



1. *Best is Better than Good: Christology and Progressive Revelation in Hebrews*

Excelente es mejor que bueno: cristología y revelación progresiva en Hebreos

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Abstract

By means of a literary and rhetoric strategy of upgrading-through-downgrading, the author of Hebrews called the attention of its original addressees to the fact that what they felt prone to go back to as God's most dependable self-disclosure (the temple, the priesthood, the Sinai covenant, etcetera) had in fact Jesus Christ as its very foundation, sub-stance and unsurmountable apex. All those former revelatory phases or stages were only segments of a seamless continuum. Staring at the stem of God's revelatory tree, they were in danger of missing the nurturing root and the fruit-bearing top. The pre-incarnate Son had been feeding endlessly and from the very onset every inch of the tree as its divine Root, while the top was now offering dire and free access to the seasoned fruit of salvation in and through the person and ministry of Jesus Christ both on earth at first and in heaven now.

Keywords

Hebrews — Christology — Revelation — Upgrading — Downgrading

Resumen

Mediante una estrategia literaria y retórica consistente en destacar el valor superior de algo contrastándolo con otro elemento comparativamente inferior, el autor de Hebreos llama la atención de sus destinatarios originales al hecho de que las revelaciones mediadas que Dios hizo de sí mismo en el pasado y que aparentemente les parecían más confiables (el santuario/templo, el sacerdocio levítico, el pacto del Sinaí, etc.) tenían en realidad a Jesucristo mismo como fundamento, sustancia y clímax revelacional. Todas aquellas fases previas no eran insuperables ni fines en sí mismos, sino apenas segmentos de un todo continuo, progresivo e indivisible. Absortos como estaban en el tronco de la auto-revelación divina precedente, corrían el riesgo de perder de vista a quien era el Sustrato nutriente del todo y su razón de ser. El Hijo pre-encarnado había estado alimentando todo el tiempo y desde el mismo comienzo cada partícula del árbol de la revelación divina como su raíz y su esencia misma. La atención de ellos debía ser llamada a la copa que ofrecía acceso directo

y libre al fruto maduro de la salvación en y por medio de la Persona y el ministerio de Jesucristo, primero en la tierra, luego en el cielo.

Palabras claves

Hebreos — Cristología — Revelación — Mejorar — Revaloración por devaluación relativa contrastante

The proposal

This paper has several aims. Firstly, to highlight that besides the prologue, there is further literary and lexical confirmation of divine, progressive self-disclosure with Christ as its foundation, substance and climax as the main theological focus of Hebrews. Second, to show that the rhetorical strategy followed by the author to achieve his goal is not straightforward superseding of the former stages of God's self-revelation (the law, the temple and the priesthood) by Christ. Instead, Hebrews' pen uses a more subtle device that could be termed upgrading-through-downgrading and consisting in highlighting the revelatory superiority of Christ in comparison with all previous stages of God's disclosure. This is not just putting two things one by the other like in plain *synkrisis*, but pressing one down to proportionally make the other go up like in an hydraulic press. Finally, to stress the fact that in Christology and God's progressive self-disclosure along history as the dual theological axes informing and pervading Hebrews, the former is included into and subordinated to the latter as the author's main or primary agenda given the circumstances his addressees seem to have been facing.¹

¹ Unlike John P. Meier, "Structure and theology in Heb 1,1-14", *Biblica* 66 (1985): 33-52, for whom the charting and programmatic prologue is focused and revolves around Christ's nature and work. However, in the light of progressive revelation as the theme pervading the whole document, it seems that the prologue makes even more sense when read not as mainly having to do with Christ's nature (ontology) nor work as such, but with his revelatory work and place within the history of mediated revelation, of which he is certainly the climax. So, we need to see the seven predictions in the prologue in the light of God's superseding self-revelation through and in Christ as the main theme in the document: 1. God's self-revelation in creation; 2. The Son as the agent of creation; 3. Christ behind all the stages of divine self-revelation: a. Through his creation; b. Through his incarnation; c. Through redemption; d. Through his glorification and enthronement, both at the cross as perfect representative and substitute of his fallen creatures and at heaven as their intercessor applying the effectiveness of his perfect

In doing this, I will depend on some presuppositions. First, that the document was originally addressed to a predominantly Jewish-rooted body of believers² reluctant for some reason other than overt persecution to abandon or prone to return to the sources of confidence typical of Judaism,³ namely the temple and its services together with the Levite priesthood as a way of gaining access to God's mercy.⁴ In turn, this would chronologically anchor the document to a period somewhere before the national disaster of AD 70, when the temple and its services ceased to exist.⁵

sacrifice to their salvation and to the vindication of his name questioned in front of the universe by Lucifer before creation (Rev 12). On the protracted meaning of God's salvation in and through Christ both on earth and in heaven, see Michael Kibbe, "Is it finished? when did it start? Hebrews, priesthood, and atonement in biblical, systematic, and historical perspective," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, New Series 65, part 1 (2014): 25-61.

- ² E.g., David W. Perkins, "A call to pilgrimage: the challenge of Hebrews," *The Theological Educator* 32 (1985):69-81; Hughes, *ibid.*, 21, 22. Matthew McAfee, "Covenant and the warnings of Hebrews: the blessing and the curse," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57, n.º 3 (2014): 537-53; J. Julius Scott Jr., "Archegos in the salvation history of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 29 (1986): 47-54. Contrary to Clements, "The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews", 45 (based on two unconvincing and even anachronistic constructs: Uncertainty of the addressees on how to exactly approach the OT literature, and some proto-Marcionist trend contrary to such a scriptural heritage).
- ³ On the internal evidence seemingly favorable to a Jewish background of most if not all the addressees of Hebrews, see for instance 1,1; 2,16; 3,2, 5, 9; 3,7-19; 6,16 (*cf.* Matt 5,33-37); 8,9. Contrary to a scenario of current persecution, lest likely imperial, see Nicholas Elder, "The oratorical and rhetorical function of Hebrews 6:4-12", *Conversations with the Biblical World* 34 (2014): 250-268. Unlike William L. Lane, for whom the original readers felt threatened in Rome by Nero's persecution in AD 64. On this, see his "Hebrews: a sermon in search of a setting", *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 28, n.º 1 (1985): 13-18. In this respect, the wilderness experience as the original context of the OT selection of passages Hebrews quotes and alludes to in its rebuke and warning sections suffices to propose a context of long term journey discouragement and longing to back to the Egypt comfort zone rather than persecution as the prevailing circumstance behind Hebrews. On environmental hostility prior to AD 70, both Jewish in and out of Palestine, and pagan (often triggered by local Judaism) in the Diaspora as more in tune with the passages on suffering in Hebrews, *cf.* the whole of Acts, 1 Thessalonians 2, and even 1 Peter.
- ⁴ See Scott, "Archegos", 47, 48. This would make even more sense if the public was close to an already extant temple; namely, in Palestine. Unlike Diaspora Judaism and its trend to spiritualize worship, mostly after AD 70; *cf.* on this Clements, "The use of the Old Testament in Hebrews", 43 note 16.
- ⁵ Scott, "Archegos", 48. Unlike Clements, "The use of the Old Testament in Hebrews", 43. For some inner hints that seem to favor a pre AD 70 date for the document, see Heb 5,1-4; 7,5, 6, 8, 9, 28;

First Things First (and Last)

There is considerable scholarly agreement on several things about the prologue or exordium of Hebrews. Its exquisitely knitted and complex literary structure as inseparable from a dense Christological agenda is surely one of them.⁶ The expansive and explicative function of verses 5 through 15 regarding the first four verses is another.⁷ Its importance in light of its location at the beginning of the document as a structuring device setting the tone for the whole has also been noted.⁸

With the clue to the originally intended meaning of New Testament documents usually at the onset, Hebrews 1,1-3 seems to be a preview of the mainly Christological-revelatory agenda framing the paraenetic content scattered throughout the letter:⁹ “Having spoken many times and in many ways to the forefathers through the prophets, at the end of

8,3, 4, 5; 9,6-7, 9, 10, 13, 22, 25; 10,1-3, 4, 8,11, 28; 13,9-11. On a veiled critique of the irregularities in the appointment of the high priesthood under Rome in Heb. 8:4, see Bryan Dyer, “One does not presume to take this honor’: the development of the high priestly appointment and its significance for Hebrews 5:4”, *Conversations With the Biblical World* 33 (2013): 125-146.

⁶ E.g., Victor Sung Yul Rhee, “The role of chiasm for understanding christology in Hebrews 1:1-14”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 131, n.º 2 (2012): 341-362; Perkins, “A call to pilgrimage”, 71. On Hebrews as “a Christological treatise”, see Philip E. Hughes, “The christology of Hebrews”, *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 28, n.º 1 (1985):19-27; John P. Meier, “Structure and theology in Heb 1,1-14”, *Biblica* 66 (1985):168. On Christology as thematically subordinated to and dependent on progressive revelation as the main theme in the author’s agenda, see note 1.

⁷ Rhee, “The role of chiasm”; Meier, “Structure and theology in Heb 1,1-14”, 169.

⁸ Perkins, “A call to pilgrimage”, 72; Coetsee, *ibid*, 2; James W. Thompson, “Argument and Persuasion in the Epistle to the Hebrews”, *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 39, n.º 4 (2012): 364, 365.

