

3. THE DIVINE SON: EXPLORING THE MESSIAH'S DEITY IN HEBREWS 1

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But to the Son He says ...

“You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; They will perish, but you remain; And they will grow old like a garment; Like a cloak you will fold them up, and they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will not fail” (Hebrews 1:8a, 10-12).

We are evaluating **David Wilber's** exploration of the Messiah's putative Deity in Hebrews chapter 1.

For **Wilber** the Son was personally present in the original Genesis creation, and therefore *is* himself God. **Wilber's** 'ace' was that “**The Son is the Agent of Creation**” because **Hebrews 1: 2** (as is often translated) reads that it was through the Son that God **made the world(s)**.

However, after appealing to more appropriate contextual and grammatical considerations, we concluded that the phrase should read that ... “**God appointed (designated or planned) the ages** — with His promised future Son in mind. Jesus is the heir of the future cosmos. God plans to **gather up all things in him (Eph.1: 10)**.”

This universe is not here by accident, without purpose, just drifting aimlessly along. The writer to the Hebrews assures his readers that God has destined His Son (and all the redeemed people of Christ) to govern a renewed world — the coming Kingdom of God. We saw that many other places in the NT teach this same glorious purpose which God has planned for the ages (e.g **Eph.1:10; 3: 9-11; Rom. 16: 25-27**).

We ended our previous article by showing that **Wilber** does not accept that **Hebrews 2: 5** refers to **that future world** for two main reasons: **1)** A different Greek word than **ages** is introduced and, **2)** A few verses earlier in **1:10** we read that, “**in the beginning the Son laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands ...**” **Wilber** says ...

“...the author explicitly attributes YHWH's work of creation “in the beginning” to the Son (Heb. 1:10). Thus, it is entirely implausible that the author refers to the forthcoming “age to come” when speaking of the creation of the world in Hebrews 1:2 [and 1:10]. He is referring to the Genesis creation.”

For him then, **Hebrews** unequivocally teaches that the Son of God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning of time. **Wilber's** “Joker” is on the table! Best card in his pack. How will we answer?

AN INTRIGUING FACT

Now, here is an interesting fact. Three-quarters of all New Testament (NT) quotations from the OT are **not** from the original Hebrew Scriptures. They are from the Greek translation of the OT known as the Septuagint (LXX). But even more intriguing is that **The Epistle to the Hebrews** — written to *Jewish* believers in Messiah with their religious and cultural heritage rooted in the OT faith of Israel — doesn't quote one verse from their Hebrew Bible!

That's right. Whenever he cites a passage from the OT our author always quotes from the LXX. *Always*. 100% of the time! Let that fact sink in, as it's crucial to what we are shortly going to say about **Hebrews 1:10f**.

Also bear in mind that the book of **Hebrews** was written for Jewish Christians who were in danger of abandoning their faith in Yeshua Messiah and returning to their old synagogue communities. We would be forgiven for thinking that he would quote from the Hebrew text, and not the Greek Septuagint to persuade them — but not so.

For the writer to the Hebrews, the LXX carried the full authority of their holy Scriptures! Hold this thought firmly in mind.

THE OLD WORLD ADMINISTERED BY ANGELS

Many commentators have correctly pointed out that **Hebrews chapter one** is a sustained argument for Christ's superiority over the angels. In this first chapter there are seven quotes from the Old Testament (OT) marshalled to prove this point — and as we've mentioned, they are all from the LXX.

There are at least two reasons for this lengthy and detailed argument concerning the Son's superiority over the angels. **The first** is that the Jewish Scriptures understood this present Evil Age was being administered by rebellious angels — called 'the sons of God'. It all goes back to the rebellion at **the Tower of Babel** when God scattered rebellious humanity, dividing them into confused language groupings.

That earthly division reflected what was also going on in the heavenly places, in what is known as the Divine Council. Here is how the LXX explains it:

The Most High divided [to] the nations their inheritance, He separated the sons of mankind, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the angels of God, for the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance, He found them a desert land ... (Deut.32 : 7-10). (¹)

This is a huge story, and requires a number of articles on its own. (²) But to stick to our current investigation, the salient point is that Israel knew the nations of the earth were being administered by (rebellious) angelic authorities — which the NT calls **rulers, and powers, and wicked spirits of darkness in heavenly places (Eph. 6:12)**.

