

Hebrews

1:1. “through the prophets.” The Greek here represents a Hebrew idiom (represented in Greek by the instrumental dative) and means, “through” the prophets (Buchanan , *Anchor Bible*).

1:2. “Ages.” The Greek word is the plural of *aiōn* (#165 αἰὼν) and means “ages.” This verse is referring to the “ages,” not the “world.” *Vine’s Lexicon* has, “an age, a period of time, marked in the N.T. usage by spiritual or moral characteristics, is sometimes translated ‘world;’ the *R.V.* margin always has ‘age.’” *Bullinger’s Critical Lexicon* (under “world”) has: “*Aion* [age], from *ao*, *aemi*, to blow, to breathe. *Aion* denoted originally the life which hastes away in the breathing of our breath, life as *transitory*; then the course of life, time of life, life in its temporal form. Then, the space of a human life, an age, or generation *in respect of duration*. The time lived or to be lived by men, time as moving, historical time as well as eternity. *Aion* always includes a reference to the filling of time.”

Since most translators are Trinitarian and think that Jesus was the one who made the original heavens and earth, they translate “ages” as “world,” or even “universe” in this verse. There are other Greek words that mean “world,” such as *kosmos* and *oikoumene*, and when the Devil tempted Jesus by showing him all the kingdoms of the “world,” these words are used. In Hebrews 1:2 *aiōn* means “ages,” and should be translated that way.

Trinitarians use Hebrews 1:2 to try to prove that Jesus Christ created the world as we know it, but the context of the verse shows that cannot be the correct interpretation. Verses 1 and 2 show that God spoke through Jesus “in these last days,” whereas He had spoken “in the past” in various ways. If indeed it were through Jesus that the physical world was created, then one of the ways that God spoke in the past was through Jesus. But that would contradict the whole point of the verse, which is saying that God spoke in other ways in the past, but “in these last days” is speaking through the Son.

Since verses 1 and 2 say that it was “God” who spoke through prophets and through His Son, it is clear that God is the prime mover and thus different from the Son. These verses show that the Son is subordinate to God and, as a “mouthpiece” for God, is compared to the prophets.

The fact that God appointed the Son to be “heir” shows that God and the Son are not equal. For the Son to be the “heir” means that there was a time when he was not the owner. The word “heir” is a common one and, because death and inheritance are a part of every culture, it occurs in all the biblical languages. Any dictionary will show that an heir is one who inherits, succeeds or receives an estate, rank, title or office of another. By definition, you cannot be an heir if you are already the owner. No one in history ever wrote a will that said, “My heir and the inheritor of my estate is...ME!” If Christ is God, then he cannot be “heir.” The only way he can be an heir is by not being the original owner. That Christ is an “heir” is inconsistent with Trinitarian doctrine, which states that Christ is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. If Christ were God, then he was part owner all along, and thus is not the “heir” at all. These verses teach that God is the original owner, and will give all things to His heir, Jesus Christ. It is obvious from the wording of these first two verses that the author of Hebrews does not consider Christ to be God.

Since *aionas* means “ages” and not “world,” it is fair to ask in what sense God has given form to the ages through Jesus. The Greek word from which “given form” is translated is *poieō*, a word with very many meanings. Alone, and in combination with other words, it is translated more than 100 different ways in the *NIV*. Some of the ways *poieō* is translated are: accomplish, acted, appointed, are, be, bear, began, been, bring, carry out, cause, committed, consider, do, earned, exercise, formed, gain, give, judge, kept, made, obey, performed, preparing, produce, provide, put into practice, reached, spend, stayed, treated, was, win, work, wrote, and yielded. Although most people read *poieo* in Hebrews 1:2 as referring to the original creation, it does not have to mean that at all. The context dictates that the “ages” being referred to are the ages after Christ’s resurrection. In verse 2, Christ became heir after his resurrection. In verse 3, he then sat at God’s right hand after his resurrection. Verses 5 and 6 also refer to the resurrection. The context makes it clear that God was not speaking through His Son in the past, but that He has spoken “in these last days” through His Son, and “given form to” the ages through him. For more information see, *One God & One Lord*.

1:4. “Having become as much better than the angels.” The entire opening section of Hebrews, usually used to show that Christ is God, actually shows just the opposite. After Christ sat down at the right hand of God, “he **became** as much better than the angels” as his name is better than theirs. “God” has always been superior to the angels. If Christ only *became* better than angels after his resurrection, then he cannot be the eternal God.