⁹ The stylized repetition of the prologue at the end of the document (12:1-3) seems to confirm the proleptic and programmatic role of the prologue as a chart for the whole document. On Hebrews’ genre as a compound of homily and paraenetic pastoral letter, see Gabriel M. Cevalco, “Una aproximación al género literario de Hebreos en comparación con los recursos literarios de la epistolografía contemporánea” (Essay for the degree Master of Theology, Universidad Adventista del Plata, Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina, 2015). On paraenesis over thesis and on argumentation serving exhortation, see William L. Lane. *Hebrews 1-8*. Word Biblical Commentary 47A (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991), c; Perkins, “A call to pilgrimage”.

these days¹⁰ he spoke to us by the Son, whom he appointed as heir of everything, and by whom he made the ages”.¹¹

Besides the beginning, the end of the New Testament writings usually resumes and sums up the main agenda of the authors thus keeping the readers focused on the main target all the way to the end. In this respect, Hebrews 12,1-3, right before the pastoral compact at the end of the letter, sounds as an echo of the prologue. This is also witnessed to some degree in other parts of the message as 9,23.26; 10,1.9; 11,1-3; 12,1-3.27 and even 13,8 to some degree.

Best is Better than Good

It is still fresh in my mind that enigmatic phrase the president of a conference addressed to us, a group of newcomers to ministry, years ago: “Best is better than good”. Later on, I got the point of the cryptic maxim: Excellence in performance is preferable to what is just a well done job (even though “better” does not turn “good” into something “bad” or “wrong”).

The New Testament attests here and there a typology related concept known as “replacement theology”. Jesus is the true temple (John 2,18-22;

¹⁰ On the phrase ἐπὶ ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν as a designation of the eschatological “end of days” in the Old Testament, see LXX Num 24,14; Jer 23,20; 25:19; Ezq 38,16; Dan 2,28; 10:14; Acts 3,5; Mic 4,1.

¹¹ My translation. The object or complement of the verb ποιέω in 1,2 is the plural τοὺς αἰῶνας (lit. the times, eras or ages; thus the New Jerusalem Bible [ages], Young’s Literal Translation [ages] and Serafin de Ausejo’s Spanish version [los tiempos]; cf. The English Bible in Basic English [generations]), making room here for a possible allusion to revelatory stages former to that of Christ himself, in agreement with the main argument of the document (cf. Mt. 5,17; Luke 2,;25-27, 32; John 5,39; Rom 10,4; 1 Pet 1,10-12); unlike Rhee, “The role of chiasm”, 349. This use of αἰῶν in Hebrews is also attested in 6,5; 9,26; cf. Lc. 1,70, 72, 73; Acts 3,21; 15,18; Aph 2,7; 3,9,11; Col 1,26, 27. See perhaps the same idea behind the expression τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου in Gal 4,4. On the anarthrous use of ἐν νῶϊ in 1,2 as implicitly emphasizing the distinctive divine quality of Jesus Christ as the ultimate spokesperson of God’s revelation, see Rhee, “The role of chiasm”, 344-345; Moises Silva, “Perfection and Eschatology in Hebrews”, *Westminster Theological Journal* 39, n.º 1 (1976): 63; Ronald E. Clements, “The use of the Old Testament in Hebrews”, *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 28, n.º 1 (1985):38”; Coetsee, *ibid.*, 2. Another option is that νῶϊς as a reference to Christ is a monadic, self-defined noun. On the Semitic concept of sonship as sharing in nature, cf. John 5,17-18.

Rev 21,22) as well as the Lamb who takes away sin (John 1,29; Rev 1,5; 5,6.9.12). He is also the true manna (John 6,48-58), the light and water behind the Feast of the tabernacles (John 4,10-14; 7,37-38; 1 Cor 10,4), the real curtain giving sinners straight and full access to God's mercy when dying on the cross (Matt 27,51; Luke 23,45; cf. Heb 10,20). Moreover, he is the heavenly High Priest (1 Tim 2,5; Rev 1,6.12-13; 2,1.17; 3,12; 5,10), the much expected prophet like Moses (Deut 18,18-19; Matt 21,11; Luke 7,16; 24,19; John 4,25-26; 6,14; 7,40), the Moses capable of freeing people from the slavery of sin (Luke 9,31; the word ἔξοδος is used in the original), of making them cross the Red Sea of death (Rom 10,6),¹² of bringing the law straight from heaven (John 3,10-13; Rom 10,6), of healing the deadly wound of the Serpent (John 3,14-15; 12,32), etcetera.

However, the book of Hebrews seems to go another way or at least a step further in the same direction when it emphasizes the antitypical superseding of the former revelatory shades not just by replacing them with the later reality.¹³ The author does this not by a straight substitution, but by pressing down or downgrading, so to say, the manifold layers of God's former self-revelation, good in themselves, in comparison with Christ as the unsurmountable climax uppermost all. This strategy based on analogy and dissociative comparison but going beyond plain *synkrisis* somehow resembles the rabbinical logic of the holy things defiling even what is good or pure in itself by mere contact, or by mere comparison in this case.¹⁴

¹² See Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: a Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 336, 337.

¹³ On this superseding in terms of a sequence of historical faith-related earthly types anticipating also historical and earthly antitypes, unlike the two levels of reality in Platonic dualism, see George W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, 2nd ed. The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), 25; unlike Clements, "The use of the Old Testament in Hebrews", 43; Thompson, "Argument and persuasion", 368. See also Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, 30 on the Psalms citations in Hebrew in compare to those from the Pentateuch as implying superseding of the unbelieving Exodus generation that failed to achieve the goal by the latter generation of the Psalms and the Prophets focused on the Messianic era.

¹⁴ Cf. Mishna, *Yadayim* 3.5.

Thus, the Christological and progressive revelatory argument of the author of Hebrews goes beyond what the rest of the New Testament has us used to, namely, the typological replacement of the revelatory shadows, more or less distorted in first century Judaism, for the reality in the person, the message and the ministry of Jesus Christ.¹⁵ Interestingly, this kind of replacement or superseding is not of a polemic tone as in Jesus's dialogues with the leaders of Palestinian Judaism in the gospels, but of an irenic or purely theological kind instead.¹⁶ The different public addressed in each case (hostile Jewish high ranks in the Gospels, unstable Jewish-rooted Christians in Hebrews), circumstances and authorial agenda surely accounts for the difference in tone.

Downgrading-Upgrading Textual Markers

Where does this downgrading-upgrading strategy by comparison occur in Hebrews? Which are the textual and literary markers of this theological and rhetorical strategy?

Consistent use of some comparative adjectives and adverbs as well as *μὲν... δὲ* clauses, intensifying prefixed prepositions and other particles throughout the document shows a sustained attempt to keep in place a subtle tension between different and former stages in God's progressive self-revelation (good in themselves and better to each other) on the one hand, and Christ as the uppermost phase or climax in such a process on the other.¹⁷

¹⁵ See, for instance, John 1,16-18 (God's grace and truth as revealed in Jesus and taking the place [*χάριτι ἀντὶ χάριτος*] of previous revelation mediated by Moses' Torah; John 2,1-11 (Jesus and the gospel as a latter and better wine/revelation than ritual and ceremonies of Judaism void of their God-intended original messianic meaning); John 6,25-59 (Jesus as the true life-giving manna from heaven). On the Christological prologue of Hebrews vis-à-vis that of John's gospel, see Perkins, "A call to pilgrimage", 71.

¹⁶ Thompson, "Argument and persuasion", 366; unlike Noel Weeks, "Admonition and error in Hebrews", *Westminster Theological Journal* 39, n.º 1 (1976): 72-80. See Clements, "The use of the Old Testament in Hebrews", 38, 39, 45.

¹⁷ On this, see appendixes 1 and 4. On comparison and contrast as stylistic and rhetorical devices to show revelatory superseding in the prologue and other parts of the document, see Coetsee, "The unfolding of God's revelation in Hebrews 1:1-2a.", 5; Thompson, "Argument and persuasion", 365, 366; Timothy W. Seid, "Synkrisis in Hebrews 7: the rhetorical structure and strategy", in

*Jesus is Better than...*¹⁸

The Angels

The first stop in Hebrews upgrading of Jesus through comparative downgrading of some former revelatory stages and icons are the angels (1,5-2,18). Why the angels and why in the first place? They had played a meaningful role as mediators of God's bestowing of the law to Israel through Moses according to Jewish tradition.¹⁹ Moreover, even a cursory reading of the second temple Jewish apocalyptic literature (*e.g.* 1 Enoch, Apocalypse of Abraham, Jubilees), most of it produced in Palestine,²⁰ shows a marked tendency to stress God's transcendence over his material creation, humans included, through the all-arching mediatory (hiper) activity of an army of angels of all ranks, even to the point of some overlapping with the divine.²¹ Perhaps this would account in part for Hebrews felt need of making God nearer to his human creatures in and through the divine-human person (unlike the angels) and ministry, both earthly and heavenly, of Christ as God's final and uppermost revelatory stage in comparison with the former lesser-in-splendor shades distracting the addressees from him.²² The placement of the issue on angels at the very beginning of the downgrading string and of the document as

The rhetorical interpretation of scripture: essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 322-347; Gene R. Smillie, "Contrast or continuity in Hebrews 1,1-2", *New Testament Studies* 51 (2005): 551.

¹⁸ See appendix 2.

¹⁹ Jubilees 1,27, 29; 2,1; LXX Dt 33,2; Acts 7,53; Gal 3,19.

²⁰ On the original Semitic language (Hebrew or Aramaic), and therefore provenance, of most of these documents relevant to NT interpretation, see the introductions to them in James H. Charlesworth ed., *The Old Testament pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic literature and testaments*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1983), vol. 1.

²¹ This stress on divine transcendence is also witnessed in the targums and the LXX, for instance, in their avoidance of anthropomorphisms to depict God and his actions. On 1st century Jewish speculation on angels, see Hughes, "The christology of Hebrews", 21.

