

## Chapter Seven

**7-Vs. 1: For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him;**

The next few verses more or less recapitulate the Genesis account of Melchizedek and Abraham. Traditionally, Salem has been understood as peace, *shalom* (cf vs. 3). Compare Melchizedek as a priest (*hiereus*) with Jesus Christ as high priest (*archiereus*) in 2.17 and onward. I.e., the word prefaced to *hiereus* is *arche* indicative of first in the sense of a beginning.

The author of Hebrews situates Melchizedek in the context of Abraham's return from battle, the cause of which was the kings having taken captive Abraham's kinsmen (cf. Gen 14.14). Note that at this time he was called Abram and did not receive the name Abraham until 17.5, "father of a multitude."

**7-Vs. 2: and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.**

Apportioned (*merizo*): literally, "to divide." Abraham re-possessed his belongs which the kings had taken as booty: "Then he brought back all the goods and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his goods and the women and the people" [Gen 14.16].

The author of Hebrews follows the traditional interpretation of Melchizedek's name, "king of righteousness" (*dikaiousune* for the Hebrew *tsedaqah* which is more inclusive, that is, it embraces the notion of welfare and piety). Note that Melchizedek is first (*protos*); refer to vs. 1 where he is a *hiereus* and Christ is an (*arch*) *iereus*. *Protos* here is used in the sense of the beginning of a sequence whereas *arche* is first as a principle which initiates as sequence of events.

Translation (*ermeneuo*, verb): more specifically, this verb means to interpret which is a looser form than translation, and more insight can be read into it. The translation is *eirene*, the Greek for *shalom*.

**7-Vs. 3: He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.**

*Apator, ametor, agenealogetos*: an interesting way to say without or *a-* (father, mother, genealogy). The author of Hebrews is simply following the lack of ancestral records with regard to Melchizedek; he is not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament, let alone the Old. This is significant because ancestry is paramount and pertains to Jesus' earthly lineage as testified by the Gospel of Matthew. By reason of his lack of genealogy, Melchizedek falls into the same category of his predecessors Enoch ('and he was not, for God took him,' Gen 5.24) and Elijah who ascended into heaven (cf. 2 Kg 2.11).

Note the use of *arche* and *telos* (beginning and end) as used in vs. 3 which refer to the temporal extension of human life (days and life). Such an a-temporal existence is a kind of resembling or *aphamioiao*, the only New Testament use of this verb; it implies making a facsimile or to cause a model to pass off (*apo*) into an image or shape like it.

The title "Son of God" is used here instead of the proper name Jesus Christ because it implies a-temporal existence transcending yet including *arche* or *telos*.

There is an interplay of sorts between remain (*meno*) and forever (*eis to dienekes*) which regards to the Son of God's priesthood. The latter may literally be taken as, "into that which has no interruption." Note the connection between remaining and the preposition *eis* (into) in the sense of being-fully-present-within. Also, another *eis* is used with forever, *eis ton aiona*. 12.1, 12 & 14 give examples of this continuousness.

#### **7-Vs. 4: See how great he is! Abraham the patriarch gave him a tithe of the spoils.**

See (*theoreo*): in the sense of having *theoria*, a contemplative insight into the matter at hand, a kind of beholding, which deals with Melchizedek as "resembling the Son of God" (vs. 3).

Spoils (*akrothinion*), the only New Testament use of this word which can apply to the first-fruits of anything: it is comprised of *akros* (an extreme point) and *this* or heap, better, the very top of a heap. Compare with *aparche* (first-fruits): "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep" [1 Cor 15.20]. Thus Abraham's tithe of spoils—really his own possessions as noted earlier—may be taken as a type or foreshadowing of Christ as *aparche*.

Note that the author of Hebrews has been referring to Abraham whereas the Old Testament has him as Abram; he does not yet receive the name Abraham until Gen 17.5 as noted in vs. 1.

The Greek text has *dekate* or tenth instead of tithe.

**7-Vs. 5: And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a command in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brethren, though these also are descended from Abraham.**

This verse refers to Num 18.21: “To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance in return for their service which they serve, their service in the tent of meeting.” The Hebrew for tithe is *mahser* which in Hebrews reads as *apodekatoo*. The citation from Numbers situates the proper context, the tent of meeting.

Priestly office (*hierateia*), the only other New Testament reference being Lk 1.9: “according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him (Zechariah) by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.” Like the Levites, Zechariah enters the Lord’s temple which has succeeded the tent of meeting.

“In the law:” the Greek articulates it better by using the preposition *kata* or according to which serves to demonstrate the harmony between Levites, *Torah*, people and God.

The Letter to the Hebrews identifies the Levites with “their brethren” (*adelphos*) despite the fact that they had no share in Israel’s heritage: “For the tithe of the people of Israel which they present as an offering to the Lord, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said of them that they shall have no inheritance among the people of Israel” [Num 18.24]. Despite this lack of inheritance which bears a certain parallel with Melchizedek’s lack of genealogy, the author of Hebrews attributes to Abraham their (and his readers) common ancestry.

**7-Vs. 6: But this man who has not their genealogy received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.**

Another reference to Melchizedek and his lack of genealogy (*me genealogoumenos*); compare with *agenealogetos* of vs. 3 which parallels the Levites’ not participating in the inheritance of Israel.

Bless (*eulogeo*): literally, “to speak well” (*eu*).

**7-Vs. 7: It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.**

Dispute (*antilogia*): also can mean contradiction as signified by the preposition *anti*.

The author of Hebrews sets up a contrast between inferior (*to elatton*) and superior (*hupo tou kreittontos*) or between Abraham and Melchizedek. Note that Abraham did have a genealogy whereas Melchizedek did not. For an example of an inferior (the woman) addressing a superior (Jesus Christ), cf. Lk 11.27: “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked.”

This verse contains another uses of *eulogeo*, of “speaking well,” as in vs. 6.

**7-Vs. 8: Here tithes are received by mortal men; there, by one of whom it is testified that he lives.**

Reference (here or *hode*, in the sense of ‘thus’) is to the Levitical priests; note the passive (‘are received’), almost as though an agent larger than both mortal men and the Levites is involved, namely, God.

Mortal men (*apothnesko*): the present participle is used showing that human beings who offer the tithes (*dekate* or tenth part of something) are in a continuous state of passing out of existence.

There (*ekei*) differs from *hode*; the former pertains to Melchizedek who lives (*zao*). A contrast of sorts is presented, namely, Melchizedek lacks a genealogy whereas the Levites have one as well as Jesus Christ as noted above. The impersonal “by one” suggests this absence of human ancestry. A similar impersonal note is present by “it is testified” (*martureo*).

**7-Vs. 9: One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham,**

Hos *epos eipein*: literally, “as word to say,” or the equivalent of “If I may be allowed the expression.”

The author of Hebrews focuses upon Levi himself, that is, a person who is first mentioned in Gen 29.34; note that Levi is son of Leah, one of the wives of Jacob, the

other being Rachel who was barren. Later Moses is mentioned as being the son of a “man from the house of Levi” [Ex 6.1] and implies that Moses was a Levite (i.e., priest) of sorts.

Compare the active receiving of tithes here with the passive mode of the previous verse. The situation in vs. 9 is inverted, namely, Levi, the receiver of tithes, gives them through an intermediary or Abraham.

**7-Vs. 10: for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.**

Levi was Leah’s son as noted above (cf. Gen 29.34) and had Abraham as his father.

In the loins (*osphus*): i.e., location of the generative power. Compare with a similar notion in Lk 1.41: “And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb.”

The verse at hand juxtaposes the lack of genealogy of Melchizedek with the one of Levi, yet both take on new direction in the person of Abraham. The preposition *sun* (with) suggests this juxtaposition of temporal/a-temporal coming together.

**7-Vs. 11: Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than the one named after the order of Aaron?**

Perfection (*teleiosis*): a term closely related to *telos* as noted in vs. 3 which pertains to Melchizedek (‘and has neither beginning of days nor end of life’). As pointed out there and elsewhere, *telos* is intimately bound up with *arche*, beginning; here the term has a more technical sense, as pertaining to the requirements and obligations of the clerical state. In the verse at hand such perfection is presented as not attainable (through the Levitical priesthood (*hierosune*); compare with *hierateia* in vs. 5, priestly office.

The **RSV** puts in parentheses the author of Hebrew’s intent to contrast the dispensations or priesthood in both the Old and New Testaments.

Received the law (*nomotheteomai*): consists of law and to place (*nomos* and *tithemi*); *nomos* is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew *Torah*. Note too that Moses received the

Torah on Mount Sinai who transmitted it to the Israelites (cf. Ex 20-31) as well as particulars about the priestly office entrusted to Aaron detailed in Ex 28-9.

The author of Hebrews rhetorically asks about the need for “another priest” to arise (*anaistemi*) in the sense of emerging from the order or taxis of Melchizedek (cf. 5.10). Such arising is in accord with Melchizedek’s timeless character.

The priesthood of Jesus Christ is inferred as successor to that of Melchizedek, i.e., both have in common their apartness from the spacial-temporal realm (“without father or mother or genealogy,” vs. 3, despite the record of Christ’s genealogy). On the other hand, Aaron is a historical figure whose priesthood is described in Ex 28-9. Note that it is Moses who consecrates Aaron and his sons.

**7-Vs. 12: For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.**

This verse centers around the notion of change or *metathesis* in the sense of a transfer; the verb *metatithemi* is used in the first instance and the noun in the second. Cf. 12.27 for another use of the noun: “This phrase, ‘Yet once more,’ indicates the removal of what is shaken.” Since vs. 12 deals with the shift from the Levitical priesthood to Christ’s, perhaps the notion of removal can be inferred. Keeping in mind the genealogy-less nature of Melchizedek, one feature of Christ’s priesthood was his participation in human genealogy while at the same time remaining eternal.

The Levitical priesthood is changed/removed along with the *Torah* (*nomos*).

**7-Vs. 13: For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe from which no one has ever served at the altar.**

Jesus Christ did not share in any priesthood, neither that of Aaron, Zadok or Levi. The “other tribe” (*phule*) is not specified from among the traditional twelve tribes of Israel whose father was Jacob. However, by reason of his Jewish heritage, Jesus Christ traced his genealogy (again, unlike Melchizedek) from King David who was “the son of Abraham” [Lk 1.1]. Note the preposition *kata* (according to) which implies following a specific order (taxis) first noted in 5.10.

This notion of another tribe bears a certain affinity with Nathaniel's remarks about Christ: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth" [Jn 1.46]? No one who came from Nazareth has ever served at the altar.

Belong (*metecho*): literally, "to have with" (*meta*): "He himself likewise partook of the same nature" [2.14].

Altar (*thusiasterion*): In the context of priesthood—both that of Melchizedek and Aaron—refer to detailed descriptions regarding this place of sacrifice in Ex 29; the altar was made of acacia wood (cf. Ex 27.1). *Thusiasterion* is used in 13.10: "We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat."

Serve (*prosecho*): more specifically, "to give attention to," a fact borne out by the preposition *pros*, in-the-direction-towards-which. Cf. 2.1: "Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard." Compare the verbal root echo (to have) used with the just noted *metecho*. I.e., in one verse we have with and towards.

**7-Vs. 14: For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.**

Evident (*prodelos*): the preposition *pro* (before) prefixed to the common adjective *delos* (clear in the sense of conspicuous) which heightens the sense of something obvious. This is true for the author of Hebrews (compare with 'more evident' of vs. 15) who wishes to impart his understanding of Jesus Christ handed down by the church.

With regards to Christ's lineage from the tribe of Judah: the Greek *anatello* for descended more specifically means to spring up, to arise. Emphasis is upon an upward (*ana*) motion, as it were, suggests movement from *arche* to *telos*; here it applies to Jesus Christ having perfected the election of Israel and her tribes, one of which is Judah. "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel" [Mt 2.6, quoting Mic 5.2]. Despite the royal calling of Judah, Moses is silent about priests associated with it.

**7-Vs. 15: This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek,**

A transition from evident to even more evident (*prodelos*->*perissoteron eti katadelon*). *Perissoteron*: note the preposition *peri* (around), as though such evidence “surrounded” what the author of Hebrews is discussing. It is used in conjunction with the adjective *katadelos* (the only New Testament use), again, *delos* prefixed (as in vs. 14 with *pro*) by the preposition *kata* (according to). We thus have a clarity along with a specified order or “according to” such an order which is the subject of discussion.

Relate the use of *kata(delos)* with the second *kata*: “according to the likeness of Melchizedek.” It is as though both *kata*’s were pointing to the new priesthood of Jesus Christ as fulfillment of the old.

Likeness (*homoites*): that is, following the second *kata* just discussed or with respect to the order of Melchizedek. Cf. 4.15: “in every respect.” The verb *anistemi* (to arise) is used with *homoites*, as though Jesus Christ as priest “rises” into this likeness, an ongoing process. Compare *anistemi* with *anatello* (to descend) used in the previous verse.

**7-Vs. 16: who has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by the power of an indestructible life.**

“Has become” may be aligned with that *anistemi* or rising of vs. 15.

This verse contrasts two uses of the preposition *kata*:

1) Legal requirement (*nomon entoles*): referring to what (the Jewish priesthood) in the author’s time had become encrusted as legal formalism and had lost sight of Moses’ original vision on Mount Sinai where he received guidelines for this sacred office. Note the emphasis on bodily descent or *sarkines*, an adjective which in the New Testament has a negative connotation in contrast to the spirit.

2) Indestructible life (*akatalutos*): literally, “not according (note another *kata*) loose (*luo*).” Here *kata* is used with *dunamis* (power) which governs, as it were, a life free from all vicissitudes.

**Vs. 17: For it is witnessed of him, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”**

The impersonal witnessed (*martureomai*) intimates something larger than human and angelic testimony. The Greek lacks “of him.” Again, keep in mind the importance of *kata* (according to) that taxis or order founded upon Melchizedek’s priesthood.

**7-Vs. 18: On the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness**

An incomplete verse which has two uses of *gar* (on the one hand), here and in vs. 19 (on the other hand) which sets up a contrast as parallel to Christ’s distinction from the role of angels discussed at the beginning of Hebrews.

Former commandment (*proagouses*): from the verb *proago*, to go before, to proceed as though this commandment were a forerunner or herald. It is set aside or *athetesis*, a legal term (noun) applied to cancellation of an obligation. *Athetesis* occurs only one other time, 9.26: “to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Weakness and uselessness (*asthenes* and *anopheles*); the former can still mean that the law has power, albeit diminished; the latter (only use of the term in the New Testament) refers to something utterly ineffectual. Again, keep in mind the contrast this verse has with the “strong” and “effective” This verse is reminiscent of Lk 16.16: “The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone enters it violently.”

**7-Vs. 19: (for the law made nothing perfect); on the other hand, a better hope is introduced through which we draw near to God.**

The RSV uses the parentheses as an observation, if you will, on the two words *asthenes* and *anopheles*; they are contrasted with (nothing) perfect or the verb *teleioo*. Cf. 5.9 which employs the same verb: “and being made perfect,” that is, being made *telos* through suffering and implying Christ’s crucifixion. An important aspect of the *Torah* was its role as an *arche* or beginning. However, in light of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the *arche* of *Torah* assumed a fulfillment or *telos* which many in Israel did not expect.

The second *gar* (on the other hand) serves to introduce (*epeisagoge*, noun is used; only New Testament usage) a better hope. Note the two prepositions prefixed to the verb *ago*: *epi* and *eis*, upon and into. It is meant to convey a thorough incorporation of hope (*elpis*) through the person of Jesus Christ in comparison with (i.e., ‘better’)

that offered by the Mosaic Law. *Epeisagoge* is a refinement, as it were, of drawing near (*eggizo*) to God, which is in the dative case.

**7-Vs. 20: And it was not without an oath.**

This short verse begins with *kath' hoson* which literally means “according to how much” or “inasmuch as.” The term for oath here is *horkomosis* (only occurrence in the New Testament) and is related to *horkos* first used in 6.16: “and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation.” Despite its brevity, vs. 20 serves to introduce further reflections on the priesthood of Jesus Christ in light of Melchizedek’s.

**7-Vs. 21: Those who formerly became priests took their office without an oath, but this one was addressed with an oath, “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever.’”**

The Greek text of vs. 20 continues with the words of the **RSV** to vs. 21, “Those who formerly became priests took their office without an oath.”

In place of an oath, the priests in former times (that is, before Jesus Christ) traced their lineage from Aaron who, in turn, was appointed by Moses: “Now this is what you shall do to them to consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests” [Ex 29.1]. Again, keep in mind that the transmission of priestly ordination was given on Mount Sinai, that is, “Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was” [Ex 20.21] and there received details concerning the Torah, etc.

The often noted verse from Ps 110.4 first cited in 5.5 has an added term, *metamelomai* (to change), in the sense of “it repents (behooves) one.” “For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it” [2 Cor 7.8].

**7-Vs. 22: This makes Jesus the surety of a better covenant.**

That is to say, the context of Ps 110.4 just cited in reference to Melchizedek who lacks genealogy. Here Jesus equals surety (*egguos*), the only New Testament occurrence. Such surety is in relationship with the better covenant (*diatheke*) or in the sense of a dispensation and can refer to both the Old and New Testaments.

**7-Vs. 23: The former priests were many in number because they were prevented by death from continuing in office;**

It seems that having a multitude of Levitical priests was intended as a kind of surety in that the required sacrifices and rites associated with them might continue, especially in the face of a calamity which could destroy them. This verse is intended as a contrast with Christ's abiding priesthood in the next few verses.

Continuing (*parameno*): literally, "to remain besides" in the sense of being near. The Greek text lacks "office."

**7-Vs. 24: but he holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever.**

An allusion to Melchizedek's genealogy-less background which finds fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ permanently (*aparabatos*) holds his priesthood; this term has alpha privative attached to the verb *parabaino*, to trespass or to go beside (*para*), the only New Testament usage.

Christ's priesthood (*hierosune*; cf. vs. 11 which is Levitical) is eternal. The Greek way of expressing this is through the verb *meno* (to remain; compare *diameno*, vs. 23) coupled with *aion* (eternity). *Aion* also means age and in the context of the verse at hand, can imply that Christ's priesthood endures for an indefinite succession of eras.

**7-Vs. 25: Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them.**

For all time (*eis to panteles*): literally, "into completeness," *pan(teles)* being associated with *telos* discussed earlier. The only other New Testament reference is Lk 13.11: "She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself." In the verse at hand, such "all complete-ness" is related to saving (*sozo*), that is, Christ's priesthood which he holds permanently (*aparabatos*), vs. 24.

The saving effected by Christ applied to persons who draw near (*proserchomai*) to him, that is, initiative must come from them. Note the verb prefixed with the preposition *pros*, direction-towards-which. Here *pros* is employed with regard to God and through (*dia*) Jesus Christ.

The author of Hebrews correlates Christ's always living (*pantote*; compare with *panteles*) and his act of interceding (*entugchano*). This verb applies to meeting or consulting a person.

**7-Vs. 26: For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens.**

Fitting (*prepo*): in the sense of being seemly or conspicuous; the word implies something beautiful, lovely, which in this instance is Christ as high priest (*archiereus* as in 2.17), who in this office has five qualities:

- 1) Holy (*hosios*): connotes piety towards God.
- 2) Blameless (*akakos*): alpha privative prefixed to the adjective *kakos*, evil; i.e., “not evil.” The only other New Testament reference is Rom 16.18: “by their own flattering words they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded.”
- 3) Unstained (*amiantos*): alpha privative; cf. 13.4: “and let the marriage bed be undefiled.”
- 4) Separated (*chorizo*) as pertaining to sinners.
- 5) Exalted (*hupselos*); here it is in the comparative degree, i.e., “higher;” with respect to heavens (*ouranos*).

**7-Vs. 27: He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; he did this once for all when he offered up himself.**

This verse deals with the nature of priestly sacrifice and is situated within the context of temporal vs. eternal orders or the Levitical one (*kath’ hemeran*, daily) compared with Jesus Christ (*ephapax*, once). The temporal order is accented by need (*anagke*, also necessity) which does not apply to Jesus.

Offer (*anaphero*) sacrifices: literally, “to bring up” (*ana*) or to transfer from one realm to the other. “Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God” [13.15]. *Anaphero* is used a second time with respect to Christ having offered himself.

The author of Hebrews follows the Old Testament order of high priests (note: *archiereus* as opposed to priest or *hiereus*) first making sacrifices for their personal sins followed by those on behalf of the congregation. “Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people; and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them” [Lev 9.7].

**7-Vs. 28: Indeed, the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.**

Compare this verse with 5.1-2 which deals with weakness (*asthenia*): “For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses.” Such shortcomings the Law or *Torah* takes into account by reason of appointment (*kathistemi*, verb). “For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God.”

Word of oath: a combination of *logos* and *horkomosia* as in vs. 20: “And it was not without an oath.” Although not implicit, *logos* can suggest Christ as *Logos* who came later (meta) or “after” the *Torah* or *nomos*.

The verb *kathistemi* (appoint) is used once with two objects, the first one noted as “men in their weakness” and second, a Son which lacks a definite article.

To make perfect (*teleioo*) being a perfect passive participle, that is, action has been completed in the definite past. At the same time this verb is used with *eis ton aiona*, forever, or literally “into the ages.” *Aion* can apply to a definite period of time or age as well as eternity.

## Chapter Eight

**8-Vs. 1: Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,**

Point (*kephalaion*): literally, “pertaining to the head” (*kephale*) or the sum of parts which have attained full sum; as related to money, this term refers to the capital as distinguished from the interest. *Kephalaion* sums up what the “we” or author of Hebrews had discussed with regards to the priesthood of the Levitical and Christian orders. Vs. 1 recapitulates, as it were, (*epi tois legomenois*: what we are saying or “literally ‘upon what had been spoken’”) the essence of this distinction and continues to reflect upon the heavenly sanctuary and new covenant.

Christ as *archiereus* hearkens back to the verse quoted from Ps 110.1 quoted in 1.13; also cf. 3.11, 4.14, 6.20, 7.26, and 9.11; here he is seated (aorist active, *kathizo*) with respect to a throne (*thronos*).

Note two uses of the preposition *en* (in or at) to show a two-fold presence or dwelling-in: “*en* the right hand” and “*en* heaven.”

Majesty (*megalosune*): cf. 1.3: “...he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” This verse is preceded by Christ reflecting God’s glory and bearing the stamp of his nature which can be taken as the fullness of the two-fold *en* regarding the verse at hand.

**8-Vs. 2: a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent which is set up not by man but by the Lord.**

A continuation or amplification of Christ as *archiereus* in vs. 1, that is, as a *leitourgos* (minister). The latter is a more general term applying to anyone in the service of religion. For another sense of this word, cf. 1.7: “Who makes his angels winds and his servants flames of fire.”

The *leitourgos* of vs. 2 is situated in the sanctuary (*ta hagia*), literally, “the holy things.” The *leitourgos* also functions in the true tent (*skene*), the larger context or shelter, if you will, of *ta hagia*. As for *skene*, it indicates a transitory or provisional dwelling which later evolved into the Jerusalem temple.

The author of Hebrews has God who set up the true tent (and by implication the sanctuary), the verb being *pegnumi* which literally means to fix, fasten (as tent pegs), this being the only New Testament occurrence. Keep in mind this divine agent with the command of Ex 25.40: “And see that you make them after the pattern for them which is being shown you on the mountain.”

**8-Vs. 3: For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer.**

Is appointed (*kathistemi*): as in 7.28, whereas the verse at hand the verb is passive, the agent presumably being God.

The object of such an office: to offer (*prosphero*) as in 5.1: to offer gifts and sacrifices, the two words being *doron* and *thusia*. *Prosphero* is used a second time, aorist active, indicating that the implied sacrifice of Christ happened once and has no need of being repeated.

**8-Vs. 4: Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law.**

Christ not being on earth (*epi ges*) is a kind of refinement on the genealogy-less nature of Melchizedek discussed earlier. Although Christ's death on the cross (that is, *epi ges*), is essential to his priesthood, its fulfillment does not remain there but "at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven" [vs. 1].

*Hiereus* is used instead of *archieus*, high priest. Most likely it is intended to contrast the office of Jesus Christ with those "who offer (*prosphero*) gifts according (*kata*) to the law." *Kata* signifies the following of a pattern, here the *Torah*, which may be taken as belonging to the realm of *epi ges*.

**8-Vs. 5: They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary; for when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."**

Serve (*latreuo*): in the sense of paying homage; originally to "serve for hire."  
"Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night within his temple" [Rev 7.15]. The verse at hand is suggestive of Ex 25.40 as noted under vs. 1: "And see that you make them after the pattern for them which is being shown you on the mountain."

*Latreuo* has two objects: copy and shadow (*hupodeigma* and *skia*). The former suggests something to be imitated. For another reference, cf. 9.23: "Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites." The latter is similar to the English term and can apply to shade, usually in the negative sense. Compare both *hupodeigma* and *skia* with 1.3: "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature where *doxa* and *charakter* pertain directly to divine reality.

