</sup> where they are encouraged to make sure that they enter into the rest that is promised in

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<sup>153</sup>This use of the concept of fulfilment is reflected in the use of the *pi’el* of  $\text{קָם}$  in the Mishnah (Sheqalim 6:6 and Baba Qamma 3:9), which, according to Metzger (“The Formulas Introducing Quotations of Scripture in the NT and the Mishnah”, p. 307) “is properly translated ‘fulfilled’” in the sense that it “is said to be fulfilled by anyone whenever he complies with the Mosaic precept”.

<sup>154</sup>Cf. Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 259.

<sup>155</sup>The context of Deut. 32:35, 36 is significant and probably familiar to our author. The last half of v. 21, “I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding” (NIV), cited in Rom. 10:19, may have drawn our author to this passage if he saw this verse as referring to NC believers as Paul did.

<sup>156</sup>Cf. Smith, “The Use of the Old Testament in the New”, p. 60.

the psalm. Also, ch. 11 demonstrates that, in like manner to its use of particular passages of Scripture, Hebrews is able to apply a scriptural concept, in this case faith, directly to the situation of the readers.<sup>157</sup> Here our author uses outstanding examples from Scripture of faithful individuals as patterns for his readers to follow (cf. 12:16, 17, which use a negative example). Then, near the end of his sermon, the author directly applies two more passages of Scripture to the readers. The first is Deut. 31:6, in which the Lord promises never to leave or forsake Israel; the second is Ps. 118:6, which describes the Lord as a help and protection to the psalmist and to Israel.

In much of our author's application of Scripture, he deliberately opens a gulf between his readers and Scripture by arguing for the obsolescence of the OC and for the distinction between NC believers and Israel (see the section on "The People of God" above). It is evident, however, that having opened this gulf he is also willing and able to find a bridge which allows him to span it and apply Scripture to his readers, even in a way that treats certain passages as if they were originally intended for his readers. This bridge, I suggest, is the typological relationship established between the peoples of the Old and New Covenants based on prophecy. It is clear that Hebrews applies Scripture typologically to Christ, but there is also a typological connection made between OC and NC believers (e.g. 10:19-22, 26-29). Just as the Christ-event is seen to fulfil the expectation of Scripture by establishing an eternal priesthood and a NC, the NC people of God are seen in Hebrews as fulfilling the role of God's people previously occupied by Israel (10:15-18).

The typological relationship between the readers and Israel, like all of the typologies in Hebrews, can be described as founded on the fulfilment of prophecy and promise. Furthermore, this relationship depends on the prophetic and typological connection previously made between Christ and scriptural prophecies and institutions. For example, Jeremiah's NC promise is fulfilled in the Christ-event (8:6, 7), so that the followers of Christ can be identified as God's NC people (8:6; 9:15). On this basis Christians receive and fulfil the NC promise originally given to Israel (10:15-18). Furthermore, if the sacrifice of Christ corresponds to the levitical sacrificial system typologically, and if Christ's sacrifice is the NC provision for sin on which Christians rely, then Christians must

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<sup>157</sup>Cf. Smith, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New", p. 60.

stand in a typological relationship to Israel, since their respective sacrifices are so related (10:11-18). The same could be argued on the basis of the typologies of the tabernacles, the priests and even the covenants. There is, then, a theological basis for applying OC Scripture typologically to the NC people, but this does not explain the author's direct application of Scripture to his readers.

Hebrews argues that the OC is obsolete (8:13), and that Christians (NC believers) are not bound by OC stipulations (13:12-16), but Hebrews does not argue that Scripture itself is obsolete<sup>158</sup>—for example, the Abrahamic promise is validated (kept) through its fulfilment by Christ (6:18-20). In the light of this it is vital to maintain a distinction between the OC and (OC) Scripture, for they are not equivalent. First, Scripture contains more than just matters related to the OC (e.g. Genesis, cf. Heb. 11:4-22). Secondly, for our author the OC is not the most fundamental construct in Scripture, or even the most foundational covenant or promise (see Heb. 6:12-20 in the light of Gen. 15-17).<sup>159</sup> Though much of Scripture deals with matters directly related to the Mosaic Covenant, there are institutions, constructs and principles in Scripture that are more fundamental and abiding than the OC. These principles undergird both the OC and the NC, and can therefore be directly applied to both communities. In other words, our author recognises certain principles that derive from the very nature of God and humanity that are so fundamental that they are operative in all relationships between the two, for example: 1) God judges his people, 2) the just shall live by faith, 3) faith in God is a virtue that he rewards, 4) God does not abandon his people 5) God helps and protects his people.<sup>160</sup> These things apply to OC believers not because they are particular to the OC, but because they are foundational to any (covenant) relationship with God. If these foundational principles apply to Israel as God's people, apart from their particular covenantal responsibilities, then they must also apply to NC believers as the people of God. But how does our author identify the institutions and principles that precede and supersede the Mosaic Covenant? Evidently, they are drawn from or confirmed by Scripture

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<sup>158</sup>Cf. Zimmerli, "Promise and Fulfillment", p. 115.

<sup>159</sup>Zimmerli ("Promise and Fulfillment", p. 118) says, "according to Paul [the faith of Abraham] does not belong to the time characterized by the subsequent giving of the law, but stands in the sphere of evangelical promise". Hebrews seems to take the same position with regard to the Abrahamic promise.