²² On a possible Pauline concern on angelology as related to revelation, *cf.* Gal 1,8; see also 2 Cor 11,14; Col 2,18. See also Ronald H. Nash, "The notion of mediator in Alexandrian Judaism and the Epistle to the Hebrews", *Westminster Theological Journal* 40 (1977-1978): 109-112.

well as the amount of material devoted to it seems to say something about its importance for the author and his concern on it.

If such a reading of Hebrews downgrading of an angelic role in God's former self-disclosure is correct, then the Palestinian provenance of the Jewish apocalyptic speculation on angelology together with the rejection of its sources by the surviving non-apocalyptic Judaism in AD 70²³ could have some implications on the question about the location of Hebrews addressees and its date of composition respectively.

Moses

Then, it comes the turn of Moses, Israel's human freedom giver and lawgiver, of being praised as a good trusted steward vis-a-vis with Christ (3,2.6.16; 10,28-29) only to be found lesser in compare to the Builder, Owner, Sustainer and Heir of the house. Moreover, he seems to be subtly downgraded due to his failure in getting the unbelieving wilderness generation into the Land: "For who provoked *Him* when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt *led* by Moses?" (Heb 3,16, New American Standard version).²⁴ The logic here seems to be: As Moses was not capable of making the unbelieving Hebrews to believe and enter the Promised Land, the Mosaic law as a former good stage of God's revelation mediated through Moses is now not only unable to grant them salvation, but is also hindering unbelieving Judaism and hesitant Jewish-Christians to respectively grasp and retain Jesus as the best revelatory stage behind and above the law (*cf.* John 1,16-18). In other words: "Do not abandon the antitype Moses Jesus to put your confidence back in the foreshadowing Moses, lest you end up as your spiritual ancestors and contemporary fellow countrymen. The fact that the former Moses took them out of Egypt did not warrant them to get to

²³ 4 Ezra is a good example of such a rejection or reluctance and discontinuation after AD 70.

²⁴ Note the emphatic position of the name of the leader at the end of the sentence (τίνες γὰρ ἀκούσαντες παρεπίκραναν; ἀλλ' οὐ πάντες οἱ ἐξεληθόντες ἐξ Αἰγύπτου διὰ Μωϋσέως;), thus stressing it as the most meaningful word in the unit.

the destination. He didn't manage to do it. Unlike him, Jesus Christ did, does and will do it."²⁵

Furthermore, in the hall of faith of chapter 11, the fact is perhaps subtly stressed that Moses ("he who draws out" [הַשֵּׁךְ]) had to be drawn out and saved himself being kept out of sight by his parents (v. 23).²⁶

Jesus used the same downgrading strategy on Moses when confronted by the unbelieving multitude after the miraculous feeding:

"They said therefore to Him, 'What then do you do for a sign, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread out of heaven to eat." Jesus therefore said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, *it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven*, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world... I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. . . *Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and [but] they died*" (John 6,30-33.35.49, NAS; italics supplied, the optional translation of καί as adversative in square brackets is mine).

Perhaps Moses portray as God's servant²⁷ over his house-people in 3,5 is not minor and adds also to some degree to the downgrading strategy under discussion.²⁸

Joshua

The third typological prefiguration of Christ being downgraded by comparison is Joshua, the one called to complete the task originally

²⁵ Cf. Weeks, "Admonition and error in Hebrews", 76.

²⁶ On the etymology of the name and of it as a pun or play on words from הַשֵּׁךְ, see Victor P. Hamilton, art. הַשֵּׁךְ in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:529, 530.

²⁷ θεράπων (trusted servant or steward) as quote of Num 12,7 (MT עָנִי קָדַח, exceedingly poor, afflicted, humble or meek). There are several words for servant in Greek depending on the task and position of the person in regard to his/her lord and the lord's property, with δούλος as the most frequent (123x). θεράπων appears only here in the NT and 10 times in the canonic LXX, 4 times designating Moses, once Joshua and twice Job.

²⁸ On the typological use of Moses in compare to Jesus in Heb 11,23-28, see Samuel Wells, "Between Text and Sermon: Hebrews 11,23-28", *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 66, n.º 4 (2012): 437-439.

assigned to Moses, namely to take possession of the Land by displacing its former pagan inhabitants, the enemies of God's people both by military opposition and, like in the story of Balaam and the Moabites, by moral defilement.²⁹

Unlike Joshua, who was not able to give the Israelites rest (κατάπαυσις) from their Canaanite enemies, Christ succeeded in behalf of the first generation of Jewish-rooted believers,³⁰ the ones who, unlike those in the past who died in the wilderness or renounced their identity in Canaan as well as the first century unbelieving Jews³¹ and some hesitant Jewish-rooted Christians addressed in the letter, got out of the camp of Judaism (ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς), like Christ and to him, to bravely share in his πάσχειν (13,12) and ὀνειδισμός (13,13).³²

²⁹ Bryan J. Whitefield's proposal, in the line of the pioneering work of J. Rendel Harris, of priest Joshua in Zechariah 3 as the necessary allusive link to account for the abrupt transition from Heb 2 on Jesus' faithfulness to collective faithlessness in Heb 3, verse 7 in particular, seems unconvincing in light of the overall upgrading-through-downgrading plot of Hebrews, where only paradigmatic characters and institutions of Jewish history and Judaism are selected. The obscure Joshua of Zechariah 3 would surely be out of place here. In this respect, the superseding strategy of the document consists in highlighting the superb exploits of the national heroes only to outshine them in compare to Jesus far more successful performance. In the case of the priest Zechariah there is nothing to commend or outshine about him, but all to the contrary. Moreover, and unlike Abraham, Moses and the Joshua of Numbers, the priest Joshua has no typological pedigree in the New Testament. Finally, the fact that he had to be cleansed from his own sin before being able to intercede for the people would make him just one among the many anonymously counted in Heb 5,1-3; 7,27, 28; 9,7. Unlike Whitefield, "The Three Joshuas of Hebrews 3 and 4." *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 37, 1 (2010): 21-35.

³⁰ Cf. Heb 2,3; 4,3, 10; 10,14; 12,23; cf. John 1,11-13.

³¹ Cf. Heb 4,2 (ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς as a designation of the gospel), 6; cf. Jn 1,9-13; 12,38; Rom 10,16, 17; Gal 3,2, 5; 1 Thes 2,13 (the gospel is called λόγος ἀκοῆς).

³² See also Heb 10,33, 34; 11,26; 35-38; 12,3; 13,6. On this likely background of social pressure perhaps exerted by an hostile Judaism against early Jewish-rooted Christians to bring them back to the synagogue fold, cf. Matt 10,17; 23,34; Mark 8,38; 13,9; Luke 12,11; 21,12; John 9,13-34; 12,42; 16,2; 19,38; Acts 9,1, 2; 22,19; 24,12; 26,11; 1 Thes 2,14-16. On ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς (Heb 13,11, 13) and ἔξω τῆς πόλεως (Heb 13,12) as seeming references to Jerusalem and Palestinian Judaism, cf. Rev 11,8; 18,24 (see Matt 23,34-37). See also the word ἔξοδος as used in Luke 9,31 and Jon Paulien on the leaders of Palestinian Judaism rhetorically turned in the fourth Gospel into a spiritual Egypt and Pharaoh oppressing the new Christian Israel by their violent and active opposition to Jesus and the early church (*John: Jesus gives life to a new generation*, The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier [Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1995], 76); On social pressure from a hostile Jewish environ as a background option, see Raymond Brown, "Pilgrimage in faith: the christian life in Hebrews", *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 28, n.º 1 (1985): 28.

Interestingly, the Sabbath rest of the fourth commandment is mentioned within Joshua's downgrading scheme (4,4.10) as a pending and available *κατάπαυσις* for some while already enjoyed by those who had already accepted Christ as the Joshua able to give them rest from their works (*ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων*). Although the version of the fourth commandment quoted here is that of Exodus 20,8-11, Deuteronomy 5,12-15 could also be behind verse 10, mostly if a Jewish-rooted Christian background somehow in conflict with former Judaism is assumed. If those addressed by Hebrews are Jewish-rooted Christians pressed or prone for some reason to go back to Judaism, then *ἔργον* in verses 8-11 could be here the same theologically loaded word we already know from the Pauline conflict with Jews and Judaizing Christians on the works of [the] law (*τὰ ἔργα νόμου*) as *the* way of salvation.³³ Granted this, only those accepting Christ, the better Moses and Joshua, as atoning Messiah (a better paschal Lamb) and freedom giver would enjoy real, deep and full *rest from their works* (*ἢ κατάπαυσις ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων*), both their former toils to please their Egyptian lords spiritually speaking, when under the yoke of legalism, and the dead deeds of the spiritual Canaanites surrounding them.³⁴

The Priesthood

If there is a revelation stage Hebrews devotes most of its downgrading strategy to, it is surely the Levitical priesthood,³⁵ with close to sixty verses, including the whole of chapter 7, to it.³⁶

³³ According to rabbinic tradition, the Torah was the way, the truth and the life. See Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 4 vols. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1922–1928), 2:357-358, 362, 467, 481-483 on John 14,6 and related verses.

³⁴ Cf. Heb 2,15-16. On assimilation to the pagan context as one of the problems contemplated in Hebrews' warnings, see Jason Whitlark, "The Warning against Idolatry: An Intertextual Examination of Septuagintal Warnings in Hebrews", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 34, 4 (2012): 382-401.

³⁵ On the similarities and differences between Hebrews elaboration on Melchizedek and that of Qumran, see Leandro J. Velardo, "La figura de Melquisedec en Qumrán", *DavarLogos* XVI, 2 (2017):1–19.