“**better.**” The Greek is *kreittōn* (#2909 κρείττων), and it means “better,” or in some contexts, “superior.” It is a major theme of Hebrews, occurring sixteen times in 13 chapters. The *NIV* text note on Hebrews says, “Hebrews could be called ‘the book of better things....’” *NIV Study Bible* (Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985), p. 2346.

The book of Hebrews was addressed to unsaved Jews and/or Jewish Christians who were intimately familiar with the Old Testament. Every chapter is packed with Old Testament references, and there is much discussion about the Law. Hebrews teaches that obeying the Law will not get people saved, but what will is faith in Jesus, the one who died for our sins and is now our living High Priest, elevated even higher than angels. The Jews fiercely held to the Law, which was given by Moses. To persuade them to let it go and move on to something else, God would have to offer something “better,” and that is a major theme in Hebrews.

Hebrews teaches that God has done something in Jesus that is “better” than what He had done in the Law. Jesus is specifically said to be better than angels (1:4); he brings a better hope (7:19); guarantees and mediates a better covenant that is founded on better promises (7:22, 8:6); is a better sacrifice than those offered under the Law (9:23); reminds people of better possessions in the future, including a better future country (10:34, 11:16); offers a better resurrection (11:35), brings something better for us than the Old Testament believers had (11:40); and his blood speaks better than the blood of Abel’s sacrifice (12:24). Hebrews also shows (without specifically using the word “better”) that Jesus was a greater High Priest than Aaron (4:14-5:10) and ministers in a better sanctuary (9:11-14).

1:5. Quoted from Ps. 2:7 and 2 Sam 7:14.

1:6. Quoted from Deut. 32:43.

“again brings...into the world.” This is a referral to Jesus 2nd birth, his resurrection from the dead (Cp. NASB).

“pay him homage.” See commentary note on Matt. 2:2.

1:7. Quoted from Ps. 104:4. The point of this verse is to elevate the son. The angels of God are swift as the wind, strong as a fire, but they pay homage to the son (verse 6). We went with “destructive as” because that is what fire does—burn things up and destroy them. The “feel” of the verse is that angels are beings whom we should hold in awe.

“flaming fire.” The Greek reads “flame of fire,” but this is the figure of speech *antemereia*, (see Bullinger).

1:8, 9. Jesus is a “god” in the oriental sense. See *One God & One Lord*. Quoted from Ps. 45:6, 7.

1:10-12. Quoted from Ps. 102:25-27.

1:13. Quoted from Ps. 110:1.

2:4. This verse is a parenthesis, expanding on the fact that not only have others people confirmed what was spoken by the Lord (verse 3), but God himself has also borne witness by signs and wonders to what the Lord said.

2:6-8. For “little,” see v. 9. Quoted from Ps. 8:4-6.

2:9. A major question involves the word “little,” which can refer to time “for a little while,” as per our translation, the NASB and the RSV; Cp. *Tyndale New Testament Commentary: Hebrews* (Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, England, 1994, pp.85, 86). “Little” can also refer adjectivally to “a little lower,” as it does in most translations.

The context, as usual, determines the meaning. Trinitarians say that Jesus was made “a little lower than angels,” but of course imply that as “God in the flesh” was still very different from the rest of mankind. This argument is inconsistent, at best. If Jesus was “God in the flesh, fully God and fully human” then he was not “a little lower than the angels,” even if he acted like it by acting human. On the other hand, if the kenotic Trinitarians are correct, and Jesus “emptied” himself of his godhood while on earth, then Jesus was not made “a little lower than angels” at all, he was in fact made just like the rest of mankind. We believe that the context in the next 8 verses show that Jesus was “made like his brothers in every respect” (Heb. 2:17). He was “fully human” in the usual sense of the word. Jesus was fully human, and lower than the angels “for a little while,” which turned out to be the duration of his earthly life, about 30 years. The fact that Jesus was “for a little while made lower than the angels” speaks both to God’s purpose and destiny for Christ, and the facts of the case. God did not destine Christ to be lower than the angels for long, and because of his obedience even to suffering and death, he was not.

Some might argue that Jesus was made positionally “a little lower than angels,” but this would not be the case. Even on earth Jesus was the king of kings, certainly something the angels knew, even if many humans did not.

“in place of everyone.” From the Greek preposition *huper* (#5228 ὑπέρ). See Romans 5:6 commentary on “in place of the ungodly... for... in our place.”

2:12. Quoted from Ps. 22:22.

2:13. Quoted from Isaiah 8:17, 18.