<sup>160</sup>1) 10:30; 2) 10:38, 39; 3) 11:6; 4) 13:5; 5) 13:6.

passages that are not associated with the Mosaic Covenant. For example, that God judges his people is demonstrated, in part at least, by the story of Esau (12:16, 17). That the just shall live by faith is shown, for example, by the stories of Abel (11:4) and Abraham (6:12-15; 11:8-19) and the other patriarchs (11:20-22), as is the principle that faith in God is a virtue that he rewards. That God does not abandon his people, and that he helps and protects them, is demonstrated by the Abrahamic Promise (6:13-20) and the story of Noah (11:7). These principles can also be demonstrated from Scripture passages associated with the OC, and Hebrews applies certain of these passages directly to the readers (e.g. Deut. 31:6 and Ps. 118:6 in 13:5, 6), but this only serves to illustrate the universality of these principles. These principles, then, applied directly from OC Scripture to NC believers, have a wider authority than the OC, and are derived from the broader record of God's dealings with his people, including but not limited to the OC.

In Hebrews, then, Scripture is fulfilled in at least three different ways: its predictions come true, its redemptive patterns are consummated and its universal principles are reiterated, affirmed and given their ultimate expression. These are three distinct kinds of fulfilment; nevertheless, it can be said that each fulfils the expectation of Scripture.

### CONCLUSION

“Every community which regards as normative certain texts given by the worthies of old must develop a ‘hermeneutic’, a means whereby these fixed standards can be kept in an effective relationship with the ever-changing frontier of day-to-day experience.”<sup>161</sup> This is one accomplishment of Hebrews, but for our author, the Christ-event has brought about such a fundamental change in the relationship between God and his people that they do not just experience an ever-changing frontier, but the arrival of an altogether new frontier, the ultimate and final frontier.<sup>162</sup> The Christ-event has removed the people of God from the age of the OC and has brought them into the eschatological age of

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<sup>161</sup>Towner, “Hermeneutical Systems of Hillel and the Tannaim: A Fresh Look”, p. 101.

<sup>162</sup>Cf. Hughes (*Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, pp. 110-13, 125-26), who does not seem to fully appreciate the view of the writer of Hebrews that he and his readers stand on an interpretive plane, as a result of the Christ event, that can never be superseded (1:1, 2). See Goppelt, *Typos*, p. 12.

the NC, yet there remains a vital and authoritative link with the past and God's revelation therein.<sup>163</sup> For the author of Hebrews, there remains a profound authority in OC Scripture, even though the OC itself is "obsolete and growing old".<sup>164</sup>

If the OC is obsolete in the view of the author of Hebrews, what authority can OC Scripture have for his readers? To answer this foundational question, first it is necessary to recognise that in Hebrews the OC and Scripture are not coextensive. There are concepts and divine dispositions in Scripture that are, in contrast to the OC, permanent. The promise to Abraham, for example, does not come under the criticism of obsolescence in Hebrews, and rather than being replaced by the Christ-event and the NC, it is realised, affirmed and finds its eschatological fulfilment in the NC ministry of Christ. Secondly, there are certain theological presuppositions that undergird our author's use of Scripture: 1) the God of the OC and the God of the NC are the same in identity and in character, 2) the people of the NC are distinct from the people of the OC and yet both share the same essential humanity and 3) the essential purpose of God is the same under the OC and NC, but only the latter is able to fulfil that purpose finally and perfectly. Thirdly, Hebrews 8–10 understands Scripture as fulfilled by the Christ-event and the NC: 1) prophetically 2) typologically and 3) universally. The concept of fulfilment as it relates to the use of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10 is multifaceted, but it always involves an attempt to express the consummate significance of Scripture in the last days.

The use of Scripture in Hebrews 8–10 is founded on its prophetic fulfilment in the Christ-event, and guided by the prophetic link between Scripture and the age of the NC. Typology forms the backbone of our author's use of Scripture, and grows out of the prophetic relationship between Scripture and its NC fulfilment in the Christ-event. In Hebrews, typology is not so much meant to interpret Scripture as to interpret the Christ-event and to establish its meaning and significance in redemptive history. The direct application of Scripture to the readers in chs. 8–10 stems from the typological relationship between Israel and Christians,

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<sup>163</sup>Cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 28.

<sup>164</sup>Schröger (*Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, p. 313) is right to say that "The author of the epistle to the Hebrews had at his disposal an excess of capability to show the readers how one must read 'Scripture' in order to learn the sense intended by God; he did it according to the manner of his time" (my translation).

which identifies them as God's NC people. It is also based on universal principles that undergird God's dealings with humanity under both covenants and that are reiterated in Scripture in a context broader than the OC.

This study has confirmed that our author views the OC as obsolete, that Scripture is in fact an important source for his message and that he relies on the authority of Scripture to strengthen his message and its efficacy with his readers. Now it is possible to answer the question that began this study: If the author of Hebrews understands the OC as obsolete, how can he rely on OC Scripture as an important source and authority for his message? The answer to this question is that the author of Hebrews understands the OC as fulfilled in the NC and the Christ-event, and OC Scripture as fulfilled in the age of the NC. As a result, it is impossible to understand or appreciate fully the significance of the spiritual realities of the NC, the Christ-event or the relationship between God and his NC people apart from their concrete prefigurements in Scripture. Therefore, filtered through the grid of "fulfilment", God's revelation in Scripture still has meaning, significance and authority for the readers of Hebrews as NC believers.

Though the readers are in danger of losing confidence and slipping away from their faith, our author uses Scripture in a way that assumes the readers' acceptance of its authority. The readers have already paid a price for their faith, and our author expects that they will suffer still more on account of it (cf. 10:32-36). By showing the readers that as NC believers they fulfil the expectation of Scripture, and even the expectation of the OC itself since in Hebrews the OC inherently anticipates the better provision of the NC, our author seeks to encourage his readers to discharge faithfully their commitment to Christ outside the safety and comfort of Judaism. Scripture is used in Hebrews 8–10 as an authority to demonstrate the nature, validity and security of the NC provision of Christ, and this is meant to embolden the readers in their commitment to Christ and his NC community.

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