³⁶ See the chart.

Besides Christ's sinlessness and a string of virtues sounding like a veiled critic of an extant priesthood by contrast,³⁷ Jesus' two high-priestly features most and most frequently highlighted in Hebrews are surely his direct access to God's heavenly mercy seat³⁸ and his permanent intercession there in behalf of repentant sinners.

Unlike the only human Jewish highest rank priests having access to God's presence only once a year, only for a while and to the risk of their lives in case of a sinful condition unsolved before, the High Priest Jesus had no personal sins to purge in prepare to office, and he accessed the Father in heaven to constantly intercede for his people on earth. Both the quantitatively and qualitatively *oneness* of his atoning sacrifice together with its eternal sufficiency is also noticeably stressed through repetition.³⁹

In Abraham's parenthetical inclusion of 6,13-7,10, the author of Hebrews unequivocally summarizes on the topic:

“And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them [i.e. Melchizedek] collected a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promises. But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. And in this case mortal men [i.e. the priests] receive tithes, but in that case one [Melchizedek] *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?” (7,5-11).

³⁷ *E.g.*, 2,17 (mercy, faithfulness); 3,2 (faithfulness); 4,15 (sympathy with weaknesses); 5,2 (gentleness toward the ignorant and misguided), 8 (obedient, trained in suffering). On Heb 5,4 as a veiled critique of the irregular appointment of the high priesthood under Rome, see Dyer, “One Does Not Presume to Take This Honor”, 125-146.

³⁸ *E.g.*, “No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest” (8,11, NIV).

³⁹ The word occurs 33 times in the NT, only 7 outside Hebrews (17x) and the Pauline longer corpus (9x).

Abraham

In the context of Jesus' superiority as a high priest over the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood and in the likeness of Melchizedek, even Abraham the patriarch (ὁ πατριάρχης, v.4),⁴⁰ the most conspicuous figure in second temple Judaism,⁴¹ is subtly downgraded in comparison with Christ, whose historical prefiguration (Melchizedek) was recognized by the father of faith and the friend of God as higher in rank to himself through tithing and receiving livelihood from him.

The Sinai Covenant

Covenant (διαθήκη)⁴² as such is mentioned for the first time in Hebrews 7,22 against the backdrop of the treaty God celebrated with Israel at Sinai, starting a section roughly ending in 9,20.⁴³ The author says the Lord has a better (κρείττονος; also 8,6) covenant to offer to his people now, at the end of these days (cf. 1,2; 9,9.26). The advantages of the new (καινή) covenant over the former (πρώτος; 9,15) are said to be:

1. 8,6; 9,15-20. The Lamb Jesus Christ as a better split covenantal victim (μεσίτης).⁴⁴

⁴⁰ The honorific title ὁ πατριάρχης is in an emphatic position, at the end of the sentence, the same as Μωϋσῆς in 3:16.

⁴¹ Cf. Matt 3,9 and parallels; Luke 16,19-31; John 8.

⁴² From δια-τίθημι: lit. "to put in between" or "in midst of." Cf. כרת ברית: lit. "to cut a covenant", as a reference to the splitting in two of an animal set between those two making an agreement (kings or heads of tribal clans) and their alternate standing in midst of the split victim while pronouncing a solemn oath of being loyal to each other lest they ended as it. Cf. Gen 15:9, 10, 17, 18; Jer 34:18 (LXX 41,18).

⁴³ Even though the covenant is also mentioned in 10,16.29; 12,24, these are loosely connected to the main covenantal flow ending in 9,20. Moreover, Heb 10,16 is a partial echo of the quotation from Jer 31,31-34 in Heb 8,8-12, while 10,29 and 12,24 are already within the paraenetical core in the last part of the document. Besides, there seems to be a clear-cut thematic transition in 9,21 with the conjunction καί as a literary marker subtly splitting the waters between blood as a mainly covenant related motif (stressing ratification) and blood as a tabernacle linked one (stressing purification).

⁴⁴ The use of μεσίτης (lit. the one in midst or in the middle) with the nuance of "mediator" in LXX Job 9,33 and in half the places where it occurs in the NT (Gal 3:19; 20; 1 Tim 2:5) besides the mediation motif in Hebrews (E.g., 2,2; 12,22) have perhaps inclined the translators and interpreters to read this meaning also in the covenantal material of Hebrews, thus rendering

2. 8,6. A covenant based on greater granted privileges (ἐπαγγελία).⁴⁵

μεσίτης as “mediator” in Heb 8,6; 9,15; 12,24. However, the covenantal context and jargon where it appears, unlike in Job and the other places of the NT, together with its proximity to the covenantal technical term διαθήκη in Hebrews, seem to merit some second thoughts. Besides, the split in the argument made by switching from διαθήκη = covenant (from 7,22 on) to διαθήκη = testament in Heb 9,16-17 in most Bible versions is not only unnecessary and unjustified, but also means an unnatural interruption in the literary, rhetorical and lexical covenantal flow starting in Heb 7,22. Nothing is lost by rendering διαθήκη as covenant in Heb 9,16-17, but something is missing when one switches from covenant to testament there. Unlike Vos on διαθήκη as “testament” only in Heb 9,16-17. See on this his “Epistle of the *Diatheke*”, 181, where he says the translation “covenant” would imply “a tortuous, artificial appeal to symbolic suicide of the covenant-maker.” This misses the fact that the problem of the seeming “suicide” is not solved by rendering διαθήκη as “will” or “testament”, as it is clear even rephrasing Vos’s statement to “a tortuous, artificial appeal to symbolic suicide of the *testament*-maker”, but perhaps and in part by taking the genitive τοῦ διαθεμένου as a reference to the one providing the sacrificial victim for the covenant (a subjective instead of an objective genitive). On a theological ground, the NT in general and Hebrews in particular are consistent on the multiple role of the Deity within the covenant dynamics as its originator, the provider of the victim and the victim itself (E.g., John 1,29; 3,16). In this respect, Jesus death on the cross was seen by himself not as a suicide, but as voluntary surrender in the likeness of that by typological Isaac (John 10,18). On a source ground, the whole section on διαθήκη is built on Jeremiah 31,31-34, where there is no room for any shift from covenant to testament, a socio-cultural disposition foreign on another hand both to the Semitic world of the OT source and the OT-flavored setting Hebrews’ covenant section is embedded in. Finally, like with the parables and the apocalyptic visions, the covenant as a *metaphor* should not be pressed to the point of turning it into a point-to-point source of theology trying in vain to solve that way some logical limitations as that of the so called “suicide” of the covenant-provider. As for versions rendering διαθήκη as covenant here, see, for instance, the New American Standard Bible and The English Young’s Literal Translation of the Holy Bible. For ancient versions, see the English translations of the Peshitta by Etheridge, Magiera and Norton. On διαθήκη as “covenant” instead of “testament” as the most natural exegetical option based on contemporary legal practice, grammar, syntax, the author’s use of the term elsewhere, and the literary-theological context of the document as a whole, see Scott W. Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death: A Study of Hebrews 9:15-22”, *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 66 (2004):416-436; G. D. Kilpatrick, “Διαθήκη in Hebrews”, *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 68 (1977): 263–265. Unlike Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 255–256; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 462–463. On the rendering “mediator” of μεσίτης as falling short of the author’s overall covenantal argument in Hebrews and as taking it wrong for ἔγγυος (cf. 7:22), see Nash, *ibid.*, 114, 115.

⁴⁵ As with μεσίτης, the prevalent translation of ἐπαγγελία as “promises” in Heb 8,6 somehow obscures the covenantal connection the word has to the immediate context and within the thematic unit starting in 7,22, in whose light the term designates the privileges granted to a person as part of an agreement. In harmony with this, *God’s Word* translation renders ἐπαγγελία in Heb 8,6 as “guarantee”.

3. 8,10; 9,11. A better location for the covenantal stipulations: inside instead of outside.⁴⁶

Of course, the later covenant does not turn the former a wrong or a bad one, mostly since this superseding was already announced far ago by God himself through the prophets (Jer 31,31-34 is quoted in 8,8-12; 10,16-17),⁴⁷ when the new covenant was still in the future, hidden so to say under the foreshadowing Sinai covenant as the only one then available.⁴⁸ Thus, this betterment was no surprise for God and was not supposed to be it neither for the spiritual Israelites already set free by the new Moses Jesus from the Egypt of sin⁴⁹ and the heavy yoke of legalism (*cf.* 4,10-11; see John 2,6-11).⁵⁰

The Temple and its Services

The temple, with its Levitical priesthood, was the very gravitational center of Judaism, mostly in Palestine, in the first century until AD 70, when it was destroyed during the Roman assault on Jerusalem thus putting an end to the first Jewish revolt against the empire.

Decades before, the one who claimed to be the true temple at the very beginning of his ministry (John 2) shocked his disciples with the announce of the tearing down of the majestic building (Matt 24 and parallels). In this light, the downgrading the author of Hebrews makes of the temple and of all related to it in comparison with Jesus as God's most

⁴⁶ An implicit downgrading of the earthly tabernacle, where the Law, both Moral and Mosaic, was kept in the Most Holy, inside and by the ark of the covenant respectively, completely out of reach for people. The ancient Semitic covenant documents were usually kept in the temple of the deity. *Cf.* Heb 7,19.

⁴⁷ See Clements, "The use of the Old Testament in Hebrews", 41.

⁴⁸ See Silva, *ibid.*, 68; Albert Coetsee, "The Unfolding of God's Revelation in Hebrews 1:1-2a.", *Theological Studies* 72, 3 (2016): 1-8.