“Look!” The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

“trust.” We can and should trust God. Although it is common to hear religious people say, “Just have faith,” meaning, “Just trust,” the fact is that the human mind

cannot “just trust.” In order for us to trust, we must believe the object of our trust is trustworthy. There are five basic elements to trust, and all can be expressed starting with a “c,” nicely making “The Five C’s of Trust.” Whether or not we trust someone or something is directly related to the presence of these five elements. If they are present, we will trust, and if they are not, we will instinctively not trust. The five are: Character; Competency; Commitment; Consistency; and Cohesion. “Character” is the sum total of our moral and ethical qualities. A person of dubious character cannot be trusted, because they will without notice fail to keep their word or somehow turn against us. The Greco-Roman gods are a good example. They were selfish, capricious, and often just plain evil. They could not be trusted to being loving and helpful. “Competency” speaks for itself when it comes to trust. If we know a person cannot do for us what we need done because they are simply not capable, then we cannot make ourselves trust them; our minds just will not trust. We can take a risk and hope; but we cannot “trust.” “Commitment” is a person’s dedication to something, and especially to do what they say. We do not trust people who we know have no commitment to their work or words. They could change their mind and leave us in a very bad state. “Consistency” is needed to make competency and commitment trustworthy. A person might be competent and also committed to something, but if we know the person may be inconsistent for some reason, we cannot trust him. Lastly, “cohesion” is the part of trustworthiness that puts people on the same team, or working together. A person might have character and be competent, committed, and consistent, but if he or she works for a rival company, plays for a rival team, or is dedicated to a different or rival cause, then we cannot trust that person. Once we understand how trust works, we can see that God meets all the requirements of trust, and if we enter into a relationship with Him, we will trust Him more and more over time. In fact, once we understand how trust works, we can see how people get deceived into trusting something they should not trust. A lying salesman might seem to be trustworthy, but in reality not have good character, or be consistent. Or he may only feign cohesion but really be after his commission, not a good result for us.

There is one caveat about trusting God. If we have wrong beliefs about God, then we will not trust Him. If for example, we think that God causes cancer, car wrecks, or hurricanes that kill untold innocent people, then he is acting like the Greek gods and we will not trust Him. We might try to love Him, but in our hearts we will not trust Him. Thus, a very important part of our trusting God is having right doctrine.

3:2. “made” (See Rotherham; Lenski).

“in all his house.” Moses was faithful in all of God’s house. The “his” refers to God.

3:7. Quoted from Ps. 95:7

“if you hear his voice.” The verb “hear” is second person, plural, subjunctive. It may be that God will not speak to us and therefore we will not hear His voice. But if He does speak to us, then we should not harden our hearts as the Israelites did in the desert.

3:8. Quoted from Ps. 95:8.

3:9. Quoted from Ps. 95:9, 10. The NT breaks the verse differently than the OT.

3:10. Quoted from Ps. 95:10.

3:11. Quoted from Ps. 95:11.

3:15. Quoted from Ps. 95:7, 8.

3:16. There is a question about whether or not the text should read “*was it* not all” as if all did rebel, or “not all” as if all did not. But the meaning clearly seems to be as we have it (Cp. Lenski). “But” is *alla* of emphasis.

4:3. Quoted from Ps. 95:11.

4:4. Quoted from Gen. 2:2.

4:5. Quoted from Ps. 95:11.

4:7. Quoted from Ps. 95:7, 8.

“after so long a time.” David wrote that the people of God should not “harden their hearts” as they did at Meribah and Massah.

4:12. “considerations and intentions.” The mind “considers” then it forms a conclusion.

4:16. “open and honest speech.” The Greek word is *parrhesia* (#3954 παρρησία).

Although some translations, including the KJV, have “boldly” or “boldness,” in this context, which is a person coming before a powerful ruler, the English word “boldness” gives the wrong impression. *Parrhesia* was used of the Greeks in the marketplace who were called upon to speak about political issues with complete openness. It was to speak one’s mind, or say what one will, so perhaps “straightforwardness,” “candor,” “openness,” or “frankness” would be good translations (Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*). As it can be imagined, being totally open and honest about one’s ideas and feelings to a ruler was quite rare in the ancient world. It could get one in serious trouble (note what happened to John the Baptist when he confronted Herod). No one would speak with *parrhesia* (openness and honesty) about Jesus because they were afraid of the Jewish rulers (John 7:13). Because complete openness of speech required confidence and even boldness, it can be translated that way also, and is in other verses. However, to translate it “boldness” here misses the point. The verse is not saying to be “bold” before God, as if we could swagger into His throne room and make demands on Him based upon our “rights.” Rather it is saying that we can be completely honest with Him, and lay our hearts out before Him knowing that we will find mercy and grace to help us. Because in certain contexts speaking openly required great boldness, “boldness” can be a good translation of *parrhesia* (cp. Acts 4:13).