¹ Most English Bibles follow the Hebrew manuscripts and read that God **set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel** (e.g. KJV, NKJV, NASB, RSV, NIV). The LXX is doubtless the original Hebrew intention as confirmed by other passages such as **Deut. 4:19; 29:26; Ps. 82; Is. 24: 21-23, etc.**

² See **Michael Heiser's** extensive works on this theme in *The Unseen Realm; Angels; Demons; Reversing Hermon*, etc.

However, our beloved Lord Jesus **disarmed** those heavenly powers when he died on the cross. At **Calvary** Jesus **divested the rulers and authorities** of their jurisprudence (**Col. 2:15**). Their evil administration over this earth was stripped from them by the Son of God Most High, though we await the Day of Messiah to reveal this publicly. As **1 Peter 3: 22** puts it,

Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, he has now gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to him.

By raising His Son to glorified immortality, and by setting him at His own right hand, God has declared to the wicked sons of God — the angels who have rebelled against His rule and enslaved mankind — that their tenure over the nations, their administration has been judged and is doomed. The future now belongs to Messiah and to his people. Hallelujah!

The second reason **Hebrews chapter one** details why the Son is greater than the angels is because the first covenant God instituted with Israel was **ordained through angels (Gal. 3: 19)**. This is to say, when Moses instituted the Law on **Mount Sinai**, it was mediated to Israel by angelic agency under Yahweh's authority.

The writer goes on in **Hebrews 2** to expressly state that we must give **the much closer attention to what we have heard** (i.e., to the new covenant as delivered by Jesus Christ) **for if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience** (against that Mosaic Law) **received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation** (since it was mediated to us through the Son of God and not lesser angelic authority) (**2: 1-3**).

So, why would a Jewish Christian wish to renege on the far better and finished work of the eschatological Son who is therefore the mediator of a far better covenant? Indeed. To deny one's Christian faith would be to forfeit one's privileges of sonship in Messiah and to go back under bondage **to those elemental spirits**. Paul likens those who desire to go back under the Mosaic Law to being **in bondage [again]** (**Gal. 4: 1-3**)!

The future world is to be governed by God's Son the Messiah — and all the children of God who are loyal to him. This is the worldview our author is writing about ... **For He has not put the world to come of which we are speaking, in subjection to angels** (**2:5**) but we see Jesus **crowned with glory and honour** who has gone on ahead to secure our salvation. **Not to angels** is the future government of the New Age to be given!

Putting it bluntly: How can **Wilber** miss this big picture? Oh, the power of a false (trinitarian) paradigm to think that the subject is the Son's having created the Genesis universe! Every bone in my body screams out against this false and disjointed interpretation! But for the sake of the exercise, let's entertain for a moment his reading. Let's look at his Joker on the table ... **Hebrews 1:10ff**

THE SON LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE UNIVERSE?

In **Hebrews 1:10ff** God says to the Son, “You, Lord in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth. And the heavens are the work of your hands ...” There can be no doubt that God addresses the Son as the creator of the heavens and the earth here *in some sense*.

Hebrews 1:10f is quoting **Psalm 102**, and to be a good Bible reader we must go back and look at the original source the author is quoting from. Right here I am going to ask that we remember what I said earlier, namely that the writer to the Hebrews does not quote from his Hebrew text. He cites **Psalm 102 from the Greek translation**, i.e. from the Septuagint.

Psalm 102 is headed: *The Discouraged Hope in the LORD*. And its subheading is titled: *A prayer of the afflicted when he is discouraged and how he pours out his supplication before the LORD*. The pray-er, the petitioner (and Zion itself) are experiencing Yahweh’s judgement, but he makes earnest request for mercy and restoration.

The theme of the psalm concerns a coming new world order (where do we hear that expression touted today?). The petitioner looks forward to the Day when God’s Kingdom will appear on the earth, when the nations will live together in peaceful harmony. He prays for a future society on earth — a **generation to come** — which will **praise the LORD ... in Jerusalem ... and when the nations are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the LORD (Ps. 102:18- 22)**.

Crucially, at this point, from **verses 23 to 25**, the Greek text differs significantly from the Hebrew version. (³) The esteemed **F.F.Bruce** helps us with this observation: **In the Hebrew text the suppliant is the speaker from the beginning to the end of the psalm, but in the Greek text his prayer comes to an end with verse 22.** (⁴)

Our English Bibles follow the Hebrew text in **verse 23**. They read, **He [God] has weakened my strength ... He has shortened my days.**

But the Greek LXX reads, **He [God] answered him ...** Thus, at **verse 23** the psalmist’s prayer is interrupted for God “**answers him**”. And notice how God addresses the suppliant, the one who is praying. God calls him ‘**lord**’.

³ I remember the day **Anthony Buzzard** first explained this to me in his home in Atlanta, Georgia, USA many years ago now. Without notice I, and one or two others, asked Anthony about **Hebrews 1: 10ff**. I had not long abandoned my trinitarian system and sat there totally absorbed in his ability to exegete one of the most challenging verses. He did it succinctly, straight from the top of his head! Accordingly, I wish to honour **Anthony** by acknowledging the light he brought to my mind in those early days. If you wish to read his expert exegetical unpacking of **1:10** go to:- <https://focusonthekingdom.org/Hebrews110.pdf>

⁴ **The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews** (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI 1964) pp21

THE LORD MESSIAH IS NOT THE LORD GOD!

Speaking to the petitioner (who feels his life is ebbing away from him before he will ever get to see God's salvation) God **answers**, "You, lord, at the beginning founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands" (v. 25).

So, who is this small 'el' lord? Who does Almighty God address as "lord"? Those English Bibles which put the word "lord" in all capitals "LORD" (in **Hebrews 1: 10**) show their trinitarian bias and make an impossible conundrum. They make it that Yahweh the LORD God addresses the petitioner as Yahweh God. Yahweh answers the psalmist as if he were a second Yahweh!?! Two Yahwehs is nonsense.

To prove this, let's allow the writer of the **Epistle to the Hebrews** to give us his inspired answer. He writes: **But to the Son He says ... "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth ...** thus he understands that in **Psalm 102: 23** God was speaking prophetically to His future Son. The Son is the Messianic lord.

Remember, the pray-er is depressed because he fears he will perish before he sees God's deliverance and promised restored future for Zion. And God — **Who spoke in times past to the fathers through the prophets** — in the spirit of prophecy in the **LXX 102nd Psalm** — **answers** him by saying it is impossible that the lord Messiah who is destined to rule over God's future Kingdom should perish. The "lord" must endure because, as the Son, he is destined to found the new heavens and the new earth!

This is the basis for Messianic eschatology! Messiah will be the founder of that new society. Remember when he faced his ordeal of crucifixion, how Jesus **offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to Him who was able to save him from death, and who was heard because of his reverent submission (Heb. 5: 7)?**

When all appeared lost, when he would have been tempted to doubt his Father's promise that as Messiah he would be the founder of God's everlasting Kingdom, **Psalm 102** would have reassured Jesus in the hour of his trial that God would indeed vindicate him — that God would through him lay the foundation of a new and righteous heavens and earth?

What an assurance this must have been for the Son of God, our Messianic lord, to know His Father's plan was for him to lay the foundation of a new heavens and a new earth, and that he himself would not perish from having **shortened days (v. 23)**.

What an assurance this must have been for the mortal Jesus to know that this old creation, this present Evil Age, would indeed pass away like an old garment and be rolled up as one folds a cloak, but that his **years will not ever come to an end**.

What an assurance in that dark night in **Gethsemane** to remember God's promise to raise him up to sit as Lord and King over a new heavens and a new earth!

Thus, from **verse 23** onwards to the end of **Psalm 102** we have God's answer to the psalmist's petition. The author of **Hebrews** explains that God is calling His Son

“lord” because through Him the lord Messiah will be the founder and creator of the new heavens and earth. As **Professor Buzzard** aptly puts it:

Hebrews 1:10 is a prophecy, written in the past tense (as customarily prophecies are), but referring to the “inhabited earth of the future about which we are speaking” (Heb. 2:5).

Wilber and our trinitarian friends miss the point entirely by always pointing backwards to the Genesis creation. Our writer to the Hebrews is reading the Greek LXX version where Yahweh invites His anointed Son, the Messianic lord, to initiate a whole new age of glory, which involves the whole heavens and earth.

And Yahweh assures the one He calls ‘lord’ that, in contrast to the present perishable heavens and earth, his **years will never fail, and will never come to an end.**

Other OT prophets predict the exact same thing. Take **Isaiah 51:16** for instance, where YHWH the LORD God says, “**And I have put my words in your mouth, and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, ‘You are My people’”.**

This is precisely the message the Hebrews’ writer wants to convey about the superiority of Jesus over angels. Jesus is the founder of that coming new Kingdom. No angel is given this privilege nor this authority. This all confirms our exegesis that the Hebrews’ writer in **2:5** explicitly tells us — *contra* **David Wilber** — that it is “**the inhabited earth of the future about which we are speaking**”!

As **Anthony Buzzard** brilliantly summarises for us: This is really not so difficult when this difference in the LXX is explained. Both Psalm 102 and Hebrews 2:5 and indeed the whole of Hebrews 1 refer to the new order of things initiated by Jesus and it would not matter whether we think of the new order as initiated at the ascension (“All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me,” Matt. 28:18), or at the second coming. Psalm 102 is all about the coming age of the Kingdom and the restoration of Jerusalem in the millennium (see vv. 13-22).

The writer looks forward to the restoration of the city when God appears in His glory (v. 16). The Psalm is written for the “generation to come” (v. 18) and a newly created people of the future Kingdom on earth.

Hebrews is speaking not of the Genesis creation but the “economy to come” (2:5).

The Word Biblical Commentary says: That makes no sense if it refers to the original [Genesis] creation...In the other instances God acts alone, using no agent. Here the one he has hidden in the shadow of his hand is his agent.

Wilber and his trinitarian friends want us to believe the Son of God was God’s agent in the original Genesis creation. But concerning that first creation of the universe, God’s own testimony is that “**I, Yahweh [the LORD], am the Maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself, and spreading out the earth all alone**” (Is. 44:24). God says He had no agent helping Him create the universe! However, He

does say that He will shake this old world up so as to bring in the new order, the new heavens and the new earth, and that He will enlist His Son as the agent through whom He will bring it all to pass (Heb. 12: 26-29).

Isaiah 9: 6 (in the LXX!) puts this in beautiful Hebraism, the Son will be **the father of the age to come**. Just as Jews considered **Abraham** to be the father of their nation, so Jesus will have the greater and the higher honour of being the founder, i.e. the father, of the new society in the Kingdom of God on earth!

Thus, **Hebrews 1:10** is pointing out that the present administration of the angels of **the heavens and the earth** is temporary — a passing phase in the drama of the vast ages. The whole rationale behind our author's lengthy argument for the Son's superior status over the angels is that the Son has a **better** everlasting administration than the present temporal one of the angels precisely because he the Son's throne is forever (**Heb. 1: 8**)!

Sorry **David Wilber!** Your "Joker" is not the "Big Bird" you were trusting in. We are playing a different game altogether. As we said in our previous article, we are not playing your game of **palaeontology**. We are dealing in on the 'game' called **eschatology**. You are playing a game called "Looking back to the old Genesis world". **Hebrews** is speaking about "The coming new world order". Jesus, the Son of God, is the Messianic lord of that future new heavens and earth. Better deal again!

POSTSCRIPT:- For those wanting more information as to: WHY WE HAVE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE HEBREW AND THE GREEK?

Professor Anthony Buzzard explains this beautifully:- The reason for the completely different translations, between Greek and Hebrew, is the Hebrew vowel points. The sense can be altered if the vowel points are changed, and sometimes it is not clear which of the possible senses is the right one. Thus the Hebrew takes **innah** to mean "He [God] afflicted" (v. 23) but the LXX reprints the same Hebrew consonants as **anah** which means "He [God] answered [him]." So then in the LXX God is answering the one praying and addressing that person as "lord." The LXX adds "lord" in v. 25.

Next the Hebrew has **omar eli** ("I say, 'O my God,' v. 24). But the LXX reads these consonants as **emor elai** ("Say to me," v. 23b; i.e. the person praying is commanded by God to tell God). The idea is that God is asked to cut short the days which have to elapse before the Kingdom comes (cf. Matt. 24:22). Ps. 102 is largely about the age to come and the restoration of Israel in the future Kingdom and so was entirely appropriate as a proof text for Hebrews 1 in regard to what the Son is destined to do in the future, indeed his role in the new, not the Genesis creation. This sense is reversed when it is made to support the unbiblical idea that Jesus was the Creator in Genesis. (⁵)

⁵ <https://focusonthekingdom.org/Hebrews110.pdf>