⁴⁹ *Cf.* the use of the word *ἐξοδος* in Luke 9,31 in the context of Jesus' transfiguration beside Moses and Elijah, and as a reference to his future crucifixion.

⁵⁰ On the Old and New Testaments as a revelatory seamless continuum in constant need of being read both forwards and backwards, from promise/prophesy (OT) to fulfillment/climax in Christ (NT) and viceversa, and on this as one of the hermeneutical implications of Hebrews' prologue, see Coetsee, "The Unfolding of God's Revelation in Hebrews 1:1-2a.", 7, 8; also Mary Healy, "Spiritual Interpretation in the Letter to the Hebrews", *Cruce* 48, 2 (2012): 28-36.

excellent atoning sacrifice and heavenly High priest seems to make the more sense if the temple had not yet disappeared.⁵¹

The sacrifices performed in the temple as part of Moses Law and as *raison d'être* of the temple itself are also downgraded in Hebrews 13,15-16 compared to praising God (θύσιαν αινέσεως), doing good to outsiders (εὐποιίας) and sharing indoor (κοινωνίας).

In 12,26-27, the removal of all the moveable things (τὰ σαλευόμενα) on earth *vis-à-vis* the unmovable things (τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα) in heaven finds an echo in 82,5 where the shadowy human-made temple is downgraded to highlight and in comparison with the brighter heavenly one.

The Mosaic Law

For first century Judaism, Moses Law was the way, the truth and the life.⁵² According to Jewish tradition, the Law was already in place at Eden, and even the angels had underwent circumcision.⁵³ The Law was so central to postexilic Judaism that an oral Torah was believed to have been given by God to Moses on the mount to preserve the written Torah from transgression in the likeness of a fence. This encircling fence against transgression was made of hundreds of regulations and commandments finally written down to become the Mishna in the second century AD.

In the gospels and Paul, the polemic between Christ and the apostle on the one hand, and the Pharisees and the Jewish Christian party on the other had to do both with those traditional regulations surrounding Moses written Torah and mainly with claimed meritorious obedience to them besides circumcision. Here in Hebrews, the focus is rather the contrast between Moses Law as a good shadow and a better reality, namely Jesus Christ, the one the Law was all about (τέλος in Rom 10,4).⁵⁴

⁵¹ Cf. 11,14-15; 13,13-16. On the temple as seemingly still in place when Hebrews was composed and delivered, see Heb 9,9-10.13.25; 10,1-4.8.11.28. Unlike Clements, "The use of the Old Testament in Hebrews", 43.

⁵² See note 53.

⁵³ E.g., *Jubilees* 15,27.

⁵⁴ See Roberto Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law. Romans 10.4 in Pauline Perspective*, JSNTSup 10 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 144-151

Progression Everywhere

Besides the reiteration of progressive revelation as the main topic of Hebrews through compact blocks working as summarizing signposts set in crucial places of its literary structure,⁵⁵ the whole document is shaped within a staircase frame of revelatory crescendo ending upstairs in Christ as its pinnacle according to the following arrangement:

1. From revelation in creation to Christ as Creator and Sustainer of all (1,1-3; *cf.* Rom 1,18-28)
2. From revelation through angelic ministration to the glorified Son of Man (1,4-2,18)
3. From revelation through Moses as God's steward to the Son as Heir of all things (3,1-4,13)
4. From revelation through the priesthood to Christ as heavenly High Priest (4,14-8,13)
5. From the temple and its services to Christ as God's atoning Lamb (9,1-10,39)
6. From revelation through the enduring witness of faith of the forefathers to Christ as God's faithful and uppermost Witness (11,1-12,3)

God's Three-Layer Revelation Building

As said before, the climactic Christological, progressive revelatory focus of the document is already introduced in the prologue and confirmed in 12,2, close to the end, right before the paraenetic finale of chapter 13. This focus is sustained throughout the document by the interplay of several words and cognates portraying God's progressive self-disclosure all along history in a way resembling the building of a house going upright crescendo from the unseen foundation through the columns and walls to end in the roof. The author of Hebrews stresses the fact that Christ is the all in all of divine progressive revelation. In this

⁵⁵ *E.g.*, 1,1-3; 9,23, 26; 10,1, 9; 11,1-3; 12,1-3, 27; 13,8.

respect, there is a lexical trio in Hebrews popping up here and there throughout the whole structure: the words ἀρχή, ὑπόστασις and τέλος together with a cluster of cognates.⁵⁶

ἀρχή

The ἀρχή word family breaks into the document as early as in Heb 1,10, as part of the prologue and in thematic tandem with verses 2b and 3a, a quotation of Psalms 102,25-27 where God is exalted as looking down to earth and the earthly sanctuary from above in heaven (v. 19) as the Creator of heaven and earth (v. 25),⁵⁷ and for being immutable in compare to all which is part of the world (vv. 26-27).⁵⁸ The three things God is exalted for in the psalm (his uppermost divine position, creative power and immutability) are attributed in Hebrews 1 to the Son (*cf.* 13,8).

In Hebrews 2,3, Jesus is said to have been the one who announced salvation first (ἀρχήν), *i.e.* to the first generation of believers whom in turn shared the gospel both with the author and his audience. Since a nuance of hierarchic primacy is present in the stem ἀρχ-⁵⁹ together with a temporal aspect, the use of the word here could be conveying also the idea that the risk the addressed in Hebrews were at when hesitating to go all the way outside the camp following Christ's example (12,13) was rejecting as lower a revelation of God's salvation that was in fact the most authoritative: "In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe" (1,2).⁶⁰

⁵⁶ See Appendix 3 on this.

⁵⁷ The phrasing closely resembles Gen 1,1 (*cf.* John 1,1; 1 John 1,1; Heb).

⁵⁸ *Cf.* the de-creation language in Heb 12,25b-29 as a quotation of Haggai 2, where the future and further glory of the second temple is announced by God when "what is desired by all nations" (Hag 2,7, NIV; MT תִּהְיֶה) finally arrives and only the immutable things remain (*Cf.* Heb 13,8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever").

⁵⁹ *Cf.* the same twofold semantic phenomenon in Ψ87, for instance in Gen 1,1 as a polemic with the polytheist cosmogonies of the ancient Near East. See also the twofold use of ἀρχή as beginning and ruler in John 1,1; 1 John 1,1-4; Rev 3,14.

⁶⁰ *Cf.* 1 John 1,1-4: "That which was from the beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς), which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we

This qualitative emphasis of ἀρχή in 2,3 is confirmed in verse 10, where Jesus is called the ἀρχηγός⁶¹ of salvation, as in the summarizing 12,2. In this light, Hebrews is more on revelatory supremacy than on revelatory chronology.⁶²

Chapter 3,14 of Hebrews is the first and only place of the document where the three revelatory layers (ἀρχή, ὑπόστασις and τέλος) appear together: μέτοχοι γὰρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγονάμεν, ἐάνπερ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατάσχωμεν.

The qualitative-hierarchic nuance of ἀρχή is somehow lost of sight in most if not all Bible versions when they render the word opting for its chronological nuance.⁶³ This is perhaps due in part to the overlooking of the nuance of progression toward a goal which is inherent to the word τέλος. The other factor probably prompting the translators and interpreters to opt here for the chronologic nuance of ἀρχή in detriment of the hierarchic one concurring in the word is the pervading theme of waiving and hesitation as the main paraenetic concern in the document,⁶⁴ together with the author's chronologic segmentation of the early history of the church between those who first received the gospel and believed it and the addressees of the letter as a second generation

proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ".

⁶¹ Several versions aptly grasp this nuance of the word when they render ἀρχηγός as author (*E.g.*, New American Standard Bible), leader (*E.g.*, New Jerusalem Bible), Prince (*E.g.*, Etheridge Translation of the NT Peshitta), captain (*E.g.*, The English Bible in Basic English), source (*E.g.*, Holman Christian Standard Bible), founder (*E.g.*, English Standard Version), head (*E.g.*, Norton Translation of the NT Peshitta), champion (*E.g.*, The Idiomatic Translation of the New Testament), lord (The Tyndale New Testament) instead of the mainly temporal or chronological nuance "pioneer" (*E.g.*, New English Translation), "initiator" (*E.g.*, Complete Jewish Bible) and the like.

⁶² *Cf.* Silva, *ibid.*, 67.

⁶³ *E.g.*, "original", "the beginning", "initial", "first", "the start".

⁶⁴ On this, see Heb 2,1-3; 3,6.10.12-14; 4,14; 6,11; 10,23.35.36.38; 12,1b, 3. Also Andrew J. Wilson, "Hebrews 3:6B and 3:14 Revisited", *Tyndale Bulletin* 62.2 (2011), 247-267; Perkins, "A call to pilgrimage".

of believers, including him (*cf.* 2,1-4).⁶⁵ The nuance of revelatory progression toward a climax could be also suggested in the verse by the sequence in which the three words are used: ἀρχή > ὑπόστασις > τέλος. From a crescendo revelatory scheme, Jesus Christ is not only the one setting salvation in motion through his incarnation, atoning death and resurrection (chronologic nuance of ἀρχή), but also the unsurmountable revelatory Head, the Revelation *par excellence* that the believers should not lose sight of during their growing toward complete maturity (τέλος).⁶⁶ He is the sub-stance (ὑπό-στασις) the whole of revelation is made of no matter the stage.