5:5. Quoted from Ps. 2:7.

5:6. Quoted from Ps. 110:4.

5:7. “because of.” The Greek preposition *apo* (#575 ἀπο), which has a number of possible definitions, but the best fit in this context is to indicate a cause or means (BDAG). Why was Jesus heard? It was due to the way he had lived his life in total submission to God. When someone lives in a way that is totally honorable to God, God hears that person. That is why Scripture says God gives grace to the humble but sets His face against the proud (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). Some scholars assert that he was not heard “because of” his reverent submission, but “from” it. That would make the verse say that Jesus was praying in a state of reverent submission, and not like the submission with God’s hearing him. That would make the verse the equivalent of, “and he was heard from his posture of godly submission, but that does not seem to be what the verse is saying. The fact that Jesus had, and always had, a posture of godly submission to the Father is not debated.

“reverent submission.” The Greek word is *eulabeia* (#2124 εὐλαβεία) and it is used only twice in the New Testament, both times in Hebrews (cp. 12:28). There has been much discussion among theologians as to what the word means. Generally in the

NT the Greek word *phobos* (which occurs almost 50 times, and is the origin of the English word “phobia”) is translated “fear,” and thus to use the word “fear” here when it is unnecessary seems to be potentially confusing. Wuest (Word Pictures in the NT) gets the sense of *eulabeia* correct when he says, “The picture in the word [*eulabeia*] is that of a cautious taking hold of and a careful and respectful handling.” F. F. Bruce notes, “...the consistent meaning is reverence toward God,” and while he notes the translation “godly fear,” he also notes the translation of the NEB, “humble submission” (Bruce: New International Commentary: Hebrews, pp. 101, 102). “Godly fear” is a fine translation if one realizes the semantic range of “fear” and that in this context it refers to respect and reverence, not “fear” in the modern sense, and it is precisely because of the modern sense, and possible confusion with *phobos*, that we have avoided that translation.

5:8. This sentence is the figure of speech *parembole*, a type of parenthesis, which is complete in itself (Cp. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*). The context flows perfectly without the *parembole*, but it adds to the context.

5:11. “about this.” The Greek phrase *peri hou* can be masculine (“about him”) or neuter (“about this,” “about which”). In this case, neuter carries the day because the discussion is about the comparison between Christ and Melchizedek, not only about Melchizedek the person. These Jews, who once were considering a Messiah, had become dull, and so the relation between Melchizedek and Christ would be hard to explain or expound.

5:12. “*kai*” = indeed (Brown, Comfort, *Interlinear*);

“**obligated.**” The Greek is *opheilo* (#3784 ὀφείλω), and it has two major meanings, to be indebted to someone in a financial sense; or to be under obligation to meet certain social or moral expectations (BDAG). Mankind has a moral obligation to God to use his talents to further the kingdom. In this case, the hearers had heard long enough to be teachers of the subject, but had stayed so long in disbelief, doubt and hesitation that they needed someone to teach them again.

The beginning of the sayings of God would be the OT. These Jews needed a proper teaching on the first principles of what God has said, beginning in the OT.

“**Indeed.**” We feel that the *kai* is emphatic, making the same point that it made in the opening of the verse. The RSV and NRSV have the sense, but attain it by ignoring the *kai* altogether.

6:1. “Fundamentals.” Technically, “beginnings,” as per 5:12, but since the beginnings of Christ might seem like his conception and birth instead of the beginning principles, we have gone with “fundamentals.”

6:8. Land that produces thorns and thistles was burned so the weeds would have less chance of reproducing.

6:14. Quoted from Gen. 22:17.

6:16. This is a difficult verse to translate because of the various phrases in the Greek that can be placed in different positions. This accounts for the differences in the English translations, which all seem to say the same thing in slightly different ways. A strictly literal rendition of the Greek is so awkward that it is hard to understand. The point of the verse is that people swear by things greater than themselves, and when an oath is given for confirmation, (such as “I swear by God”) that brings an end to the dispute. The Greek, not in the order of the Greek text, could be structured as follows:

καὶ αὐτοῖς ὁ ὄρκος εἰς βεβαίωσιν πέρας πάσης ἀντιλογίας
and for them the oath [*given*] for confirmation [*is*] an end of every dispute

6:17. “more convincingly.” The Greek is more literally, “more abundantly,” but in the context of convincing people of His intentions, “more convincingly” is a good translation (cp. ESV; Sterns, *Complete Jewish Bible*).

