

HEBREWS 2:5–9: An Exegetical Paper

The objective of biblical hermeneutics is to gain understanding of the Bible and its message. This enterprise can be difficult as one realizes that there are many different methods within hermeneutics. These various methods can cause the Bible to become bewildering, because one realizes that everyone has been left to his own interpretation.

The Bible was written over a vast amount of time, by numerous scholars, each providing his own message from God. Since the writing of the Bible, there have been countless writers who have offered additional thoughts about what God intended in the origin of writing the Bible. Many of these interpretations have made readers question the authorial intent, and the veracity of God's word. Yet, the Bible is a united account telling how God set out to have a personal relationship with mankind.

The Bible teaches humanity that God reveals Himself by communicating through His word. Hebrews 2:5–9 is a passage used in the early church to present God's revelation of Himself to man. The author of Hebrews apparently knew this, and considered Psalm 8 as a viable text this idea. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to do an exegetical analysis of Hebrews 2:5–9, considering the reason that the writer of Hebrews used Psalm 8, and more importantly, only verses 4–6 of Psalm 8. The goal of this paper is to display that the original author of Hebrews wanted to show that a flawed Christology mars one's obedience to God. The first section of this paper discusses the historical context of the Book of Hebrews by first considering the writer and his audience. The second part of this paper provides the historical context of Hebrews 2:5–9. The third portion of this paper examinations the literary context of Hebrews 2:5–9. The fourth segment of this paper is a conclusion summarizing the findings of this paper, and showing how these findings reach the intended goal of this paper – to describe that the original author wanted to demonstrate that a faulty Christology impairs one's obedience to God.

Psalm 8

To the Chief Musician. On the instrument of Gath. A Psalm of David. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens! Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained

strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger. When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen -- Even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!

Analysis of Hebrews 2:5–9

For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place, saying: “What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Historical Context – The Author and His Audience

The Author. The debate concerning the author of the Book of Hebrews has been discussed, perhaps, since it was written.¹ In fact, as time has passed, many have avoided delving into the issue because it is near impossible to conclusively determine the original author(s).² But, it is a vital issue in that it helps set the historical context of the Book of Hebrews. However, it is not the intent of this paper to resolve the issue, but rather acknowledge that the original author had

¹ David L. Allen provides a concise synopsis for the various discussion and debates concerning the authorship of Hebrews.

² David L. Allen notes, “Most commentaries on Hebrews of recent vintage do not spend a great deal of time discussing matter of authorship and recipients. This is understandable in light of the multitude of theories available.” David Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary, vol. 35 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2010), 29.

the respect of early Christians. This respect allowed him to write the Book of Hebrews, and distribute it so that it was accepted into the Christian Scripture.³

Since the writing of the Book of Hebrews there have been numerous suggestions for the authorship of Hebrews.⁴ While each of these submissions have advocates who argue the various cases, the author of this paper contends that two seem to have the greatest viability. The two that appear as the most likely to have authored the Book of Hebrews are, Paul and Luke.⁵ The reason for this hypothesis is that Paul and Luke seem to have the greatest interest in the welfare of the early church.⁶ As far as Paul as the author, those that argue for Paul writing the Book of Hebrews state that it is written with the transparency of understanding the Jewish religious tradition.⁷ On the other hand, those that

³ F. F. Bruce notes, “Canonicity and authorship are in principle quite distinct, but in the early Christian centuries, as a practical issue, the canonicity of New Testament books and their apostolic authorship were frequently involved with each other, and nowhere more so than in relation to this epistle.” F. F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 22. Elsewhere, Bruce comments that “the most authoritative writings available to the church were those which came from his apostles. Among his apostles none was more active in writing than Paul. There were some in Paul’s own day and a few in later generations, who questioned his right to be called an apostle, but throughout the churches of the Gentiles his apostleship was generally undoubted – inevitably so, because a number of those churches would not have existed except for his apostolic ministry.” Later he states that “the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews no doubt were acquainted with its author (in that sense they would not have regarded it as an anonymous communication), but since it does not bear his name, his identity was forgotten after a generation or two, and has never been certainly recovered.” F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988), 256–257. D. H. Williams presents a case showing that authoritative tradition given by the leaders of the church was a large part of defining the early church. D. H. Williams, *Tradition, Scripture, and Interpretation: A Sourcebook of the Ancient Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 15–32.

⁴ Some suggestions for authorship of the Book of Hebrews: Clement, Barnabas, Apollos, Philo, Priscilla and Aquila, Philip, Peter, Silvanus (Silas), Aristion, and Jude.

⁵ According to Bruce M. Metzger, most leaders within the early church accepted Paul as the author of the Book of Hebrews. Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). David Allen remarks that Eusebius “conjectured that Paul did not prefix his name to the epistle since the Jews were prejudiced and suspicious of him.” Allen, *Hebrews*, 30–31. Origen did not accept Hebrews as coming from the hand of Paul; but, he did recognize its apostolic authority. Craig D. Allert, *A High View of Scripture? The Authority of the Bible and the Formation of the New Testament Canon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007) 53–54. However, there are some that contend that Origen thought that the Book of Hebrews was Pauline, but that someone else wrote the letter because of stylistic matters.

⁶ The writer of this paper acknowledges that Hebrews could have been written after Paul and Luke. Allen comments, “The view that Luke could have helped Paul write Hebrews was popular in the nineteenth century, but it fell into disrepute in the twentieth century due to the increasing weight of the anti-Pauline hypothesis and the combination of two converging positions: (1) the Luke-Acts was written late in the first century and not necessarily by Luke the traveling companion of Paul; and (2) that Hebrews is likewise to be dated after-AD 70.” Allen, *Hebrews*, 47. However, it seems plausible that Paul and Luke could have worked on Hebrews before they were separated, seeing the disruption taking place within the early church, and Luke finished the work later. However, since all are silent about the matter, no one can know definitively.

reason that Luke wrote the Book of Hebrews maintain that the literary style appears to resemble Luke-Acts.⁸ Since Paul and Luke were co-laborers and companions in their journeys, it seems plausible that they shared thoughts with one another about God's work. And, as they shared these thoughts together they were reminded of the hard work, and the need to encourage followers to continue that work. This could lead one to conclude that Paul and Luke wrote Hebrews. Additionally, Leon Morris helps strengthen the argument that Paul and Luke collaborated to pen Hebrews. He states, "The earliest reference to authorship is a statement of Clement of Alexandria that Paul wrote it in Hebrew and that Luke translated the work into Greek."⁹ One contends that Paul provided Luke with Jewish ideology and clarification, and Luke took this information and edited it. Even though Donald Guthrie does not support the idea, he does note that the author was "a man who has pondered long on the Christian approach to the Old Testament."¹⁰ In other words, the author was a man who had worked out his salvation, and wanted others to follow (Phil 2:12). The main concern of the writer of Hebrews seemed to have had was that Christians need a strong Christocentric worldview.¹¹ As a consequence, he wanted his audience to realize that a warped Christology harmed his walk and faith with God.

The Reader. The debate concerning the authorship of the Book of Hebrews is only part of the issue that has been discussed. The other factor that

⁷ Steven Ger comments, "The fact that his Old Testament quotations are exclusively drawn from the Septuagint lead many to believe that the author is a Hellenistic (Greek) Jew born outside the land of Israel among the Jewish diaspora of the Roman Empire." Steven Ger, *The Book of Hebrews: Christ is Greater*, Twenty-First Century Biblical Commentary Series (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2009), 1–2.

⁸ Allen maintains, "An examination of the New Testament literature reveals that the writings of Luke and Hebrews alone approach the standard of Classical Greek style. The similarity in vocabulary and style was noted as early as the second century. Hebrews shares 53 words that occur elsewhere in the NT only in Luke-Acts, a significant number. In fact, two-thirds of the total vocabulary of Hebrews occur in Luke-Acts." Allen, *Hebrews*, 49.

⁹ Leon Morris, *Hebrews*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol 12 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 6. See, Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6:14.2.

¹⁰ Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 15 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990), 21. Guthrie remarks, "The anonymity of the text is an immediate difficulty for Pauline authorship, since nowhere is there any suggestion that Paul would have written anonymously." Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 19.

¹¹ Ray C. Stedman comments, "Wherever the readers lived it is clear that they were largely second-generation Christians; their first leaders had already passed away (13:7). They had professed Christ for some time (5:12) and had once shown great evidences of sturdy faith (10:32–34). But when the letter was written they had reached a state of discouragement and spiritual lethargy. Some had given up meeting with other believers (10:25); many found increasing opposition to their faith in Jesus among their Jewish families and friends, while they also faced sharpening hostility from Gentile authorities and citizens." Ray C. Stedman, *Hebrews*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series vol. 15 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992), 12–13.

has been deliberated is the recipients of the Book of Hebrews. The various possibilities are: Jewish (Messianic and Non-Christian) Community in general, Jewish Christians, non-Jewish Christians, Gentile Christians, Hellenistic Jews, or the Christians in Rome or Jerusalem. Ger contends that with the absence of any explicit hearers, it is more difficult to identify the recipients for the Book of Hebrews, than the authors.¹² Yet, if Paul and Luke, as Clement of Alexandria contends, were co-authors of the Book of Hebrews; then, they could have reached their intended audience with the message as it is found within Hebrews without identifying themselves. One major part of that message was to encourage them not to forsake the assembling of themselves or their faith.

The Limit of the Passage – Hebrews 2:5–9

The limitation of this passage, as found within this paper, is confined to Hebrews 2:5–9. The reason for the restriction is that the original author only used three verses from Psalm 8 to convey a part of his message (Hebrews 2:5–9). The other part of Hebrews 2:5–9 applies some insight for how the verses from Psalm 8 are intended to be utilized. Yet, the verses as found in Psalm 8:4–6 and Hebrews 2:6–8 seem to desire to convey a thought – man should realize that he is important to God. A paradigm for this can be seen in Hebrews 2:6 which states, “What is man that You are mindful of him Or the son of man that You take care (*episkepte*) of him?”¹³ Hermann Beyer observes that the understanding of God’s “gracious visitation to men and nations” is a concept that is realized from the Old Testament and is passed on into the New Testament.¹⁴ The writer of

¹² Ger, *The Book of Hebrews: Christ is Greater*, 11–21.

¹³ Hermann W. Beyer states, “The term *episkeptomai* has a religious content in the LXX only when God is the Subject of the action. . . . It denotes an unchanging attitude on God’s part. The word *episkeptomai* actualizes this attitude. It is mostly used where we have the rendering ‘to visit.’ It combines the various senses of ‘to visit, to look upon, to investigate, to inspect, to test, to be concerned about, to care for,’ in description of the act in which the Lord in a special incursion into the course of life of individuals or of a people, mostly Israel, makes known to them His will either in judgment or in grace. It is worth noting that this sense does not occur in secular Greek but only in the context of the OT history of salvation, from which it passes into the NT. This visitation takes place when God draws near to His people in its sin and distress, and shows Himself to be the Lord of history. It may entail the judgment executed by Him. But it may also consist in an act of mercy. The point is that He manifestly enters history.” Hermann W. Beyer, “*episkeptomai*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 602.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 605.

Hebrews reminds man that in the beginning, God made man in His image to rule over creation. However, man's disobedience forfeited that right. Therefore, God sent His Son to redeem and rectify the issue that man's sin caused. God and His Son are to be glorified for the work that they accomplished; for the work that Jesus Christ achieved places Him over all things (Psalm 110). A failure to apply this message causes one to have faulty Christology, causing one to misunderstand how to live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.¹⁵

Historical Context – Use of Psalm 8:4–6 as Found in Hebrews 2:5–9

The endeavor to acquire insight into the Bible and understand its message is an enormous undertaking. This is especially true when a New Testament writer uses the Old Testament as a method of interpretation. The two Testaments were written many years apart and have a variety of issues, such as, textual issues (words added or omitted) and hermeneutical issues (how the author wrote and how the audience in turn understood the text).

This proposed study is attempting to gain insight into what is meant by the passage as it is found in Hebrews 2:5–9 and in what context is it used (2:5–9 → Ps 8 is it a direct quote, paraphrase, or an allusion). However, it should be noted that the writer of this paper is not attempting to understand all the areas of interrelationship between Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2:5–9. An enterprise such as that would take more space than this paper will allow. There are varying proposals about how Hebrews should be understood and especially on how the Old Testament was used within its confines.¹⁶ Having made this statement, one's interpretation will determine what kind of outcome one will have. Thus, where does one start? Billy Wayne Murray's examination of the use of Psalm 8:4–6 in Hebrews 2:5–9 finds that "the psalmist intends for his passage to exalt mankind in general. The writer of the Hebrews, however, intends to show humiliation

¹⁵ William Lane remarks, "In Jesus we see exhibited humanity's true vocation. In an extraordinary way he fulfills God's design for all creation and displays what had always been intended for all humankind, according to Ps.8. He is the one in whom primal glory and sovereignty are restored. His experience of humiliation and exaltation guarantees that the absolute subjection of everything envisioned in Ps. 8:7 and promised in Ps. 110:1 will be achieved." William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary. Vol. 47a. (Waco: Word, 1991), 48.

¹⁶ In order to gain further insight one must examine the various commentaries on Hebrews and discover the wide range of understanding each commentator has submitted.

rather than exaltation and to apply the passage specifically to Jesus Christ.”¹⁷ He further states, “one does not have the privilege of manipulating a given text to make it mean what the author did not intend. If the writer of the Hebrews actually changed the meaning of the psalm citation, then his argument lacks a proper foundation.”¹⁸

The perceived foundation that propelled the author to write Psalm 8 was his recognition that God must be glorified for the works of His hands.¹⁹ Michael Wilcock states, “The Bible world, like ours, was pluralistic, awash with all sorts of different beliefs; in the view of any correctly thinking person, all of them valid, but none of them actually ‘right’ in such a way as to make the rest wrong. Not so the psalmist. The Lord, the God of Israel and the Bible, is not just our Lord, he says, but the name, the only name, to be honoured in all the earth and even above the heavens.”²⁰ In other words, man should recognize that God is the great Creator of all things. God’s name alone represents King, because He is the Creator.²¹ Therefore, “His name (Yahweh) is glorious over all the earth, by virtue of his creative activities (cf. Gen 1:1–31).”²² Thus, man is to recognize that even in his most feeble state, God makes it possible for man to prevail over his strongest enemies. Only a Creator of all things has the capacity to do such an act. This

¹⁷ Billy Wayne Murray, “A Hermeneutical, Textual, and Semantic Examination of the Employment of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2,” Th.D. diss., Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992, 2–3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹ There is some discussion as to who the author of this Psalm was and his setting and age. However, the writer of this paper contends that David was the writer and his age and original setting are not relevant for the context of this paper.

²⁰ Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Psalms, 1–72* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity 2001), 39. Willem VanGemeran comments, “The introductory and concluding ascriptions of praise form an inclusion within which the glory of the Creator is the object of celebration. The Redeemer-God, Yahweh, is Lord over his people. The title ‘our Lord’ is an address to God as king: ‘our governor’ or ‘our ruler’; so to speak of Yahweh as ‘Lord’ was an ascription of kingship in the OT (Ps 97:5).” Willem A. VanGemeran, *Psalms, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 110.

²¹ Peter Craigie contends, “The word ‘name’ here represents not only God, but also God’s revelation of himself, and it is critical to an understanding of the theme of revelation in the psalm as a whole.” Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50, Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 19 (Waco: Word, 1983), 107.

²² Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 107.

beginning section of Psalm 8 appears to be an allusion referring back to Genesis 1.

It is in Genesis 1 that the narrator commenced with an introduction of the two main subjects of the Bible—God, the Creator, and man, the creature. As Creator, God made all that was, is, and ever will be. It was on the last day of creating that God created man uniquely in His own image. According to the author of Genesis, the outcome of what took place on the sixth day of creation is the foundation of the relationship between God and man. Even though there is complexity in understanding what actually took place on that day, the Bible conveys the message in a manner that allows man to realize that he has been given an individual identity and a unique ability to share fellowship with God. Not only can man have fellowship with God, but the Bible will demonstrate time and again that he is specifically created for that purpose. The ability for man to have a personal relationship with God is intrinsic to being created in the image of God. Consequently, this is what the author of Psalm 8 seemed to stress as he coined the words of this text pondering the thought—“what is man that You are mindful of him?”

In His vast creation, the Bible teaches that God divided the heavens and earth. VanGemeran observes, “The Creator has established two spheres of rule: heaven and earth. He has established the celestial bodies in the firmament and has given them the rule over day and night (Gen 1:17–18), whereas he appointed man to govern the earth (Gen 1:28).”²³ The usage of the word *'enosh* (man) appears to indicate that the psalmist has an underlying objective in mind. The word *'enosh* has “the basic emphasis on man’s weakness, mortality, or insignificance.”²⁴ Fritz Maass will remark that *'enosh* “is found almost exclusively in poetic texts . . . which draws upon the creatureliness, frailty and danger of man that is often emphasized in the Old Testament.”²⁵ The point that the psalmist appears to have made was that man could be overcome with astonishment in

²³ VanGemeran, *Psalms*, 112. Wilcock notes that “the inhabitants of this tiny planet have the ability to control their own destiny . . . because it was God’s plan first to create this immense setting for man, and then to appoint him ruler over it.” Wilcock, *The Message of Psalms, 1–72*, 39. Anthony Hoekema states, “The psalmist’s contemplation of the marvels of the starry heavens makes him realize, by comparison, the smallness and insignificance of man. Yet God has assigned to man an exalted position on the earth, having given him dominion over the rest of creation.” Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 18.

²⁴ Thomas E. McComiskey, “*'enosh*,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 59.

²⁵ Fritz Maass, “*'enosh*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 346.

realizing that God, the Creator of the heavens and earth, could even consider an insignificant creature—man. However, the psalmist did not leave the reader with the impression that God care little about man. According to Hoekema, “man, so says the inspired author of Psalm 8, was made only a little lower than God—a statement that strongly reminds us of the words of Genesis 1 about man’s having been created in the image and likeness of God.”²⁶ Yet, this statement does not come without its textual issues.

The writer of Psalm 8 presented the notion of man’s importance within God’s creation. This can be illustrated by how the original author intended for the word *'elohim* to be understood—God or angel?²⁷ The word *'elohim* means “God, gods, judges, angels. . . it is generally viewed as the plural of *'eloah*, and is found far more frequently in Scripture than either *'el* or *'eloah* for the true God. The plural ending is usually described as a plural of majesty and not intended as a true plural when used of God. This is seen in the fact that the noun *'elohim* is consistently used with singular verb forms and with adjectives and pronouns in the singular.”²⁸ The word *'elohim* can be found 2,570 times in the Old Testament as referring either to God or gods.²⁹ The word *'elohim* used to indicate a judge can be found twice (Ex 21:6 and 22:8–9). However, the only possible passage that uses *'elohim* to denote angels is Ps 8:5.³⁰ Peter C. Craigie believes that verse 5 most likely refers to God and not to angels, for he states that “the translation God is almost certainly correct, and the words probably contain an allusion to the image of God in mankind and the God given role of dominion to be exercised by mankind within the created order.”³¹ Nowhere else in the Bible does

²⁶ Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 19.

²⁷ Aquila, MT, Symmachus, and Theodotion translate the word *'elohim*. However, LXX, Vulgate, Targum and Syriac all translate the word *aggelous*. Robert G. Bratcher, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament*, (New York: United Bible Societies, 1984), 63. Craigie writes, “The translation angels may have been prompted by modesty, for it may have seemed rather extravagant to claim that mankind was only a little less than God. Nevertheless, the translation God is almost certainly correct, and the words probably contain an allusion to the image of God in mankind and the God-given role of dominion to be exercised by mankind within the created order.” Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 108.

²⁸ Jack B. Scott, “*'elohim*,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 44.

²⁹ Helmer Ringgren, “*'elohim*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 272.

³⁰ Murray, “A Hermeneutical, Textual, and Semantic Examination of the Employment of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2,” 19–21.

it state or imply that man should be subservient to anyone or anything other than God.³² God created man in such a manner that nothing should come between God and man.³³

The Lord God *yasar* (formed) man and God breathed the breath of life into man and created him in His own image.³⁴ Longman notes that the author wanted to instruct man that he has a special relationship with God, and this is “highlighted by the fact that his body is animated by the very ‘breath of life’ (Gen 2:7).”³⁵ God’s breathing into man’s nostrils portrays the image of astounding closeness between God and man not found in any other part of creation. Furthermore, Bernard W. Anderson remarks that this idea is known as *creation continua*; “Creation is not just an event that occurred in the beginning, at the foundation of the earth, but is God’s continuing activity of sustaining creatures and holding everything into being.”³⁶ At the time of creation, God, through His Spirit, breathed the breath of life into man and continues to give him life.

God, because of His grace and desire to fellowship with man, provided a means for man to have restored fellowship with Him. Gen 3:15 states, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” What is meant by seed in this passage? One seed refers to that of the serpent, who, as the rebellious leader, led the woman to disobey God. This seed will ultimately have his head bruised which conveys the implication of his total defeat.³⁷ The other Seed is

³¹ Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 108. Also see, Derek Kidner, He states, “In the most obvious sense of the Hebrew (as in RV, RSV), verse 5 would seem to allude to the image of God, mentioned in Genesis 1:26.” Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol 14a (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1973), 67.

³² Herbert Lockyer comments, “For first to last, the angels of God are ministering spirits. Worship and ministry are their twofold function—they are priests in the heavenly temple; messengers on God’s errands of love and justice. . . . From the earliest ages angels have been employed to make known the decrees and purposes of God concerning His dispensations of mercy to mankind.” Herbert Lockyer, *All the Angels in the Bible* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 67.

³³ Lane states, “The reminder that God did not entrust the administration of the heavenly world to come to the angels but to the exalted Son puts in a proper perspective the exposition of Jesus’ solidarity with the human condition that follows.” Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 46.

³⁴ The original author of Genesis used a waw consecutive with the word *yasar* to show that there was a continuation of creation.

³⁵ Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 106.

³⁶ Bernhard W. Anderson, “Introduction: Mythopoetic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith,” in *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. Bernhard Anderson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 14.

³⁷ Sailhamer, John. *Genesis*. The Expositor’s Bible Commentary. vol. 2. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990),

born of a woman and is to be understood as Jesus Christ, Himself.³⁸ To further understand the progression, a brief examination of seed is needed. Waltke notes, “‘Offspring’ renders *zera* ‘seed,’ which is used commonly as a figure for descendants. Like the English word, *zera* can refer to an immediate descendant (Gen 4:25; 15:3), a distant offspring, or a large group of descendants. Here and throughout Scripture, all three senses are developed and merged.”³⁹ Therefore, Gen 3:15 inform the reader that “the following words of God to the woman and the man include expressions both of divine grace and of divine judgment. Yes, there will be pain for Eve, but she is promised children. Sterility will not be one of her problems. Yes, there will be frustration for Adam because of intractable soil, but he will eat and not starve to death.”⁴⁰ However, there is a significant point to be made in the Seed of Christ. Waltke remarks, “Humanity must return to the garden without sin and without death. That will require the second Adam, who by clothing us in his righteousness will take us into the garden. The first Adam, representing all people, fails and brings death upon all. The active obedience of the last Adam satisfies God’s demands and gives the faithful eternal life (Rom 5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:45–49).”⁴¹

VanGemenen states, “In his full participation with humanity, Jesus has been ‘crowned . . . with glory and honor’ (Heb 2:7) because of his responsiveness to the Father. He is ‘the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being’ (Heb 1:3). Jesus, the God-Man, has suffered death for man (Heb 2:9) and hence has received greater glory and authority. The Father has subjected everything to the Son (Heb 2:5; cf. Col 1:15–20), and all things must submit to his messianic rule (1 Cor 15:27).”⁴² Verses 6–8 corroborate with what has been stated in the aforementioned section of this paper. Man was created in the image of God and was commanded to have dominion over all

³⁸ Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*. The New American Commentary. vol. 1A. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 247–248.

³⁹ Bruce Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 93. Waltke footnotes that “the immediate seed is Abel, then Seth. The collective seed is the holy offspring of the patriarchs (Gen 15:5; 22:17). After Genesis we do not hear again of the promised seed until God promises David a seed (2 Sam 7:12), which should also be understood in all three ways. The unique fulfillment of this seed promise, Jesus Christ, comes into the world through the seed of the woman: the patriarchs and David.” Ibid.

⁴⁰ Victor J. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapter 1–17*. The New International Commentary of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 200.

⁴¹ Waltke, *Genesis. A Commentary*, 104.

⁴² VanGemenen, *Psalms*, 113.

things which the Lord made. However, it should be noted that this was prior to man's disobedience and subsequent fall.⁴³ Barnabas Lindars notes that "the special value of this psalm is that it enabled early Christian thinkers to express the concept of the risen Lord as the 'inclusive representative' of redeemed humanity. It is a psalm of praise for man's redemption in and through the person of Jesus, crucified and risen. It is not properly a messianic psalm like Pss. 2 and 110, but acquires this character through its usefulness to fill out the meaning of the Christology formulated by means of these psalms."⁴⁴

Historical Hermeneutical Context Concerning Psalm 8

In order to understand how the early Jewish/Christian⁴⁵ reader comprehended Psalm 8, insight must be given on how they perceived hermeneutics within their lives.⁴⁶ George Brooke helps with this knowledge when he states that "for the early Jew there was no difference between exegesis and hermeneutic, that is, no difference between his encounter with the text as object per se, and as it related to himself as subject. Such is to say that the text presented itself to the early Jew as immediately relevant."⁴⁷ Therefore, how did the early Jewish/Christian community treat Psalms?