In the harsh rebuke of Hebrews 5,12, what those spiritually immature were ironically in need of being taught again is said to be τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ θεοῦ. The contrast is made in verses 12-14 between such a milk-like στοιχεῖα and solid food for mature (τέλειος) believers. Several things should be noted here. First, the idea of an early stage of development of these spiritual babies is not conveyed necessarily by ἀρχή, which is in genitive case modifying the plural στοιχεῖα (elements, truths, principles, rudiments, the basics, ABCs). The derogative strength of the genitive construct is on στοιχεῖα rather than on ἀρχή. If a tension between the hierarchic and the chronologic nuances concurring in ἀρχή is accepted as consistently sustained throughout Hebrews, 5,12-14 included, then the genitive τῆς ἀρχῆς in τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς could be read even as a genitive or ablative of source (the ABCs derived from the ἀρχή), a genitive or ablative of comparison with an implied comparative adjective⁶⁷ (what is the ABC in compare to or regarding the [far greater] ἀρχή).

In the same line of thought, it should be also noticed that 5,12 is in parallel to 6,1a

⁶⁵ See Perkins, "A call to pilgrimage", 78.

⁶⁶ See on this Silva, *ibid.*, 69.

⁶⁷ *E.g.*, κρείττων, περισσotέρως, πλείονος, μείζονος, etc.

5,12	6,1a
τὰ στοιχεῖα	[τὸν λόγον] θεμέλιον
τῆς ἀρχῆς	τῆς ἀρχῆς
τῶν λογίων	τὸν λόγον
τοῦ θεοῦ	τοῦ Χριστοῦ

In Hebrews 7,3, unlike in the texts above, the chronological-quantitative nuance of ἀρχή is stressed over its concurring hierarchic-qualitative side, as is clear by the accompanying partitive genitive/ablative ἡμερῶν. The same is true about the contrasting end of the formula ζωῆς τέλος,⁶⁸ yet with ζωῆς as seemingly a plain descriptive genitive (the divine Christ's ζωή is not only endless, but of a kind in no need of growing, progress or gradual development toward a goal [τέλος]).⁶⁹ However, revelatory perfection is clearly the nuance of the stem in 7,9.19; 9,9 and 10,1 on the Levitical priesthood and the ceremonial aspect of Moses Law as falling short of attaining revelatory τελεῖωσις in compare and in contrast to Christ's heavenly high priesthood (7,28; 9,11.26; 10,14).⁷⁰

ὑπόστασις

The word appears in the New Testament only in Paul (2 Cor) and Hebrews. Both, its most obvious etymology (ὑπό + root στα) as well as its further extended meanings, account for its seminal nuance of sub-stance, something underlying visible conditions;⁷¹ substructure, foundation, the substantial quality or nature of a person or thing;⁷² that which settles at the bottom, anything set under, subject-matter of a speech or poem, the

⁶⁸ Cf. Rev 1,8; 21,6; 22,13 on Jesus as the alpha and omega.

⁶⁹ On this distinctive meaning of τέλος when modified by a genitive, cf. Rom 10,4 (τέλος νόμου). See Badenas, *ibid*.

⁷⁰ In 10,14, the idea of completion intrinsic in τέλος is reenforced by the stative perfect τετελείωκεν.

⁷¹ J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 659.

⁷² Joseph H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 644-645.

foundation or ground, the real nature of a thing, essence;⁷³ the essential or basic nature of an entity, nature, real being;⁷⁴ the objective aspect and underlying reality behind anything, an undertaking plan, project; actual being, reality.⁷⁵ To these, it can also be added the rendering *support* (from the Latin *sub portare*, namely to uphold something from below) and *subsistence*.⁷⁶

In Hebrews 1,3, the word is in the genitive case, qualifying the noun *χαρακτήρ* (form, shape, sign, evidence, manifestation)⁷⁷ as part of the dual genitive chain *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ*, in which Jesus Christ stands for God's ultimate or paramount sensitive, corporeal manifestation, revelation or disclosure (*χαρακτήρ*) as well as

⁷³ Henry G. Liddell, Robert Scott and Henry S. Jones eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1895.

⁷⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 1:584.

⁷⁵ Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, Felix W. Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 1040.

⁷⁶ Thus, for instance, *Young's Literal Translation* of the word in Heb 1,3. On the 27 *ὑπό* compounds present in the New Testament as mostly paralleled with Latin words containing *sub*, see James H. Moulton and Wilbert F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek, Vol. 2: Accidence and Word-Formation* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963], 327). See also Eduard Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik auf der Grundlage von Karl Brugmanns Griechischer Grammatik. II. Syntax und syntaktische Stilistik*, ed. A. Debrunner (München: C. H. Beck, 1950), 522. On the Latin prefix *sub-*, see Peter G. W. Glare ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 1835. On basically the same nuances as witnessed both in the LXX and the Greek Fathers, see Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Belgium: Peeters, 2009), 705 and Geoffrey W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 1456–1458 respectively.

⁷⁷ Only here in the NT; also in LXX Lev 13,28; 2 Mac 4,10; 4 Mac 15,4.

(merely conjunctive *καί*)⁷⁸ the underlying substrate (*ὑπόστασις*) of all other and previous God's (*αὐτοῦ*) foreshadowing self-disclosures.⁷⁹

As seen before, Hebrews 3,14 is the only place in the document where the three words occur together and in a quite short sequence: *μέτοχοι γὰρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγόναμεν, ἐάνπερ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατάσχωμεν*. This is one among many other instances of the exhortation to the readers to hold fast to Jesus Christ as God's ultimate revelation in fulfillment of the hopes they started walking in some time ago, when they first believed.

In 11,1, notice the resort to paronomasia in the pair *πίστις - ὑπόστασις* on the one hand, and among the genitive plurals *ἐλπιζομένων, πραγμάτων, βλεπομένων* on the other.⁸⁰

See also what is a synonym parallel structure in the same verse, more clearly perceived through a slight rearrangement:

Ἔστιν δὲ πίστις
ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις,
πραγμάτων [οὐ βλεπομένων] ἔλεγχος

Besides, the copulative verb *εἰμί* makes the nominatives *πίστις, ὑπόστασις* and *ἔλεγχος* interchangeable synonyms explaining each other and answering the question: What does *πίστις* (faithful faith) really mean?

⁷⁸ Are the two genitive phrases parallel and thus synonym? (thus Ulrich Wilckens, *Charakter. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974], 9:421). This would require a *καί* linking both not just connective, but appositional or even expegetic or explanatory ("that is", "namely"), which seems hardly the case in view of the shared genitive *αὐτοῦ* at the end of the sentence. This same fact makes also an intensive *καί* ("even"), more suitable to the main argument of the section and of the document as a whole, also grammatically unviable. On vv. 2b-4 as a sevenfold distinct characterization of the *πίστις* introduced in 2a and linked to it through relative pronominal clauses and participles, see Meir, *ibid.*, 172-173.

⁷⁹ Such translations of *ὑπόστασις* as "nature" fall short of the sub-idea conveyed by the prefixed preposition *ὑπό*. On this, Moulton and Howard comment: "Ἰπόστασις in its various meanings runs parallel with its Latin equivalent *substantia*, an underlying foundation being implied" (James H. Moulton and Wilbert F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek, Volume 2: Accidence and Word-Formation* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963]), 328; cf. Rhce, "The role of chiasm", 349.

⁸⁰ On paronomasia as a stylistic device to emphasize semantic relationships in different parts of Hebrews, see Owen Nease, "Sound Familiar? Paronomasia in Hebrews", *Trinity Journal* 33, New Series (2012): 77-94.

Provided *ὑπόστασις* stands in part for the divine Son as the *raison d'être* and sub-stance or essence pervading God's progressive self-disclosure throughout history, the answer to such a question in Hebrews 11,1 is: Enduring faith is perceiving and accepting Jesus Christ as the sub-stance formerly unnoticed beneath and behind the realities hoped for and dressed in the garb of the foreshadowing former revelatory stages, and to live in accordance to such a perception and conviction.

Since the three participles depend as to time on the main verb εἰμί, which is a present tense representing protracted action, the things hoped for (ἐλπίζομένων) and not yet seen (οὐ βλεπομένων), could be partially pointing to a disappointment on the parousia owed to a too short term eschatological expectation on the part of the addressees of Hebrews (cf. 1 Thes 4,13-17; 2 Thes 2,1-8)⁸¹ and making them prone to go back to the foreshadowing but visible landmarks of Judaism. This could in turn be a hint on a possible pre AD 70 date for the document.⁸²

Such a reading of 11,1 seems to perfectly match the other shore of the rhetoric gap in 12,2, with the long explanatory-exemplary parenthesis of the hall of faith from 11,2 through 12,1 in the middle. While in 11,1 the not yet seen things (οὐ βλεπομένων) demands the exercise of πίστις based on Christ as God's self-disclosure that had been passing for long unnoticed (*ὑπόστασις*) in the former revelatory stages, now he is called for the readers to be the exclusive focus of their attention while waiting for the consummation of all things in the parousia: ἀφορώντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν (Heb 12,2a). He had been in

⁸¹ This short-term eschatology is consistently witnessed throughout the New Testament starting with the disciples themselves in the synoptic gospels (E.g., Mark 13 and parallels). For the New Testament writers, the eschatological era had been already inaugurated by and in Christ, to be consummated no far in the future in occasion of his glorious return (Heb 9:28; cf. John 5,21-29; 2 Thes 2,1-9). For them, the future had already irrupted into the present and both were moving forward together (cf. Luke 17,21).