“**he guaranteed it.**” The Greek word is *mesiteuo* (#3315 μεσιτεύω), and means to act as a mediator, or peacemaker, or to guarantee (BDAG).

6:18. “two unchangeable things.” The promise, and then the oath that confirmed the promise.

This verse has been translated many different ways, in part due to the large number of phrases that can be moved into different positions in the verse. We feel that the way the Greek text has the phrases gives us significant insight into what God is trying to tell us. One of the major differences in the translations revolves around the verb “to flee” (often translated “who have fled”) and how it relates to the phrase about the hope. Compare the ESV, “we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope,” with the NASB, “we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.” The NASB and similar versions have us fleeing for refuge in the hope, while the ESV has us fleeing for refuge, but leave open the questions, “Flee from what,” and “what is the refuge?” We feel that these questions are answered in the context if the verse is translated in the natural word order of the Greek text, as the NASB and REV has done. We flee for refuge (which can also be translated, “found refuge,” (Lenski; BDAG lexicon) in our hope.

The chapter has been speaking of the destruction of the wicked, and the hope of the righteous (cp. vs. 8, 11). But the hope with its promises (v. 12; which is the hope in its fullness, including rewards for the faithful) is not always easy to maintain, especially in the light of the earthly persecution we endure. We must have faith and longsuffering (v. 12) to firmly hold it. Therefore it helps to know that the hope is not a “maybe,” but rather a sure thing, so sure, in fact, that God swore to it by not one, but two “unchangeable” things. And why did God swear by those things? “In order that...we may have strong encouragement.” The sad truth is that many who at one time in their life find refuge in our wonderful future hope, lose their confidence in it and abandon it, even sometimes returning to hopelessness. But we have no need to abandon our hope, no matter how difficult our lives are, because it is sure; after all, God guaranteed its coming with two unchangeable, or immutable, things.

6:19. “extending.” The Greek word is *eiserchomai* (#1525 εἰσέρχομαι), which is more properly “entering,” and is usually used with people or animals entering someplace. However, occasionally, as here, it refers to an object entering someplace, and in this case, that “entering” is by virtue of the anchors “extending” all the way to behind the veil of the holy of holies in the Tabernacle or Temple. In the ocean, an anchor is “sure and steadfast” if it firmly grips the bottom, and our anchor and hope are sure and steadfast because it grips the work of God that is even in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. It is the anchor (the hope) that extends, see Lenski.

7:3. “for all time.” The Greek is *dienekes* (#1336 διηνεκής), meaning “uninterrupted,” “continually.” The word occurs four times, only in Hebrews (7:3; 10:1, 12, and 14).

7:8. “in the one case...in the other case” The Greek *hode* (#5602 ὧδε) is an adverb, which usually means “here” “a position or point that is relatively near, *here*; and also, “a reference to a present event, object, or circumstance; in this case, at this point, on this occasion, under these circumstances” (BDAG).

7:15. “in the same way as Melchizedek.” This seems clearly to be the meaning of the Greek in this verse. See BDAG lexicon. “Likeness” is more literal, but misses the point here. Jesus’ priesthood was conferred by God “in the same way as” Melchizedek’s was.

7:17. Quoted from Ps. 110:4.

7:21. Quoted from Ps. 110:4.

7:22. “covenant.” The Greek word is *diatheke* (#1242 διαθήκη). This word was used in the Septuagint over 250 times as the translation of the Hebrew word *berith*, covenant. A covenant was usually an agreement between two or more parties, and the Greek word can have that meaning (cp. Kittel; *Theological Dictionary*). There are theologians who say that a covenant with God was one sided, and that is why *diatheke*, which was most often understood to be the will of one person (such as a last will and testament) was used to translate *berith*. However, although there are one-sided covenants, that was the exception, not the rule. In fact, the “Old Covenant” was clearly an agreement between God and the people (Exod. 24:5-8), with the people agreeing to obey God and follow His commands. The Greek word *diatheke* was translated as *testamentum* in the Latin Versions, and our English word “testament” comes from that Latin root.

