

The Letter to the Hebrews, Handout #1: Lesson 2

Often the inspired writers of the Old and New Testament used word-play and patterns, as well the symbolism of numbers, and literary devices like alliteration (repetition of sounds). These devices are usually lost in our English translations but sometimes it is possible to discern these devices even in our modern Bibles. The inspired writer's opening line in Hebrews 1:1-2 compares God's interaction with man in past times with His interaction with man in these "final day" in this pattern:

GOD	
Past days	Final days
having spoken	has spoken
to ancestors	to us
through the Prophets	through the Son

There is also repetition of the "p" sound in this passage: *At many moments in the past and by many means, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets...* The line (in the literal Greek) many moments [occasions] and many forms [types] of old the God has spoken to the fathers [forebearers] by the prophets, shows the repetition of the p sound 5 times in Greek: *polymeros kai polytropos palai ho theos lalesas tois patrasin en tois prophetais...* This example is offered to help you understand that the inspired text of the Bible is more complex than our English translations illustrate.

Old Testament Passages quoted in Hebrews 1:5-13 Offered as Proof of The Son's superiority over the Angels: 8 quotes from 7 different passages Bold type = portion of passage quoted in Hebrews
1. Psalm 2:7-8, <i>I will proclaim the decree of Yahweh: He said to me, 'You are my son, today have I fathered you. Ask of me, and I shall give you're the nations as your birthright, the whole wide world as your possession.</i>
2. 2 Samuel 7:14-16a, <i>I shall be a father to him and he a son to me; if he does wrong I shall punish him with a rod such as men use, with blows such as mankind gives. But my faithful love will never be withdrawn from him as I withdrew it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your throne and your sovereignty will ever stand firm before me and your throne be for ever secure.</i>
3. Deuteronomy 32:43, <i>Heavens, rejoice with him, let all the children (literal is sons; Hebrews has "angels") of God pay him homage! Nations, rejoice with his people, let God's envoys tell of his power! For he will avenge the blood of his servants, he will return vengeance to my foes, he will repay those who hate him and purify his people's country.</i>
4. Psalm 104:3-4, <i>You stretch out the heavens like a tent, build your palace in the waters above, making the clouds your chariot, gliding on the wings of the wind, appointing the winds your messengers, flames of fire your servants.</i>
5. Psalm 45:6-7a, <i>Your throne is from God (literal = O God is) for ever and ever, the scepter of your kingship a scepter of justice, you love uprightness and detest evil.</i>
6. Psalm 45:7b-9, <i>This is why God, your God, has anointed you with oil of gladness, as none of your rivals, your robes all myrrh and aloes.</i>
7. Psalm 102:25-27, <i>Long ago you laid earth's foundations, the heavens are the work of your hands. They pass away but you remain; they all wear out like a garment, like outworn clothes you change them; but you never alter, and your years never end.</i>
8. Psalm 110:1, <i>Yahweh declared to my Lord, "Take your seat at my right hand, till I have made your enemies your footstool."</i>

The Letter to the Hebrews, Handout #2: Lesson 2

Examine the first four verses in the Letter to the Hebrews.

In order to discover what the inspired writer is saying what questions do we have to ask concerning the first four verses? I have identified 12 questions that need to be answered—you may find more:

1. What does he mean by “times past”?
2. What does the inspired writer mean by “partial” and “various” ways?
3. What is a prophet? How did the prophets speak to our ancestors?
4. What is meant by “final days”?
5. Who is “the Son”?
6. How was the Son involved in Creation?
7. Why is the Son identified as “the heir”, what is His inheritance, and what does this title mean to us?
8. How is the Son the *apaugasma* of God’s glory? Hint: means splendor, brilliance or radiance.
9. How does the Son bear the “impress” or “imprint” of the Father’s being?
10. How does He sustain all things through His word?
11. How has the Son purged away sins and taken a seat at God’s right hand?
12. What was the role of the angels and how is the Son superior to them?

The Gospel According to St. John [New Jerusalem translation]: *The Word became flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” John 1: 14

The literal translation is “only begotten from the Father”. The use of the word “only-begotten” [*monogene*] is significant. It is only used 5 times in the New Testament of Christ as the Son of God, and it is used this way only in the writings of John the Apostle.

Jesus Christ the “only begotten Son” of God (New Jerusalem translation)

John 1:14	<i>“the glory that he has from the Father as the only [begotten/monogene] Son of the Father,..”</i>
John 1:18	<i>“No one has ever seen God; it is the only [begotten/monogene] Son, who is close to the Father’s heart...”</i>
John 3:16	<i>“For this is how God so loved the world: he gave his only [begotten/monogene] Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”</i>
John 3:18	<i>“No one who believes in him will be judged; but whoever does not believe is judged already, because that person does not believe in the name of God’s only [begotten/monogene] Son.”</i>
1John 4:9	<i>“This is the revelation of God’s love for us, that God send his only [begotten/monogene] Son into the world that we might have life through him.”</i>

In each case the Greek texts use the word “monogene” = *mono/only* and *gene/begotten*.