⁸² On this reading as possible, for instance in the light of the phrase ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων (Heb 1,2), Coetsee says: "... this phrase also makes it clear that the hearers lived in a time of intense expectation and revelation of salvation" (ibid., 5). On the relation between an imminent expectation for the *parousia* and an early date for Hebrews, this would be perfectly in tune with most of an early NT canon, with the only exception of the Johannine corpus, granted their late date according to early tradition, which is still not a set matter.

the past recognized by them as God's *chief* (ἀρχηγός) and unsurmountable (τελειωτής) revelation and they are now called to hold fast to such a conviction to the very end of the way.⁸³

τέλος

The stem τέλ- is the one exhibiting the greatest morpho-syntactical variety among the trio of words under discussion (τέλος, τέλειος, τελειότης, τελειώσεις, τελειωτής, συντέλεια). However, the root idea of a goal, climax or fulfillment reached as the result of a progress or development seems to be always present in all the morphemes (e.g. 5,14; 6,1; 11,40; 12,23).⁸⁴ As in Hebrews 12,2, the duo ἀρχ- and τέλ- is also present in 2,10: Ἐπρεπεν γὰρ αὐτῶ, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα καὶ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα, πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν διὰ παθημάτων τελειῶσαι.

This time, Jesus Christ is called the ἀρχηγός of salvation (τῆς σωτηρίας), unlike in 12,2, where he is the ἀρχηγός of enduring, faithful faith (τῆς πίστεως). To reach that goal he had to go through a process (διὰ παθημάτων) in order to achieve the goal (τελειῶσαι) of being a suitable (implicit stress on quality) substitute and high-priestly mediator in behalf of fallen humans before God (cf. 5,19). The qualitative and hierarchic nuance of ἀρχ- seems to be stressed in the derivate ἀρχηγός mostly in virtue of a seeming parallelism between the duo ἀρχ- τέλ- and the repeated prepositional phrase δι' ὃν... δι' οὗ pointing to the pre-incarnated Son as

⁸³ While most translations stress the chronological or temporal nuance of the stems ἀρχ- in ἀρχηγός and τέλ- in τελειωτής, some others opt for the hierarchical or qualitative shade of meaning simultaneously present in them. For instance, they render ἀρχηγός as chief (Etheridge Translation of the NT Peshitta) and captain (The Bishops' New Testament), from the Latin *capita*: head (cf. ψ87). As for τελειωτής, the spectrum include: goal (God's Word translation), consummator (The Idiomatic Translation of the New Testament), and completion (Murdock Translation of the NT Peshitta).

⁸⁴ Cf. Silva, *ibid.*, 68. On this prevailing nuance of progression from revelatory imperfection in the previous and foreshadowing covenant institutions to Christ as God's perfect revelatory climax and foreshadowed reality, even in the much discussed Heb 5,14 and 6,1, see Craig A. Hill, "The Use of Perfection Language in Hebrews 5:14 and 6:1 and the Contextual Interpretation of 5:11-6:3" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57, 4 (2014): 727-742.

the creator,⁸⁵ sustainer and heir of all things, a saying closely resembling Hebrews 1,1: ἐν υἱῷ, ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων, δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας where he also is creator (δι' οὗ ἐποίησεν) and heir (ὄν... κληρονόμον).

Conclusion

The author of Hebrews calls the attention of the readers to the fact that what they regarded as most reliable and certain as God's revelations (the temple and its services, the priesthood, Moses, the Torah, the Sinai covenant, etcetera), had Jesus Christ as its foundation (ἀρχή), sub-stance (ὑποστάσις; cf. 1,3) and unsurmountable pinnacle (τέλος).⁸⁶ All those former revelatory phases or stages were only segments of a seamless continuum. Absorbed as they were in staring at the trunk of God's revelatory tree, they were in danger of missing the nurturing root (ἀρχή) and the fruit bearing top (τέλος) for the transitional, instrumental trunk. The root (ἀρχή) had been feeding endlessly and from the very onset every inch of the tree (ὑποστάσις), while the top was now offering dire and free access to the seasoned (τέλος) fruit of salvation in and through the person and ministry of Jesus Christ both on earth at first and in heaven now (10,19-20).

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⁸⁵ On him as hierarchic Head (ἡγεμῶν / ἀρχή) of creation, cf. Gen 1,1; John 1,1; 1 John 1,1. On a Semitic background of the leader-ruler connotation of ἀρχηγός in Hebrews, see Scott, *ibid.*, 47.

⁸⁶ The play on the word οἶκος and on the motifs of the house and the family in 3,2-6 acquires a more special sense within this scheme.

Appendix 1

Words	Texts
πάς - ADJ	1,2.6; 3,4; 4,14-15; 5,9
κρείττων (ἀγαθός) – COMPARATIVE ADJ	1,4; 6,9; 7,7.19.22; 8,6 (2x); 9,23; 11,16; 12,24
πρω- PREFIXED ADJ (πρώρος)	1,6
περισσοτέως (περισσῶς) - COMPARA- TIVE ADV	2,1; 6,17
προσ- PREFIXED PREP	2,1; 5,10
ἐπ- PREFIXED PREP	3,1; 9,23; 11,16; 12,25; 13,14
ἀρχ- PREFIXED NOUN	3,1; 4,14-15; 5,5.10; 6,20; 7,3.26; 8,1; 9,11
πλείονος (πολύς) - COMPARATIVE ADJ	3,3; 12,25
κατα- PREFIXED PREP (with perfec- tive force)	3,3-4.6
μέγας ADJ	4,14; 8,1; 13,20
αἰώνιος ADJ	5,9; 6,20; 7,21.24.28; 9,12.14-15; 13,20; cf. 1,2; 6,5
μείεονος (μέγας) - COMPARATIVE ADJ	6,13.16; 9,11
οὐδείς – PRON (emphatic negation for contrast)	6,13; 7,19; 9,12
προ- PREFIXED PREP	6,20
α- PREFIXED PRIVATIVE ALPHA	7,3 (3x).16.24.26 (2x); 9,14; 11,27; 12,28
διηγεκές (cf. αἰώνιος) - ADJ	7,3; 10,12.14
μέν. . . δέ – CONJ SUBORDINATE (contrast)	7,7; 9,23
ἀλλά - CONJ (contrast)	7,16; 9,24; 12,26; 13,14
παντελής - ADJ	7,25

πάντοτε - ADJ / ADV	7,25
ύψηλότερος - COMPARATIVE ADJ	7,26
τελειώω (VERB) / τέλειος (ADJ)	7,28; 9,11; 10,14
διαφορωτέρας (διάφορος) – COMPARATIVE ADJ	8,6; 1,4
καινός (cf. νέος) - ADJ	8,8.13; 9,15
οὐ / μη - (contrast)	9,11 (2x).24; 12,26-27; 13,14
μᾶλλον - ADV (comparison)	9,14; 12,25
δεύτερος (ADJ) as better than πρώτος (replacement)	10,9
ἐφάπαξ / ἅπαξ (PREFIXED PERFECTIVE PREP / ADJ / ADV) as better than something occurring many times (replacement for something happening just once and for all)	7,27; 9,12; 10,10; 12,26-27
εἷς, μία, ἓν (ADJ) as better than many times (replacement)	10,12
νῦν (ADV) as better than τότε / before (replacement)	11,16; 12,26; 13,13
πρόσκαιρος (ADJ) / προσ- PREFIXED PREP)	11,25
νέος (ADJ; cf. καινός)	12,24
ἀπό (PREP)	12,25
μετά- PREFIXED PREP (replacement)	12,27
ὡς (CONJ) – downgrading/upgrading comparison	12,27
ἐκ- / ἔξω (PREP) as implicitly better than εἰς	13,12.13 (2x)
ὧδε (ADJ / ADV) as implicitly better than ἐκεῖ	13,14

Appendix 2

Jesus Christ as best and better than	
The angels (1,4.14; 2,2.5.16)	Created to minister, not divine, not sovereign
Moses (3,2.6.16; 10.28-29)	A good steward, but not the owner and heir
Joshua (4,8)	He could not make the people rest
The priesthood (4,14-5,10; 6,19-20; 7,1-28; 8,1, 3-6; 10,1. 21; 13,10-12)	Limited by own sinfulness and death Limiting the direct access of men to God Not appointed by God on a personal or individual basis
Abraham (7,4-10)	Lesser than Melchizedek and Christ
The Sinai covenant (7,22; 8,6-13; 9,1.15-22; 10,16; 12,18-29; 13,20)	It was a foreshadow of the everlasting one
The sanctuary and its services (8,2; 9,1-23; 10,1-10.12-15.18-20; 13,10-15)	It could not grant salvation
The mosaic law (10,1-8.28-29)	It could not change the heart

Appendix 3

Words and cognates	Texts
ἀρχή	Heb 1:10; 2:3, 10 (ἀρχηγός); 3:14; 5:12; 6:1; 7:3; 12:2 (ἀρχηγός)
ὑπόστασις	Heb 1:3; 3:14; 11:1
τελείω	Heb 2:10; 5:9, 3:14 (τέλους); ; 6:1 (τελειότης); 7:3 (τέλος), 11 (τελείωσις), 19; 7:28; 9:9, 11 (τέλειος), 26 (συντέλεια); 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:2 (τελειωτής), 23

Appendix 4

Places where the upgrading-through-downgrading strategy seems to occur in Hebrews⁸⁷

Chapter	Verse	Text
1	2	ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ, ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων, δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας While Moses occupies the place and does the role of a faithful servant over his divine Master's house, the Son Jesus is the heir of everything and even the Master himself as the Maker of it all.
	4	τοσοῦτῳ κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων ὅσῳ διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοῦς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα
	6	ὅταν δὲ πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην, λέγει, Καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ
	9	ἠγάπησας δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν· διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέν σε ὁ θεός, ὁ θεός σου, ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιᾶσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου
2	1	Διὰ τοῦτο δεῖ περισσotέρωσ προσέχειν ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσιν, μήποτε παραρῶμεν
3	1	Ὅθεν, ἀδελφοὶ ἅγιοι, κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι, κατανοήσατε τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν
	3	πλείονος γὰρ οὗτος δόξης παρὰ Μωϋσῆν ἠξίωται, καθ' ὅσον πλείονα τιμὴν ἔχει τοῦ οἴκου ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτόν·
	4	πᾶς γὰρ οἶκος κατασκευάζεται ὑπὸ τινος, ὁ δὲ πάντα κατασκευάσας θεός
	6	πᾶς γὰρ οἶκος κατασκευάζεται ὑπὸ τινος, ὁ δὲ πάντα κατασκευάσας θεός
4	14	Ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας
	15	οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθεῖσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν, πεπειρασμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοίότητα χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας

⁸⁷ The list does not pretend to be exhaustive, but only illustrative.