Both copy and shadow apply to the singular reality of the heavenly sanctuary (*epouranios*; noted earlier as in 3.1, 6.4), the adjective heavenly being in the plural; "sanctuary" is lacking in the Greek text. Thus both are *epi ges* (on earth) as noted on vs. 4. "But you have come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem" [12.22].

Erect (*epiteleio*): used with *mello* (about to), indicating future action in the future which is more or less proximate. *Epiteleio* is often associated with the performance of religious services as in 9.6: "performing their ritual duties." It is closely related to

the notion of *telos* (end) and has the prefix *epi* (upon) as if to indicate seeing something through to the very end. In the verse at hand, *epiteleo* is used in reference to Moses' setting up the tent or *skene* as in vs. 2. "The temple of the tent of witness in heaven was opened" [Rev 15.5].

Moses was instructed (*chrematizomai*) by God about the task before him, this being a verb applied to management of public affairs or the giving of a response to those who consult an oracle. Cf. 12.25: "much less shall we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven."

The verse under consideration quotes Ex 25.40 cited just above; Moses is to engage in the act of *epiteleo* by seeing (*horao*) which here is according to (*kata*) that *tupos/tavnyth* or type. Note that the Hebrew text has the present tense ("being shown?"), whereas the Greek cited in vs. 5 is an aorist passive participle.

Moses received his vision of the heavenly sanctuary on Mount Zion or according to the Greek text, "in (*en*) the mountain."

**8-Vs. 6: But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry which is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better since it is enacted on better promises.**

"But as it is" (*nun*): alternately, "now." This verse centers around Christ's ministry (*leitourgia*) which fundamentally means a public office undertaken by a citizen. The proper name Christ is lacking in the Greek text.

The perfect active indicative of *tugchano* (to obtain) indicates continual possession. This verb is used in 6.15 with the prefix *en-*: "And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise." The object of *tugchano*: Christ's ministry which is much more excellent (*diaphoros*), literally, "different" and used in 1.4: "the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs," that is, the angels.

*Diaphoros* is used with regards to the old covenant (*diatheke*) as noted in 7.22. Thus we have two instances of the preposition *dia* (through) used as a prefix. Jesus Christ is mediator (*mesites*, noun used here). Note the **LXX** of Dt 5.5: "while I stood between the Lord and you at that time to declare to you the word of the Lord." Here Moses acts as a *mesites*, the word *mesos* (between) signifying the role of mediator. "And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant" [12.24].

Enacted (*nomotheteo*): a verb pertaining to the enactment of laws, *nomos* being part of this word. Instead of the *Torah*, *nomotheteo* refers to better promises (*epaggelia*; cf. 4.1). The contrast between the old covenant and that of Jesus Christ is foretold in Jer 31.31 & 33: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah...I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts.”

**8-Vs. 7: For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second.**

Faultless (*amemptos*): the occasion for the first covenant to contain faults was not due to its divine origins on Mount Sinai but the lack of the fullness of revelation or Jesus Christ as Messiah, i.e., a second covenant.

Occasion (*topos*): literally, “place.” In the Greek text, *topos* is used with the verb *zeteo* (to seek), that is, “no place for seeking” (a second).

**8-Vs. 8: For he finds fault with them when he says: “The days will come, says the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;**

Vs. 8 commences a lengthy quotation from the prophet Jeremiah 31.31-4 and runs through vs. 12.

The fault (*memphomenos*; present middle participle) is not to be taken as a defect in the negative sense but hearkens back to the partial nature of that copy and shadow mentioned in vs. 5.

Note the future coming of the plural days uttered by the (singular) Lord. Such reference to temporal extension is akin to the Greek *aion* first discussed in 1.2 and which bears a certain parallel with the verse at hand: “but in these last days...through whom he created the world.” Thus *aion* can connote an extended yet definite period of time just like the days of vs. 8. Also parallel these days with the last (*eschatos*) days of 1.2.

Establish (*sunteleo*): future tense keeping with the equally future days will come. This verb consists of the now familiar *telos* (end) prefixed by the preposition *sun*, with. Implied is the “end/perfection” activity of God with respect to the new covenant.

New covenant (*diatheke*): as in 7.22 & 8.6; that is, as opposed to the implied old one.

The preposition *epi* (upon) is used for “with” or in conjunction with house of Israel and house of Judah as if to say that the new covenant is placed physically “upon” both houses as an obligation to fulfill.

**8-Vs. 9: not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in my covenant, and so I paid no heed to them, says the Lord.**

The conclusion of this verse has “says the Lord,” a typical Old Testament expression to get the people’s attention, that is, not focus upon the person uttering these words but their divine source. Note that it is used in vs. 8 as well as vs. 10.

“Their fathers” stands in contrast with the new covenant of vs. 8. Compare “on (literally, *en* or *in*) the day” with the plural “the days with come” also in vs. 8. The preposition *kata* (according to) is used for “not like the covenant” implying the following of this covenant in a close, methodological fashion. This “in the day” is in conjunction with the verb *epilambano* (to take), the preposition *epi* (upon), again signifying a firm grasp of Israel; the verb also means to take possession of anything.

A two-fold “out” or *ex*: to lead (*ex-ago*) and *ex* Egypt which serves to contrast the *epi-lambano* mentioned just above. Such leading is done in a child-like way, “by the hand,” which is also in the Hebrew text.

Continue (*emmeno*): in the sense of remaining: “exhorting them to continue in the faith” [Acts 14.22]. It is used with the preposition *en* (in) “my covenant” which refers to the time after Israel had left Egypt and was wandering in the Sinai Peninsula.

“Did not pay attention” (*ameleo*): or to neglect as in 2.3: “How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?”

**8-Vs. 10: This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be my people.**

“After those days:” not those of vs. 8, (‘the days will come’) but the (plural) days after that day when God led Israel out of Egypt (vs. 9) or better, that time period when God “paid no heed to them.”

Covenant/make (*diatheke/diatithemi*): an instance of the noun and the verb from which it is derived, both having the preposition *dia* as prefix, that is to say, a making or placing through. Such through-ness is further accentuated by a three-fold action of God, all in the future tense:

1) Putting his laws (*nomos/torah*) into or eis the Israelites’ minds (*dianoia*) or in the Greek text, “in the mind of them,” as if Israel had one mind for a plurality of members. *Dianoia* pertains to the mind as faculty of understanding as well as feeling and desire.

2) Write on (*epigrapho*): a verb with the preposition *epi* (upon); a verse also quoted in 10.16 with specific reference to the Holy Spirit. “Heart” is in the singular with the plural personal pronoun “their.”

3) *Eis theon*: “(I will be) their God” or literally, “into (*eis*) God.” The Hebrew text has the preposition *l-* prefixed to “God” and “people” which corresponds to the Greek *eis*.

**8-Vs. 11: And they shall not teach everyone his fellow or everyone his brother saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for all shall know me from the least of them to the greatest.**

The act of teaching (*didasko/lamad*) is presented with two different verbs of knowing:

1) *Ginosko*, which corresponds in the Hebrew text to *yadah* and connotes intimate familiarity. It is presented as a command which is no longer required. This type of knowing pertains to fellow or *polites*, better, “fellow citizen.”

2) *Eido*, a knowing which implies the application of sight or seeing. The Hebrew also reads *yadah*. This type of knowing applies to the full range of humanity (least/greatest).

**8-Vs. 12: For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”**

The conclusion of the excerpt from Jeremiah ending on a two-fold note:

1) Merciful (*hileos*): another reading as in Mt 16.22: “God forbid, Lord!” The Hebrew verb is *salach* which also connotes pardon; the Hebrew text lacks towards their iniquities (*adikia*, in the sense of unrighteousness).

2) Remember (*mimneskomai*): the Hebrew verb is *zakar* from which is derived “male” implying the continuation of a blood line. If such remembering were applied to sins, they would therefore be propagated, so to speak, with respect to future generations.

**8-Vs. 13: In speaking of a new covenant he treats the first as obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.**

New vs. what’s obsolete (*palaioo*) or that which is old. *Palaioo* and *gerasko* (growing old): the latter refers to the former Law which is old in the sense of wearing out with age. Both verbs—present active participles—show a process observable in the present with respect to decay, of fading, and are related to that which is vanishing away (*aphanismos*, adjective) or disappearing from sight, the only use of this word in the New Testament. Note the other adjective *eggus* (ready), more properly as near in the sense of being close at hand.

## Chapter Nine

**9-Vs. 1: Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary.**

First (*protos*) in the sense of an order where a sequence is to be expected in distinction from *arche* as noted in 7.2 where it pertains more to the notion of a first principle; “covenant” is not used in the Greek text.

Regulations (*dikaionoma*): the verbal root *dikaioo* implies that this term pertains to anything deemed right and which has the force of law. Such regulations pertaining to the *Torah* are two-fold:

1) Worship or *latreia*; cf. 8.5 which contains the verbal root for this noun, *latreuo*. The original sense of *latreia* pertains to any service for hire or for a wage.

2) Earthly sanctuary (*hagion kosmikon*): two terms consisting of two different realities: *hagion* or an adjective used as a noun, “that which is holy,” and *kosmikon* which refers to anything worldly. In the verse at hand, *hagion* is not used in the

profane sense but in contrast with the appearance of Jesus Christ (cf. vs. 11 ff.). Verses one through ten serve to describe this earthly sanctuary in some detail.

**9-Vs. 2: For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place.**

Tent (*skene*): also can mean tabernacle; cf. 8.2 for details where this term refers to the one established by Jesus Christ. Here *skene* is posited first after which comes the Holy of Holies mentioned in vs. 3. Note the refinement implied by another use of the adjective *protos* which signifies that *skene* was first in order or sequence to the Holy of Holies, that is, as the first sacred area to enter.

The tent is prepared (*kataskeuazo*); cf. 3.3: “Yet Jesus has been counted worthy of as much more glory than Moses as the builder of a house has more honor than the house.” This verb is passive (was prepared), to indicate that *skene* was acted upon by a greater (divine) agent.

The verse at hand concludes with an alternate term for *skene*, Holy Place or *Hagia*, neuter plural of the adjective *hagios* as in vs. 1. Thus *Hagia* may read “Holy Places” as if to indicate a multitude of sacred rooms. This *skene/Hagia* contains two objects:

1) Table or *trapeza*.

2) Bread of Presence (*prothesis ton arton*): literally, “the placing before of breads.” The regulation for this offering is set down in Lev 24.5-9; cf. vs. 7: “And you shall set them in two rows, six in a row, upon the table of pure gold.” Such a table was revealed to Moses: “And you shall make a table of acacia wood” [Ex 25.23].

**9-Vs. 3: Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies,**

Second or *deuteron*, which follows the *protos* or first in order; here it refers to the curtain (*katapetasma*) which is not mentioned in the text. Cf. 6.19: “a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain.” The chief reference with regards to this verse is Ex 26.37: “And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia and overlay them with gold.” The Hebrew for screen/curtain is *masak*, an image associated with a virgin covered by a veil.

*Hagia Hagion* for the Hebrew *qodesh haqodeshym* as in Ex 26.34: “You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place.”

**9-Vs. 4: having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold which contained a golden urn holding the manna and Aaron's rod that budded and the tables of the covenant;**

The previous verse speaks of the tent and Holy of Holies after which comes this list of three items; the first (golden altar or *thumiaterion*) was located in the tent, not the Holy of Holies. "You shall make an altar to burn incense upon; of acacia wood shall you make it" [Ex 30.6]. Compare this term with *thusiaterion* of 7.13: "...from which no one has ever served at the altar." The former (only New Testament use) pertains to incense and the latter to burnt offerings. Note that *thumos* (passion, heat) forms part of this word in reference to the coals or the burning incense itself.

Ark of covenant (*kibotos*): described in Ex 25.10-22, the Hebrew word being 'aron. Note its construction of acacia wood, the same as the altar of incense (25.1).

Covered (*perikalupto*): the sense of this verb is a thorough wrapping on all sides (*peri* and *panothen*), here with gold. "And you shall overlay it with pure gold, within and without shall you overlay it" [Ex 25.11].

The golden urn (*stamnos*; only New Testament use) is found in Ex 16.33 (LXX) for the Hebrew *tsintseneth* (only Old Testament use): "Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it and place it before the Lord to be kept throughout your generations." That the next verse has Aaron placing it before the testimony as though this manna were a reminder for God about his feeding Israel during forty years of wandering prior to entrance into the Promised Land. Such manna was specifically intended only for a day's use; if it were hoarded, the manna would spoil. However, the manna kept before the Lord is immune to corruption.

Aaron's rod or *rhabdos* (cf. 11.21) is described in Num 17.10, especially vs. 10: "Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept as a sign for the rebels, that you may make an end of their murmurings against me, lest they die." Such a rod or *mateh* can refer to kingly power (cf. Ps 110.2); it also means a walking stick as well as a branch or twig. For a correspondence between *rhabdos* and *mateh* as a staff, cf. Mt 10.10: "Take no...bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor a staff." Note that Aaron's rod produced blossoms and ripe almonds (cf. vs. 8). Presumably this budding rod continues to flower "before the testimony" much like the manna immune from corruption.

The tables (*plax*) of the covenant correspond to the Hebrew *luach* upon which Moses wrote the laws and covenant while on Sinai and which he broke upon seeing Israel's apostasy (cf. Ex 32.19); later it was renewed or better, written by God himself (cf. 34.1).

**9-Vs. 5: above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot speak in detail.**

Continued reference to the ark, for example, Ex 25.18: "And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat." In the verse at hand, the cherubim are of glory (*doxa/kavod*) which suggests brightness or radiance. At the same time, the brightness of these cherubim have the opposite function, of overshadowing (*kataskiazo*, only New Testament use), of providing shade according to (*kata*) their "bright" nature.

Mercy seat (*hilasterion*): a place of propitiation as noted in Rom 3.25: "whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith." The Hebrew for *hilasterion* is *kaphoreth*, literally, covering (cf. Ex 30.6).

In detail (*kata meros*): literally, "according to part" and reminiscent of Jn 21.25: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were everyone of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

**9-Vs. 6: These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent performing their ritual duties;**

Preparations (*kataskheuazo*): perfect passive participle ("these having been prepared"); the same verb was used in vs. 2, "a tent was prepared." In the verse at hand, *kataskheuazo* sets the stage for a description of priestly functions through vs. 10.

The (Levitical) priests are presented as entering the outer tent continually (*diapantos*), literally, through all. This outer (*protos*) tent already mentioned was accessible to priests, the Holy of Holies being set aside for the high priest to enter once a year. Here the term is *hieron* signifying the outer part of the temple accessible to Jews as opposed to the Holy of Holies. For a more specific reference to vs. 6, cf. Num 17.6: "And behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites...to do the service of the tent of meeting."

Go...into (*eiserchomai...eis*): note two uses of the preposition signifying a full presence within the outer tent.

Within (*eis*) this sacred precinct yet before the Holy of Holies the priests perform (*epiteleo*) their ritual duties (*latreia*; cf. vs. 1). The verb *epiteleo* is used in 8.5 in the sense of constructing, of bringing to fulfillment of the Levitical priestly rites can be intimated in light of Christ's priesthood.

**9-Vs. 7: but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.**

The verb to go is lacking in the Greek text; entry into the second (*deuteron*) is signified by the preposition *eis*. Here the *archiereus* is permitted to enter, again, a forerunner of Jesus Christ. *Apax tou eniautou* (once a year) literally reads as "once for each year." The high priest brings blood into the Holy of Holies, rather, not without (*ou choris*) it, a more vivid expression along with but once a year which suggests the solemn nature of this act.

The high priest offers (*prosphero*; first encountered in 5.1) this blood for himself and the people's errors (*agnoema*), literally, ignorance. For a context of this ignorance, cf. Lev 4.1 & 3: "If anyone sins unwittingly in any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done...then let him offer for the sin which he has committed a young bull without blemish." The Hebrew adverb derives from the verbal root *shagag*, to err, commit a fault (by wandering). In sum, the offerings noted in the verse at hand do not necessarily apply to deliberate offenses but those which are indirect.

**9-Vs. 8: By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing**

An incomplete, lengthy sentence which continues into the next verse.

Indicates (*deloo*): better, makes clear. The author of Hebrews has the Holy Spirit (*Pneuma*) as agent of *deloo*; compare with Holy of Holies in vs. 3, almost as though the latter were in competition with this Third Person.

Way (*hodos*): here with respect to *hagion* (sanctuary) or literally, "the way of the holies" which may include the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. Such a way is

presented as not yet opened, *phaneroo* being the verb used which better means to be manifest. I.e., the way may be taken as already existing but requires someone (Holy Spirit) pointing out its location.

The *hodos* remains concealed as long as (*eti*; connotes something in the present and continuing) the *prote skene* (outer or first tent) is standing. Note the use of the noun *stasis* (standing) with the verb *echo* (to have); i.e., “having a standing.” *Stasis* refers to an unmoved object and resistant to the concept of *hodos* which suggests motion; i.e., it is made even more static by the verb *echo*, as though *stasis* were in possession of its static nature.

**9-Vs. 9: (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,**

The outer (*protos*) tent is given almost by way of footnote as representative of the author’s time which he terms present age: this phrase is composed of *kairos* or special occasion—used both positively and negatively—and the verb *enistemi*, literally, to stand in. Use of *kairos* intimates that the time contemporaneous with the author can extend both forward and backward, that is, does not necessarily involve chronological time. In addition to the preposition *eis* (*enistemi*), note the use of *eis*: “into the present age,” that is, the outer tent is fully contemporary with the *kairos* of which the author is speaking.

Symbolic (*parabole*): literally, a placing of one thing by the side of another with the intent of making a comparison. In the verse at hand, the outer tent is placed-beside the present age, better, into (*eis*) it.

*Kath’ hen*: according to this arrangement or “according to which.” The preposition *kata* sets up a negative description of the outer temple’s function, if you will, in light of Christ as high priest (cf. vs. 11).

Gifts and sacrifices: referring to such things as animal sacrifices which are unable to perfect (*teleioo*; cf. 7.28 for last usage & 5.9, both with respect to Jesus Christ) or bring to a *telos* that for which they are intended. This would imply conformity with the beginning or *arche* discussed several times earlier in this document. Here *telos* in the sense of an end is used with respect to a worshiper’s conscience (*suneidesis*), literally, “knowledge together,” thus implying that knowledge needs to be shared for it to become actualized. Conscience pertains to the worshiper (*latreuo*; cf. vs 1); the verb is used signifying that the person is engaged in the act of worship.

**9-Vs. 10: but deal only with food and drink and various ablutions, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.**

Reference to food, drink, ablutions and regulations suggests attention to ritual details by the Pharisees against which Christ railed in Mt 23: “So practice and observe whatever they tell you but not what they do; for they preach but do not practice” [vs. 2].

Such observances which can be traced to the Book of Leviticus are acceptable for a limited period, that is, during the time of reformation: *kairos diorthoseos*. Here *kairos-as-event* is used with *diorthosis*, setting straight, the only New Testament occurrence. That is to say, the regulations governing temple worship or the outer (protos) tent are superseded by the second one of Jesus Christ. This verse may be taken in light of the heavenly Jerusalem’s descent; it lacked a temple because “its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” [Rev 21.22].

**9-Vs. 11: But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)**

The verb *paraginomai* (to appear) bears a certain correspondence with *diorthosis* (reformation) of the previous verse which literally means setting straight. That is to say, Christ has placed himself beside/near (*para-gignomai*) by reason of his office of high priest. An image of Christ is presented here where he is set alongside the pre-existing temple or encloses it much like a smaller box is fully nested within a larger one. Such is the meaning of Mt 5.7: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have not to abolish them but to fulfil them.” Here the verb *pleroo* parallels *paraginomai*.

The verse at hand specifies this placing-beside: Christ not only as an *archiereus* but one with regard to those goods (*agathon*) already present (have come: *genomenon*). That is to say, Christ remained (potentially) hidden in the person of those high priests offering earlier sacrifices and observances associated with Jewish temple worship.

The author of Hebrews now proceeds with Christ entering (verb is in next verse) or going through (*dia*: in sense of ‘by means of’) the tent or *skene* which is greater and more perfect (*teleios*: i.e., tending towards a greater sense of fulfillment, *telos*).

This other tent harkens back to Ex 15.17 where God himself is builder of the temple, that is, as mentioned in the Song of Moses after Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea from the Egyptian army: "You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O Lord, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established." This verse is set in the larger context of the Exodus and at the very point of entry into the Sinai wilderness when God revealed himself forty years prior to Israel's entry into the Promised Land. With this in mind, vs. 11 regarding Christ's entry into the Holy Place (vs. 12) bears a certain parallel this crucial point in Israel's history.

Note the correspondence between this temple not made by human hands and not of this creation, i.e, it is eternal and unbegotten, just like the sanctuary in Ex 15.17 made by God.

**9-Vs. 12: he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.**

This and the previous verse are reminiscent of Christ's crucifixion when "the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom" [Mt 27.51]. The words *anōthen* and *kato* (top and bottom) show the thorough rending of the veil, not simply that it had been removed or taken aside.

Enter/into (*eiserchomai/eis*): two uses of the preposition into which may be viewed in light of *anōthen/kato* above. *Ephapax* (once for all) designates permanent entry, as though there was no turning back; cf. its use in 7.27: "he did this once for all when he offered up himself." *Ta Hagia* (Holy Place): cf. 9.2 as the holy things. In the Greek of vs. 12, these first words follow those pertaining to goats, etc., as if to first posit Levitical practices in anticipation of Christ's relationship to the Holy Place.

Instead of using the verb taking the Greek text reads through (*dia*) the blood of." This preposition also is used with respect to Christ's blood, the vehicle, as it were, enabling entry into *Ta Hagia*.

Eternal redemption (*lutrosis*): in the sense of releasing, from the verb *luo*; the noun implies that a person had been previously bound, in captivity. The verb *heurisko* (securing) is used with respect to redemption; more properly it means to find in the sense of securing.

**9-Vs. 13: For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh,**

This verse forms the first part of one sentence continued in vs. 14 with “if” setting up the contrast to be made. Implied here is Lev 16.3: “But thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering” (and so forth). A key point is holy place which in the **LXX** reads *to hagion* (singular compared with *ta hagia* in vs. 12) for the Hebrew *qodesh*.

Sanctifies (*hagiazō*): the verb for *ta hagia*. “Father, hallowed by your name, your kingdom come” [Lk 11.2]. In the verse at hand, *hagiazō* has a direction of *pros* (for) or direction-towards purification (*katharotes*) of the physical body (‘flesh’); this is the only New Testament use of the term.

**9-Vs. 14: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.**

“How much:” intended to balance the “if” which begins vs. 13.

Here the Spirit (*Pneuma*) as eternal (*aionos*) is intimately related to Christ as high priest in the offering (*prosphero*, verb) of himself to God which implies the equal attribute of eternal to himself. Christ relates to the Spirit through (*dia*) him which results in him being without blemish or *amomos*. Christ’s blood is intended for purification (*katharizo*, verb) of a person’s conscience or *suneidesis*, knowing-together .as in vs. 9 above and pertaining to Levitical worship: “gifts and sacrifices...which cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper.”

The dead works parallel the “futile ways” of 1 Pt 1.18 or *mataios*, reminiscent of Ecclesiastes’ “vanity of vanities.” This verse is related to the adjective *amomos* found in the next one, “the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”

The purpose of such purification: *eis to latreuein*, literally, “into the to serve” the living God. Note the connection between “living” and *latreia* as in 9.1 which originally meant liturgical worship according to the Levitical law. Furthermore, purification leads into (*eis*: full presence-in) such *latreia*.

**9-Vs. 15: Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.**

“Therefore” introduces a sentence which sums up the previous verses beginning with Christ having entered the Holy Place (cf. vs. 12); it presents Jesus Christ as mediator or *mesites* as noted in 8.6. Here it is in conjunction with a new covenant (*diatheke*; cf. vs. 22, better covenant plus 8.6). The function of a mediator is to stand in between, as it were, a fact suggested by *dia* (through)-*theke*. This term is lacking in the Old Testament but is indicated by Aaron acting as mediator between Moses and Pharaoh (cf. Ex 4.15-6: ‘and you shall be to him as God’).

Those who are called (*kaleo*): the verb is a perfect passive participle; the agent doing the calling is not specified but presumably is God. “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose” [Rom 8.28]. Here purpose (*prothesis*) is a “setting before (*pro*);” in 9.2 it is bread of the Presence in the sense of being a preparation.

Promised (*epaggelia*): here a noun; cf. 8.6. It is used in reference to eternal inheritance (*kleronomia*).

Death is mentioned without the definite article, i.e., “(a) death.” Although it pertains to Jesus Christ, this term is presented almost in an impersonal fashion, perhaps a way of expressing the link between Christ’ crucifixion and the earlier Levitical sacrifices. The chief difference is that the death of Christ effects redemption: note the Greek expression, into (*eis*) *apolutrosin*. That is to say, his death—which pertains to those who are called—leads into this redemption. “They are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” [Rom 3.24].

Such redemption is effected with regard to transgression (*parabasis*). Note the preposition *para* (besides) which suggests a going-besides or running parallel but not quite in tune with divine reality. Cf. 2.2 where *parabasis* is identified with disobedience, a failure to hear God.

The concluding words of vs. 15 are first (*protos*) covenant, another mention of *diatheke*, that is, the one given to Moses. The adjective *protos* contrasts with the one describing the new (*kainos*) covenant established by Christ; *kainos* connotes something which is recent whereas *protos*, that which is first in a sequential order.

The preposition *epi* (upon) is used with respect to the first covenant, here in English as “under” in the sense of “by.”

**9-Vs. 16: For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.**

The author of Hebrews continues with an impersonal approach in that he wishes to isolate a particular human faculty to make his message that much clearer to his readers.

Will (*diatheke*): the same term as used for covenant” this and vs. 17 are the only New Testament occurrences. Since *diatheke* can be conceived as a will or as relative to inheritance, it pertains not only to the present but to the future, that is, Israel as well as the “will’s” fulfillment in Jesus Christ (‘new covenant’).

In human affairs, the person who drew up the will has to pass away before it is handed over to the party designated as heir. A legal process is suggested in vs. 16, that is, the person’s death requires (*anagke*: adverb for must) verification; it is used with respect to the person who made (*diatithemi*) the will. This is the verbal root for *diathesis*, to make a covenant. Thus vs. 16 has a legal as well as a communal overtone which is borne out by the verb *pheresthai* (*phero*), to be established.

**9-Vs. 17: For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.**

Takes effect (*bebaios*): the Greek adjective is used which means something stable or firm and here is related to death, inferring that of Jesus Christ.

In force (*ischuo*): in the sense of having strength and validity; this verb is parallel in meaning to *bebaios*, i.e., both connote firmness and integrity. Here the will lacks force as long as the person who made (*diathemenos*) it remains alive, the verbal root for *diatheke* (will).

**9-Vs. 18: Hence even the first covenant was not ratified without blood.**

Both the first and new covenants required the shedding of blood for ratification (*egkainizo*; cf. 10.20): this verb pertains to the making of something new (*kainos*, as in new covenant) as well as to inaugurate. A reference to the first covenant: “And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people and said, ‘Behold, the blood of the

covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words” [Ex 24.8]. Note that in vs. 7 Moses read the book of the covenant to the people; reading leads to a baptism of sorts, that is to say, it makes the people *kainos*.

**9-Vs. 19: For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,**

Every commandment (*entole*): note that they were spoken to the people as opposed to having been written by God on Mt. Sinai. These individual commandments are “of (*kata*) the law” (*Torah*), better, “according to the law” which means a correspondence of many ordinances with reference to the whole or the *Torah* itself. “All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do:” such was the people’s response, Ex 24.3. Their willingness follows an order, a *kata*, if you will, which comes after the words, “Moses alone shall come near to the Lord” [vs. 2]. It is as though this physical separation sets the stage for Moses’ declaring to the people.

The verse at hand implies Lev 14.4 and Num 19.6, liturgical gestures with respect to cleansing from ritual impurity. Moses first sprinkled the book (*biblios*) and then all the people...in that order; this sequence is akin to Moses’ coming near to the Lord (that is, to hear him) followed by his declaration to the Israelites of what the Lord had written down on tablets.

Moses received the *Torah* on Mt. Sinai, “the two tablets of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God” [Ex 31.18]. The ritual to which vs. 19 refers takes place before the people’s apostasy in chapter 32; Moses broke the two tables (cf. 32.19) on the same mountain where he received them. Later in chapter 34 Moses re-ascends Sinai but as vs. 27 indicates, he, not God, does the writing or re-writing of the original *Torah*. Thus this second set of tablets written by Moses represents a type of secondary transmission or speaking. Furthermore, Moses’ face shone after this second writing; he had to put a veil on his face whenever he spoke with the people (cf. 34.35).

This whole process of transmission from God to Moses to the people may follow the outline: God writing→people willingly hear writing transmitting through speaking→Moses’ breaking the tablets (writing)→Moses writing them again→declaring the new tablets, only now with Moses’ face veiled.

The verse under discussion describes Moses ritual purification. It is almost as though this secondary writing necessitated purgation by reason of it coming after the original hearing of Moses on the mountain. Since Moses destroyed the first set of tablets (written by God), the re-telling to the people from the second set (written by Moses) does necessitate purification because the second set comes through man, not God.

**9-Vs. 20: saying, “This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.”**

A continuation of vs. 19 which concludes here in dramatic form. The same verb (saying, *laleo*) was used to introduce vs. 19 in the Greek text (declared); it picks up on the theme discussed there, God writing followed by the people hearing through Moses as mediator.

Emphasis is placed upon the primacy of blood (cf. vs. 7 and following) which is sprinkled upon first the book and then the people. Vs. 20 is lifted from Ex 24.8 and has direct bearing upon Christ’s institution of the Eucharist: “Take, eat; this is my body”...”Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” [Mt 26.26 & 27-8]. Here the bread/body is distinct from the cup/blood, as though the latter were derived from the former much as an animal’s blood comes from its body. Also, the bread/body is not identified with the covenant per se, only the blood. Moses actively sprinkled the people who remained passive; the disciples were “active” in that they were commanded to both eat and drink.

Saying this (*touto*): the Hebrew equivalent is *hineh*; it translates better as behold, an act of getting someone’s attention. *Hineh* is more proper to speaking as opposed to writing. Also the Hebrew has *karath* for the Greek *entellomai* (to command) which basically means to cut and conveys a more intimate sense compared with imparting a command. *Entellomai* (*entello*) connotes enjoining which is a fuller meaning than the giving of an order: “...when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch” [Mk 13.34].

**9-Vs. 21: And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship.**

In the same way (*homoios*): that is, after Moses had sprinkled the book and people. Even though Moses follows an order, *homoios* suggests that each part contributes to a whole of this liturgical gesture. “And Moses killed it (a ram) and threw the blood upon the altar round about” [Lev 8.19].

Sprinkle (*rhantizo*): as in vs. 19. This verb is used in the **LXX** of Lev 6.27 with the preposition *epi* (upon) prefixed to it and refers to a similar liturgical gesture: “When any of its blood is sprinkled on a garment, you shall wash that on which it was sprinkled in a holy place.” For a verb paralleling this notion of sprinkling, cf. Rev 19.13 which speaks of The Word of God clad in a robe dipped in blood. Here his robe is dipped or *bapto* (related to the verbal root for baptism), that is, it was fully immersed in blood.

Worship (*leitourgia*): in the “liturgical” and public sense as opposed to veneration offered by individual persons. Cf. 8.6 which brings out another aspect of this noun: “But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry which is as much more excellent than the old.”

**9-Vs. 22: Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**

Almost (*schedon*): alternately, “I may also say.” This verse sums up the preceding ones and prepares the reader for the rest of the chapter which pertains to Christ and his sacrifice. Note the connection between *schedon* and under (*kata*, according to) the law or the sequential nature of the *Torah*’s individual ordinances. Implied are those ordinances not purified by blood. The importance of blood is brought out in Lev 17.11: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life.” The Hebrew for life is *nephesh* which more properly refers to the human soul.

Shedding of blood (*haimatekchusia*): the only occurrence in the New Testament, composed of *heima* + *ekchuno*. The implied sacrifice necessary to obtain blood releases, as it were, the victim’s *nephesh*. As a result there is forgiveness (*aphesis*, cf. 10.18) of sins. This noun suggests a releasing, a setting-free. “For this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” [Mt 26.28]. Here *aphesis* is used with the preposition *eis* (into), signifying presence-in of this forgiveness.

**9-Vs. 23: Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.**

Note the relationship between necessary (*anagke*) and but (*de*) which makes the transition between liturgical rites of the Torah to its fulfillment in Jesus Christ which the author of Hebrews proceeds to delineate.

Copies (*hupodeigma*): as discussed in the context of 8.5 which is more specific or concerned with one object (“They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary”) whereas here it encompasses all rites and practices ordained by Moses. In the verse at hand, this term is related to heavenly things which in the Greek text literally reads, the copies of things (*ton*) in the heavens” (*en tois ouranois*). Thus the contrast between *hupodeigma* and *ton* (“in the heavens”) is brought out as well as by rites (*toutois*, literally, ‘by these’).

The phrase heavenly things (*ta epourania*) is used again only with the author’s intent to contrast them with the “copies” associated with the Levitical rites, that is, through sacrifices (*thusia*). Cf. 8.3: “For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices.” In the verse at hand, this word is in the plural; compare *ta epourania* with *ouranos* in the first half of this verse: the former has the preposition *epi* (upon) prefixed to it as if the author wished to intimate a greater sense of transcendence. He does this by the relative pronoun *auta* (themselves). As for *thusia*, compare with 10.12: “But when Christ offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins.” Here *thusia* is singular as opposed to the plural in the verse at hand.

“Than (*para*) these:” in reference to the earlier sacrifices; *para* is comparative here and connotes two things placed alongside each other to effect a comparison.

**9-Vs. 24: For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.**

After several verses related to sacrifices in and by themselves, the author of Hebrews comes back to the notion of a sanctuary which was last mentioned in vs. 8. Here the term is *hagia* as in vs. 12 (holy place) which there was noted as being in the plural, “the holy things.”

The verse at hand presents Christ first as having entered (*eiserchomai*) this sanctuary. Note the preposition *eis* (into) prefixed to the verb which is used with *cheiropoiotos* (made with hands). “...circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands” [Eph 2.11].

Copy (*antitupos*): this copy has been fabricated by hands (*cheiro-poiotos*). This English term was used in vs. 23 for *hupodeigma*. As the literal meaning of *antitupos* suggests, it signifies a striking against (*anti*) and therefore has a dynamic connotation; it is as though the *antitupos* was determined to be set apart from and different from what it had been compared to at an earlier time.

By way of note, compare *huodeigma* with copy: *hupo* (under) + *deiknumi* (to show, point out); it lacks a more assertive force as in *antitupos*.

True one (*alethinous*): an adjective used with the definite article literally meaning “of true things;” compare the plural with *ta hagia* (sanctuary, as in 8.2).

Christ has entered (*eiserchomai*, as just noted) into (*eis*) heaven (*ouranos*); note the use of *autos* (itself) which further sets apart this “hand-less” made sanctuary from those associated with the Jewish dispensation.

This double *eis*, if you will, results in Christ appearing (*emphanizo*) or putting himself in the presence of someone or something. “I will love him and manifest myself to him” [Jn 14.21]. In the verse at hand, *emphanizo* is with respect to God’s presence (*prosopon*), literally, face; not just the divine presence but “on our behalf” (*huper*).

**9-Vs. 25: Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly with blood not his own;**

“Nor:” the other half of this verse’s significance is in vs. 26 which is introduced by “but.”

The offering (*prosphero*, verb) presented here is in the context of the Jewish *archiereus* who makes sacrifice repeatedly (*pollakis*) which parallels yearly (*kat’ eniauton*). Implied in this verse is that sacrifice is subject to becoming routine without any end in sight; emphasis is upon a cyclic nature of time. This repeated nature of time is further signified by the high priest having blood which is not his, i.e., it is from the sacrifices that have been offered.

*Eiserchomai* (to enter) is coupled with *eis* with respect to the Holy Place or *Ta Hagia* (cf. 9.2).

**9-Vs. 26: for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.**

Further stress upon time's cyclic nature with regard to (animal) sacrifices by another use of the word repeatedly (*pollakis*). The suffering of Christ as high priest would have to correspond to this endless perception of time from the foundation (*katabole*) of the world.

Appeared (*phaneroo*): connotes a public manifestation; compare with *emphanizo* of vs. 24. For another use of the verb at hand, cf. 9.8: "that the way into the sanctuary is not yet opened."

The appearance of vs. 26 is *apax* (once for all, as in 6.4 & 9.7), that is, definitively. Such conclusiveness is conveyed by at the end (*sunteleia*) of the age: *sun* (with) *telos* (end). This noun corresponds to the sense of the verb *teleioo* of 5.9: "and being made perfect." With regard to *sunteleia*, completion is conveyed by the preposition *epi* (at): also it is "upon"—as fulling situated-upon—this termination of age or *aion*. *Aion* is found in 1.2 as world; it manifests a given period of time or epoch which in the context of vs. 26 is the seemingly endless cycle of time.

At the end of this given *aion* Christ as high priest puts away (*athetesis*, noun) sin, the only other New Testament use being 7.18 which there has a legal connotation: "on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness." With the legality of *athetesis* in mind, Christ's sacrifice (*thusia*) of himself is implied as being both within and transcending the *Torah*.

**9-Vs. 27: And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment,**

The conjunctive "and" introduces the first half of the author's intent and is balanced off by "so" which begins vs. 28 and completes Chapter Nine.

Appointed (*apokeimai*): the present tense suggests that the subject under discussion (death) is continuously in effect as in Col 1.5: "because of the hope laid up for you in heaven." Note the two uses of the preposition *apo* (by means of, about, etc.) prefixed to *apokeimai* and *apothnesko* (to die, in the sense of being at death's door).

Another use of the adverb *apax* (once) in contrast to vs. 26 where it refers to Christ's appearance.

The preposition *meta* (after) signifies the finality of death as with *apax*, only here it sets the stage for the more or less immediate presence of divine judgment (*krisis*). "Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it not I alone that judge, but I and he who sent me" [Jn 8.16].

**9-Vs. 28: so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**

Once or *apax* as used yet again to indicate the finality of Christ's offering (*anaphero*) of himself; cf. 7.27 for the verb: "he did this once for all when he offered up himself." In this verse an adverb similar to *apax* is used, *ephax* (once for all, literally, "upon" or *epi* all"). Compare *anaphero* with *prosphero* of vs. 25: the former involves something related to above or *ana*; the latter, with respect to towards or in-the-direction-of (*pros*). I.e., we have a "vertical" and "horizontal" offering.

Appear (*orao*): has the fundamental meaning of seeing, perceiving; compare with the two verbs noted above, *hupodeiknumi* and *phaneroo*. Christ will appear a second time (*deuteron*); cf. vs. 7: "but into the second only the high priest goes," this word meaning second in the sense of succession. The first appearance could apply to Christ's birth in the flesh; understanding of the second appearance can be expanded through the Book of Revelation. "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him" [Rev 1.7].

*Choris*: without; in vs. 28 it is used in the sense of "not to deal with sin," i.e., not to be burdened further by sin (that is, with regard to one's own person). The first coming of Christ was in order to abolish sin: "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh" [Rom 8.3].

In place of sin, the author of Hebrews presents Christ engaged in the act of saving (*soteria*); the Greek text has a noun with the preposition *eis*: "into salvation." This is in reference to those persons eagerly awaiting Christ (*apekdechomai*).

## Chapter Ten

**10-Vs. 1: For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices which are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who draw near.**

Shadow or *skia* as in 8.6 to which the verse at hand bears a close parallel: “They (sacrifices by Levitical priests) serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary.” Here the law or *Torah* is a *skia* used with the present active participle *echo* (having) which intimates that although a semblance, the *Torah* participates in the good things to come (*ton mellonton agathon*). Cf. 9.11: “When Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come.” We have the same *agathon* in the plural only in this verse it is in the past tense compared with the present tense of 10.1. *Mello* connotes on the point of doing or being something, that is, it is immanent. Here *ton agathon* with respect to *Torah*-as-shadow are about to overtake it, not blot it out. “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them” [Mt 5.17]. Note the contrast between *kataluo* and *pleroo* (to abolish and to fulfill), a sentiment intimated in the verse under discussion.

True forms (*eikon*): the term for “image” as in Gen 1.27 and the antithesis of *skia*; it is directly related to realities or *pragma*, that which is done or pertaining to that which is real.

The phrase year after year (*eis to dienekes*) is used in 7.3, forever; as noted there, the preposition *eis* (into) signifies full presence within that which is unbroken and is not subject to temporal sequence. Shadow can be tied in with this phrase, that is, as something which waxes and wanes in the course of a given year. Sacrifices (*thusia*) similarly offered point to the repetitious or cyclic nature of time. They are unable to make perfect (*teleioo*)...effect a *telos*...in the sense that Jesus Christ can effect where this same verb is used: “...appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever” [7.28].

Such making of a *telos* pertains to persons who draw near (*proserchomai*), the author’s intent of approach as pointed out in 7.25: “He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him.”

**10-Vs. 2: Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered? If the worshipers had once been cleansed, they would no longer have any consciousness of sin.**

Otherwise (*epei*) introduces a rhetorical question which the author of Hebrews answers. *Epei* alternately means “since” as in 9.26 (‘for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly’). At issue is the repetitious nature of time and hence sacrifices,

themes already noted. This sentence can read, “For if it were otherwise, would they have not ceased to be offered?”

Cleansed (*katharizo*): as in 9.14 (“purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God”). Use of the perfect means that cleansing has taken place definitively. *Katharizo* is with respect to worshipers, the verb *latreuo* being used and was discussed in 8.5 (“they serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary”). Thus *latreuo* can apply to a liturgical act and representative of a greater, transcendent reality.

The adverb once (*apax*) is used in a hypothetical situation, that is, with respect to worshipers having had the possibility of being cleansed. It is to be considered in conjunction with the first word of vs. 3 (but or *alla*) which deals with the cyclical nature of sacrifice.

The author of Hebrews does not simply mention sin (*hamartia*) but consciousness of it, *suneidesis*, as treated in 9.9 & 14, that is, as a knowing-together (*sun*).

### **10-Vs. 3: But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year.**

Note the suggested parallel between the cyclic nature of time/sacrifice and memory: year after year and remember (*kat’ eniauton* and *anamnesis*). Compare the former with *eis to dienekes* of vs. 1; the Greek in the verse at hand is used in 9.25: “as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly.” This phrase taken literally can read “according to year,” that is, following an order with liturgical overtones.

*Anamnesis*: a term freighted with Plato’s conception of knowledge as recollection. It better reads “a calling again” (*ana*); this preposition also suggests an upward motion, as if memory were returning to a transcendent state congenial with human nature. “Do this in memory of me” [Lk 22.19], words associated with the institution of the Eucharist.

In (*en*) these sacrifices: this preposition with its presence-in almost intimates that those offering sacrifices were stuck “in” them, equivalent to the unbroken cycle of “year after year.”

### **10-Vs. 4: For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.**

For (*gar*): this word completes the above-described notion of cyclic sacrifices coupled with *adunaton* (it is impossible). Vs. 4 has in mind Lev 16.15: “Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering which is for the people and bring its blood within the veil...sprinkling it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat.” The Hebrew for mercy seat is *kaporath* which translates into English as veil; from the verbal root *kaphar*, to cover. The Leviticus verse has *paroketh* for veil, also derived from *kaphar*.

The verse at hand implies—in light of Christ’s sacrifice—that this action of sprinkling blood is itself an act of covering that which is already covered. Hence, the *adunaton* of this gesture with regard to taking away (*aphaireo*) sins.

**10-Vs. 5: Consequently, when Christ came into the world he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me;**

Consequently (*dio*): this word prepares a transition from the cyclic nature of Levitical sacrifices (‘but,’ ‘for’) to that of Jesus Christ which is presented in terms of Ps 40.6-8 (LXX).

Come into (*eiserchomai*): with respect to Christ who is not mentioned in the Greek text. This verb which is prefaced by the preposition *eis* is used with the same preposition, “into the world.” *Kosmos* pertains to an adornment as well as the sum total of everything, i.e., the universe.

The verses from Ps 40 quoted in vss. 5-7 are put into Christ’s mouth to show his role of high priest discussed earlier in Hebrews.

The object of sacrifices and offerings (*thusia* and *prosphora*): the latter as in 10.18 (‘Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin’). Also, Eph 5.2 which uses the same terms as in the verse under consideration: “...as Christ loved (*agapao*) us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Note the phrase here, *eis osmen euodias*, which literally reads, “into a smell of sweet fragrance” and fills out the meaning of vs. 5.

God did not desire (*thelo*) the two gestures of Levitical liturgical rites: this verb basically means something a person wishes or intends and involves the correct application of free will.

Prepared (*katartizo*): the object of which is *soma* or body as opposed to Levitical sacrifices; it indicates not only the sacrificial body to be offered (Christ's) but can infer his incarnation. *Katartizo* more specifically means arranging something for a purpose, putting into proper condition, as well as restoring to order. "Equip you with everything good that you may do his will" [13.21]. The preposition *kata* (according to) suggests this order.

Instead of the phrase "but a body you have prepared for me," the Hebrew reads "ears you have dug for me," *karah* suggesting the digging of a well as well as to buy, to make a feast.

### **10-Vs. 6: in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.**

The third citation from Ps 40 which adds to sacrifices and offerings those offerings which are burnt (*holokautoma*) and are related to sin (*hamartia*). The former suggests that which is offered in totality (*holos*, adjective); the latter is the common term for sin and is not specified by anything especially related to offering, most likely being joined with the former. The preposition *peri* (concerning) is used.

Take pleasure (*eudokeo*): the verb which has as its object the two offerings, rather, what God does not delight in. The preface by *eu* (well) is added to the verb *dokeo* (to think, suppose), i.e., to be disposed favorably towards something.

### **10-Vs. 7: Then I said, 'Lo, I have come to do your will, O God,' as it is written of me in the roll of the book."**

Then (*tote*): this word serves to counter the negative aspect of sacrifices of the previous two verses and shifts to a direct statement (by Christ) to God in the words of the psalmist.

Lo (*idou*): an exclamation which here demonstrates Christ's readiness and prefaces his willingness to effect God's will. The Greek text reads, "I have come; in the roll of the book it is written of me to do your will, O God." First is (Christ's) coming, rather, having come which in itself signifies readiness for action. Such action demonstrates the importance of the roll (*kephalis*, of book or the *Torah*; only New Testament use), the diminutive form for head.

Book (*biblion*): in the sense of a scroll as in Rev 5.1: "And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with

seven seals.” Both a scroll and a book are rolled up when not in use, i.e., they are relatively compact for storage and carried easily. In this “roll of the book” the author of Hebrews finds words to put into Christ’s mouth, that is, of me (*peri emou*) in the sense of concerning.

Will (*thelema*) for the Hebrew ratson an emotion which connotes delight in addition to an act of the will. Thus “doing” this “delight” conveys a richer meaning.

Verse eight restates the words of Ps 40 quoted in vs. 5 and adds (in parentheses, **RSV**), “these are offered according to the law.” It seems the author of Hebrews wishes to re-enforce the distinction between the Old Testament sacrifices and that of Jesus Christ.

Verse nine similarly restates the words of Ps 40 quoted in vs. 7. The second half of this verse contains the statement: “He abolishes the first in order to establish the second.” Here an order is posited: first and second (*proton* and *deuteron*). Both involve two verbs of opposite meaning:

- 1) Abolish (*anaireo*) which can apply to execution and literally means to take away in the sense of up (*ana*).
- 2) Establish (*histemi*) or to set up permanently.

**10-Vs. 10: And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

Another mention of will (*thelema*) which alludes to the Hebrew *ratson* and its association of delight. Note the passive mode of this sentence instead of something like “that will has sanctified us.” Perhaps the author wishes to emphasize the contrast he has been making throughout Hebrews with regard to the Old Testament sacrifices and that of Jesus Christ. The passive highlights “we” as the object of this sanctification (*hagiazō*, verb). 2.11 uses both the active and passive of the same verb: “For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin.”

In the verse at hand, sanctification occurs through (*dia*) the medium of Christ’s offering (*prosphora*) which stands in contrast to that of vs. 5, borrowed from Ps 40: “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired.” *Prosphora* has a specific object, the *soma* of Jesus Christ. “But he spoke of the temple of his body” [Jn 2.21]: here is a verse which parallels Christ’s own *soma* with the Jerusalem temple.

Once for all (*ephax*): that is, definitely as in 9.28: “so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many.”

**10-Vs. 11: And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.**

“Every (*pas*) priest:” that is, those priests responsible for the Levitical rites and sacrifices. *Pas* connotes multiplicity as opposed to the unique priesthood of Jesus Christ; it stands in contrast to *ephax* (once for all) as noted in the previous verse, *pas* being associated with the constant repetition of Old Testament liturgical gestures.

Stand (*histemi*; cf. vs. 7): the perfect of this verb refers to being in position—almost with a sense of future expectation—as well as being faithful with respect to the spot where one’s duty is performed. Here it involves the priest’s service or *leitourgeo*; the verb is used from which *leitourgia* is derived. In the verse at hand, there is an obvious correspondence between *histemi* and *leitourgeo*.

Daily (*kath’ hemeran*): as in 7.27 with the same sense of repetition. The preposition *kata* also means according to, that is, according to the cyclic nature of time.

Repeatedly (*pollakis*): as in 9.25 & 26 with regard to the high priest making sacrificial offerings. The recurrent nature of these offerings is enhanced in a two-fold way: by being the same and never (*autas* and *oudepote*), that is, with regard to these sacrifices never being able to take away (*periaireo*) sins. This verb means a total removal or destruction, literally a “taking from around” (*peri*). Note the verb to turn, (*epistrepho*) or “to turn oneself...upon” (*epi*); it effects the *peri-aireo* or taking away of sins just noted.

**10-Vs. 12: But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,**

Instead of “Christ” the Greek text has this one (*houtos*) which counters “every priest” of the previous verse by stressing Christ’s special role; also, the impersonal character of *houtos* makes his priesthood stand out that more dramatically in comparison with the Levitical one.

“Single (*heis*) sacrifice:” alternately, one in the sense of indicating uniqueness which is further underscored by for all time (*eis to dienekes*) first noted with regard to 7.3: “but resembling the Son of God he (Melchizedek) continues a priest forever.”

For (*huper*) sins: this preposition also means “on behalf of;” it suggests the intercessory role of Jesus Christ’s priesthood and offering of himself.

Sat down (*kathizo*): verb is in the past tense, signifying a clean break not only with Levitical sacrifices and their cyclic, endless nature, but it serves to introduce a new concept of time or *kairos*. *Kathizo* was first encountered in 1.3: “he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” This verse is an introduction of sorts and comes after the author of Hebrews said (same verse) that Christ “made purification for sins.” His sitting is developed in the context of Ps 110.1, 1.13: “Sit at my right hand.” Also, cf. 8.1... “such a high priest seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.”

In distinction to these references the verse at hand has *houtos* seated at God’s right hand as opposed to 1.13’s “my right hand.” The Hebrew of Ps 110.1 reads, “at my right hand.”

### **10-Vs. 13: then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet.**

This verse is situated within the context of Ps 110.1 already used earlier in Hebrews: cf. 1.13 and 2.8.

The sitting at God’s right hand in vs. 12 was noted as a break with the cyclic, endless nature of Levitical sacrifices and the introduction of a new concept of time or *kairos*. It is passive and complemented by the active role Christ plays in the Book of Revelation which also deals with sitting in conjunction with God’s throne. Such sitting is midway, as it were, between having brought to completion Levitical sacrifices and the commencement of Christ’s reign. Hence the author interjects the notion of waiting (*ekdechomai*), this verb (with its sense of expectation, *ek-* or from) being used in 11.10: “For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” The notion of waiting is combined with the similar one of reigning as in 1 Cor 15.25: “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.”

Vs. 13’s waiting connotes temporal extension by *to loipon* (then)...*heos* (until). In a sense this is true; more accurately, it seems to be an infusion of *chronos*-logical time by that *kairos* of the divine reign already discussed.

**10-Vs. 14: For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.**

The theme of cyclic time and *kairos* has been noted thus far which here is continued by the phrase single (*heis*) sacrifice first discussed in vs. 12, that is, as opposed to the continuous sacrifices of the old dispensation.

Perfected (*teleioo*): first noted in 2.10 and used elsewhere on numerous occasions. Such perfecting or bringing to completion rejoins the theme of *chronos/kairos* by the words for all time (*eis to dienekes*) first encountered in 7.3: “but resembling God he continues a priest forever.”

The object of *teleioo*: those who are sanctified (*hagiazō*). Cf. vs. 10: “And by that will we have been sanctified.”

**10-Vs. 15: And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,**

Such bearing witness (*martureo*) by the Holy Spirit is presented in vss. 16-7 which quotes from the prophet Jeremiah. The wording of the Greek text follows as : witness, us and the Holy Spirit. I.e., the function expressed by this verb comes first with “us” in between it and the Spirit who bears witness to the priestly action of Jesus Christ as he fulfills the Levitical dispensation.

The verse at hand continues into the next two verses or two parts which are comprised of “after saying” and “then he adds.”

**10-Vs. 16: “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds,”**

The author of Hebrews now presents the first part of the Holy Spirit’s bearing witness, i.e., “after saying.”

This verse was used in 8.10, and the following is intended to flesh-out what had been noted there. Covenant (*diatheke*): from the verb *diatithememi* which is in the future tense; the covenant is not made for the present but takes effect “after those days” or when “I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt” [Jer 31.32], words preceding those from the same prophet in vs. 16. Thus covenant equals time after the Exodus.

While the Holy Spirit is bearing witness here, keep in mind the Hebrew, “says (*na’am*) the Lord.” As mentioned under vs. 12, *na’am* is fuller in meaning than a simple saying; it is more like an uttering. Unlike the Greek, the Hebrew makes a distinction between covenant (*beryth*) and make (*karath*); the latter fundamentally means to cut as noted under 9.20 and is reminiscent of God writing the *Torah* on the two tablets of stone (cf. Ex 31.18).

The Greek text has “with (*pros*) them,” indicative of direction-towards-which;” the Hebrew has “house of Israel.” Note the play on words: *beryth/bayth* (house), as if to make an identity between the divine and human spheres.

Laws (*nomos*): for the Hebrew *Torah*, also in the plural. They are placed upon (*epi*) their hearts, *kardia*. Here the Hebrew for *kardia* is *qerev*, literally, “in the midst;” the verbal root *qarav* means to draw near, to approach.

Write (*epigrapho*): literally, “write upon” (*epi*) which may be taken with the preposition just noted. The Hebrew uses *karath*; again, keep in mind the “cutting” of the two tablets on Mt. Sinai.

Minds (*dianoia*): here the “writing-upon” (*epi*) is intended to pervade or go through (*dia*) minds which are akin to the two tablets of the *Torah*. The Hebrew has hearts (*lev*).

**10-Vs. 17: then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their misdeeds no more.”**

“Then he adds” is not in the Greek text; *kai* (and) is used.

Refer to 8.12 which quotes these words from Jer 31.34 with a fuller sense of this verse: “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” Vs. 17 adds their misdeeds (*anomia*), that is, a condition disposed to being outside the law (*nomos/Torah*). “For just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity” [Rom 6.19].

God will no longer remember (*mimnesko*) this insubordination as noted in 2.6 quoting from Ps 8: “What is man that you are mindful of him?” The Hebrew has *zakar* which as noted under 8.12 (a variant reading of *mimnesko*) connotes propagation of a blood line.

**10-Vs. 18: Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.**

Forgiveness (*aphesis*): in reference to the sins and misdeeds of the previous verse. Cf. 9.22: “and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins,” an alternate meaning as noted there is “setting free.”

The verse at hand means that absence of sins and misdeeds does not necessitate offering (*prospora*) for sin. In light of vs. 17 which quotes Jer 31.34, the lack of remembrance (*mimnesko*) is bound up with such forgiveness. This can be further clarified if we keep in mind the Hebrew *zakar* (to remember) as connoting the male element in physical propagation: no *zakar* equals no begetting or offering (for sin).

**10-Vs. 19: Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus,**

Therefore (*oun*) signifies that the brethren have grasped the meaning of the Jeremiah quote of vss. 1-7 and marks a transition to a spiritual understanding of heaven’s spiritual sanctuary.

Confidence (*parresia*): this newly found trust reveals that the brethren have obtained a full comprehension of the difference between the cyclic nature of Levitical sacrifices and the unique one of Jesus Christ (‘blood of Jesus’). *Parresia* connotes frankness and boldness of speech technically belonging to citizens of a Greek city-state. Cf. 3.6: “And we are his house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our hope.”

In the verse at hand, *parresia* pertains to entering (*eis ten eisodon*) the sanctuary (*hagios*), the blood of Jesus acting as a kind of door. Note the two uses of the preposition *eis* (into) signifying full and permanent entry as well as abiding there. Sanctuary is in the plural, literally, “of holy (things).” For a similar use, cf. 9.8: “That the way into the sanctuary is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing.”

“By (*en*) the blood of Jesus:” this preposition parallels *eis* just noted, “in the blood of Jesus.” Here blood is not unlike a vehicle (something in which we are present) which brings us *eis...into...the* “holy things.”

**10-Vs. 20: by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,**

A continuation of the previous verse which carries over the force of “therefore” to a completion of the sentence.

Opened (*egkainizo*): as in 9.18 which has another sense of this verb: “Hence even the first covenant was not ratified without blood.” The verb literally means to make something new, *kainos*.

The notion of *kainos* in *egkainizo* is amplified by the adjective new or *prospatos*, the only New Testament use of this word which literally means something freshly slaughtered. The notion of a recently butchered animal as for sacrifice is re-enforced by the adjective living (*zao*).

Both *zao* and *prospatos* are used to describe way or *hodos*, a term which Jesus Christ used as applying to himself: “I am the way, the truth and the life (i.e., the *zao*)” [Jn 14.6].

Curtain (*katapetasma*) equals Christ’s flesh or *sarx*, a term often referring to human nature. Both words connote a certain thickness or density as opposed to the spirit which is accentuated by the preposition through (*dia*), that is, with regard to Christ’s *sarx*. Two other verses containing *katapetasma* are 6.19. Also consider Mk 15.38: “The curtain of the temple was torn in two,” that is, by means of Christ’s body which had been crucified and newly slaughtered, *prospatos*.

### **10-Vs. 21: and since we have a great priest over the house of God,**

Great (*megos*) priest: equivalent to high priest or *archiereus* as in 7.1. He is situated over (*epi*, upon) God’s house (*oikos*). “Just as Moses was faithful in God’s house” [3.2]. Note the difference: Christ is *epi* this house whereas Moses is in (*en*) it.

### **10-Vs. 22: let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**

Draw near (*proserchomai*): as in 4.16: “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace.” Both are exhortations, the verse at hand allowing this *proserchomai* as result of Christ being over (*epi*) God’s house. Also cf. 7.25: “He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him.”

The preposition *meta* (with) is associated with this act of drawing near and has three parts:

1) True (*alethinos*) heart: this is specified further, namely, in full assurance (*plerophoria*) of faith. Cf. 6.11: “the full assurance of hope until the end.”

2) Sprinkled clean (*rhantizo*): cf. 9.19 & 21 in reference to Moses making purification with regard to liturgical matters, whereas here sprinkling pertains to conscience (*suneidesis*), in making it free from evil. Cf. 9.9: “gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper” or the knowing-together (*sun*) of the worshiper.

3) Pure (*katharos*) water for washing (*louo*) the body. Although water is mentioned, it is within the context of sprinkling which was done with blood.

This transference of ritual purification to the human person with respect to God traces much of its influence from God purifying the house of Israel in Ezk 36. For example, cf. vs. 25: “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.” The purpose: “I will put my spirit within you” [vs. 27] or the *ruach* of God *qerev* Israel; cf. 8.10 which treats this word within the context of this Ezekiel passage.

**10-Vs. 23: Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful;**

The first of two “Lets,” the second introducing vs. 24 which forms part of the verse at hand.

Hold fast (*katecho*) as in 3.14: “For we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end.” This verb has the preposition *kata* (according to) which suggests holding in accord with a given order which is the confession (*homologia*) of our hope.” The *kata-echo* is based upon hope (*elpis*): “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for.”

Unwavering (*aklinos*): used to describe hope which literally means “not inclining,” the only New Testament occurrence.

Promised (*epaggellomai*): which is equivalent to God being faithful (*pistos*). Cf. 6.13 for this verb: “For when God made a promise to Abraham.” It pertains to making an announcement and is related to *epaggelia* (promise and hence the Gospel).

**10-Vs. 24: and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,**

The second of two “Lets,” the first which introduced vs. 23 and here with regard to the verb *katanoeo* (to consider) as in 3.1: “Consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.” As noted there, we are to put our minds (*noeo* + *nous*) according to (*kata*) a given order, the one the author of Hebrews presents here in vs. 24.

The word “how” is missing in the Greek text.

The order just noted applies to stirring up (*paroxusmos*) our fellows; one another suggests this fellowship or brethren as in vs. 19. *Paroxusmos* is a noun connoting a state of irritation or sharp disagreement. “And there arose a sharp contention, so that they separated from each other; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed” [Acts 15 39-40]. In the verse at hand, the noun *paroxusmos* with its negative connotations is used in conjunction with *agape* and “good (*kalos*) works,” this adjective also pertaining to anything beautiful.

**10-Vs. 25: not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.**

This verse pertains to gatherings of Christians for worship. It may be read in light of frequent Old Testament allusions to worship and liturgical practices described thus far in Hebrews. Immediately comes to mind gatherings of the Apostles mentioned in Acts including their assembly prior to Pentecost.

Neglecting (*egkatalaipo*): as noted before, the preposition *kata* (according to) can imply not going in accord with the order of assembly.

Meeting (*episunagoge*): the only other New Testament reference being 2 Thes 2.1: “Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him.” Note the preposition *epi* (upon) prefixed to *synagoge* which can indicate a more solemn type of gathering.

Habit (*ethos*): with reference to *egkatalaipo*, of not following the order (*kata*) as constituting the church assembly. This term connotes long established behavior with regard to an individual or a group.

Encouraging (*parakaleo*): note the preposition *para* (beside) prefixed to the verb, almost as though the act of encouraging were gathering a group together with people beside each other. This is the verbal root for *Para-clete* or the Holy Spirit. Cf. 3.13 for another use of this verb: “but exhort one another every day.”

Day (*Hemera*): The RSV puts this term in capital letters in reference to Christ’s second coming. Compare the verse at hand with 9.28: “will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.” In the verse at hand, this *Hemera* has not yet arrived but is drawing near (*eggizo*). “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” [Mt 3.2]. Also, the author of Hebrews realizes that his audience has intimations of its nearness.

**10-Vs. 26: For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,**

Deliberately (*hekousios*): used with respect to sin, better, in light of knowledge of the truth. The notion of a voluntary act is suggested by this adverb.

Knowledge (*epignosis*): in the sense of recognizing someone or something; the preposition *epi* (upon) *gnosis* connotes a “knowing upon” with respect to the truth. Such *epignosis* is made all the more noteworthy (as opposed to simple *gnosis*) by reason of the inability for sacrifice to abolish sins: “no longer remains” (*apoleipo*); this verb suggests a ceasing or leaving off intensified by the preposition *apo* (from).

**10-Vs. 27: but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries.**

Two objects of *apoleipo* (remains) mentioned in the last verse:

1) Fearful prospect (*ekdoche*): in the sense of expectation. The only use of this word in the New Testament, here with respect to *krisis* or judgment. “And when he comes (Counselor...*Parakletos*...or Holy Spirit), he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment” [Jn 16.8].

2) Fury (*zelos*) of fire: in the sense of zeal which means any intense feeling or with respect to things divine: “Zeal for your house will consume me” [Jn 2.17]. *Esthio* is the verb used in the verse at hand.

Adversaries (*hupenantios*): the only New Testament use of this word other than Col 2.14: “having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this

he set aside, nailing it to the cross.” Such foes can be among the author of Hebrews’ audience: “if we sin deliberately” [vs. 26].

**10-Vs. 28: A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses.**

Violated (*atheteo*): literally, “to place aside,” and akin to the notion of sin or *hamartia*, that is, a failure to hit the mark. For an example of such transgression on which vs. 28 rests, refer to Dt 17.6: “On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses he that is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.”

In the verse at hand, *atheteo* is situated in the context of the *Torah* (*nomos*) given to Moses which embraces the need for multiple witnesses (*martus*).

Without mercy (*oiktirmos*): “So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, and affection and sympathy” [Phil 2.1]. Here *oiktirmos* is connected with a comparable word, *splagchnon* (affection, literally bowels: note that the last two words are plural in the Greek text).

The Greek text lacks testimony or *martus*.

**10-Vs. 29: How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?**

Punishment (*timoria*): alternately as help, assistance (with respect to someone who has been wronged). This is the only New Testament use of the word. Such *timoria* is deserved, *axioo* having the connotation of being suitable, often for requital) and has three objects:

1) With respect to a person who has spurned (*katapateo*) the Son of God (first mentioned in 4.14); the verb literally means to trample, to stomp upon which is enhanced by the preposition *kata* (against) and imparts a violent action.

2) With respect to a person who has committed a profanity (*koinon hegeomai*, verb): literally, “to consider (as) common.” That is to say, to consider the covenant’s blood as *pro-fanus* or outside (before)-the-temple. This verse is to be read in context of Ex 24.8: “And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people and said, ‘Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance

with all these words.” “Making common” the covenant’s blood is all the more disturbing because the person who has done it had already been sanctified (*hagiazō*).

3) With respect to a person who has committed an outrage, *enubrizo* being the only New Testament use of this verb; it connotes mockery, here with respect to the “*Pneuma* of grace.”

**10-Vs. 30: For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.”**

Two quotations from the Old Testament to back up the three-fold object of *timoria* in the previous verse:

1) Dt 32.35 reads in full, “Vengeance is mine and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.” In addition to vengeance (*naqam/ekdikesis*) is divine recompense (*shilem* in Hebrew and related to *shalom*; the Greek is *antapodidomi*: “For what thanksgiving can we render to God for you,” 1 Ths 3.9). Note that time in the Deuteronomy verse is *kairos* and pertains to when Israel’s (collective) foot will slip or fall away from God. Rom 12.19 incorporates this verse: “Beloved, never avenge yourselves but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’” the words “says the Lord” are not in the original text.

2) Dt 32.36 which reads in full, “For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.” This better situates divine judgment (*dyn/krino*, verbs). Note that it occurs when God sees Israel’s power (*yad*; also means hand) depleted as well as no free or slave remaining which implies Israel in its entirety. The Dt 32.36 verse is also found in Ps 135.14: “For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants.”

**10-Vs. 31: It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

Fearful thing (*phoberon*): with respect not only to God but the living (*zao*); perhaps this adjective is intended to distinguish the God of Israel and Jesus Christ from idols which are considered dead.

To fall (*empipto*), the preposition *em-* (or *en-*) as falling-in. Hands signify action by God as opposed to simply being present before him. Note the preposition *eis* (into) being used here.

**10-Vs. 32: But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings,**

Recall (*anamimnesko*): note the preposition *ana* (again, upwards) prefixed to the verb which signifies a fuller sense of recollection in that the reader is bidden to make-present-again in former days or those days which were *proteros* or first in the sense of the beginning of sequence. The plurality of days suggests a time which although indefinite, is nonetheless to be fixed in the memory.

In the sequence of this special application of memory, the author of Hebrews first mentioned the time after his listeners were enlightened (*photizo*). Cf. 6.4: “For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened.” Most likely vs. 32 is in the same context of repentance.

In addition to speaking about enlightenment, the author of Hebrews situates *anamimnesko* in the context of a hard struggle, *athlesis* being the only New Testament occurrence which derives from *athleo*, to complete in a contest. Such an *athlesis* involves sufferings (*pathema*, singular). This struggle was endured or *hupomeno* (cf. 12.7), literally, “to remain under.” “But he who endures to the end will be saved” [Mk 13.13].

**10-Vs. 33: sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and affliction and sometimes being partners with those so treated.**

A continuation of the previous verse which is more specific as to the distress of “former days.” Note that such afflictions are not private, as it were, but open to the view of all. They follow upon personal or inner enlightenment of vs. 32:

1) Publicly exposed (*theatrizo*): the only New Testament use of this verb; for a related word (*theatron*), cf. 1 Cor 4.9: “Because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men.” The object of such public gaze: abuse (*oneidismos*) and affliction (*thlipsis*).

2) Partners (*koinonos*): a second use of *touto* (sometimes) as if to express the occasional as opposed to constant notion of persecution. *Koinonos* is in conjunction with those so treated (*anastrepho*): this verb pertains to conducting one’s life in accord with certain principles which here would involve the time of persecution.

This stress upon persecution continues to the end of Chapter Ten and sets the stage for examples of faith in the next chapter.

**10-Vs. 34: For you had compassion on the prisoners, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.**

Compassion (*sumpatheo*, verb, as in 4.15, a ‘suffering-with’) as related to prisoners or most likely Christians suffering for their faith. In this verse the persons demonstrating sympathy are not in prison, whereas the other group is; both have in common a possession (*huparxis*) which is two-fold: better and abiding (*meno*). The noun *huparxis* literally means staying-under (*hupo*) and connotes a state of existence. For the only other New Testament reference, cf. Acts 2.45: “And they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all as any had need.”

The author of Hebrews says that those suffering this fate did so joyfully (*meta charas*, literally, ‘with joy’). This is reminiscent of one of the beatitudes: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” [Mt 5.10].

**10-Vs. 35: Therefore do not throw away your confidence which has a great reward.**

A direct correspondence between confidence and reward (*parresia* and *misthapodosia*). As for the second term, it’s found only in 2.2: “For if the message proclaimed by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution.”

The author of Hebrews bids his audience not to throw away (*apoballo*) this two-fold gift. “Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light” [Rom 13.12].

**10-Vs. 36: For you have need of endurance so that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised.**

Endurance (*hupomone*): literally, a “remaining under;” compare with possessions of vs. 34, (*hup*)-*arxis*. “By your endurance you will gain your lives” [Lk 21.19]. In the verse at hand, the author of Hebrews intimates that his audience lacks this trait and requires it. Such *hupomone* is two-fold:

- 1) God’s will or *thelema*: here to put it into effect.

2) The putting into effect of divine *thelema* results in a reception or *komizomai* (verb) which is amplified in 11.13: “These all died in faith, not having received what was promised.” The object of such reception is what is promised (epaggelia), a noun often noted in Hebrews and first encountered in 4.1: “Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest remains.” Thus in the verse at hand there is a direct correspondence between doing (*poieo*) God’s will and *epaggelia*.

**10-Vs. 37: “For yet a little while and the coming one shall come and shall not tarry;**

This and the next verse contain a quote from Hab 2.3-4; the LXX differs from the Hebrew text. The expression *mikron hoson hoson* (literally, ‘small much as much as’) implies the immediacy of God’s arrival. “What does he mean by ‘a little while (to *mikron*)’ [Jn 16.18]?”

The notion of little while is in the context of Jesus Christ (i.e., the ‘coming one’) not tarrying (*chronizo*), that is, by not extending time in the sense of *chronos*. “As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept” [Mt 25.5].

Note the association of the coming one (*erchomenos*) with *chronos* (-izo); action of the person (Jesus Christ, presumably) so coming is in the present combined with the future tense of *hexo*, another verb meaning to come. The association of *erchomenos* with (not) tarrying or spending *chronos* is in the future tense.

The Hebrew of this verse (3) from Habakkuk runs as follows in full: “For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.” This vision has a specific time (Hebrew: *mohed*) which may be taken as a *kairos* event, that is, in distinction to one of *chronos* (-izo). It may allude to Daniel’s vision of 8.19 which speaks of “an appointed time of the end,” again, a *kairos* event. Applied to the Hebrews verse at hand which connotes persecution, it sees a link between this distress and the final coming of Jesus Christ.

**10-Vs. 38: but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”**

The conclusion of the Habakkuk quote begun in the last verse. Here we have the righteous person or *dikaïos* which has a fuller meaning in the Hebrew as *tsadyq* which involves a type of straightness, almost in the physical sense. This *dikaïos/tsadyq* lives by (*ek*) faith, literally, from faith. Being “from” something is mere derivative and shows a closer relationship with the source which is faith.

Shrink back (*hupostellomai*): in the sense of withdrawing or disappearing from a position. The hesitation signified by this verb results in God having no pleasure (*eudokeo*), rather, his *psuche* having no pleasure. Attribution of *psuche* to God intimates a more human aspect of divinity, as it were, compared with *pneuma*; *psuche* involves human life in all its aspects which includes both physical and spiritual realities.

The Hebrew of this verse (4) reads as follows: “Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail (literally, ‘is not puffed up’), but the righteous shall live by his faith.” Here *nephesh* corresponds to the **LXX** *psuche* as described in the last paragraph; it is (not) upright or *yashar* which is akin to *tsadyq* (note: righteous in the second half of this verse) in that it implies straightness and is more suggestive of a physical, vertical position than the moral/spiritual one of *tsadyq*.

The verb *haphal* (to swell, be puffed up) is the exact opposite of the vertical *yashar*; such swelling originates from within a person, balloon-like, as opposed to divine intervention. In contrast to the “*ek* faith” of the Greek, the Hebrew has “in (*b-*) faith.”

**10-Vs. 39: But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and keep their souls.**

Shrink back (*hupostole*): the only New Testament occurrence of this word which is a noun derived from the verb *hupostellomai* as in the previous verse. The noun is used in conjunction with *apoleia* (destruction), a noun in the Greek text. This phrase literally reads, “(a) shrinking back into (*eis*) destruction.” For a fuller sense of this term, cf. Rev 17.11: “As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to perdition.”

In contrast to this *hupostole/apoleia* the author of Hebrews places himself and his readers among persons who “have faith” or in the Greek, “of faith.” It is joined to the keeping (*peripoiesis*) of their souls by the preposition *eis*...“into keeping.” Note the singular use of *psuche* in conjunction with the plural “we.”

The noun *peripoiesis* also means possession or that which has become one’s own. “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people (literally, ‘a people for or *eis*...into...his possession’)” [1 Pt 2.9]. Note the preposition

*peri* (around, besides), as though such keeping of soul (again, singular *psuche*) were endowed by divine protection.