7:25. “for all time he is able to save.” The versions are split over the translation of the word *panteles* (#3838 παντελής), whether it means here save “completely,” “to the uttermost” (cp. ESV; NIV; NET; KJV; ASV) or save “for all time,” “always” (cp. NASB; NRSV; HCSB; NAB). As usual, the context should be our guide, and in this case the context favors the understanding that Christ is able to save *for all time*. Verses 23-24 lay a the problem with the old priesthood; namely, that the former priests were prevented from continuing in their office because they died. This is contrasted with Christ who holds his office permanently, and so he, unlike the former priests, can save us for all time.

8:5. Quoted from Exod. 25:40.

“divinely warned.” From *chrematizo* (#5537 χρηματίζω). The word has the connotations of *divine instruction* and/or *warning*. The context makes it clear that here warning is the stronger meaning—and, interestingly, in all other instances of the word in the book of Hebrews (11:7, 12:25). For more on this word, see note on “divinely instructed” in Matthew 2:12.

8:8-12. Quoted from Jer. 31:31-34.

8:8. “**Look!**” The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

8:13. Quoted from Jer. 31:31

9:8. “the Holy Spirit,” literally, “the Spirit, the Holy *one*...” This refers to God, who was the one who established the Tabernacle and its rituals.

The way into the Holy Place. Literally, “the way [road] of the Holy Place,” a genitive of relation. The High Priest would take a path (not a specific path, but the path he would walk” through the Tabernacle court, through the first curtain and into the Holy Place, through the second curtain and into the Holy of Holies (or Most Holy Place; Exod. 26:33, 34) where the ark of the covenant was kept. The “road of the Holy Place” was not revealed to those standing outside the Tabernacle. What went on behind the curtain was not clear to them.

9:14. “by *the* Age-abiding spirit.” This is a reference to God’s gift of holy spirit, which has been helping people since Genesis, age after age. The “the” is latent in the preposition *dia* “by,” (see commentary on Matt. 1:18). The spirit of Yahweh helped

Moses and the leaders of Israel (Num. 11:17). It helped the Judges of Israel walk with God in power (Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29); it helped David rule (1 Sam. 16:13). Jesus told the apostles that the spirit would guide them (John 16:13). Jesus himself needed the spirit of God, and received it at his baptism, when it came in the form of a dove. He walked in the guidance and power of that spirit, and so it was that by that spirit he was able to offer himself as a lamb without blemish.

“without blemish.” See note on Ephesians 1:4.

9:20. Quoted from Exod. 24:8.

10:5-7. Quoted from Ps. 40:6-8.

10:7. “Look!” The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

10:8. Quoted from Ps. 40:6

10:9. Quoted from Ps. 40:7, 8.

“Look!” The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!”).

10:10. “By that will.” By the same will of God of verse 9 that had Christ offered for a sacrifice, we have been sanctified.

10:16, 17. Quoted from Jer. 31:33, 34

10:20. “newly made.” The Greek is *prospatos* (#4372 πρόσφατος), and originally meant “freshly killed.” By the time of the New Testament it had the everyday meaning of “newly made.” However, given the context of this section of Hebrews, the choice of *prospatos* should not be missed. The way into the presence of God was indeed freshly made. Furthermore, it was because Jesus was “freshly killed.” It needs to be pointed out that “newly made” is not in contrast to an old way that had been around awhile. Before Jesus’ death made entrance to God available for everyone (symbolized by the tearing of the Temple veil which separated God from the people), people did not have open access to God. The overtones of the death of Christ are very much in the verse, because Jesus Christ both died (was freshly killed) and had risen from the dead in order to make the way to God available.

10:21. “great priest.” *Great* is from *megas* (#3173 μέγας), which does not mean “great” in the sense of *wonderful*, or “doing a good job,” rather, it refers to “being relatively superior in importance.” F. F. Bruce (*New International Commentary*) notes that this is the “commonest Hebrew title for the High Priest.” Thus some versions render the phrase, “great high priest” (cp. HCSB), or “high priest” (KJV; NJB).

10:22. This is a clear reference to what was required of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement in order for him to enter into the Holy of Holies. He had to have his body washed with water (Lev. 16:4, 24), and then he sprinkled the atonement cover and in front of the atonement cover (Lev. 16:14, 15) and thus made atonement for himself and all Israel (Lev. 16:17).

10:24. “provoke.” The Greek is *paroxusmos* (#3948 παροξυσμός) and it has three distinct definitions: 1. A rousing to activity, stirring up, provoking. 2. A state of irritation expressed in argument, sharp disagreement. 3. A severe fit of a disease, attack of fever, esp. at its high point: convulsion (BDAG). Here, in Hebrews 10:24 it means to stir up to action, while in Acts 15:39. it means a sharp disagreement (see commentary on Acts 15:39).

10:25 It is not completely clear why the author of Hebrews used *episunagōgē* (#1997 □πισυναγωγ□) in this verse. Historically scholars have brought up two major reasons. First and most likely, the noun *sunagoge* is used in the Bible many times for Jewish meetings, or the place the Jews met, i.e., the synagogue. At the time Hebrews was written, there would have still been many Christians going to synagogue services, and so commanding people not to forsake the *sunagoge*, might be misinterpreted and taken to mean that God was commanding Jewish Christians (to whom Hebrews was at least in part addressed) to go to synagogues. By saying *episunagoge* a distinction is made between Jewish meetings and Christian ones. Other commentators point out that the prefix *epi* would emphasize that there was a place to meet, in contrast to simply "hanging out" wherever people happened to see each other and calling that a Christian meeting.

10:30. Quoted from Deut. 32:35, 36.

10:37. This verse is quoted from Habakkuk 2:3.

“(How little! How little!)” This is the figure of speech *interjectio* (interjection), which is a form of parenthesis in which an exclamation, whose sense is dependant upon the context, is thrown into the sentence. It is also the figure *epizeuxis* (duplication), a repetition of the same word in the same sense for emphasis. The Greek text reads *micron hoson hoson*, which would literally be translated, “a little, how very! How very!” We get our English “micron” from the Greek *micron* (little). Bullinger translates *hoson hoson* as “How little, how little,” picking up “little” as part of the meaning of the word in this context (Figures, p. 198). Rotherham does something similar and translates the verse, “For yet a little while, how short! How short! The Coming One will be here....” The point should be well taken. To those who are suffering trials in life, Jesus seems to be in heaven for a very long time, but compared to the eternity we will spend with him, our suffering, and his not coming yet, is “How little! How little!”

“the coming one will come.” This is the figure of speech *polyptoton* (many inflections. Bullinger; *Figures*).

10:38. Quoted from Habakkuk 2:4.

11:2. The great men and women of faith were commended by God in His Word, by others, and also their deeds were recorded in the books of heaven.

11:5. “Moved” = “to convey from one place to another, *put in another place, transfer*” (BDAG). Referring to Gen 5:24.

11:7. “divinely warned.” See note on Hebrews 8:5.

11:12. Quoted from Gen. 22:17.

11:17. “tested.” See Matthew 4:1 note on “tempted.”

11:18. Quoted from Gen 21:12.

11:19. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from amongst the dead.”

11:21. “each of the sons of Joseph.” Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, and the record is in Genesis 48. He adopted them as his own, (Gen. 48:5), which is why the two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, were reckoned among the 12 tribes of Israel.

“bowed in worship.” See note on Matthew 2:2.

“over the top of his staff.” A reference to Gen. 47:31. The word *proskuneō* can mean to prostrate oneself on the ground, but that would have been too difficult for Jacob at his age and physical condition, so he bowed while leaning over his staff. Some

versions, such as the NASB, supply “leaning,” (“*leaning* upon his staff”) and that was what Jacob was doing, but it does not have to be supplied for the verse to make sense.

The book of Hebrews clears up a problem for us. The Hebrew text of Genesis 47:31, as it is currently pointed, says that Jacob leaned on his “bed,” but the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament done about 250 BC and abbreviated LXX) says “staff.” Since the unpointed Hebrew text can read “staff” if pointed differently, and the LXX reads “staff,” and the NT clearly reads “staff,” that is apparently the true record. **11:23.** “a well-pleasing child *to God*.” This is referring to the record in Exodus 2. The word “well-pleasing” is from *asteios* (#791 ἀστειός), which in the New Testament occurs only here and in Acts 7:20. In the Septuagint it has the connotation of physical beauty and charm. The words “to God” are added from the wording in Acts 7:20. It is not that they saw their child was good looking—what parent wouldn’t think that?—or worse, that God cared about how “well bred” (BDAG) Moses was. Rather, the connotation is that the child was something special. As the NIV captures with their translation: “they saw he was no ordinary child.”

11:39. “having been commended.” The Greek is *martureō* (#3140 μαρτυρέω), and it is an aorist passive participle. As an active verb, *martureō* means, to bear witness to, or to be a witness. However, in the passive voice it means that someone bears witness of you. Also, the word often has the connotation of a good witness, or good testimony, as it does here. The reference is to the record of people’s lives that is being kept in heaven, and these people have a good report that has been entered into God’s books. This is a good example of why the reader has to have a wide scope of the teachings of Scripture and the biblical culture to clearly understand what the verse is speaking about. One scholar loosely translated the Greek word in this context as “having had their names entered on the record” (F.F. Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews*).

12:1. “easily entangles.” The Greek is *euperistatos* (#2139 εὐπερίστατος). It only occurs here, and Robertson (Word Pictures) notes that there are probably a dozen ways to translate it. Here we have a word that only occurs one time and can be translated many different ways. Note the variations in translation: “clings so closely” (ESV); “so easily beset” (KJV); “so easily entangles” (NASB); “so prone to be ensnared” (God’s New Covenant); “easily hampering” (Lensiki); “the sin which controls (us) so tightly” (Louw Nida Lexicon); “so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us” (Amplified). The context of the verse is that of a runner who needs to set aside everything that would slow him down. Thus he sets aside every weight. He also sets aside sin, which like the long robes that people wore, were taken off by the Greco-Roman runners. If left on, the robes would readily (even cleverly) cling to the runner and surround and entangle them, hindering them. This is exactly what sin does in the life of a believer. In this case, one could be tempted to conflate the translation as the Amplified Version does, but we have felt it best to go with “easily entangles.”

“let us also run.” Hebrews 12:1 begins with an initial *kai umeis* (“and us” or “us also”) that connects the modern day believers to the great cloud of witnesses mentioned in chapter eleven. The *kai umeis* goes with the verb of the sentence, let us also run, and not with the participles “having” witnesses or “throwing” off sin. The point is, since these great men and women of faith persevered even though they have not yet received the promises (11:39), *let us also* run with perseverance to the finish line where we will be

“made perfect” together (11:40). The point is not “we also have a great cloud of witnesses” (as though the saints in chapter eleven had great witnesses too), nor is it “let us also throw off sin” (as though the context of chapter eleven was about how the saints threw off sin, so we should too). Rather, the author is urging us also to run with perseverance as these great witnesses ran. Surprisingly, most of our versions get this wrong. The ESV, NASB, NRSV, NJB, and ASV make the latter mistake, and the KJV and HCSB make the former.

12:2. “finisher” (see Lenski); “the faith” (Greek text and see Lenski); “enduring” because of the similar “endurance” in verse 1.

12:5, 6. Quoted from Prov. 3:11, 12.

12:15. “exercising oversight, lest anyone is dropping away.” (Cp. Wuest; Lenski).

“be defiled.” The subjunctive is covered by the “lest.”

12:20. Quoted from Exod. 19:12, 13.

12:21. Quoted from Deut. 9:19.

12:24. Although the blood of Abel’s sacrifice still speaks to us today (Heb. 11:4) is it nothing compared to Jesus’ blood.

“**sprinkled blood.**” This is the figure of speech *Antimereia* (Bullinger, *Figures*). The Greek reads, “blood of sprinkling” moving the adjective into a nominative position for emphasis.

12:25. “divinely warned.” See note on Hebrews 8:5.

12:26. Quoted from Haggai 2:6.

12:28. “be grateful.” One of the times that grace is used of gratefulness or thankfulness (Vincent’s *Word Studies*).

“**reverent submission.**” This word is only used twice in the NT, here and Hebrews 5:7. See the note there.

13:1. “brotherly affection.” The Greek is *philadelphia* (#5360 φιλαδελφία), a compound Greek word made up of *philos* (a strong liking, a friendship; see note on John 21:15) and *adelphos* (#80 ἀδελφός), which means “brother.” It is the strong bond of friendship that exists between brothers.

13:5. Quoted from Deut. 31:6.

13:6. Quoted from Ps. 118:6.

13:9. “for it is good that the heart be established by grace, not by *ceremonial* foods.” The ritual sacrifices and ritual meals of the Law caused some people to set and establish their heart before God by whether or not they did all the sacrifices correctly, and not due to the love, mercy and grace in their lives. It is easy to get caught up in religious practices and miss the real heart of God.

13:20. “out from among the dead *ones*.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “up out from among the dead.”

“**in connection with.**” This verse is saying that when God led Christ out from among the dead, he did it in connection, or association, with the blood of the eternal covenant. The dative phrase *en haimati* (“in/with the blood”) cannot be understood as instrumental or means, which would make God using the blood as the means to raise up the Son. (Cp. Lenski).