Ralph Smith notes that the Psalms were a vital part of worship as a "source book" to guide their worship and daily lives. He states, "Early Christians seemed to have no problem with using Old Testament Psalms for Christian worship because the God of the Old Testament was the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Old Testament was Scripture for them."⁴⁸ Therefore, it

⁴³ Ibid., 114.

⁴⁴ Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetics: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 168–169.

⁴⁵ The writer of this paper labels the early Jewish/Christian community as such to show that there were true similarities but there was a difference between the two.

⁴⁶ R. Kent Hughes comments that Hebrews 2:5–9 "emphasizes comforting the afflicted. The smallness of the tiny house-church, the immensity of the hostile sea around them, and the mounting breakers of Neronian persecution left them feeling lonely and insignificant—like a forgotten cork in the tide. This seeming insignificance is countered by the writer in verses 5–9 as he shows how Christ, through his superiority, gives them massive significance in his ultimate intention for them." R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 55.

⁴⁷ George J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in Its Jewish Context* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 3.

is no surprise that Psalm 8 can be found as a resource for the New Testament. In fact, Psalm 8 was a psalm that was highly esteemed and thought of as a “messianic psalm” by many within the early Jewish/Christian community.⁴⁹ Thus, this can be viewed as an important piece of information for it lets it be known that “the text functioned primarily in the life of the community” and was not some piece of stagnant literature that did not have impact upon the community.⁵⁰ Consequently, having stated the impact that the Psalms had upon the Jewish/Christian community it should be noted that the Qumran community, Apocalyptic/rabbinic Judaism were also influenced by Psalms and in particular Psalms 8.⁵¹

The Literary Context – Hebrews 2:5–9

There can be little question that man is affected by his environment. This is especially true when it comes to issues surrounding interpretation of Scripture and one’s belief system. Lindars notes that “the [early] Church selected whole passages of the Old Testament for study. A definite rule of interpretation was used. We should thus expect that, when a verse was quoted, its application should be closely related to this interpretation, and that this should be the same if it was quoted more than once. In fact, however, this was not so.”⁵² Hebrews 2:5–9 is arguably a prototype of this statement. Thus, it can be deduced that there can be little doubt that the early Christian community was influenced by outside coercion.⁵³ Part of the influence likely came from the Qumran community who held angels in high regard. Raymond Brown documents, “The Jewish people believed that in past times the angels shared in the mediation of God’s word (2:2) and that in the present age they participate in the administration of God’s

⁴⁸ Ralph Smith, “The Use and Influence of the Psalms,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 27 (1984): 5–6. He notes that “the New Testament was influenced by the Psalms more than by any other Old Testament book.” *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Smith, “The Use and Influence of the Psalms,” 16.

⁵⁰ W. H. Bellinger, Jr., “Let the Words of My Mouth: Proclaiming the Psalms,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 27 (1984): 18.

⁵¹ Qumran uses of Psalm 8 – 1QS III, 17–18; 1QS XI, 20; 1QS XI, 21–22a; Midrash uses of Psalm 8 – 3 Enoch; 4 Ezra 6:53–54.

⁵² Lindars, *New Testament Apologetics: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations*, 17.

⁵³ Bruce, *Hebrews*, 3–9.

world.”⁵⁴ At this point, it should be noted that most assuredly the early Church used Old Testament Scripture as an “apologetic” method to proclaim the Gospel. Key passages were used to bring to mind particular issues.⁵⁵ Thus, it can be taken for granted that Hebrews 2:5–9 was a direct quote of Psalm 8. However, it should be noted that the writer of Hebrews left out words or phrases or changed words in order to convey his homily.

Verse 5 begins by informing the listener that “the world to come would not be subject to angels” but, would be subject to Christ. Consequently, Raymond Steadman points out that this statement “raises the possibility that the present age is subject to angelic governance.”⁵⁶ John 12:31 states, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”⁵⁷ The perception given by this verse is that the fallen angel called Satan is referred to as a principality of this world, and is permitted his control over man until the Lord returns and the new age begins. This idea can further be confirmed in Matthew 4:5 and Luke 4:5–6 where the Bible states that Satan approaches Jesus and tells Him that if He would worship him then he would give Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.” Satan, apparently, at some time took dominion over the earth from man. The only place that this was possible, according to Scripture, was when man ate the fruit of the forbidden tree and died. Therefore, Herschel Hobbs keenly observes that “the new order whereof we speak, the spiritual restoration of the world both natural and spiritual, is not to be subdued by angels.”⁵⁸

Thus, the writer of Hebrews continued in verse 6 by asking about man.⁵⁹ “What is man that You are mindful of him of the Son of man that You take care of Him?”⁶⁰ Man was the principal part of creation; however, because of sin there is

⁵⁴ Raymond Brown, *The Message of Hebrews* (Downer Grove: InterVarsity, 1988) 54.

⁵⁵ Lindars, *New Testament Apologetics: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations*, 19.

⁵⁶ Ray C. Steadman, *Hebrews*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992), 38.

⁵⁷ Eph 6:12 portrays angels as hostile principalities and power: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

⁵⁸ Herschel Hobbs, *Hebrews: Challenges to Bold Discipleship*. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1971), 20.

⁵⁹ At this point, there is a slight textual issue, the pronoun *ti* was used in the Old Greek reading, but it was changed to *tis* for no apparent reason. Murray, “A Hermeneutical, Textual, and Semantic Examination of the Employment of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2,” 153.

a paradigm shift, and the son of man becomes the central part of creation. Guthrie asserts, “The original context is man, yet not in his ordinary state but in his ideal state, indicated by the use of the title ‘son of man.’ At creation man was given dominion over the earth, but ever since the fall that authority to subject has been lacking.”⁶¹ Brown explains that the writer of Hebrews wished to convey that “only Christ could achieve our salvation and in order to do so became man, not taking upon himself the nature of angels but being made ‘like his brethren in every respect (2:16–17).”⁶² Thus, Christ took upon Himself the title of the “Son of Man.” Gary Habermas writes, “Few New Testament topics have been treated in more publications or with more detail” than the title “Son of Man.”⁶³

Thus, the question arises—what is meant by the title “Son of Man?” Leonard Goppelt asserts, “Philologically the title simply means ‘human being’ but it always has a messianic flavor when applied to Jesus. These sayings create the impression that the title ‘Son of Man’ connotes a definite messianic idea that was not formulated by Jesus, but was shaped and revealed by God’s redemptive decree and would be fulfilled by Jesus.”⁶⁴ Furthermore, C. H. Dodd will affirm, “In Ps. Viii the ‘son of man’ (in parallelism with ‘man’) is simply man as such, and in his weakness and insignificance, yet ‘visited’ by God, and by his merciful ordinance ‘crowned with glory and honour.’ There is a clear analogy with the ‘Son of Man’ of Ps lxxx and Dan vii,² which speak of Israel, under the similitude of a human figure, humiliated into insignificance until visited by God and raised to glory.”⁶⁵ Elsewhere in the New Testament, Paul did not seem to have had any qualms with addressing man in his sinful state as being the “divine image of the first Adam” (1 Cor 11:7; cf. 1 Tim 2:13f.). From the usage of these passages it seems clear enough that Paul was not imagining man returning to the state in which he was originally created, but rather to a better condition that only Christ

⁶⁰ Allen comments, “The term ‘mindful’ conveys the idea of being concerned, which is further seen in the parallel term *episkeptomai* (‘care’) in the second line, which was a medical term in Greek for a visit from a doctor.” Allen, *Hebrews*, 204.

⁶¹ Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Vol. 15. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 84.

⁶² Brown, *The Message of Hebrews*, 55.

⁶³ Gary Habermas, *The Risen Jesus & Future Hope* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 100.

⁶⁴ Leonhard Goppelt, *TYPOS: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 91.

⁶⁵ C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1957), 117.

could live and give. The reason, according to Paul, “Christ is the image of God (*eikon tou theou*, Col 1:15; 2 Cor 4:4) and because he is the second Adam, those who belong to him will be conformed to his image (*eikon*) (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:29; cf. 1 Cor 15:49) and in this way they, like Adam, will ‘be created in the image’ of their creator.”⁶⁶ Dodd put it succinctly,

The argument here is as follows: it is perfectly possible for God to accomplish the miracle of transforming our bodies into the likeness of his glory, since (as we know from scripture) He is able to subject all things to Christ. This argument becomes perspicuous if we assume that Paul saw in the triumph of Christ over death the pledge of glory for mankind as such, to which the psalm refers. The promise of Ps. VIII that man, in the person of Him who is “Son of man” (or in Pauline terms, the Man from heaven) shall be crowned with glory and honour, has been fulfilled in Christ, and will be fulfilled for those who are “in Him.”⁶⁷

Scripture holds a view from Psalm 8 that “human beings had been given the status of creature-sovereign with responsibility for the ordering of the creation of God.”⁶⁸ Yet, because of man’s fall he forfeited his right. Consequently, the “Son of Man” by taking on the form of man was able to answer man’s problem of sin→death. By vicariously taking the fashion of man upon Himself, He suffered and died and, as a result, of such obedience was able to become the ultimate paradigm and lead man to glory.⁶⁹

Therefore, the author of Hebrews reasoned that Christ, as stated in verse 7, “was made a little lower than the angels.” Hobbs rightly states that “man was created a little lower than God, not angels. Nowhere does the Bible place angels above man in dignity and honor (cf. 1:14).”⁷⁰ It is noteworthy, at this point, how the word *brachu ti* (little lower) is used within this text. The first time, as used here in verse 7, it is used as in Psalm 8:5; however, the second time the author of Hebrews used the phrase in verse 9 the observant listener would note that the

⁶⁶ Goppelt, *TYPOS: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, 132.

⁶⁷ Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology*, 33.

⁶⁸ Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 46.

⁶⁹ Attridge, “The Psalms in Hebrews,” in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 208.

⁷⁰ Hobbs, *Hebrews: Challenges to Bold Discipleship*, 21.

author has created more than what was stated in Psalm 8 (a possible allusion). Lane observes that there is a change in verse 7 and in verse 9. Note:

Verse 7 – “You made him a little lower than the angels”

Verse 9 – “For a little lower than the angels he was made”

He concludes, “By this change the stress falls upon the momentary character of the humiliation that was necessary to the accomplishment of redemption.”⁷¹

Guthrie asserts that “the writer to the Hebrews was mainly concerned with man’s present status.”⁷²

Man’s current condition was due to his disobedience of God. Hobbs states, “It was when through inordinate ambition he tried to be God or to be equal with him that man lost his spiritual relation to God.”⁷³ Thus, the Greek reading of the text is correct; for, when man became disobedient unto death—Satan, the fallen angel, usurped man’s authority and took dominion from fallen man. Murray keenly notes that the writer of Hebrews indeed wrote in Greek, but surely was well versed in Hebrew and understood the textual implications.⁷⁴ Hobbs notes that the reading as proposed in Psalm 8 was correct; that “man was created as a person endowed with the right of choice. It was in the wrong use of choice that man fell from this image and likeness. It is God’s purpose in redemption to restore man to his original estate. Thus, those who receive his Son in faith shall become sons of God (John 1:12; Rom 8:16ff) . . . no other of God’s creatures is it said that it “became a living soul” (Gen 2:7) . . . only man is akin to God in spirit.”⁷⁵ Therefore, Jesus unaided by either man or angel accomplished what God purposed for man—righteousness.⁷⁶ Bruce observes, “When one person fails in the accomplishment of the divine purpose (as, in some degree, all did in Old Testament times), God raised up another to take his place. But who could

⁷¹ Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 48.

⁷² Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 85. Guthrie previously contended that “in the psalm this phrase is intended to be a mark of man’s dignity. . . . the psalmist sees man’s dignity to be directly due to God’s initiative.” *Ibid.*

⁷³ Hobbs, *Hebrews: Challenges to Bold Discipleship*, 21.

⁷⁴ Murray, “A Hermeneutical, Textual, and Semantic Examination of the Employment of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2,” 162.

⁷⁵ Hobbs, *Hebrews: Challenges to Bold Discipleship*, 21.

⁷⁶ Edward Dalglish, “The Use of the Book of Psalms in the New Testament,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 27 (1984): 34.

take the place of Adam? Only one who was capable of undoing the effects of Adam's fall and thus ushering in a new world-order."⁷⁷ Which would be Christ and Christ alone, for when man, due to his sin, forsook his intimate relationship with God, he disrupted all of creation (Gen 3:17–19).⁷⁸ Thus, as the faithful "representative" of man, Jesus had to take on the form of man so that he "could blaze the trail of salvation of mankind and act effectively as his people's high priest in the presence of God. This means that he is not only the one in whom the sovereignty destined for humanity is realized, but also the one who, because of human sin, must realize that sovereignty by way of suffering and death."⁷⁹ The death of Jesus, God's Son, becomes the principal point in His suffering. It was not the pain of His death, but the separation from His Father that caused the suffering. J. K. Elliott notes that "Jesus at his death is *choris theou* ["apart from God"] because he entered, albeit temporarily, the realm of Satan which is death (and which according to Paul is the last Satanic enemy to be overcome, 1 Cor 15:26; cf. also 5:21 in which it is stated that sin rules in death)."⁸⁰ Later Elliott notes,

In tasting death, by which is meant fully experiencing the alienation from God which the sin of Adam brought to every man, Jesus is without God. The author of Hebrews thus follows the same doctrine of death as Paul in Rom 5:12. This doctrine is entirely consonant also with Heb 2:14 where it is stressed that the fully human Jesus shared death like the rest of mankind, in order to be able (through the resurrection) to break the devil's power over death and thus effect man's ultimate salvation (cf. John 8:51 – 52). Salvation means salvation not from sin as such but sin's consequence, i.e., death.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Bruce, *Hebrews*, 73.

⁷⁸ Hobbs, *Hebrews: Challenges to Bold Discipleship*, 22.

⁷⁹ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 74. Kevin DeYoung makes this assessment, "Much is made of the fact that Christ is crowned with glory and honor because he suffered, but the reason his suffering is so highly exalted is because he was doing what God as God had not and could not do, namely, suffer." Kevin DeYoung, "Divine Impassibility and The Passion of Christ in the Book of Hebrews," *Westminster Theological Journal* 68 (2006) 44–45.

⁸⁰ J. K. Elliott, "When Jesus was Apart from God: an Examination of Hebrews 2," *The Expository Times* 83 (1972): 340. His argument is that the text needs to be returned to the Church Fathers reading. Murray comments that *chariti theou* is supported by Codices Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, and Ephraemi, along with P⁴⁶. . . . However, the alternate reading *choris theou* is found in many of the Church Fathers and is the more difficult reading." Murray, "A Hermeneutical, Textual, and Semantic Examination of the Employment of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2," 154. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 70.

⁸¹ Elliott, "When Jesus was Apart from God: an Examination of Hebrews 2," 340.

Further he notes that “it is basic to the Christian belief that resurrection is the only means whereby Christ first and Christians subsequently can be released from the bondage of death (i.e., from being ‘without God’) and be eternally ‘with God,’ restored in effect to the pre-Fall situation once again (cf. Rom 5:14 in which Adam and those who follow after him lose their potential immortality by allowing death to enter in as a consequence of their sin).”⁸² DeYoung states that “we see that the incarnation involved some sort of ‘change.’ Christ, the exact representation of God, was made for a little while lower than the angels. The Son of God underwent, at the very least, a change of status, descending from the highest heavens to the earth as a man lower than the angels.”⁸³ The purpose was to restore man to his original intent, however, the only way that could be accomplished was for Christ—the Messiah, to suffer and die for man. Another textual issue can be found in verse 8 with the omission of part of Psalm 8:6 “You made him ruler over the works of your hands.” Yet, by all considerations Murray rightly notes that “the reason for the omission is known only by the author.”⁸⁴

Literary Hermeneutical Overview Concerning Hebrews 2:5–9

Believers during the time of the writing of Hebrews 2 had an extremely high view of Scripture. It was their understanding “that the words of the Bible had their origin in God and were, in fact, the very words of God. Thus, they considered the purpose behind all biblical interpretation to be a translation for man into the life of God’s instruction—that is, making the words of God meaningful and relevant to the lives and thought of the people in their present situations.”⁸⁵ Therefore, Jews and the early believers applied the same methodology of studying the Old Testament Scripture especially “in accordance with the principle of selection and interpretation which was commonly accepted

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ DeYoung, “Divine Impassibility and The Passion of Christ in the Book of Hebrews,” 44.

⁸⁴ Murray, “A Hermeneutical, Textual, and Semantic Examination of the Employment of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2,” 154. Bruce remarks that “A A C D P Y and some other Latin and Coptic versions include Ps 8:7 However , it is missing from P⁴⁶ B and Tertullian’s text D and in most Greek MSS.” Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 70.

⁸⁵ Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 6–7.

throughout the whole of the early church.”⁸⁶ Scripture was seen as vital and life changing. However, their approach to Scripture differed.⁸⁷ Therefore, as Richard Longenecker notes, “Mainline Jewish exegetes of the first century viewed their task as primarily that of adapting, reinterpreting, extending, and so reapplying sacred Scripture to the present circumstances of God’s people, both with respect to how they should live (“halakah”) and how they should think (“haggadah”).⁸⁸ Hebrews, as well as, the other New Testament writings sought to affect the lives of believers through the Scripture.

Thus, the significance found in Hebrews provided a Christological thrust (both eschatological and messianic), teaching early followers how to live Christ. Harold Attridge states that “the fundamental thrust of Hebrews is to sketch a Christian virtue ethic by focusing on the ultimate paradigm of commitment to God. Christ’s acceptance of God’s will, earned him his seat at God’s right hand and showed his followers what they must do as fellow heirs of the promised covenant.”⁸⁹ Hebrews 2:5–9 presents man a course of life. Lane comments, “The three lines reproduced by the writer combine to form a confession of faith that celebrates the three successive moments in the drama of redemption, i.e., the incarnation, the exaltation, and the final victory of Jesus.”⁹⁰ Thus, the Book of Hebrews provides a strong Christological message that helps formulate the Christian life. George Brooke states, “Any interpreter of scripture who wished his interpretation to be accepted is likely to have used particular interpretive techniques because they were reckoned to be valid ways of producing a meaningful interpretation.”⁹¹ Hebrews is analogous “to the New Testament specifically in its usage of Psalm 8. Portions of Psalm 8 are quoted in several instances: Matt 21:16; 1 Cor 15:27; and possibly Eph 1:22.”⁹²

⁸⁶ G. B. Caird, “The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *Canadian Journal of Theology* 5 (1959), 45.

⁸⁷ The various interpretations ranged from a Literal, Midrash, Peshar, and an Allegorical Interpretation.

⁸⁸ Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, xxvi.

⁸⁹ Attridge comments that Hebrews appears to have borrowed from “the elaborate imagery that draws on Jewish apocalyptic traditions and conventional Platonism.” Harold Attridge, “The Psalms in Hebrews,” 197.

⁹⁰ Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 48.

⁹¹ Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in Its Jewish Context*, 4.

⁹² Murray, “A Hermeneutical, Textual, and Semantic Examination of the Employment of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2,” 137.

David Peterson observes that,

linking Psalm 8 with 1 Cor 15:25 –27; Eph 1:20 –22; and possibly 1 Pet 3:22 points to an established Christological association of these texts in Christian tradition. Psalm 8:6 seems to have been applied to Christ because the words “putting all things in subjection under his feet” are reminiscent of the theme of Christ’s absolute dominion in Psalm 110:1. However, our writer goes further than others when he relates the preceding verse of Psalm 8 to the incarnation and heavenly exaltation of Jesus. It is not an understanding of Jesus as the Son of Man that underlies the use of Psalm 8 in Hebrews, but the idea of him as head of a redeemed humanity in a “new creation.”⁹³

Therefore, there are two things that stand out hermeneutically in Hebrews. Firstly, Hebrews is not an autonomous book that had no relevance for its audience. Secondly, Hebrews was not reliant or exclusive of any one school(s) for its stylistic methodology in compiling its message.⁹⁴

Conclusion

The genuine outlook of Scripture that the early Church had can hardly be questioned. They truly believed that Christ had risen and because He had risen they now had hope. Why? From the beginning of time, starting with Adam, man had been in a rebellious state against God. In fact, the revolt of man took place in the Garden of Eden where God put Adam and Eve so that He could commune with them. It was in the Garden that they chose to be disobedient unto His command—not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. By being disobedient, they sinned which separated them and their descendants (Gen 5:3) from God. However, man has longed for redemption (Rom 8:19–23) for separation was not God’s original plan. God created man to have fellowship and communion with Him. Thus, Psalms was originally written referring to the ideal state of man; on the other hand, Hebrews 2:5–9 was written as a homily quoting and paraphrasing from Psalm 8 but explaining the state of man and the reason

⁹³ David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the “Epistle to the Hebrews”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 52.

⁹⁴ Murray, “A Hermeneutical, Textual, and Semantic Examination of the Employment of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2,” 151.

Christ died, arose and restored all things. The purpose of this paper was to do an exegetical analysis of Hebrews 2:5–9, considering the reason that the writer of Hebrews used Psalm 8, and more importantly, only verses 4–6 of Psalm 8. Hebrews 2:5–9 describes the reason through the state of man after the Fall. The hierarchy of mankind and angels changed after the Fall – all of creation changed. The writer of Psalms and Hebrews painted an image of the original flaw in man – his disobedience to God. The writer of Hebrews showed how a faulty Christology mars one’s obedience to God. Thus, insight as to why the writer of Hebrews chose the Greek version instead of the Masoretic text helps one not be confused of what Jesus did. Jesus Christ died and suffered to gain what man had so carelessly given to the powers of darkness.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allert, Craig D. *A High View of Scripture? The Authority of the Bible and the Formation of the New Testament Canon*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.
- Anderson, Bernhard W. "Introduction: Mythopoetic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith," In *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. Bernhard Anderson. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- Attridge, Harold. "The Psalms in Hebrews." In *The Psalms in the New Testament*. London: T & T Clark, 2004.
- Bellinger, Jr., W. H. "Let the Words of My Mouth: Proclaiming the Psalms," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 27 (1984): 17–23.
- Beyer, Hermann W. "episkeptomai," In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 2. 599–622. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Bratcher, Robert G. *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1984.
- Brooke, George J. *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in Its Jewish Context*. Sheffield: JSOT, 1985.
- Brown, Raymond. *The Message of Hebrews*. Downer Grove: InterVarsity, 1988.
- Bruce, F. F. *Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- _____. *The Canon of Scripture*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988.
- Caird, G. B. "The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 5 (1959): 44–51.
- Craigie, Peter C. *Psalms 1–50*, Word Biblical Commentary. Vol. 19. Waco: Word, 1983.
- Dalglis, Edward. "The Use of the Book of Psalms in the New Testament," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 27 (1984): 25–39.
- DeYoung, Kevin. "Divine Impassibility and The Passion of Christ in the Book of Hebrews," *Westminster Theological Journal* 68 (2006): 41–50.
- Dodd, C. H. *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology*. London: Nisbet & Co., 1957.

- Elliott, J. K. "When Jesus was Apart from God: an Examination of Hebrews 2," *The Expository Times* 83 (1972): 339–341.
- Fritz Maass, "'enosh,'" In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979. 345–348.
- Goppelt, Leonhard. *TYPOS: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.
- Guthrie, Donald. *Hebrews*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Vol. 15. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Habermas, Gary. *The Risen Jesus & Future Hope*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.
- Hamilton, Victor J. *The Book of Genesis, Chapter 1–17*. The New International Commentary of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Hobbs, Herschel. *Hebrews: Challenges to Bold Discipleship*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1971.
- Hoekema, Anthony A. *Created in God's Image*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.
- Hughes, R. Kent. *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2015.
- Lane, William L. *Hebrews 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary. Vol. 47a. Waco: Word, 1991.
- Lindars, Barnabas. *New Testament Apologetics: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961.
- Lockyer, Herbert. *All the Angels in the Bible*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995.
- Longenecker, Richard. *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Mathews, Kenneth A. *Genesis 1–11:26*. The New American Commentary. Vol. 1A. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996.
- McComiskey, Thomas E. "'enosh,'" In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Vol. 1. 127–128. Chicago: Moody, 1980.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

- Murray, Billy Wayne. "A Hermeneutical, Textual, and Semantic Examination of the Employment of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2," Th.D. diss., Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992.
- Peterson, David. *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the "Epistle to the Hebrews."* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Ringgren, Helmer "'elohim," In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Vol. 1. 267–284. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.
- Sailhamer, John. *Genesis*. The Expositor's Bible Commentary. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.
- Scott, Jack B. "'elohim," In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Vol. 1. 47–48. Chicago: Moody, 1980.
- Smith, Ralph. "The Use and Influence of the Psalms," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 27 (1984): 5–16.
- Steadman, Ray C. *Hebrews*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992.
- VanGemeren, Willem A. *Psalms*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary. Vol. 5 Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.
- Waltke, Bruce. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.
- Wilcock, Michael. *The Message of Psalms, 1–72*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity 2001.
- Williams, D. H. *Tradition, Scripture, and Interpretation: A Sourcebook of the Ancient Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.