5	5	Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν, Υἱὸς μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε·
	9	καὶ τελειωθείς ἐγένετο πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ αἰτίος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου
	10	προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ
6	9	Πεπεύσμεθα δὲ περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀγαπητοί, τὰ κρείσσονα καὶ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας, εἰ καὶ οὕτως λαλοῦμεν
	13	Τῷ γὰρ Ἀβραάμ ἐπαγγειλάμενος ὁ θεός, ἐπεὶ κατ' οὐδενὸς εἶχεν μείζονος ὁμόσαι, ὤμοσεν καθ' ἑαυτοῦ
	16	ἄνθρωποι γὰρ κατὰ τοῦ μείζονος ὀμνύουσιν, καὶ πάσης αὐτοῖς ἀντιλογίας πέρας εἰς βεβαίωσιν ὁ ὄρκος·
	17	ἐν ᾧ περισσότερον βουλόμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιδείξει τοῖς κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκω
	18	ἵνα διὰ δύο πραγμάτων ἀμεταθέτων, ἐν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι [τὸν] θεόν, ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν ἔχωμεν οἱ καταφυγόντες κρατῆσαι τῆς προκειμένης ἐλπίδος·
	20	ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσήλθεν Ἰησοῦς, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα

7	3	ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων, ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ, μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηγεκέες
	7	χωρὶς δὲ πάσης ἀντιλογίας τὸ ἔλαττον ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος εὐλογεῖται
	8	καὶ ὧδε μὲν δεκάτας ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀνθρωποὶ λαμβάνουσιν, ἐκεῖ δὲ μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῆ
	16	ὃς οὐ κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης γέγονεν ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου
	19	οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν ὁ νόμος- ἐπεισαγωγῆ δὲ κρείττονος ἐλπίδος δι' ἧς ἐγγίζομεν τῷ θεῷ
	21	ὁ δὲ μετὰ ὀρκωμοσίας διὰ τοῦ λέγοντος πρὸς αὐτόν, Ὡμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται, Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα
	22	κατὰ τοσοῦτο [καὶ] κρείττονος διαθήκης γέγονεν ἔγγυος Ἰησοῦς
	24	ὁ δὲ διὰ τὸ μένειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην
	25	ὅθεν καὶ σφῆζειν εἰς τὸ παντελὲς δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους δι' αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ, πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν
	26	Τοιοῦτος γὰρ ἡμῖν καὶ ἔπρεπεν ἀρχιερεὺς, ὅσιος ἄκακος ἀμίαντος, κεχωρισμένος ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν καὶ ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν γενόμενος
27	ὃς οὐκ ἔχει καθ' ἡμέραν ἀνάγκην, ὥσπερ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς, πρότερον ὑπὲρ τῶν ἰδίων ἁμαρτιῶν θυσίας ἀναφέρειν ἔπειτα τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐποίησεν ἐφάπαξ ἑαυτὸν ἀνερέγκας	
28	ὁ νόμος γὰρ ἀνθρώπους καθίστησιν ἀρχιερεῖς ἔχοντας ἀσθένεια, ὁ λόγος δὲ τῆς ὀρκωμοσίας τῆς μετὰ τὸν νόμον υἱὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον	
8	1	Κεφάλαιον δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις, τοιοῦτον ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα, ὃς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
	2	τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς, ἣν ἐπηξεν ὁ κύριος, οὐκ ἀνθρωπος
	6	νυν[ι] δὲ διαφορωτέρας τέτυχεν λειτουργίας, ὅσω καὶ κρείττονός ἐστιν διαθήκης μεσίτης, ἥτις ἐπὶ κρείττοσιν ἐπαγγελίας νενομοθέτηται
	8	μεμφόμενος γὰρ αὐτοὺς λέγει, Ἴδου ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, λέγει κύριος, καὶ συντελέσω ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰουδα διαθήκην καινὴν
	13	ἐν τῷ λέγειν Καινὴν πεπαλαίωκεν τὴν πρώτην· τὸ δὲ παλαιούμενον καὶ γηράσκον ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ

9	11	Χριστός δὲ παραγενόμενος ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν γενομένων ἀγαθῶν διὰ τῆς μείζονος καὶ τελειοτέρας σκηνης οὐ χειροποιήτου, τοῦτ' ἔστιν οὐ ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως
	12	οὐδὲ δι' αἵματος τράγων καὶ μόσχων διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος εἰσῆλθεν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ ἅγια αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν εὐράμενος
	14	πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἄμωμον τῷ θεῷ, καθαριεῖ τὴν συνείδησιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων εἰς τὸ λατρεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι
	15	Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διαθήκης καινῆς μεσίτης ἐστίν, ὅπως θανάτου γενομένου εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ πρώτῃ διαθήκῃ παραβάσεων τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν λάβωσιν οἱ κεκλημένοι τῆς αἰωνίου κληρονομίας
	23	Ἀνάγκη οὖν τὰ μὲν ὑποδείγματα τῶν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς τούτοις καθαρίζεσθαι, αὐτὰ δὲ τὰ ἐπουράνια κρείττοσιν θυσίαις παρὰ ταύτας
	24	οὐ γὰρ εἰς χειροποίητα εἰσῆλθεν ἅγια Χριστός, ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν, ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν, νῦν ἐμφανισθῆναι τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν.
26	ἐπεὶ ἔδει αὐτὸν πολλακίς παθεῖν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου· νυνὶ δὲ ἅπαξ ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰῶνων εἰς ἀθέτησιν [τῆς] ἁμαρτίας διὰ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ πεφανέρωται	
10	9	τότε εἶρηκεν, Ἴδου ἤκω τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου. ἀναιρεῖ τὸ πρῶτον ἵνα τὸ δεύτερον στήσῃ
	10	ἐν ᾧ θελήματι ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμὲν διὰ τῆς προσφορᾶς τοῦ σώματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐφάπαξ
	12	οὗτος δὲ μίαν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν προσενέγκας θυσίαν εἰς τὸ διηνεκές ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ
	14	μᾶ γὰρ προσφορᾷ τετελείωκεν εἰς τὸ διηνεκές τοὺς ἀγιαζομένους
11	16	νῦν δὲ κρείττονος ὀρέγονται, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐπουρανοῦ. διὸ οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς θεὸς ἐπικαλεῖσθαι αὐτῶν· ἡτοίμασεν γὰρ αὐτοῖς πόλιν
	25	μᾶλλον ἐλόμενος συγκαουχέισθαι τῷ λαῷ τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ πρόσκαιρον ἔχειν ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν
	27	Πίστει κατέλιπεν Αἴγυπτον μὴ φοβηθεὶς τὸν θυμὸν τοῦ βασιλέως· τὸν γὰρ ἀόρατον ὡς ὁρῶν ἐκαρτέρησεν

12	24	καὶ διαθήκης νέας μεσίτη Ἰησοῦ καὶ αἵματι βαντισμοῦ κρείττον λαλοῦντι παρὰ τὸν Ἄβελ.
	25	Βλέπετε μὴ παραιτήσησθε τὸν λαλοῦντα. εἰ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι οὐκ ἐξέφυγον ἐπὶ γῆς παραιτησάμενοι τὸν χρηματίζοντα, πολὺ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς οἱ τὸν ἅπ' οὐρανῶν ἀποστρεφόμενοι,
	26	οὐ ἡ φωνὴ τὴν γῆν ἐσάλευσεν τότε, νῦν δὲ ἐπήγγελται λέγων, Ἔτι ἅπαξ ἐγὼ σείσω οὐ μόνον τὴν γῆν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν
	27	τὸ δὲ Ἔτι ἅπαξ δηλοῖ [τὴν] τῶν σαλευομένων μετάθεσιν ὡς πεπονημένων, ἵνα μείνη τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα.
	28	Διὸ βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες ἔχουμεν χάριν, δι' ἧς λατρεύουμεν εὐαρέστως τῷ θεῷ μετὰ εὐλαβείας καὶ δέους
13	12	διὸ καὶ Ἰησοῦς, ἵνα ἀγίαση διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος τὸν λαόν, ἕξω τῆς πύλης ἔπαθεν.
	13	τοῖνον ἐξερχώμεθα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἕξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς τὸν ὄνειδισμὸν αὐτοῦ φέροντες
	14	οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ὡδε μένουσαν πόλιν ἀλλὰ τὴν μέλλουσαν ἐπιζητοῦμεν
	20	Ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης, ὁ ἀναγαγὼν ἐκ νεκρῶν τὸν ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων τὸν μέγαν ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου, τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν