

Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews
By Oecumenius

also known as The Pseudo-Oecumenian Catena on Hebrews

Translated by John Litteral

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The commentary by Oecumenius on the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written in the same manner as a common Bible commentary, written by one author, who interprets the Scripture passages, using his own thoughts and creativity throughout the body of work. But this commentary is a compilation of comments on each passage of Scripture that was gleaned from multiple Bible commentators and Early Church writers. This technique of taking excerpts from other writers and compiling them together to form a running commentary on Scripture was an exegetical style called Catena, which became a practice in Early Christianity for creating a study tool for clergy and students of the Scriptures.

As for the authorship of this catena, or to speak more precisely, the “compiler” of this catena, for centuries has been credited to Oecumenius, the Greek bishop of Tricca. For a long time it was believed that Oecumenius wrote his Bible commentaries around 990AD, but when his lost commentary on the book of Revelation, which Franz Diekamp rediscovered in 1901, and H. C. Hoskier published in 1928, the date of the Revelation manuscript pointed towards an earlier date, around the 6th century, making him a contemporary of Andrew of Caesarea. Andrew also wrote a commentary on the book of Revelation in the 6th century and somewhat in opposition to the commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius. H.C. Hoskier, who published the first critical edition of the commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius, understood Oecumenius to be the same author of the commentary on Revelation and all of the other NT commentaries, saying...

It is, therefore, not inappropriate to bring to public attention the text and commentary of OECUMENIUS, who flourished in the sixth and seventh centuries, and whose commentary on the Apocalypse has been missing for a long period, although some

of his commentaries on other New Testament books have come down to us. Attributed generally to the tenth century, the document which we now publish itself gives us the correct date (preceding Andrew [of Caesarea] 563-614 A.D. and Arethas 860-939 A.D.), and we can now place Oecumenius, Greek Bishop of Tricca, towards the beginning of the seventh century.¹

Naturally, this led some scholars to place the date of the other commentaries by Oecumenius to the 6th century. Many scholars today do not accept that the Oecumenius who wrote the commentary on Revelation to be the same author of the commentaries on Acts, Paul's Epistles, and the Catholic Epistles. For nearly a century now, there has been a renewed interest in Greek catenae, and effort has been taking place where scholars are in the works of producing critical texts of what they term the Pseudo-Oecumenian catena, which means that they believe that these commentaries have been falsely attributed to Oecumenius. I personally hold to the traditional view that the author of the commentary on Revelation to be the same author who wrote the other commentaries. But I do want to say that I am in no way dogmatic and I am completely open to the view held by modern scholars that the catena was perhaps falsely attributed to Oecumenius. I will explain my reasons below why I hold this position, and I will provide some excerpts from both points of view and then let you the reader come to their own conclusions.

In this catena on Hebrews there are many excerpts from some of the Early Church Fathers that Oecumenius gleaned from. Not all excerpts have the names given from whom the sources are from. For those excerpts which have been named throughout the catena, Theodoret of Cyrus (393-457A.D.), Gennadius of Constantinople (died around 471A.D.), Cyril of Alexandria (died around 444A.D.), Photius of Constantinople (810-891A.D.), and Oecumenius (6th century) himself have been specifically quoted and labelled as excerpts. Oecumenius also referenced and partially quoted Gregory of Nyssa (335-395A.D.) and Gregory

Nazianzen (329-390A.D.). Cyril of Alexandria was mostly referenced and partially quoted in most cases, but there are a couple of places where his name was prefixed with the excerpts. One excerpt from Cyril was mistakenly credited to Oecumenius, but I corrected that excerpt and footnoted it and provided the source of the work, which is found in the comment section for Hebrews 13:12-15. There are undoubtedly more excerpts that are not identified, but I limited the amount of time that I spent to locate all the sources, though I truly wish that I had the time to identify as many of the excerpts as I could. Oecumenius relied heavily upon the homilies on Hebrews by John Chrysostom (died around 407A.D.) throughout the entire catena, but his name is never given as a source [on Hebrews]. Oecumenius took the interpretations from Chrysostom as the primary source but repackaged it, oftentimes in a more concise manner. Oecumenius did that same technique with some other sources as well, which makes it a bit challenging to locate the sources from where the original thoughts came from. The excerpts from Photius of Constantinople were a later stage of manuscript development and are plentiful throughout the catena, but those excerpts were added later by copyists, oftentimes as outer marginal notes, but then were later grafted into the main text by later editors. Photius was the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople from 858 to 867 and from 877 to 886, which means that he came much later than Oecumenius of the 6th century.

My Translation

I have recently translated the commentaries on the Catholic Epistles by Oecumenius, and they are published and available in print and electronic versions². That translation of the commentaries on the Catholic Epistles was translated directly from volume 119 of the Patrologia Graeca printed edition of

1864. Originally, my intentions were to do the same thing for this commentary on Hebrews, and even though I did rely upon the Patrologia Graeca as the primary source, I also consulted an earlier Greek version that was published in 1844 by Theoclitus Pharmakides³. In the Pharmakides version of the commentaries by Oecumenius, Theoclitus Pharmakides made numerous modifications to the Greek text that expanded the commentary in order to enhance and clarify what appears to be a sloppy manuscript tradition created by the editors and copyists throughout the centuries after the original commentary was written. Theoclitus Pharmakides explains...

The text of the commentaries of Oecumenius is in many parts so poor that it sometimes becomes difficult to understand. This is certainly not the fault of the author of the commentaries; the poor quality arises either from the copyists or from the editors of the commentaries themselves. From where could we correct the errors? From manuscripts? But where, as far as we know, are such found in Greece? From other editions? But we have used the newer one, the one made in Paris in the year 1631 by Morellus. Besides these and similar aids, we have moved some texts to their proper place, which were previously misplaced; and we corrected other wrongly rendered parts in the text, some by being helped by the Latin translation of Entenius, others guided by Theophylact, and never by our own speculation. Theophylact (1055-1107A.D.) is later than Oecumenius; and in many respects, he agrees with him so much that it becomes evident that he took much from Oecumenius, often word-for-word. Thus, the small changes made from Theophylact to the text of Oecumenius can, in some sense, be considered as peculiar to Oecumenius himself. From Theophylact also some additions were made to the text of Oecumenius, some small, others greater, either to fill gaps or to contribute to greater clarity of Oecumenius's text. These things were undertaken by us for the sake of the purpose for which these commentaries are chiefly published.³

I did adopt a significant amount of the modified readings from Pharmakides, but I left many out as well. Every part that I

adopted from Pharmakides is marked and has been footnoted. My goal for this translation is for the benefit of those who are seeking Patristic interpretations on the book of Hebrews for better insight, and not for creating an English translation of a critical text of the catena.

I also used the Pauline commentaries from the Greek Church, Collected and edited from catena manuscripts, by Dr. Karl Staab⁴, published in 1933. This edition was very helpful for me to locate many excerpts from the text that were not identified who the sources were, nor given any indication of where the excerpts began or ended.

Oecumenius vs Pseudo-Oecumenius

As mentioned above, I am not dogmatic about whether the original compiler of the catena on Paul’s Epistles, Acts, and the Catholic Epistles is the same author of the 6th century commentary on Revelation, but I do favor that it is the same Oecumenius who authored both. As an author of over twenty published books, I can relate to writing in two different styles, one as a complier, and also as an author based upon my own thoughts and creativity. I have also seen different styles of writings among many authors of the Early Church. I have not only seen different styles of writings from a single author, but I have also seen different manuscripts of the same writing from the same author have significant differences between them. That is one reason why textual critics are motivated to develop critical texts based upon the best manuscripts that are available in order to have a reliable standardized text. I have encountered this “dilemma” in my own translation projects in the past, especially with the English translation of the Glossa Ordinaria on the book of Revelation and the Questions on the Old and New Testaments by Ambrosiaster. As the editor of the translation of the Glossa

Ordinaria on the book of Revelation, I chose to use a 12th century Gloss manuscript as well as a 13th century manuscript, and then a 15th century version of the Gloss. Instead of trying to create a critical text, I decided to adopt glosses that I knew were not from the original glossator because they added value to the commentary as an exegetical tool for the readers. I had the same motivation when I translated the Questions on the Old and New Testaments by Ambrosiaster. There were two versions of the work by Ambrosiaster, one was a shorter version and another a longer version. I translated both for the same reason, and that is for the value of the commentary. And for this translation of the Catena on Hebrews by Oecumenius, there are excerpts that I know that are not original to the author but the content that has been carefully modified in over time. The Photius excerpts are an obvious addition by editors and copyists, but they add value to the commentary as a tool for exegetical purposes.

For those who reject the Oecumenian authorship, they provide legitimate arguments, but I am still not convinced even after examining all the arguments. The primary argument is that the name “Oecumenius” has been prefixed to some of the excerpts, as if an anonymous author or a later copyist added excerpts from an Oecumenius scholia. Since the catena has excerpts from Oecumenius, then the original author would not be Oecumenius. This is the argument that Karl Staab makes...

One only needs to examine the commentaries of Paul of more recent and newest times and one will repeatedly find Oecumenius cited as a key witness of Greek Pauline exegesis. But research based on the earliest manuscript sources increasingly destroys his fame. In the introductory volume I believe I have provided the definitive proof that this great compilation of all the Pauline epistles does not belong to our Oecumenius, that it contains only a number of scholia from his hand.⁴

That does make logical sense, but I find the argument in the introductory material of the Patrologia Graeca to be quite satisfying to me, saying...

Moreover, although in the earlier books no one has prefixed his name, as is the custom among the Greeks, never publishing under his own name what he has not elaborated by his own effort, but rather collecting certain patches from various sources: yet from evident conjectures we gather that Oecumenius is partly the author of these, partly the collector who, however, sometimes, when he presents his opinion after others, has also added his own name, lest anyone attribute it to others, which he himself did not consider worthy to be compared with their opinions.⁵

I can totally relate to that myself. Years ago I was creating a catena, that I called *The Aquinas Study Bible*, for my website⁶ where I would provide the Scripture text followed by excerpts from the Church Fathers as well as some of the Scholastic theologians, and there were some places where I would add my own comments and I would prefix my own name to the excerpt so that people knew what was coming from me, and not by Patristic writers who I considered far superior to myself.

The commentaries by Oecumenius on Acts, Paul's Epistles, and the Catholic Epistles gained a lot of favor throughout the centuries and were consulted by many great theologians throughout the centuries, but his commentary on the book of Revelation, even though his was the very first Greek commentary on Revelation, did not have the same fame because the church of the East were very slow to accept Revelation as canonical, and it was overshadowed by the commentary on Revelation by Andrew of Caesarea, and it was considered lost until it was rediscovered in 1901. As for me, I place great value upon all of his commentaries because he does an excellent job providing clear and well balanced interpretations of the Scriptures, which has been my main motivation for taking on the

work of translating his commentaries into English so that more people can read and benefit from his commentaries on Scripture the way I have over the years. Lord willing, I will continue this labor of love by translating as many of his Bible commentaries as I can.

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Translator notes for the introduction

1. The complete commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse : now printed for the first time from manuscripts at Messina, Rome, Salonika, and Athos, Ann Arbor : University of Michigan, Hoskier, H. C. (Herman Charles), 1864-1938, editor. Page 4
2. The electronic versions are on Kindle from Amazon, and Archive.org.
3. Theoclitus Pharmakides, With footnotes of ancients, published by Theoclitus Pharmakides. In Athens, from the printing house of Nikolas Angelidis on Hermous Street near Kapnikarea 1844
4. Pauluskomentare aus der griechischen Kirche. Aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben. Von Dr. Karl Staab. 1933.

5. Patrologia Graeca (Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca) 118. Oecumenius v.1: Commentary on Acts, Commentary on Paul's letters, Commentary on the Catholic letters. Pages 16-17
6. The website was called Patristic Bible Commentary, which was a Google site, that was deleted by Google a few years ago. Sadly that website is no longer available but there is a lot of the commentary preserved by Catena Bible, who has a website and <https://catenabible.com/mt/1> and an app.
7. Clark Bates, The Pseudo-Oecumenian Catena on Ephesians: This work advances the understanding of the production and purpose of the Ps.-Oecumenian catena on Ephesians through the creation of a critical edition, its translation, and theological commentary. The edition is created through the full transcription and collation of seventeen catena manuscripts, drawn from all known catena manuscripts containing the Ps.-Oecumenian catena on Ephesians. The selected manuscripts were chosen on the basis of a test passage applied to all manuscript witnesses of this catenae tradition and they represent three of the main catena types established by Karl Staab and indicative of the development of the catena from its earliest recoverable period containing the *Urkatena* and *Corpus Extravagantium*, to the addition of the *Scholia Photiana*. An analysis of the seventeen manuscripts selected for the edition is provided alongside a *stemma codicum* representing a *conceptualisation* of textual relationships between the manuscripts and the process of the transmission of the catena. The presence of author attributions in the manuscript tradition and the source material of unattributed scholia are examined with discussions related to their reliability. The identification of Oecumenius as a source for select scholia within the catena is paralleled with similar material in the commentary on the Apocalypse produced by Oecumenius, concluding that the same source is likely responsible for both. The editorial text of the critical edition is presented alongside its English translation with an accompanying theological commentary. The commentary analyses the content of each scholion in light of patristic exegesis from the second to seventh centuries. A critical edition with apparatus is provided for the entire catena of Ephesians with a separate edition and apparatus, with English translation, included for the *Scholia Photiana*. A critical edition produced from the most current catalogue of manuscripts. Analyses each stage of production in the life of the Ps.-Oecumenian catena. Theological commentary on the content of the catena

Oecumenius

Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews

HYPOTHESIS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Paul writes this from Italy. The occasion of the letter was this. Since the Jews were insisting on the law and shadowy figures, the apostle Paul, having become the teacher of the Gentiles and sent to preach the Gospel to the nations, wrote this letter after he had written to all the Gentiles, also to the Hebrews who had believed from the circumcision, to teach them through this Epistle, in which he declares that Christ has come and that the shadow of the law has ceased. And indeed, it first demonstrates that prophets and announcers [μηνυτὰς] of his coming were sent for this reason, and that Christ himself is the Son of God, through whom all things were made. And that this Son had to become a man, so that by the sacrifice of his body he might destroy death. For salvation was to come to all not through the blood of calves or goats, but through the blood of Christ. Moreover, it shows that the law made no one perfect but had only a shadow of the good things to come. The Jewish people did not find rest, but a day of rest was left to all of us in common. Furthermore, it also demonstrates that the priestly ministry was transferred from Aaron to Christ: whose figure was Melchizedek, who was not descended from Levi. It signifies that the fathers

were justified by faith, and not by the works of the law. Then, after Paul also urged them to have good morals and praised their tolerance for Christ, and advised them to honor the elders, he concludes the Epistle.

ANOTHER HYPOTHESIS

The Epistle to the Hebrews indeed seems not to be from Paul, both because of the style of writing and because it does not attach his name, as in all the other Epistles; also because it says: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness with signs and wonders?" (Heb. 2:3-4) And indeed the reason why the style was changed is evident. For it is said to have been written to the Hebrews in their own language, later translated, as some think, by Luke, but as it seems to most, by Clement; for he also preserves its character. However, the reason why he did not attach his name to the Epistle is the order of the matter. For Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, and not of the Jews. For he had given the right hand of fellowship to Peter and the other apostles, so that he himself would minister among the Gentiles with Barnabas, while those around Peter would go to the circumcision. Since there was a partnership in preaching, and the Jews had heard that Paul was teaching a departure from the law, it is fitting that he writes a letter to the Hebrews to show the agreement of the preaching. However, when he was writing to them, it was not appropriate for him to declare himself an Apostle at the beginning. The letter itself also testifies that it is Paul's, as it says: You have also shared in the afflictions that have come upon me in my chains. (Heb. 10:34) And when he says: "Pray more earnestly that I may be restored to you more quickly"

(Heb. 13:19); furthermore, when he says: "You know our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you." (Heb. 13:23) For no one except Paul, as I believe, had sent Timothy into ministry: and while waiting for him more quickly, he promises them his own and Timothy's arrival, as he often does. Many other things also show us that this is his Epistle, as the reading itself teaches in the course of it.

THEODORET¹

For what reason does Paul, being the Apostle to the Gentiles, write to the Hebrews? And this while they were hostile towards him because he was paralyzing [παραλύειν] the law? For Peter and the others who were with him, lowering themselves to the weak understanding of the Jews, were somewhat following the law. We say that just as it was not committed to Paul to baptize, yet out of an abundance of ministry he was also baptizing: so he writes to the Hebrews, although he was sent to the Gentiles. Indeed, he had anxious care for them, so much so that he even said: "I could wish to be accursed from Christ for their sake" (Rom. 9:3); and again: "I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints." (Rom. 15:25) Therefore, Paul writes to those who had already believed in Jerusalem and in Palestine: he writes, however, to comfort them because they had suffered many afflictions from their own fellow countrymen who did not believe, as he himself indicates, saying, "Strengthen your limp hands and your weak knees." (Heb. 12:12)

However, two points in this in the Epistle: Paul comforts them that they have bravely endured temptations, and that a good reward will be given for these things. Moreover, he discusses many things about faith, showing that the Jewish practices are no

longer necessary, as it was a figure of the truth, while our own practices are necessary as they are the truth.

Therefore, why Paul did not add a proper name when writing to the Hebrews, Clement² writes in his "The Hypotypes" as follows: Now indeed, as the blessed elder says: When the Lord was sent as the apostle of the Almighty God to the Hebrews, it was done out of modesty that Paul, who was sent to the Gentiles, did not write himself as the apostle of the Hebrews, out of honor bestowed upon the Lord. Furthermore, out of abundant love, it was done that the preacher and apostle of the Gentiles also wrote to the Hebrews.

Translator's notes on the preface

1. Theodoret of Cyrus was a significant theologian of the School of Antioch, biblical commentator, and bishop of Cyrus (423–457AD).
2. Clement of Alexandria (150-215AD). The Hypotypes of Clement of Alexandria is one of his lost works. It still existed in the 9th century, but probably perished with so much else in the sack of Constantinople by the renegade army originally hired for the Fourth Crusade. [Roger Pearse]

THE APOSTLE PAUL

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

CHAPTER 1

The divine doctrine of Christ, to whom the glory of the Father and the power of all things has been given, with the purification of all that is on earth, from which he ascended to heavenly glory.

Hebrews 1:1-3a *In many times and in various ways, God spoke long ago to the fathers through the prophets; but in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He made heir of all things, through whom also He made the ages [αἰῶνας]. He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word [ῥήματι].*

"*In many times and in various ways.*" God spoke in various and diverse manners through the prophets of old; but to us, he has spoken through the Son. Therefore, we have a great difference compared to our forefathers. For since they suffered evils, they did not think that they were so cared for by God as their forefathers; therefore, it shows that they are more cared for than those. For to those he sent prophets; but to us, he sent his Son.

"*but in these last days.*" He comforts those worn out by adverse circumstances, saying: *in the last*. For, he says, the end is near; and for some, rest from pains, and for others, the beginning of rewards.

"*He has spoken to us by His Son.*" He did not say, "He spoke to us in Christ," that is, through Christ; (for they were still weaker concerning Christ.) But, "*by His Son,*" that is, through the Son.

"*whom He made heir of all things.*" He says, "He made him heir and Lord of the whole world." The term "*he made*" is appropriate for the incarnation.

— [PHOTIUS] Who made him heir? Over whom? Over all things. Of all who approach the immortal and divine nature. Indeed, the Son is the heir and participant of the Father's substance [οὐσίας], wealth, and power. Then, when he said that the Son is the heir of the Father's possessions, he also explains how. Through him, he says, *the ages* were created: that is, the *ages* are the common works of him and the Father. But if *the*

ages are the mutual work of the Father and the Son, then those things which are in *the ages* are certainly mutual to the Father and the Son. And if those things which are in *the ages*, much more those things which are after the ages, namely the world and those things which are in it.

Then, lest you think that the heir is not called an heir by nature, but by a certain grace and adoption, Paul adds: "*He is the radiance of His glory,*" saying practically: Although I have said that the Father appointed him as heir, understand that nothing humble or unworthy of God is implied. For it is not said that the heir is to be made by the act of adoption and that he is to be considered as such, but rather it is a declaration of the relationship of the Son to the Father as a cause according to nature of reference and consent: and lest you think the Son exists without a principle, alienating him from the paternal kinship, and imply two principles separated from each other. Indeed, for this very reason he was also called by me heir, so that you may immediately understand from whom the inheritance descends, nor may you suspect him to be unbegotten like the Father: for this reason it was said by me, *Heir*, and, *He appointed*. Therefore, I immediately added: Who, being the *radiance*.

But if it is not established that there was or would be radiance (for Paul says: when there was *radiance*), nor is the heir truly appointed, but only in the way I mentioned above. But see how significantly and precisely he has spoken, when he says *Radiance*, having said a *representation*, and *being*, and of the *glory*. For by radiance, he reveals the natural progression [πρόοδον] of the *Son* from the Father.

Indeed, the *radiance* of anyone never proceeds entirely through grace or adoption, neither from the sun, nor from fire, nor from any other source from which *radiance* is usually derived. However, by saying "*he is,*" he shows that this is not something

newly made for him to be *radiance*, but that it has always been from eternity.

For *who is* [ὅν], since He does not have a recent existence but is from eternity and always is. Then also the divine attribute is presented through *who is*. For thus also the Father says, "I am the One who is [Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὄν], " speaking to Moses (Ex. 3:14).

Therefore, there are testimonies to demonstrate both the natural progression of the Son from the Father and the consubstantiality [όμοούσιον], and coeternal [συναίδιον], as well as what he says: "*The Radiance*," and what he states: "who is." Indeed, he also adds "of his Glory," so that you may say: "His *radiance* is the Son," which is most honorable, and it comes from nature, and there is nothing greater in the Father.

You see how and whose *heir* the *Son* is? Then, explaining more clearly what has been said, Paul adds: "*and the exact representation of His being.*" That is, having embraced the essence and substance in Himself, God is of infinite authority, omnipotent, Creator, and whatever else expresses the *being* of the Father, besides being the Father, all these things are the *Son*: therefore, He encompasses and sustains all things by His powerful word, and governs them.

Do you know how he is truly the *heir* and *sustains all* that belongs to the Father? Afterwards, when Paul spoke of the divine and supernatural about the Son, he also transitions to the rest: which are most admirable and no less supernatural, yet by hearing they seem humble and lowly, for example, death and killing! But.....
[end of the excerpt from Photius] —¹

"through whom also He made the ages." Where are those who say, "when the Son was not"? For the Creator of *the ages* is not subject to time. But since the Father is the cause of the Son, it is

fitting that He is also the cause of those things that came into being through Him. Therefore he says: *through whom*. For the Father seems to act when He begets the Son who has done these things.

"*He is.*" It is called a *radiance*, indicating the manner in which it originates from the Father, as if in some way it is an outward procession, neither entirely freed from the source of its existence, nor entirely constituted, but rather emerging, as if to stand by itself, and to have its own existence. Thus, the holy Cyril in the fifth book On the Trinity. The manifestation of the consubstantial and coeternal, as light from light. The character, as the likeness of the glory, is the Son of the Father. For the Son of the Father is similar and unchangeable, and as if into a character in different *being*² [ὑποστάσεσι].

"*sustaining all things.*" As if carrying the invisible and the visible in the word, bearing and governing. And he said word [Πῆμα], showing that he easily leads and carries all things.

Hebrews 1:3-4b Through his own purification for our sins, he sat at the right hand of majesty on high; having become so much superior to the angels as he has inherited a more excellent name than theirs.

Speaking of the bare Word [λόγον] of God, He came into humanity, lest they be overwhelmed by the sublimity of what has been said. By Himself, Paul says, that is, He did not send another minister, but worked the purification by Himself, through His cross and death, when He had freed us from sins in baptism.

"*of majesty*", that is, of the Father. For after the remission of sins was first made, He sat down at the right hand of God with His flesh.

"on high." Above all, he says, he ascends to the paternal throne. However, these signify consubstantiality [όμοούσιον].

"having become so much superior to the angels." The discourse is about the privilege itself. For His flesh was made: for the Word of God is not made, but begotten. Therefore, His flesh is so much more excellent than the angels, as can be known from the excellence of the names.

— [OECUMENIUS] Or what is said to be Generated [Γενόμενος], do not take it concerning the flesh, lest you think it to be divided from this: but concerning Christ, who is worshiped in one essence [ὑποστάσει] even with His flesh. For where it has once touched what pertains to the privilege, it speaks of humble things without fear. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"he has inherited a more excellent name." For the Son, having a name from the beginning, the Word, and after the flesh, He possessed it. Therefore, it is rightly said, "he has inherited," as through the incarnation. He has been called Christ. To say of Christ that he has acquired it by hereditary right means that he has obtained that which he had already possessed long ago.

— In another way. [PHOTIUS³] The inheritance primarily belongs to those who are entitled, but not to those who are alienated. Thus, what was fitting for the heavenly Word was received below through the flesh that was also assumed. But what is that? The Son, of the God of all, who is also the Father of that flesh, is to say, "I have begotten you." (Ps. 2:7) What he says: "today" is not a sign of time, but that the Father has never been separated from the legitimate paternal relationship that He has with the Son.

But if he were to say: I have always been affected towards you in this way: not as if a generation has come, but that it may always persist and continuously derive a beginning, with no end. Indeed,

consider whether it may be adapted in such a way that both are indeed said of Christ, namely, "You are my Son," and "Today I have begotten you" (Ps. 2:7): but that, "You are my Son," insofar as He is the Word: for it signifies His eternal birth; whereas "Today I have begotten you" refers to the flesh: for it designates a recent birth. For He was born by the good pleasure of the Father. "The Holy Spirit," said the angel, "will come upon you"; and then also: "The power of the Most High will overshadow you." (Luke 1:35) [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

That the glory of Christ is not ministerial, but divine and effective: therefore it does not dwell in the present age, in which there are ministers, but in the future.

Hebrews 1:5-7 *For to which of the angels did He ever say, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? And again, "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son." But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." And of the angels He says, "Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire."*

We heard, and we who are men, are true sons through grace. The angels, however, did not hear this, lest their sublimity be thought to be from nature rather than from grace. Christ, however, is not from grace, but from nature.

"*I have begotten You.*" The Father relates the birth of the Son according to the flesh, therefore he said: "*today*"; Thus says the holy Athanasius.

"I will be to Him a Father." — [OECUMENIUS] Again, accept this as the Son's birth according to the flesh, belonging to the Father; for it is clearly said, *"I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son* according to the flesh." [end of the Oecumenius excerpt] —⁴

"But when He again brings." Indeed, *he brings*, is as if "hands over." For then He obtained *the world* which was voluntarily governed by Him, when He tasted death for the whole world, and when He was believed to be God.

However, in order that the speech may be easily received, he said that the Father introduces the Son. By introducing, he understands not that He was previously located outside the created world: (for how could he fill all things?), But that He had nothing in common with the created world since He was God. Furthermore, when He assumed flesh, then He communicated with the created world; when He united to Himself that which was created. Thus, the holy Cyril, in his work, "Christ is God." And blessed Gregory of Nyssa in his books against Eunomius. What he says: The Firstborn, does not refer to the second, but of the one and only begotten from the Father.

— Another. [PHOTIUS³] *"But when He again brings the firstborn into the world."* That is, when it was His good pleasure for His Firstborn to appear in flesh to those who populated the world. For He says: "And the angels came and ministered to Him (Matt. 4:11); and: "From now on you will see angels descending upon the Son of Man." (Jn. 1:51) [end of the excerpt by Photius]

"Let all the angels of God worship Him," That is, in the flesh. It shows here that he is so much greater than them, as a master is greater than servants; just as if someone were to bring someone into a house, he would immediately command those in charge of

them to worship [προσκυνεῖν] him.⁵ Thus appearing in the flesh: that is, the angels worship the Son in the flesh.⁶

"Who makes His angels spirits." For they are created beings, therefore he says, "Who makes." Behold the greatest difference: that some are created, while the One is uncreated; for the act of creating denotes the production from non-being into being. It is not only to angels that the exceptional pertains, but also to every functional power. He did not say, "Having created," but "Creating," that is, sustaining by the Word, according to which they came into being.⁷

Hebrews 1:8-12 To the Son: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than your companions. And you, O Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands: they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, and they will be changed; but you are the same, and your years will have no end.

Since the Son is not a creature, but a true offspring, He is no longer referred to as "who makes," (Heb. 1:13) as is said of the angels, but rather, "Your throne, O God, is forever." The *throne*, however, is a sign of royalty, but the *scepter* is *of righteousness*.

"The scepter of righteousness." Behold, there is another symbol of royalty, the royal scepter, and the staff.

"You have loved righteousness." These humble things are appropriate after the incarnation, as they are able to receive the lowly nature of the flesh.

"therefore God, your God, has anointed you." O God, your God has anointed you. The "you" is through the flesh. For humanity is anointed with the Holy Spirit. It does not operate as it does with mere men, such as prophets and patriarchs. Anointing is, as it were, the entire presence of the anointer. Thus, holy Cyril observed. But see how Eusebius said that Symmachus refers to and rejects this anointing. "Therefore," he says, "God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy [χαρᾶς] over your companions."

"With the oil of gladness [ἀγαλλιάσεως]." Indeed, the oil of gladness is the Holy Spirit; the people are partakers of Christ. What he means by this is: Not as ordinary men are anointed, so Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit to a measure, but all was anointed with the Spirit.

"And you, O Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning." For when he again brings in the Firstborn; that is, when the Father was pleased to reveal His Firstborn Son in the flesh to those who dwell in the world. For it says: And the angels came and ministered to him (Matt. 4:11); and you will see the angels descending upon the Son of Man (Jn. 1:51) from now on.⁴

"they will perish." Something greater than creation has been revealed, the transformation of the world.⁸ For all that is seen will be transformed, and they will come to incorruption. Therefore, it is said, "*they will perish*" from the present sight.

"like a robe you will roll them up." He indicated the ease of their change.⁹ For everything will change from decay to incorruption; and thus easily, as if one were to wrap a cloak. But if he works so easily towards the better transformation and creation, would he need to focus on the lesser creation of another?

"but you are the same." He says that you will change and renew all things, and make the corruptible into incorruptible. You will

truly live forever and will always remain.¹⁰ And there is no small comfort for those suffering here, to know that things will not always be this way, but will undergo a change; and that the one who is being cared for by them remains for eternity and lives forever.

Hebrews 1:13-14 To which of the angels did He ever say: "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

— [PHOTIUS] Therefore, he offered the first fruits of our nature to the Father. And the Father marveled at the gift, both for the worthiness of the one who presented it and for the purity of what was offered, as if to receive it with His own hands and place the gift beside Him, and said, “*Sit at My right hand.*” [end of the Photius excerpt] —

He said that he did not want to show that he would not have dared to sit otherwise unless commanded: certainly not; but do not think that he lacks a beginning. For that this is so is indicated by the place of the chair, designating a similar honor, and by what was said above: *He sat*, when it is not previously read that he was told: *Sit*. Or because the Prophet could not signify the harmony and will of the Father in any other way than to sit, he used the word, *Sit*. Therefore, this is also great, not only over human nature but also over every creature. Nevertheless, this is also proclaimed on account of human nature. For as far as He is God, the Son has an eternal throne: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.” (Heb. 1:8) For he was not honored with this distinction after the cross and passion as God: but as a man he received what he already had as God. Nor was he exalted when he was humble, but when he was sublime and in the form of

God, he humbled himself by taking the form of a servant. (Phil. 2:6-7) The evangelist also cries out: "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared." (Jn. 1:18) And the Lord: "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me." (Jn. 14:11) And elsewhere: "Glorify me, O Father, with the glory I had with you before the world was made." (Jn. 17:5) Therefore, as a man hears: "Sit at my right hand." (Ps. 101:1) For God has eternal dominion.

"*until I make Your enemies Your footstool.*" Notice the demonstration that the Son is legitimate. The Father is angry against the enemies of the Son. And He did not say that the Son is powerless to put them under His feet, but to reveal the identity of will. What He says "*until*" is not indicative of time, as if when the *enemies* are placed as a *footstool*, it would again be that He would rise: far from it; but He wants to show that He will not be powerless to put all as a footstool.

Indeed, *until* [ἕως] or as long as something exists, it brings forth what is up to that point, but does not remove what comes after it. Thus Gregory¹¹ says in the second book "On the Son": "*Are they not all ministering spirits?*" He comforts them, saying: Christ is indeed the natural Son of God, but the angels are our servants: having been assigned this ministry, that they may do and administer all things so that we humans may be saved. For indeed, angels have frequently become ministers to men, as to Mary (Luke 1:26) and at the Lord's tomb (Matt. 28:2-7) and to Cornelius. (Acts 10:3)

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 1

1. There is a section missing in the text of the PG.

2. ὑπόστασις · that which has actual existence. a substance, real being · the substantial quality, substance, nature, of a person or thing.
3. The PG and the Pharakedies version do not provide any indicators that the excerpt comes from Oecumenius himself, but it is found in Staab's edition.
4. Photius of Constantinople, chief author of the great schism between East and West. He was the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople from 858 to 867 and from 877 to 886.
5. to worship [προσκυνεῖν]. Also means pay homage, show reverence; to kneel down (before). This is different from other Greek words such as, **Λατρεία** which is divine adoration given exclusively to God, and **Δουλεία** which is honor or veneration for saints and angels. This makes sense that Oecumenius used the example of, "just as if someone were to bring someone into a house, he would immediately command those in charge of them to worship [προσκυνεῖν] him."
6. The PG only reads, "Thus appearing in the flesh: that is, the angels worship the Son in the flesh."
7. The PG only has, For they are created beings, therefore he says, "*Who makes.*" The Pharmakidēs version has the longer reading.
8. Pharmakides added, "Something greater than creation has been revealed, the transformation of the world."
9. Pharmakides added, For everything will change from decay to incorruption; and thus easily, as if one were to wrap a cloak. But if he works so easily towards the better transformation and creation, would he need to focus on the lesser creation of another?
10. Pharmakides added, And there is no small comfort for those suffering here, to know that things will not always be this way, but will undergo a change; and that the one who is being cared for by them remains for eternity and lives forever.
11. Gregory Nazianzen, Orations.

CHAPTER 2

Hebrews 2:1-3 *Therefore, we must pay more careful attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved unwavering, and every transgression and disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was first spoken by the Lord and was delivered to us by those who heard it.*

Because, he says, the one who has spoken to us, the Son, is so much greater than the prophets and the angels who served in the Old Testament, we must pay closer attention to what has been spoken by him, rather than as we were inclined to the law.¹

"*Lest at any time we drift away.*" This is, let us not fall away from what is honorable and from the way that leads to salvation.

"*The word spoken through angels.*" Either Paul speaks of the law as having been given through angels, as he also says in the Epistle to the Galatians: "Ordained through angels," (Gal. 3:19) or administered; or of those things which were said to others by angels: as concerning the Sodomites (Gen. 19:1), as concerning the lamentation in the book of Judges (2:1), when the angel of the Lord came to the Israelites and reproached them for their transgression. "It was necessary," he said, "to remove all these nations from the midst, but you also made treaties with them: therefore the Lord will not destroy the nations that have been left behind." Upon hearing this, they all wept with one heart: therefore, the place was called the Place of Weeping.

But he says, this is of such a nature. For if those things predicted by angels have happened and have come to pass, how much more will those things predicted by the Son of God happen?

"*just retribution.*" Not that one thing is, and another is not; but every transgression and disobedience received its just retribution, that is, a reward, and nothing remained unpunished. He calls

punishment a wage, although normally the term wage is applied to a favorable name; but the apostle does not concern himself with niceties of words.²

“how shall we escape” He says, it is this: If what was spoken by angels in the Old Law proved of no effect, and all who sinned received their due, what excuse shall we have, seeing those who received it and yet were careless?³

“For if we neglect so great a salvation.” Which does not promise earthly goods like the Old Testament, but the kingdom of heaven and adoption as sons. However, it speaks of salvation which has been demonstrated and revealed by Christ, that is, faith in Him. This, however, it called salvation, showing that what was in the old law was not salvific.

“It was first spoken by the Lord.” Paul then shows that it is worthy of faith. For no one else, he says, was a minister of this, as was Moses in the old covenant, but Christ Himself.

“and was delivered to us by those who heard it.” They were delivered and believed by those who heard. But who are those who heard? Clearly the divine disciples, the eyewitnesses who became ministers of the word, as Luke also says; for they certainly informed us. (Luke 1:2)⁴ Do not take offense; Paul does not say that he himself also heard from Christ, although he did hear.

Hebrews 2:4-8 *While God also bore witness with signs and wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will. For it was not to angels that He subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. But there is a certain one who testified somewhere, saying, “What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you visit him?”*

You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet." For in subjecting everything to him, He left nothing outside of his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.

Then, lest those who heard from Christ be believed to lie, and say one thing for another: He says not so. For God Himself bears *witness* to the truth along with them through *signs and wonders*, and various powers which He works for them.

"*and various miracles.*" Paul said "*various*" to indicate the abundance of the gifts; for never were so many and so diverse signs produced. And since magicians also perform many things, he said "*miracles*"; for those are not powers but weakness and illusion and empty matters.⁵

"*by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed.*" And through the gifts and the coming of the Holy Spirit, those things are made which are of divine testimony. It is said, however, concerning distributions, that as spiritual grace is *distributed*, it is according to each one's measure and according to the proportion of faith, and as it is expedient for each. (1 Cor. 12:6)

"*according to His own will.*" Namely, of the Paraclete. Dividing, Paul says, to each as He wishes.

"*For it was not to angels that He subjected the world.*" This is a consequence of the comparison with the angels that was previously stated. For it was necessary for the chief creature, namely the angelic one, by consulting Christ according to the flesh, to show Him to be greater as the Lord.

He speaks of the future world when He says *the world to come*.

"*of which we are speaking.*" That is, concerning which we said above that, When he brings in the firstborn into the world.

Therefore let not your mind be led astray seeking another world. But some understood a future world, the world that will be, concerning which, he says, the whole discourse is to us. For then Christ himself will sit as judge of that world; and the angels, as ministers and servants, will stand by.⁶

"But there is a certain one who testified somewhere, saying." Speaking to those who knew the Scriptures, Paul does not mention the names of those who say: *"What is man?"*

— [PHOTIUS] For this reason, he now cites it. *What is man that you are mindful of him?* Since it seemed to oppose his purpose, he indeed shows that Christ is greater than the angels, yet he says that he was *made a little lower than the angels.* He presents this in order to resolve the objection that seems to arise, and in resolving it, he says that he was made lower because of the passion of death. "For we saw him and he had neither form nor beauty." (Isa. 53:2)

Meanwhile, it is granted that this was also said about the Lord, since he served them as well, to comfort them, as it is said: *"putting everything in subjection under his feet."* [end of the Photius excerpt] —

"that you are mindful of him." — [THEODORET] For you have not only brought him into being, but also granted him to be well, and you will continue to *be mindful*, and *you will visit him* when he is in a bad state.

"You made him a little lower than the angels." Here he recalls the declaration after the transgression. For the mortal is made lower than the angels. [end of the Theodoret excerpt] —⁷

This applies both to common humanity and especially to Christ in the flesh.

“At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.” For he said: *“He left nothing outside of his control,”* but they suffered badly and were seized by the Jews who remained in disbelief, so that they would not hesitate about what was said, Paul says: *“Do not be troubled. For not yet has all things been subjected to him, not yet has the preaching been scattered, not yet has the proclaimed king openly received power.”*

That He assumed the flesh according to the disposition and compassion and intimacy that He had towards us, so that He might free man from death through intimacy with Himself.

Hebrews 2:9-10 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels.” Paul endeavors to show that what was said applies to Christ, and he says that even if he subjected all things, it does not yet seem to fit him; and yet we showed that ultimately even this will occur; but then that he *was made a little lower than the angels*, this fits Him rather than us. For he indeed, having been three days in Hades as a man, was a little inferior to the angels, since he was in no way subject to death there; but we, being destroyed for a long time, are not briefly but far more greatly made inferior to the angels. And that to be crowned with glory and honor because of the passion suits Him more than it does us.⁸

“because of the suffering of death.” Having spoken of the suffering of death, he revealed true death. For it was not an illusion of death, but an active suffering.

"crowned with glory and honor." He calls the cross *glory and honor*. For to make heaven and earth and man and the powers above is not as worthy of God and exceedingly glorious as to deem it worthy to be crucified for us. This he says also comforting them, as if he were saying, "If Christ endured these things for us, what great thing is it if you also endure trials for him?"

"so that by the grace of God." For it is by the grace of the Holy Trinity that the Son suffered. For the Father did not give the Son according to obligation, nor did the Son accept it, nor did the Spirit cooperate in the Cross, but everything happened by grace.

It is rightly said, *"he might taste."* For He did not remain in death, but only in a certain manner did He *taste* it.

— [OECUMENIUS]. It should be noted that the Nestorians distort the Scripture, and thus they read it in such a way that He tasted death apart from God, constructing this by asserting that Christ had the indwelling of the Word of God and not a union, claiming that His divinity did not accompany Him while He was crucified.

Indeed, it has been said, they argue, "Without God he would taste death." But see how a certain orthodox one has responded. First of all, it is stated, χάριτι Θεοῦ, that is, grace or through the *grace of God*; yet even if it is said as you wish, χωρὶς Θεοῦ, that is, "without God", it must be understood that Christ died without God or except for God *for everyone*. For he did not die only for men, but also for the heavenly powers, to break down the barrier of separation and unite the lower with the higher. (Eph. 2:14) This is similar to what has been said elsewhere. But when it is said that all things are subjected, it is evident that it is outside of the one who subjected all things to Himself. (1 Cor. 15:28) [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"taste death for everyone." Not only for the faithful, but for the whole world. For even if not all were saved because of their own unbelief, he himself bore his own on behalf of all and for all. And rightly so, *"he might taste"*; for he did not remain in death, but only in a certain way tasted it; for he immediately rose again. Therefore, in this respect, he is greater than the angels, because he proved to be superior to death.⁹

"For it was fitting that he." It was fitting, Paul says, for God and the Father for whom are all things; he is indeed the beginning of all things.

"by whom all things exist." For if all things are indeed through him, the Father is the one who created all things, who begot the Creator.

"through whom all things exist." See the phrase *"through whom,"* which is placed with the Father. For if there were a decrease, it would belong only to the Son, and it would be added to the Father. But what does the phrase *"through whom"* mean? Understand this: since he said *"through whom all things,"* so that no one might conceive anything absurd, that he is needed by all; (for the preposition *"by"* also means something like this, as when we say, *"through the man the creation came into being"*); he introduced *"through whom,"* explaining that *"through"* means in this way, *"through him,"* that is, all things having been made by him. Therefore, also concerning the Son, when the phrase *"through whom"* is said, accept it thus, instead of *"by whom."*¹⁰

"in bringing many sons." He says that the one who brought them in, in the glory of the only-begotten, through the gift of adoption, the Author of their salvation, their sons, that is, Christ, was perfected through sufferings, in order to show perfect and glorious, as through the cross. And he is a Son, and we are sons; but he is genuine; we, however, are adopted; he saves; we are

being saved; we are united with him, and again we are separated; through him, who has brought many sons to glory, we share; through him, the *author of their salvation*, we are separated.

perfected through sufferings; that is, to complete what was lacking in Him. But what was lacking in Christ, as one might think of a man? The immortal part, namely, so that He might have the image continuously. Therefore, the Father fulfilled what was lacking to Him through the resurrection; for having risen, His death no longer has dominion; and through Him, filling all men, (Rom. 6:9) just as the same apostle says elsewhere: "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." (Heb. 5:9) Thus, the holy Cyril and in the one hundred sixty-fourth chapter of Philalethes.¹¹

Hebrews 2:11-15 *For both he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one. For this reason, he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying: I will proclaim your name to my brothers; in the midst of the church, I will praise you. And again: I will put my trust in him. And again: Here I am, and the children God has given me. Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he likewise shared in the same, so that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the Devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

"*For both he who sanctifies*," that is, Christ, "*and those who are sanctified*," that is, humans, are all from one God and Father. But Christ, as the Son and true offspring and of the essence of the Father, we, however, are as creature ones and have been made worthy of sonship by grace. See in these words the superiority.

He who sanctifies, and we are sanctified. Therefore, both unity and superiority.¹²

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers." — [PHOTIUS] For as he united the flesh to himself, he also put on brotherhood. Saying, *"He is not ashamed,"* He showed the distinction. For He is not a brother by nature, although He is truly a man, but by generosity [φιλανθρωπία], since He is also truly God. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"I will put my trust in him." Since he previously called Him brother and internally father, he signifies that these indeed are names of kindness and grace, but by nature and truth, God is, he says. For who trusts in anyone else except in God alone? And if he were to say: Do not think that hearing Him being called brother and father refers to someone among the common people, God is, he says, in whom it is written that one must trust.

"Here I am, and the children." Here our Father made Christ. But he says: He gave, on account of humanity, just as it is said: "Afterward I will give you the nations as your inheritance." (Ps. 2:8) "Since, therefore, the sons," that is, men, "have communion with flesh and blood; in the same way," that is, similarly and truly, not according to some fantasy, as certain heretics say, He Himself became a partaker of flesh and blood: so that in this also He might demonstrate the love He has for the sons.

The Father made Christ our own. And He gave, for the sake of humanity. Similar to that, "Ask of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance." (Ps. 2:8)

"Therefore", therefore, he says, *"the children,"* that is, the humans, *"share in flesh and blood, he likewise,"* that is, truly and not according to some fantasy, as certain heretics say, He Himself shared in flesh and blood, so that in this also He might demonstrate the love He has for the sons.

— In another way. [OECUMENIUS] We who are numbered among the children have partaken of the blood and flesh of God, that is, we are in blood and flesh, and in perishable and earthly bodies. For this reason, the only-begotten Word of God, being life by nature, partook of the same, and not in any other way, but similarly to us.

"*that through death.*" Then he also speaks of the reason for the Incarnation.

"*The*," Paul says, "*the Devil*", who has the power of death, might be destroyed; and he will be destroyed through death, as it is said, O Wisdom of God! Through death, the Devil had the power; through death, he will be abolished. Christ used against the Devil those arms which He himself was powerful with. How then does He rule over death? Because He is the ruler of sin, from which death comes, and He rules over death, that is, sin is the power of death. Therefore, having sin and being its possessor, He has the power of death (for we say that sin is the power of death). So that it might be thus: through His own death, He abolished sin, having the Devil as a servant, which is the strength of the power of death. For if this had not prevailed over man, death would not have entered into the world. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —¹³

"*all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*" — [PHOTIUS] Before, he says, death was abolished, throughout their lives, humans were exposed and subjected to the fear of slavery: for they feared death which had not yet been abolished: and nothing of worldly pleasures could delight the courageous, and this was due to the fear of death, in the manner of a cruel and savage master always pressing and terrifying those who were on the earth.

"*were held in slavery.*" The people were bound to death, as they were guilty of this slavery. The *slavery of death* is to be held and

subjected to sin, for sin is the power and sting of death. (1 Cor. 15:56) Therefore, since Christ through death abolished the one who has *the power of death, that is, the Devil*, the inventor and leader of sin, sin has become weak, and we have been freed from the slavery according to its dominion; we have been liberated from *the fear of death*. And this is clearly seen in their very actions. For those who before feared and shunned death as the greatest evil and overwhelming, now approach it joyfully as a change of life and a prelude, when they are brought forth for Christ and His laws by those who persecute them. Therefore, is it not evident that the Savior has freed us from the fear of death and from the slavery that comes from it? [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

Hebrews 2:16-18 *For it is evident that he did not take hold of angels, but he takes hold of the seed of Abraham. Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in all things, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.*

"but he took hold of the seed of Abraham." The term "he took hold" [ἐπίλαμβάνεται] indicates that we, as humans, flee from him, but Christ pursues, and by pursuing, he reached and *took hold*. He did not take hold of the nature of angels nor did he assume it, but of human nature.

Then, wishing to signify that Christ came according to the flesh from Judah, he says, "*the seed of Abraham.*"

"*Therefore, he had to be made.*" Since he deemed it necessary to fully partake, from this point onward, he had to be in all respects

made similar to humans. For he was born, he grew, he ate, he drank, he slept, he died, he rose again.

"that he might be a merciful." These things, he says, were arranged for no other reason than that he may have mercy on those on earth and lift them up from the grave.

"and a faithful high priest." Faithful, true. For it is the unusual function of the true and real *high priest* to free those of whom he is high priest from sins. Therefore, in order to offer a sacrifice capable of cleansing us, a man has come and offered himself. Then he explains how this has come to be, and why he is a *faithful high priest*.

He says, *to make atonement for the sins of the people*. For this reason, he has come to atone for us and to cleanse us from our sins.

"in the things pertaining to God." In matters that pertain to God. For in these, high priest has come to be, not to demand bodily tithes and first fruits, but he knew that we had become enemies and rejected before God, and having had mercy on us, he gave himself to us as a high priest.

"For because he himself has suffered and been tempted." The statement is humble and not outside the measures of emptiness. Furthermore, it was said also because of the infancy of those who hear. For what does he say?

For because he himself has suffered, that is, since he himself has *been tempted* in his own body, he will more willingly help *those who are being tempted*. As he said: Having learned by experience what it is to fall into temptations, not only as God, but also as a man, having learned by experience the passion (he is able, that is, he will more willingly reach out his hand to those who are being tempted).

— [PHOTIUS] He can help those who are being tempted, thus it must be understood. For when, he says, the Evil One attacked the sinless body of the Lord and attempted to surround it with temptations (Matt. 4:1-11); (for he attacked, tempting for his own sake; and he was the one inciting the Jews to murder against the Lord) therefore, since he was tempted and suffered while having a sinless body, he possesses righteous and reasonable strength against the Evil One, and is able to rescue those who are being led by sin from the temptations coming from there, and to become a helper to those who are being tempted. For the boldness of the Evil One against the sinless body provided just and reasonable strength to the Lord, to rescue those under sin from the temptations coming from there, and to be found a helper to those who are being tempted. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 2

1. The PG reads, “Therefore, since the things that are taken according to the incarnation are subtle and brief, we must pay closer attention. Or it says that we should pay attention to the law.”
2. The PG reads, “*just retribution*, as if to say: If those things occurred which were said by angels in the Old Testament, and all transgressors were punished, what excuse do we have for forgiveness when we look at them punished and disregard it?”
3. The PG does not have this part for “how shall we escape...”
4. The Pharmakides version adds, “the eyewitnesses who became ministers of the word, as Luke also says; for they certainly informed us. (Luke 1:2)”
5. The Pharmakides version adds, “Paul said “*various*” to indicate the abundance of the gifts; for never were so many and so diverse signs produced. And since magicians also perform many things, he said “*miracles*”; for those are not powers but weakness and illusion and empty matters.”

6. The PG reads, "Concerning which, He says, of which we are speaking. For Christ himself will sit as judge of that world: the angels, however, will stand as servants and ministers."
7. The excerpt by Theodoret comes from his commentary on the Psalms, Documenta Catholica Omnia, Volume 1, 00865.
8. The PG reads, "Paul says this because He was in Hades for three days. By saying "*suffering of death*," he revealed the true death. "*crowned with glory and honor*." He calls the cross *glory and honor*. For it is not so worthy of God and supremely glorious to create heaven and earth and man and the heavenly powers as it is to deem worthy for us to be crucified. This, however, Paul says while also comforting them, as if he were saying: If Christ endured those things for you, what is so surprising if you also endure afflictions for him?"
9. The PG reads, "Although not all have been saved due to their unbelief: nevertheless, he did what was his for all and on behalf of all."
10. The PG has a much shorter reading, "Through whom, it is said of the Father."
11. "Philalethes" refers to a work, specifically a treatise, written by Severus of Antioch, a prominent figure in the Syriac Orthodox Church. The title, "Philalethes," translates to "Lover of Truth". This work is a key text in anti-Chalcedonian theology, defending the Christology of St. Cyril of Alexandria against interpretations promoted by the Council of Chalcedon.
12. The Pharmakides version adds, "Therefore, both unity and superiority."
13. The Oecumenius excerpt is listed as being from Cyril in the PG. But it is identified in Staab's edition as being from Oecumenius. The Pharmakides version reads "OTHERWISE" [ΑΛΛΩΣ.], and it has the excerpt ending at, "and not in any other way, but similarly to us."

CHAPTER 3

That Christ is to be believed in just as they believed in Moses, and the more so as God is more worthy than man.

Hebrews 3:1-3 *Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus Christ, who was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all his house. For this one has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who built the house has more honor than the house itself.*

If therefore you are *partakers* and companions *of the heavenly calling*, seek those things which are above, and let no one speak to you of the things here below; there is the reward, there is the recompense.¹

"*The Apostle and High Priest.*" Coming into the administration [οἰκονομίᾳ], he speaks all the humble things freely. He calls him an *Apostle* because he is sent by the Father as a man. And of the *confession* of faith, "*was faithful.*" He says that he has a favorable faith preserved towards the Father, and that he thinks the same about saving the people.

He says that he was made an *Apostle and High Priest* by *the one who appointed him*, that is, by his Father. There is nothing remarkable here if he speaks thus, once he takes hold of the administration.

"*to the one who appointed him.*" What did he appoint? An *Apostle and High Priest*. Here he speaks not about essence, nor about divinity, but about human dignities [ἀξιωμάτων].

"*just as Moses was faithful in all his house.*" He is about to set forth Christ according to the flesh, preferring Moses; but since these were also faithful towards whom the word was addressed, they still had great honors concerning Moses, so that they might not immediately close their ears, he does not immediately set forth Christ over Moses, but first equalizes, and then he proceeds to set forth. He called his people to *his house*. And he said to the

people of Moses, because they are set against them. For God also says to him, "Your people have sinned." (Ex. 33:7)

— [PHOTIUS] "*just as Moses;*" so that it is in vain that those who are in rebellion against me say to you that he teaches from Moses, and that he is hostile towards him. But this is introduced secretly and not according to the previous discourse, in order to persuade more. For that which is prepared for defense is more suspicious.

"For this one has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses." Saying the equality of Christ with Moses, he now gently speaks of the superiority, *"this one has been counted worthy of more."* Who? The Christ understood according to the flesh, is deemed to have greater glory than Moses, insofar as he has greater honor than the *house*,²

"For this one has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who built the house has more honor than the house itself." Now he speaks of the ultimate superiority, and how great it is from God to man, and he says: Moses was faithful in all his house, that is, the people. But he himself was also of the house, and of the people. Therefore, the Christ according to the flesh is deemed worthy of so much greater glory than Moses, as much as, he says, *he who built the house has more honor than the house itself.* For he refers to the house here as the people along with Moses, since Moses was also one of the people; but Christ is the creator of the house. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

Hebrews 3:4-6 *For every house is built by someone. Moreover, he who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken. But Christ as a Son managed his own house, whose house we*

are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

Since he had called the people and also Moses, he remained in the figure of speech and said, These are the creations and servants. For there is no house unless something has been constructed. But all things have been constructed, including the house by Christ. Therefore, as it is fitting that he who created has preeminence over the work he created, so Christ has preeminence over Moses.

"*And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house.*" Then Paul speaks of another distinction between Christ and Moses, that Moses was faithful as a servant, while the Christ was a genuine Son and of the same essence. For since he called Christ faithful above, and also Moses *faithful*, he explains the distinction of the faithful.

"*for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken.*" To be a witness of the things spoken by God to the Jews, so that they may not be caught in the time of judgment. For it is customary for God to take heaven and earth and the depths as a testimony. "For hear, he says, O heaven, and give ear, O earth." (Deut. 32:1) And again, "Hear, O depths." (Ps. 130:1)

— "*But Christ as a Son.*" For even if he is called faithful, Paul says, it is as a genuine Son that he is faithful, fulfilling the will of the Father, rather the common will of the holy Trinity.

"*whose house we are.*" Here we are the house of Christ, the faithful, according to what is written: "I will dwell in them." (Lev. 27:12; 2 Cor. 6:16) —³

"*if we hold fast the confidence.*" We shall be his house if we do not shrink back because of the faith that belongs to him, but

boast with boldness, and hope to receive good things from Him as God, not being shaken or doubting in anything.

Hebrews 3:7-11 *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested me. They saw my works for forty years. Therefore, I was provoked with that generation, and said, "Always they go astray in their hearts." They have not known my ways, as I swore in my wrath, "If they shall enter my rest."*

Saying that it is necessary to hope for good things from Christ, he now says that we must not harden our hearts towards this faith and hope, so that we do not suffer the same things as those who, in the desert, became unbelievers. And today, which is always evident, as if he were saying: Whenever and as long as today is, if you hear the voice of the one calling Christ, do not harden your hearts and become stubborn so as not to hear him.

"*do not harden your hearts.*" For the hard and unyielding and stubborn are against the one who speaks to them.

"*your hearts.*" For the Israelites, he says, becoming hard-hearted, provoked the God who was speaking to them.

"*On the day of testing.*" And what is this *rebellion* that occurred on that day? When, distrusting God, they tested Him. "Will He be able," he says, "to give bread, or prepare a table for His people?" (Ps. 77:19)

— [PHOTIUS] "*where your fathers tested me.*" Where, that is, *in the desert.* Or, where they tested Him in temptation, so that it may be the "*where,*" not the indicative place. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"I was provoked with that generation." That is, I was burdened by it, because they always distrusted and tested Me.

"as I swore in my wrath." To such an extent, he says, they did *not know my ways*, until they brought me to this point, *so that I swore they shall not enter my rest*, that is, the land of promise, in which having entered they were to rest from wars.

"If they shall enter into my rest." But those, having been unfaithful and having tempted God, did not enter into Palestine. For this is the *rest*. But what will be for us, he says, since there is no other rest on earth, of which we are to be deprived by being disobedient to God? Yes, he says, there will be now the true rest, of which that old one was a type, and you will be deprived of this, if indeed you disbelieve in Christ. For there are three rests. One is the Sabbath, in which God rested from his works. The second, the promised land of Palestine. The third, the truly real one, of which the two mentioned were a type, the kingdom of heaven, where all sorrow and pain and sighing have fled away. Therefore, he says, you will be deprived of this by being disobedient to Christ.

Hebrews 3:12-15 *See, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "today," so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said, "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."*

Fearful of the saying. *See*, he says, *lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief*, from the rest, the kingdom of heaven.

— [PHOTIUS] “*an evil heart.*” There are many wicked hearts of unbelief. For there is a wicked heart of unbelief, which does not believe, but is greedy for gain, is arrogant, is drunken, and many other things. Moreover, and incomparably, a heart is a wicked heart of unbelief, which departs from the faith in God.

Therefore, see,” he says, “that there never *be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.*” And of unbelief, I say, he means the *departure from the living God.*

And he says well. *An evil heart of unbelief.* For there is also a good heart of unbelief, as in, “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God.” (1 Jn. 4:1) [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

In the *departing*, that is, through *unbelief*,

from the living God. For otherwise unbelief does not find a way unless one departs from God. For as long as one holds on to God and trusts in Him, as the Almighty, he considers nothing impossible.³

“*But encourage one another.*” Build each other up, and spur one another on.

“*As long as it is called ‘today’.*” Until the end, he says; for until the end, *today* is called. For he said, “*Today, if you hear his voice,*” he says, until that which is spoken of as today.

“*so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*” So that it does not happen, he says, as it occurred with our ancestors, and that their hearts may become hard and unyielding, deceived by unbelief, which now calls sin.

“*For we have become partakers of Christ.*” One, he says, we have become partakers with Christ, since He has deemed it worthy to be our head and to make us His members.

"if we hold the beginning of our confidence." The *beginning of confidence* is faith towards Christ. For by it we have endured and have become *partakers of Christ*.

"to the end." The 'to the end' clearly indicates that they had begun.

"As in the rebellion." Hyperbaton [ὑπερβατὸν] is: for we must understand it as "Let us fear."

The surpassing thing; in what is said: Today, if you hear the voice, and the things following, let us fear, lest, a promise being left behind, and the things following.⁵

Hebrews 3:16-19 *For some, having heard, provoked, but not all who came out of Egypt through Moses. To whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter into his rest, but to those who did not obey? And we see that they could not enter because of unbelief.*

For some, having heard the promises of God, just as we hear them, *provoked* God to anger through *unbelief*. For He desires to save them just as He saves those who have heard, and they are of no benefit from merely hearing the promise. Thus, he says, you also will not be fulfilled if you have only heard the preaching, unless you also believe. And that there is a need for faith, from those who heard long ago, but because they did not believe, they perished, is confirmed by the word. For just as it was not sufficient for those to be deemed worthy of the voice of God, but having not believed they perished, so it will not be sufficient for you either to become hearers of faith, unless you also believe sincerely. Moreover, these thought that it was enough to have self-sufficiency from merely having heard the preaching. For this

also indicates, in saying, "For we are also evangelized," just as they were.

"For some, having heard, provoked, but not all who came out of Egypt." If indeed Caleb and Joshua were not unbelievers, they also entered the land of promise.

"To whom was he angry?" This is according to the question for clarity and to avoid contradiction; for things posed as questions are based on what is agreed upon. Against whom, he says, did he bear resentment? He also adds the punishment. For, he says, their limbs fell in the desert, those large and thigh-like parts; and by parts, he showed the whole bodies.⁶

"To whom did he swear?" This is to be read as a question. Against whom, He says, did He have a hostile spirit?

"And we see that they were not able to enter." Behold, he says, before our eyes lies the punishment of unbelief. For they, having been *unbelief*, did *not enter* the promised land.

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 3

1. The PG only reads, "there is the reward, there is the recompense."
2. The PG only reads, "is deemed to have greater glory than Moses, insofar as he has greater honor than the house,"
3. The PG has indicators that give the impression that a section is an excerpt, but there are no names to indicate the source. The Pharmakides version has no indicators, nor any other version that I found. I could not find this excerpt as a quote from any source, but I did find some similar phrases in Dialogue 1 from Theodoret of Cyrus in his works Dialogues.

4. The Pharmakides version adds, "For otherwise unbelief does not find a way unless one departs from God. For as long as one holds on to God and trusts in Him, as the Almighty, he considers nothing impossible."
5. The PG reads, "Hyperbaton [ὑπερβατὸν] is: for we must understand it as "Let us fear."
6. The PG has a shorter reading, "According to the question. To whom, he says, did he bear resentment?"

CHAPTER 4

Exhortation to strive to enter the rest that has been promised.

Hebrews 4:1-2 *Let us therefore fear that, while the promise of entering his rest remains, lest anyone of you may seem to have come short of it. For we are also evangelized just as they were; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*

"*Let us therefore fear.*" In the saying, he says, "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion (Heb. 3:15), *let us therefore fear.*" And the "*therefore*" has been added. For the sake of being lengthy, so that the construction may not seem incoherent, the "*therefore*" has been placed. *Let us fear*, he says, lest any of you should seem to come short of *entering into his rest*. For the promise of entering into his rest still remains for those who wish. And this is the kingdom of heaven.

"lest any one of you may seem to have come short of it." They are lacking in entering. However, he did not say, "They have come short," but rather, "*may seem to have come short.*"

"For we are also evangelized just as they were." We have been evangelized about the good things to come, just as they were in a symbolic way about the earth.¹

"but the word which they heard did not profit them." You see that this is what he says, that nothing will *profit* you from becoming hearers of the preaching, if you do not also bring in what is from yourselves, namely *faith*; for *the word which you heard* by itself has not benefited even those in the past. But see how on our part the matter was called the gospel, as a promise of true goods, and as given from a crown and victory; but on their part, a matter of hearing.²

"not being mixed with faith." That is to say, do not be mixed with it [the word³]. From this, the idea of believing without hesitation is hinted at. And he says that those who believed heard. For they truly heard, those who also believed. Paul speaks about Joshua and Caleb. And this he says: *The word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed* and as if blended and united *with faith in those who heard it*, namely, those who believed concerning Jesus.

— [PHOTIUS] He says, *not being mixed*, that is, with those who have believed. How were they to be united? *With faith*, he says, that is, through faith. For if these had believed just as those did, they would have been gathered into one, as if by a kind of glue of faith, uniting them. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

Hebrews 4:3-5 *For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, if they shall enter my rest," although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested*

on the seventh day from all his works." And again in this passage he said, "If they shall enter my rest."

The testimony also judges from which it makes that apparent. And see how it establishes that. In any case, he says, it is necessary that some *enter* into the *rest* of God, lest the promise be made in vain and rashly. Therefore, since they did not enter (for he swore that *they shall not enter*), it is necessary for us, as long as we wish, to enter, not now into a figurative rest, but into the true kingdom of heaven. For although their children entered the promised land, now another rest is defined through David. For what else does it mean: "Today, if you hear his voice"? (Heb. 3:15)

As I swore in my wrath. But this testimony is not meant for those of us who have believed, who enter into the rest of God, but for those who do *not enter*: indeed, he says, since they did not enter, we must enter. For he speaks more openly in this progression. Now, indeed, besides this, he wishes to show that just as the rest of the Sabbath does not prevent another rest of the promised land from being called rest, so neither does the rest of the promised land prevent the kingdom of heaven from being called rest.

Therefore, he also adds: *although his works were finished from the foundation of the world*, from which God rested, did not prevent the land of promise from being called rest.

"*from all his works.*" Then, since he had called it rest (it was said, however, to be the rest of the Sabbath), he himself resolves that and says: Now that the rest of the works is made, he also calls this rest, namely the land of promise.

"*And God rested.*" You see, he says, that there are two rests? One *on the seventh day, in which God rested from his works:* and one of the land of promise, about which David is now speaking. Therefore, he says: Just as the first rest did not prevent the

second from being called rest: so neither will the second prevent the third, namely the kingdom of heaven. This, however, he asserts, because he will say that we can enter into his rest. Let him not hear: But they have entered: and finally, he says that there is another rest.

Indeed, he says, "the third rest is the kingdom of heaven. And there again, "If they shall enter into my rest." Behold, therefore, two works, the other indeed of which David said: "*If they shall enter into my rest.*"

Hebrews 4:6-10 *Since therefore some are left to enter into it, and those who were formerly evangelized did not enter because of disobedience, he again defines a certain day today in David saying after a long time, as it is said, "Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken of another day after these days. Therefore, a Sabbath-keeping remains for the people of God. For the one who has entered into his rest has also rested from his works, as God did from his own.*

For if some must enter, and those who entered have not entered into the rest of the promised land, it again defines a third rest, so that, as he says, *some may enter into it*. For if God did not have a third rest, He would not have said: "*Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts,*" so that there may be a rest into which those should enter who do not harden their hearts. Since obedience would be completely useless if there were neither rest nor reward. You have seen how he confirms it? "*Do not harden your hearts* so that you may enter into the rest," he says. For by saying that those who hardened their hearts did not enter into the rest, he implies that those who do not harden their hearts will enter. For every command of God has also a future reckoning.

"For if Joshua had given them rest." For if that were the only rest, namely the promised land into which they entered under the leadership of Joshua, he would not have spoken of another day of rest through *David*. But therefore, he mentions it, saying: *Today*, and he gave a command, saying: *Do not harden your hearts*: as if there exists a third rest into which it is necessary for those who are obedient to enter.

— [OECUMENIUS] “*Therefore, a Sabbath-keeping⁴ remains.*” Sabbath-keeping or rest. For sabbaths are interpreted as rest. Therefore, a certain third rest remains, which is the kingdom of heaven. However, he called it *Sabbath-keeping*, from the primary rest which was of the *Sabbath-keeping*. [end of the Oecumenius excerpt] —

"for the people of God." He says to the faithful. And how is this evident? From the fact that David commands, saying: *Do not harden your hearts*. For he would not command this if there were no sabbath and rest. (What benefit would there be for those who obeyed?) Nor would it be commanded to us, not to do the same as the Jews who were in the desert, lest we too be deprived of rest in the same way.

"who has entered." Since they were weary from evils, there was no mention made of the countless goods that were to come, he comforts them by saying that he who has entered into the third rest, which is the rest of the kingdom of heaven, *rests from his works*, that is, from persecutions, temptations, afflictions, just as indeed God rested from the works He had done in the first rest.

— [PHOTIUS] In another way. *“rested from his works, as God did from his own.”* As if, he rested. Since he has demonstrated that there is a third rest, and that some will enter into it, he comes to the conclusion and says: "From what has been said, it is certainly evident that there is another rest besides the

aforementioned, and this is not for everyone, but dedicated to the people of God." Truly, the people of God are those who have believed in Him and keep His commandments. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —⁵

"And he himself rested." As if he had rested.

The terror of judgment according to the discourse that has been spread throughout all, and the usefulness of priestly grace, in him who is affected in a human manner with natural compassion for us.

Hebrews 4:11-13 *Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

Where it has been shown that there is a third rest, he consequently encourages them to enter into it. And he rightly says: *Let us strive*. For faith alone is not sufficient to enter into it, unless there is also good behavior.

"lest anyone fall according to the same example." By the same, as with the Israelites. For just as they, after having crossed a greater part of the way in the desert, had fallen from all comfort through unbelief, let no one among you fall in the same way or by example, after so many trials, not acting courageously until the end.

"For the word of God is living." It gradually shows that Christ alone was the one who acted in what happened concerning the children of Israel. For it *is living*, he says, and will live forever. But lest they think that those who sin and provoke Christ are only frustrated by the earth as the ancients were, he adds a more terrible deed.

"sharper than any two-edged sword." As those who did not hear the speech might fear something more terrible, it expresses what has been said, adapting examples that are among us: for it could not be understood in any other way than what is said, cutting from both sides with any sword.⁶

"piercing to the division of soul and spirit." He says something fearful: either that the spirit separates from the soul, and leaves it desolate of the holiness that the Lord in the gospel called division; (for just as a king, when a ruler sins, is stripped of his belt and his office beforehand, and then punished; so here too the spiritual dignity is first taken away from the person, then he is punished;) or that it even reaches the incorporeal themselves.⁷

The holy Cyril certainly received in a certain place: *piercing to the division of soul and spirit*: He says that the preaching concerning God divides and distinguishes the parts of the soul, making them receptive and capable of the things heard. That it also reaches them, he says, of the incorporeal beings, and punishes the soul. That it works a division of soul and spirit. It is indeed fearful.

In another way. — [OECUMENIUS] The division that the Gospels threaten, the Fathers understood as the complete abandonment of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I think it is now a day that causes the separation of the Holy Spirit, and it removes itself from the soul, after which all good things will subsequently follow and be taken away. [*end of excerpt by Oecumenius*] —

"of joints and marrow." So that, having heard the things of the soul, they do not become careless, as if the punishment were unclear, having spoken of the incorporeal, he also speaks of the corporeal; for the more visible things strike with greater fear.⁸

"and discerning the thoughts." To distinguish and examine the very thoughts themselves, and the invisible concepts of the heart. Here the divinity of the Word is shown; for it is God who examines, that is, who tests and knows the thoughts; he says "God searches the hearts and kidneys." (Jer. 17:10).⁹

"And no creature is hidden from his sight." But what do I say about men, he says? Nor can any other creature hide or be concealed from that watchful eye, whether you speak of angels, or Cherubim, or Seraphim.

"but all are naked." Nothing can be hidden from the inspecting power of Christ. All things are bare before Him, and no covering or character can allow anyone to conceal themselves from those eyes.

"exposed to the eyes." To make it clearer how all things are naked and visible before the Word of God, He used a metaphor from the flayed sheep. For just as those sheep, having been flayed, that is, having had the knife taken to their neck and been slaughtered, after the skin is removed, everything inside is exposed; so it is with God, everything is evident. Or, flayed, He says naked, by metaphor from the sheep hung by the neck and stripped of their skin. Or, the term flayed, instead of those bowing down and stooping necks, because they cannot look upon the glory of that judge and God, our Jesus Christ. But you accept the first.¹⁰

"to whom we must give account." To Him, he says, we must give an account of our actions, and we must respond to Him, to whom we also have the word [ο λόγος]. Do you see where the matter

concluded? For in order that, having heard, you should not think that the same punishment is for us and for the Israelites on the same pattern of disobedience, he shows through these things that ours are much more terrible.¹¹

Hebrews 4:14-16 *Having therefore a great high priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot have compassion with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Therefore, let us not be subjected to those tremendous punishments, since we have *a great high priest, let us hold fast our profession*, that is, let us not abandon the faith which is in Him, but let us firmly hold it within ourselves. What is it, then? Who *has passed through the heavens*? He is not, he says, like Moses who could not enter the land of promise, nor did he introduce the people, but Christ has also *passed through the heavens* and sits on the *throne* of the Father; therefore, He can also introduce us. He calls Himself a priest because He offered Himself as a victim to God the Father. For it is proper for a priest to offer sacrifices for the people.

"*For we do not have a high priest.*" *Let us therefore hold fast our profession* and faith in Him: For we do not have a high priest who cannot have compassion with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows, he says, that because of many afflictions you are weak and feeble: therefore He can sympathize with us.

For He was *tempted* and afflicted in all things just as we are. He suffered persecution and was mocked and spat upon, and finally

was even crucified. Yet He, having suffered these things, did not sin. By saying this, He signifies that they have fallen into sin because of afflictions, in that they have been overly weakened and frail.

— [PHOTIUS] He proves in two ways that He has *compassion with the feeling of our infirmities*. In one way, because he is great and powerful, as the Son of God and God; in another way, because he himself, as a man, suffered and has experience of afflictions, and of the weakness that follows the flesh. And because of both of these, he will certainly be sympathetic to our weaknesses. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

— [OECUMENIUS] "yet without sin." Because he did not sin, he suffered, saying that he was enduring this punishment. [*end of excerpt by Oecumenius*] —

"*Let us therefore come with confidence.*" Let us approach, He says, to the *throne* of His Father, in which He sits. *With confidence*, or not hesitating in faith, or because He has overcome the world. Therefore, it is evident that He will also conquer those who now afflict us. Or because the *throne* is not now a throne of judgment, but of *grace*: therefore, approach even if you are a sinner.

"*to the throne of grace.*" The throne of grace refers to the royal throne, of which David says: "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand.'" (Ps. 110:1) For the throne is now the *throne of grace*, not of judgment. *Therefore, with confidence*, he says.

"*that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*" He rightly says: *to help in time*. If now, he says, you approach, you will receive grace and mercy; for you approach at the right time; but if you approach then, it will not be so, for it will be an untimely approach. For where there will be completion, then there will arise for judgment.

"to help in time." For whoever now approaches receives mercy and grace, because the approach and request for help is timely and appropriate: just as in judgment, the approach for help is demanding. For then it will not provide help out of grace as it does now, but judgment.

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 4

1. The Pharmakides version adds, “*For we are also evangelized just as they were.*” We have been evangelized about the good things to come, just as they were in a symbolic way about the earth.
2. The Pharmakides version adds, “But see how on our part the matter was called the gospel, as a promise of true goods, and as given from a crown and victory; but on their part, a matter of hearing.”
3. do not be mixed with it, that is the word that did not profit those of the rebellion (Heb. 3:15).
4. Sabbath-keeping [Σαββατισμὸς]. keeping of the Sabbath, Sabbath-keeping, Sabbathkeeping, Sabbath rest, Sabbath resting, Sabbath observance, observance of the Sabbath.
5. The PG does not show where the Photius excerpt ends.
6. The PG has a slightly longer reading than the Pharmakides version, adding, “in any other way than what is said, cutting from both sides with any sword.”
7. The Pharmakides version reads, “He says something fearful: either that the spirit separates from the soul, and leaves it desolate of the holiness that the Lord in the gospel called division; (for just as a king, when a ruler sins, is stripped of his belt and his office beforehand, and then punished; so here too the spiritual dignity is first taken away from the person, then he is punished;) or that it even reaches the incorporeal themselves.” While the PG provides a shorter reworked reading after the citation of Cyril which reads, “That it also reaches them, he says, of the incorporeal beings, and punishes the soul. That it works a division of soul and spirit. It is indeed fearful.”

8. The PG has a shorter reading, “Where it had said incorporeal, it also referred to corporeal.”

9. The Pharmakides version adds, “Here the divinity of the Word is shown; for it is God who examines, that is, who tests and knows the thoughts; he says ‘God searches the hearts and kidneys.’ (Jer. 17:10).”

10. The PG has a more condense version, “However, he says that the naked are those metaphorically referred to as sheep that have been skinned and stripped of their hide. Or the naked are those looking down and inclined at the neck, because they cannot gaze upon the glory of the judge and our God, Jesus Christ.”

11. The Pharmakides version adds, “Do you see where the matter concluded? For in order that, having heard, you should not think that the same punishment is for us and for the Israelites on the same pattern of disobedience, he shows through these things that ours are much more terrible.”

CHAPTER 5

Hebrews 5:1-6 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, being able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also surrounded by weakness. And because of this, he is obligated, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no one takes this honor for himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself to become a high priest, but it was He who said to him, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." As he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

He wants to show here that the New Testament is greater than the Old. And this he does by introducing a comparison from the

priests. That one had priests taken from among men, but this one has Christ.

— [OECUMENIUS] "*taken from among men*." That is, being presented. If the one deals *gently with those who are ignorant and going astray*, how much more will the one who is both man and God *deal gently with those who are ignorant and going astray*? If this is understood, then the term "being taken" will be more readily accepted instead of "being set apart." As one of the men, and being taken from them as a priest, he says, [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"*among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God*." *Among men*, he says, being *appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining*, he becomes *in the things pertaining to God*. And what are the *things pertaining to God*? He himself says, *in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins* of the people.

"*To deal gently*." That is, to be sympathetic, to accommodate, and to forgive those who are ignorant, that is, those who sin out of ignorance and are misguided.¹

And for those *going astray*, he says, from the people.

"*he himself is also surrounded by weakness*." The simple interpretation, which I think is also the truer one, is this: that for this reason the high priest is gentle toward those who are ignorant; because he himself is subject to weakness; and knowing the measure of human weakness in himself, he also measures out mercy. Or the high priest differs from the people only in this, that he is gentle and shows sympathy toward those who go astray; since in other respects he too is perhaps subject to weakness like the many. By weakness he means sins, or afflictions and temptations.²

But the phrase, "*for sins*," he clearly stated that he called weakness sin.

"And because of this, he is obligated," since he himself, he says, is under *sin*, and he must make the offering common for both his own and the *sins for the people*.

"To offer for sins." The sacrifice concerning sins, he says, *"And no one takes this honor upon himself."* He speaks of another characteristic of a priest, that he does not take it upon himself to approach the honor of the priesthood. This he also hinted at when he spoke of the priests of the Jews at that time, who were not priests by power, because they approached and had made the priesthood a service.

"just as Aaron." For Aaron was often appointed high priest by God. For indeed, at the beginning, he was called by God through Moses and thus consecrated, not by himself taking the office (Ex. 28:1). And again, when the rod budded (Num. 17:8), it was shown that he was divinely appointed; and when fire consumed those who improperly intruded upon the priesthood. (Num. 16)

So also Christ did not glorify himself to become a high priest. He also says this: "Christ is the first high priest, that he did not enter into the priesthood from himself, but was ordained by the Father." Therefore, showing in clear terms that he was a priest according to the custom of the priests, in other respects he indicates how much he ought to excel as God of men.

"but it was He who said to him." He says, God having said this to him, ordained him as high priest,

"As he says also in another place." The "And," as regards the sequence of the interpretation, is omitted.

"according to the order of Melchizedek." This one first offered an unbloody sacrifice to God, bread and wine.

— [PHOTIUS] The reason is that Christ also offered an unbloody sacrifice, for first He offered this, and then later His

own body. For this reason, it is accordingly said that Christ is a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. [end of the Photius excerpt] —³

— [ATHANASIUS] That Melchizedek was not anointed into the priesthood by oil, as Aaron, and that he did not offer sacrifices by blood, and that he was a high priest of the nations, and that he blessed Abraham with bread and wine. [end of the excerpt by Athanasius] —⁴

— [OECUMENIUS] The meaning of the word is that if Christ himself did not offer an unbloody sacrifice (for he offered his own body), then those priests who are deemed worthy by God and the high priest will offer an unbloody sacrifice from him. For this indicates, "forever." For he would not have said "forever" regarding the one-time sacrifice and offering made by God, but he refers to the present priests through whom Christ ministers and is ministered to, having also given them in the mystical supper the manner of such ministry. [end of the Oecumenius excerpt] —

Hebrews 5:7-10 Who in the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

— [OECUMENIUS] "Who in the days of his flesh." Therefore, he did not say the days of the flesh, in which the Lord visibly lived on earth, as if he had now left the flesh itself. Far from it!

For he has it, although incorruptible: but he calls *the days of the flesh*, that is, the days in which his life, which was in the flesh, lived. [end of the *Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"*prayers and supplications.*" Not only prayers and supplications, but also he offered them with *cries and tears*. However, Paul said that he was lowering himself to save them.

"*and he was heard.*" So much was he heard that he even rose again: this he said because of the weakness of the listeners, who had not yet conceived a glorious opinion of Christ.

"*because of his reverent submission.*" He said that he was heard not only out of the grace of the Father but also because of his own reverence. For his reverence was so great, he said, that the Father also revered him. However, there is a double reason for these humble words, namely the flesh and the weakness of the listeners.

"*Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.*" Therefore, he says, He was so obedient (and He obeyed as is fitting for a Son to the Father) that after He was incarnate, He even endured the cross to death. "And *He learned from what He suffered.*" He indeed says, What is death, being God? For what has God not known? But also from what he suffered, he learned. Not only, he says, as he was God, but also as he was man, having experienced death.

In another way. — [PHOTIUS] Two things are sought here, one, how it is said that he was heard, and yet he himself needed to pass by death, but he did not pass by. For he was indeed crucified and died. Secondly, from what kind of reverence does he say he was heard? And thirdly, although being the Son, to whom is he to be joined? To the one who was heard from reverence, or to those that follow, so that he may learn obedience from what he suffered, although being the Son. For there is not a small

difference between these. As for the first, it is clear that the request was not one, but a certain double one: one rejecting death, the other requesting it. For he also says in the same prayer and supplication: "But let not my will be done, but yours." (Luke 22:42)

And to clarify this more clearly, John says that the Son asks, saying, "Father, glorify Your Son, that Your Son may also glorify You," (Jn. 17:1) referring to the glory of the cross and death as he indicates. Thus, the divine Paul rightly says, "*He was heard.*" And this, from reverence, has come close to what has been said about being made clear. For we have mentioned two requests, one for the avoidance of death, the other for the acceptance of what was truly a matter of great reverence; "But not my will, but Yours." (Luke 22:42) Therefore, Christ was heard, not from the avoidance, but from the reverence, that is, that request of His came forth, not according to the avoidance, but according to the reverence.

For this reason, he says, *and having been made perfect*, that is, having been fully recognized through sufferings and the cross and death, he is exceedingly good and generous. This was also indicated above; speaking of *prayers and supplications*, he hinted at the duality of the request. Then, having spoken of *prayers and supplications*, he did not bring about the passing of death, but rather, towards the *one who was able to save him from death*, adding this well and wisely, so that when you contemplate him being crucified and buried, you should not think that he was held back by the power of the Father, but that it was a common will for Christ to suffer these things for the salvation of the world. This can also be said in relation to the resurrection. For in many places, the divine Paul, speaking, says that the Father raised Christ. Therefore, having raised him, he delivered him from death and saved him. But thus, in my opinion, these things are.

As for the statement, "*Although he was a Son*," if anyone were to take it in an extraordinary way (for the use of this is infinite to the divine Paul), the thought would be naturally advanced as follows: that in the days of his flesh, *although he was a Son*, he offered *prayers and supplications*, and moreover, that is, though having the greatest privilege as a Son, to do all things without supplication and request by the sovereign will, as the Father does, nevertheless, since he was in the days of the flesh, he offered *prayers and supplications*. It can also be accordingly connected with, "*and he was heard because of his reverent submission*," as if he were saying, "*He was heard*," *although he was a Son*, and did not need to be heard, having a will in harmony with the Father's will, and being fulfilled without any request.

If you connect it with what follows, the mind will benefit. But first, what does it mean to consider that *He learned obedience from what He suffered*? For He learned to obey the Father from what He suffered, and through experience, He gained knowledge of being subject to Him; or rather, He learned through experience the extent of obedience, how much He obeyed the Father, such as being crucified and dying, and rising again, and lifting up the human nature at the right hand of the Father, and saving humanity? For these things are from that obedience which was generated in saying, "Father, glorify Your Son." (Jn. 17:1) For this obedience, however great and however much, before obeying the Father, Christ knew as Son and God, just as the Father did; and having been heard, He learned it through what He suffered and experienced. Therefore, as someone might grasp, my second interpretation seems more likely. Thus, it has no uncertainty in saying, "*Although He was a Son*." [end of the Photius excerpt] —

"*And having been made perfected*." This then is perfection among men, to attain perfection through sufferings. And he has

spoken all things becoming of a man, behold, also becoming of God;

"he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him." That is, not only was he himself saved, but he also brought salvation to others; and not temporary, derived from wars, but eternal. To whom is this? To those who obey. How then do you disobey and risk falling away from the grace? Do you see that the whole argument is thus shaped because of the faint-heartedness of the hearers? But look here, how exalted it is! For he says he became the cause of salvation; which belongs to divinity; for no one else is the cause of such salvation except God.

"being designated by God a High Priest." And having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him." Therefore, this is perfection in humans, that through sufferings they attain completeness. And He has said everything fitting for a human. "the source of eternal salvation."

— [OECUMENIUS] Behold also that which responds to divinity. [end of Oecumenius fragment] —⁶

Warning to those in need of basic introduction.

Hebrews 5:11-14 *Concerning this, we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become sluggish in hearing. For although you ought to be teachers by this time, you again need someone to teach you the basic principles of the oracles of God. You have become in need of milk, not solid food. For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

"Concerning this Christ, there is much to say and it is hard to explain." He says it is because of you, that you are sluggish, and you do not grasp the more perfect things about Him. For having spoken so many humble things about the incarnation, he wished to move on to the divine matters.⁷ Therefore, because of your cause, he says, that you are sluggish and do not allow for the perfect things, the word concerning how Christ is a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek is hard to explain. And because you do not understand, for this reason I am not able to interpret it well.

"since you have become sluggish." Trials and tribulations, he says, have made you sluggish, and you are not able to listen perfectly to the words.

"For although you ought to be teachers." He brings forth the accusation with praise. For you are sluggish and careless, he says, although you should also teach others according to the reason of the time. Thus, it shows that they had believed a long time ago⁸, and have heard mysteries; both of these things are worthy of praise, provided they themselves have not been careless. Time, he says, makes people stronger; but you have used this in vain, having been set free.

"since you have become sluggish in hearing." The trials and tribulations, he says, have made you sluggish, and you are not able to listen to perfect words. *"For although you ought to be teachers by this time."* Then he brings the accusation with praise. For he says you are dull and lazy, though you ought to be teaching others by now because of the length of time. Thus he shows that they had trusted much and had heard the mysteries; both of these things are worthy of praise if they themselves had not become lazy. Time, he says, makes stronger; but you have wasted this opportunity after being set free. For though you ought to be teachers, you are not only not teachers, but you are

also unable to learn anything except the elementary, humble, and simple things; and even these not simply, but the weaker still, the elements of the beginning of the words of God. He does not say the elements of words, but the elements of the beginning of words. The elements of the words of God would reasonably be the words concerning the incarnation; but the elements of the beginning of words, which he goes on to say, are: "Not again a foundation," and so forth.⁸

For you are indeed *ought to be teachers*, not only are you not teachers, but you are also unable to learn, unless it be the most elementary, humble, and simplest things.

And these not simply, but he who is still weaker, *the basic principles of the oracles of God*. He does not say the oracles, *but the basic principles of the oracles of God*. And if there are *basic principles of the oracles of God*, those concerning the incarnation. But the *basic principles of the oracles*, which he says, "You need again a foundation," and so forth. "You need again to be taught something." What to teach? The *principles*, he says. "*The basic principles*." The *basic principles*, he speaks of the incarnation. but the elements of the beginning of words, which he goes on to say, are: "Not again a foundation," and so forth.

For just as we first learn the letters in writing, so also with *divine oracles* it was necessary to first teach about the incarnation. For these are suitable for the unbelieving and still infant ears. As for philosophizing about the divinity of Christ, it was therefore complete. Do you see the reason why it accommodates the humble? Because of the weakness of the listeners, who are not strong enough to receive the perfect things. Therefore, even at the beginning of the Epistle, having briefly philosophized about the divinity of Christ, he immediately ceased his discourse. The Epistle is indeed filled with the humble.

— In another way. [THEODORET] *Basic principles of the oracles of God*, he called the humbler sayings about Christ. For those who have not yet attained perfect faith, the only things offered were about humanity, the preachers of the truth. Thus, the blessed Peter measured his teaching to the weakness of the listeners while speaking to the Jews. "Jesus," he said, "the Nazarene, a man approved by God among you." (Acts 2:22) And the following things happened according to this account. And the divine Paul, offering the proclamation to the Athenians, did not call Christ God, but a man, the master. (Acts 17:31)⁹ [*end of the Theodore excerpt*] —

"*And you have become in need.*" He did not say that you have a need, but that you yourselves have become such, that is, you have made yourselves so out of laziness, not being such by nature.

"*Of milk and not solid food.*" He refers to the humble sayings about Christ as *milk*, those concerning the flesh; but *solid food* refers to the perfect ones concerning his divinity.

To those who are still infants, faith is seen in humble words, (for *milk* is suitable for infants), but to the perfect, faith is in *solid food* and the high thinking concerning Christ.

"*For everyone who lives on milk.*" For everyone, he says, who partakes of humble words, concerning the humanity of the Lord, (for these are the *milk*), *is unskilled* and lacks *the word of righteousness*.

And he speaks of *the word of righteousness*, which concerns the divinity of the Lord. "*solid food.*" The lofty word, and the high doctrines concerning Christ.

"*by constant practice.*" He refers to habit, perfection, the well-trained, having their senses exercised, such as hearing, tongue, eyes. Indeed, he speaks of the senses of the soul.

To distinguish, he says, what is *good*, and high doctrines, and what are the spurious and corrupt. He hints at those who teach anything to everyone, giving themselves and being persuaded. For he who receives everything simply, has indiscriminately both *good* and *evil*.

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 5

1. The Pharmakides version adds, “to accommodate, and to forgive those who are ignorant, that is, those who sin out of ignorance and are misguided.”
2. The PG has a shorter reading, “For only this distinguishes the priest from the people in being gentle and understanding the those going astray, since he himself, he says, is surrounded by weakness.”
3. The Pharmakides version adds, “Just as he blessed Abraham with bread and wine, so now the priests offer bread and wine from Christ, performing the sacred rites. For He Himself first handed down the mystical supper; therefore, forever He said, referring to the manner of such a sacred rite.” I chose not to add this in because it is an excerpt.
4. The Pharmakides version does not indicate that the excerpt is by Athanasius.
5. The Pharmakides version reads “three”, while the PG reads “two”.
6. According to a document with all of the Oecumenius fragments, the phrase “Behold also that which responds to divinity” is a fragment from Oecumenius.
7. The PG ends with a shorter reading, “but being still weak towards whom the discourse is directed, you were not able to hear the more perfect teachings.” The Pharmakides version reads, “Therefore, because of your cause, he says, that you are sluggish and do not allow for the perfect things, the word concerning how Christ is a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek is hard to explain. And because you do not understand, for this reason I am not able to interpret it well.”

8. Pharmakides has a section here that he has marked as being an excerpt from Photius, but I have not found it labeled as a Photius excerpt from any other source. Probably an error by Pharmakides.
9. The Pharmakides version adds, “And the following things happened according to this account. And the divine Paul, offering the proclamation to the Athenians, did not call Christ God, but a man, the master.” (Acts 17:31)

CHAPTER 6

Hebrews 6:1-3 *Therefore, leaving the elementary teaching about Christ, let us press on to perfection, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits.*

Having said above that *the elementary teaching about* the humanity of the Lord, and indeed the *perfection* of those who pertain to divinity, lest they might feel impatiently as unworthy of more perfect discourses, he also approaches to speak of more perfect matters. He speaks not in the same way as he called the perfect: (for they were not able to hear), but he skillfully approaches the discourse in another way, indeed calling *baptism* the *elementary teaching*, and *the laying on of hands* and the seal within it; but *perfection*, the idea through works. And he more clearly states what *the elementary teaching* is for those who have just believed, and what the *perfection* is.

— The following of the arrangement. [PHOTIUS] Therefore, leaving the *elementary teaching* of Christ, let us be carried toward *perfection*. And we will do this, as God permits. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

— [PHOTIUS] “*teaching about Christ.*” What kind of teaching? The *teaching* [λόγον] of the doctrine [διδαχῆς], of the necessity to lay the *foundation of repentance from dead works*, the teaching of the doctrine, of the necessity of *faith in God*; the teaching of the doctrine, of the necessity to be baptized; the teaching of the doctrine, of the necessity to be deemed worthy of the Holy Spirit; the teaching of the doctrine, that there is *resurrection*, that there will be *judgment*. For in common, according to all, both the teaching and the doctrine. [*end of excerpt by Photius*] —

— [PHOTIUS] “*on to perfection.*” Having said this, he lets go of the *elementary* and foundational teachings concerning *Christ* and is carried towards *perfection*, not simply referring to the ultimate perfection, but as if to that which is between the *elementary teachings* of the words of God and the highest perfection. For there are indeed elementary principles of the words of God, which must be put away from Satan and his works, to believe in God, to be baptized, to receive the Holy Spirit, to know the *resurrection* of the dead, to believe that there will be a *judgment*. These are the *elementary teachings* of the words of God. The fundamentals of the words of God, and not the *elementary teachings* of God, are to know that Christ suffered for us, that He took upon Himself our sins, that He accomplished salvation for us, that He became our high priest, that He offered Himself for us, and anything similar. The *perfection* of rejecting Satan and his associates is the progress in virtues, the patience in tribulations, persecutions, and temptations. The highest *perfection* is that concerning the theology of Christ, insofar as it is possible for a man to have an accurate understanding. First, therefore, we are baptized as believers, then we acknowledge all that Christ suffered and did for us according to His humanity, then we are perfected in the virtues, and afterward we are

deemed worthy of the knowledge according to theology. [*end of excerpt by Photius*] —

"*Let us not lay again a foundation.*" Let us not lay another foundation again, as he says, being laid down in baptism, that is, the renunciation of the works of Satan. For once, he says, having repented, we were baptized upon them, and it is no longer necessary to do these things from the beginning.

"*and of faith toward God.*" For it is no longer necessary now to believe in God as if from the beginning; for you have already believed.

— [GENNADIUS]¹ The statement is beyond dispute; for the teaching has been delivered through a medium to all that is present, and this is the agreement according to its meaning: not to overthrow the foundation of the teaching again, but thus to show in enumeration the matters concerning the foundation of the teaching. Paul wishes to say that for those who now first approach faith, we lay down as a sort of foundation the teaching concerning these things, first reasonably urging them to repent from works that lead to death; when they have repented, to believe in God; when they have believed, to be *baptized*; when baptized, to submit to *the laying on of hands* for the partaking of the Spirit; having thus partaken in this, no longer to doubt concerning the resurrection from the dead, knowing that there will be a judgment when they will be raised and live again, and that a continuous and just reward awaits them for what we have lived like here. [*end of the Gennadius excerpt*] —

"*of faith toward God.*" For it is not necessary now, as it was from the beginning, to believe in God. For you have already believed through teaching. The structure is thus. Therefore, *leaving the elementary of God*, what is this? The doctrine of *baptisms*, the *laying on of hands* (by which, it says, you were enlightened), and the *resurrection of the dead*, and *eternal judgment*, *let us press*

on to perfection. For it is not necessary, it says, always to speak the same things; for it has been said once and has come to pass, but it is necessary, it says, also to contribute what is among you, namely, a good conduct and a faith worthy of it. For this is *perfection*, to be two-handed in virtue, as it were, saying; Be sober; for there is no need to live carelessly, and again to be baptized, and through the laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit's visitation.

“*of instruction about baptism.*” Not as if there were many baptisms, Paul said this in the plural; for there is one baptism (Eph. 4:5); but this follows from the context. For if he were to instruct them again, and baptize them again; and again baptize those who have fallen away; then necessarily there would be many baptisms; but this is absurd. Therefore, it is not necessary to rebaptize you; but to remain with the former baptism.

— [OECUMENIUS] Perhaps these, still clinging to the law, thinking more in Jewish manners, because there are different and many baptisms in the law, wished also that the baptism of the New Covenant, which grants regeneration, should be administered many times, because they wished that the remission of sins should be considered worthy only once. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

“*the laying on of hands.*” Those things that take place in baptism; or there, when the apostles laid on their hands, they gave the Spirit, which Simon the sorcerer also sought. (Acts 8:18-19)

“*the resurrection of the dead.*” For this also takes place in baptism through the form of rising up, and is confirmed in the confession; for we confess that we believe in the resurrection of the dead.

“*and eternal judgment.*” That is, of the coming judgment, which grants either eternal good or punishment. This seems to say:

since it was likely that they would be shaken, although they had already believed, either that if we live deeply, or fall away from faith, we shall be baptized again, or again be able to wash away sins, and to share in the same things as before. For they err in thinking these things.

"*And this we will do.*" Which? To be carried to *perfection*.

"*if God permits.*" The phrase "if God permits" is not to indicate that God does not always permit (for God always permits the good and perfect), but as is customary for us to say, If God wills, we will do this. At the same time, it also teaches us from this that everything depends on that will, and we should not rely confidently or arrogantly on our own judgment and power, even in matters generally acknowledged. This is explicitly encouraged by the apostle James.

Hebrews 6:4-7 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, having tasted the heavenly gift, and having become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and having tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and having fallen away, to be renewed again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put Him to an open shame.*

"*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened.*" He did not say that it is difficult, unprofitable, or improper, but impossible, so as to cast them into despair of hoping for a second cleansing.³

"*Having tasted the gift.*" The forgiveness of sins, which is in baptism; for this is a *heavenly gift*. For no one can give such things except one, God.⁴

"and having become partakers of the Holy Spirit." After the forgiveness of sins, then comes the partaking of the Holy Spirit; for He does not dwell in a body burdened with sins; By the laying on of hands, as he says above (Heb. 6:2).⁵

"and having tasted the good word of God." The teaching concerning the mind of Christ.

"the powers of the age to come." For we shall all give an account of the words we have lived by, and both punishment and rest are everlasting. For in these things is the power of the age to come. That is, the seriousness [ἀρραβώνα] of the coming age, namely, faith in Christ.

— [PHOTIUS] “*the powers of the age to come.*” Powers of the coming age. That there will certainly be a resurrection, and that we shall all give an account of the life we have lived, and that both punishment and rest are inescapable, and such things, for these indeed are the powers of the coming age. Or that the pledge of the coming age is faith in Christ. Powers of the coming age, Instead of what the future age can teach. *For those who have tasted*, in common, what has been taken figuratively [τροπικῶς], signifying, those who have learned, have been instructed. What then can the future do, and what is its necessity and work? Because in it each finds the reward of what he has done, since there is no end either to the punishment in it, nor to the happiness, because then the unfailing judgment and the just will be revealed more clearly, and many other things. Therefore, those who have learned these things along with the others, he says, *and having fallen away, it is impossible*, and thereafter. [end of the Photius excerpt] —

"and having fallen away." It is impossible to renew a city to repentance after having lost all these things and having fallen away. What then? Should we cast away repentance? May it never be, (thus says the holy Cyril in the sixth book of “On the

Veneration and Worship in Spirit and Truth") but rather the repentance through baptism. For it is necessary first to consider repentance and the renunciation of wicked deeds, and thus to be baptized. Therefore, he says, the repentance in baptism, from which he also said, "To renew what is proper to baptism," and "To crucify again, which is also proper to this baptism." For those being baptized are crucified with the Lord. Therefore, he who wishes to repent again through the second baptism crucifies Christ by being crucified with Him.

— [PHOTIUS] "*they crucify again for themselves the Son of God.*" What does it mean, crucify again for themselves the Son of God and setting an example? He says from above, *crucify again for themselves* and bringing *shame*. But he says it is of this kind; once Christ was crucified, and we too, once, are crucified with him through baptism. Therefore, he says, one who thinks there is a second baptism, as far as he is concerned, crucifies the Lord from above. For what else does the one who thinks he is being crucified a second time through baptism do, except that he also considers himself to be crucified a second time, through what he does? But to *crucify* a second time, he says, Christ, as far as it pertains to him, is nothing other than to set an example for him and to bring him to shame. For once crucified, he is therefore immortal. But he who re-crucifies does this as a falsehood, which brings him shame as if he had only pretended to die once. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

Otherwise. — [PHOTIUS] What does it mean to *crucify again*? Calling it a second crucifixion and a second passion [πάθος], if such repentance exists, and the worthiness to receive the remission through baptism was achieved only by the cross of Christ. Therefore, those who understand this desire again to see Christ being crucified, mocked, and typified. Oh, the audacity and shamelessness! If anyone contemplates such things. And indeed, through these, they shake their thoughts, so that having

become hopeless of being able to attain such repentance, they strive for virtue instead. [end of the Photius excerpt] —⁶

Hebrews 6:7-8 *For the earth, which produces the rain that often comes upon it, and brings forth suitable vegetation for those for whom it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But producing thorns and thistles, it is unworthy and near to a curse, whose end is for burning.*

"*For the earth, which produces.*" In the parable, he speaks of the land and the people, he rain, however, is called the teaching, as elsewhere, "I command the clouds," says God, "not to rain upon the vineyard;" (Isa. 5:2) and again, "the river of God was filled with waters;" (Ps. 144:10) these, he who, having been graced by God to teach, was filled with the waters from above, that is, with gifts. those who have often heard and have been metaphorically watered by the saving word of faith, and either have benefited or gained nothing from it.⁷

"*suitable vegetation.*" What is a suitable vegetation? The proper constitution, the virtuous life; for nothing is so well-placed, that is, appropriate and agreeable, as the purity of life.⁸

"*for those for whom it is cultivated.*" Since he spoke about land and fruits, he remained in the metaphor. The good life is produced by the teachers (for these are the ones who *cultivate*), as those who partake of the virtue of the students.

— [PHOTIUS] It is indeed *cultivated* for the salvation and benefit of those who bear fruit. If it is so, as the Lord says (Jn. 15:1), the Father is the farmer, and the Son is the sower, sowing the precious seed (Matt. 13:3); if the plant is suitable for them, that is, if the farming appears (for we owe it to God to bear fruit, as it is said somewhere (Rom. 6:22): "But now, having been

enslaved to God, you have your fruit to holiness"). If therefore we cultivate this, namely for God, in order to please Him with a virtuous life, we are also deemed worthy of His blessing. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"*receives a blessing from God.*" For the fruitful land is blessed by God. Who is the fruitful land? The virtuous man.

"*producing thorns.*" He did not say "bearing [Τίκτουσα]," but "*producing* [Ἐκφέρουσα]," hinting at the unnaturalness of the production, as if he said, "spitting out [ἐκβράσσουσα]." And "*producing*" indicates the production until the end and death. For he did not say "*carrying out* [Εξενεγκοῦσα]," but "*producing* [Ἐκφέρουσα]"; note this.

And by *thorns and thistles*, he speaks of sin, because it strikes from all sides and corrupts the one who holds it.

"*and near to a curse.*" He spoke of the greatest comfort. For he did not say, "It is a self-curse," but rather, "*and near to a curse.*" And one who is *near to a curse* can also become far away through repentance. For if he had said, "And it is a curse," he would have had to despair. But now, he says, "*and near to a curse,*" speaking in fear and with caution; "Behold, you have become near to the curse; be afraid lest you fall into it, and flee from it." For one who is near can also flee; for he has not yet been seized.

"*whose end is for burning.*" See again how securely he speaks, lest it be thought that the greatest remedy among men casts out repentance. For he did not say, "He who has accepted thorns and thistles is burned," but rather, "*whose end is for burning.*" If we endure until the *end*, he says, and carry out the *thorns* until the very *end*, then we will be burned, indicating by contrast that if we do not endure the thorns until the end, but change our minds, we will not be burned.

Hebrews 6:9-12 *But we are convinced about you, beloved, of better things and things pertaining to salvation, even though we speak in this way. For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown for His name, in serving the saints and in ministering to them. And we desire each one of you to show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

Having sufficiently struck them by calling them *sluggish*, and saying other things, he now comforts them; therefore he did not say, "I think," but "I am *convinced*."

"*and things pertaining to salvation.*" Being near.

"*even though we speak in this way.*" He says, I know that you will not produce thorns and thistles, but I strike only with words, so that I may make you stronger.

"*For God is not unjust.*" Therefore, we are convinced of the good things concerning you, knowing that God is not unjust. If He is not unjust, He will not forget your good work and the love which you have shown in His name, having endured all for Him. So do not lose heart, but always hope for better things; for God is always righteous. Therefore, I have not spoken about you in a discouraging way; for I know that you are not worthy of curses.⁹

"*in serving the saints.*" Greatly testifies to them, not only by works, but also by works done with eagerness; for serving is a sign of eagerness. To *the saints*, that is, to the faithful. For every believer is holy, even if he is of the world [κοσμικὸς]. But see how he ministers to them. For he did not say, having served, and

stood; but added, and serving; that is, continuing to do the same.¹⁰

This love that you continue to show, he says, "*we desire* [Ἐπιθυμοῦμεν]." He did not say, "We want [βουλόμεθα]," but rather, it was more affectionate, "We desire," he says.

"*to show the same diligence.*" Then someone might say, "If you are convinced about the better things concerning us, and you know our works and our ministry to the saints, why then were you afraid to call us sluggish, and remembering the thorns? Why? Because "*we desire each one of you,*" he says, "*to show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end*", that is, to be steadfast in your faith in Christ and the hope that comes from it. And he did not say, We wish; which would have been a teaching authority; but, we desire; which is of paternal affection. For this is not something we wish in words only, but our soul burns for you. For such a thing is meant by the phrase, we desire.¹¹

"*that you may not be sluggish.*" And this is also for their healing; for it leads them to the future time.¹² And although he said above, "You have become sluggish," (Heb. 5:11) he then said to their listening ears, "but now, all of you have become sluggish."

"*imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*" Then he lists those who *inherited the promises through faith*, such as Abraham. What is meant by "*through patience*"? That is, through endurance. For he endured the promise being set forth for so many years, and still remained believing. For if the gift were to follow immediately upon the promise of God, there would no longer be any need for faith or endurance on the part of the one receiving the promise, since God would be completely truthful. But if, having promised, he is delayed, and the one receiving the promise patiently waits for the delay, then he believes purely, then he endures with self-control.

That the promise of God is assured and these things with an oath.

Hebrews 6:13-16 *For when God promised Abraham, since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.*

Of those who through faith inherited the promises, many have died, but they were kept safe for others; he only remembers Abraham, both because of the dignity of his person and because he especially was deemed worthy and attained the promises. And through this, he shows that one should not be faint-hearted, but should wait for God, having the habit not to hastily bring about the promised things, but through a long time.¹³

"*He swore by Himself.*" When did God swear by himself? In those very words, in which he says, "By myself I have sworn." (Gen. 22:16) Perhaps also the word "Amen" could be considered a divine oath; for "Amen," truly "Amen," signifies nothing else but a confirmation of the truth; and what else could truth be but God? Therefore, when you see Christ saying, "Amen, amen, I say to you," understand that he swears by having no one greater than himself, and the "Amen" is an oath, just as the Father also swears. Yet some have thought that the Son swears to Abraham; for the Word swears, "Amen, I will bless you." For Scripture says that the angel spoke to Abraham. But nowhere do they say that the Father is an angel, but the Son is the angel of the great counsel.¹⁴

"*And so, having patiently.*" You see that the patience of Abraham accomplished something? He said that by being patient he obtained the promise, in order to show the great power of

patience, and that it was not the promise alone that accomplished everything; but also patience.¹⁵

"*he attained the promise.*" And yet in the end, it says that all these, having seen them from afar and embraced them, did not receive the promises, so that they would not be made perfect apart from us. How then does he say here, "*he attained the promise?*" And we say, he did not speak about the same things. For the things here he has given to him, concerning which he now spoke, but those there, he keeps, concerning which he says at the end of the Epistle, "And the end of all their opposition." (Heb. 12:3) And the end of all opposition and dispute to confirm the things spoken by him is the oath. Both, however, the obtaining and the not yet obtaining, serve as encouragement to the faint-hearted; the one, that we also, if we endure patiently, will obtain; the other, that, since he has not yet obtained it, though perfected many years ago, we who are still struggling are not foolish because we have not yet obtained it.¹⁶

"*an end of all dispute.*" And the conclusion of all contradiction and dispute to confirm what is said is the oath. For indeed many things are spoken and disputed on each side; but the oath, coming last and confirming, resolves all doubts.¹⁷

Hebrews 6:17-20 *Here in this matter, God, when He wished to show the firmness of His counsel to the heirs of the promise, He mediated by an oath, that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both safe and committed, and which enters into the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus has entered as a*

forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

It was necessary, therefore, he says, to believe in God who had promised without an oath, but since God wanted to do something more, *he mediated the promise by an oath.*

"*to show the firmness of His counsel.*" He also came to us. For we are the *heirs* of the promise, being the seed of Abraham; and if we are the seed, then we are also *heirs*.

"*He mediated with an oath.*" See what he prepares. That the Son was thereafter the mediator of God and men (for he has also become a mediator in the incarnation); and then he mediated with the Father and with Abraham, confirming him with an oath; for the Word was he who both spoke to Abraham and swore. The meaning of the interpretation is well-founded, so that it may be thus. God, that is, the Word, wanting to show the unchangeable nature of those glorifying the Father, mediated with the Father and with Abraham with an oath, that is, he became a mediator in the oath. For through him, as the Word, God and the Father swore.

"*that by two unchangeable things.*" Two things, both that God has promised, and that He has added an oath to the promise. For since among men the oath seems more trustworthy, on account of this He also added it Himself.¹⁸

"*In which it is impossible.*" *In which*, instead of "from which," from these two *things*, the promise is shown to be most trustworthy, and *it is impossible for God to lie*. Therefore, just as He swore by us (although it is unworthy of Him to swear), so also understand the "from which" He learned what He suffered. For men also consider it more credible to come through experience.¹⁹

"we might have a strong encouragement," That is, a great exhortation and urging.²⁰

"who have fled." To him, he says. *"to hold,"* let us *have strong encouragement to lay hold to the hope set before us.* From those, he says, that were said to Abraham, let us be faithful also to the things to come, and to the kingdom of heaven. *For this is our hope, which now is set before us* in expectation, but then will be realized, as it was said; From those things, this will be understood. There it was made true, that in these things we may believe. And that for this reason he swore then, that now we may believe concerning the things to come. For there was nothing else, he says, and the things then promised with oaths, or the future hope of the faithful.

"we have as an anchor," which stabilizes the wavering ships, and *hope* makes those who are shaken by temptations brave, committed, and patient.

"safe and committed." Not simply an anchor, but also *safe* and secure. For there is an anchor that does not keep the ship unshaken when it is smaller than it ought to be.

"which enters." In order that, he says, while we are still here, hope may enter into the kingdom of heaven, that is, so that we may already be in our hopes. See what hope does. It anticipates what is to come.

"enters into the inner sanctuary behind the curtain." The inner part of the curtain is called heaven.

"where Jesus has entered as a forerunner on our behalf." Having said that our hope enters into heaven, he confirms what has been said, trusting this by the facts. For Christ himself *entered* there; and not only did he enter, but he *entered on our behalf.* And where our *forerunner has entered*, there it is necessary for us also to enter. For the *forerunner* is the forerunner of those who

follow; and the difference between the forerunner and those who follow is not very great, just as between John and Christ. Do not be disturbed, then; as long as we have not yet entered, we will enter where our forerunner is. The "*on our behalf*" is extended so that he may be called our *forerunner*. The fact that he entered in the flesh is on our behalf, so that we also, having flesh, may obtain entrance.²¹

"Having become a high priest." And this is a great encouragement, if indeed our high priest is above and much better than those among the Jews; first, in manner; for he is not according to their order, but according to the order of Melchizedek; then, in place and tabernacle; for he is above and in heaven; third, in the covenant; for it is upon greater and more perfect promises; likewise, in permanence; for he is eternal, and not temporary; lastly, in person; for he is the Son of God. Therefore, do not lose heart. And well is the term "*having become*," because it was according to the flesh that he became a high priest.²²

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 6

1. Gennadius of Constantinople was the patriarch of Constantinople from August 458 until his death. Gennadius is known to have been a learned writer who followed the School of Antioch of literal exegesis, although few writings have been left about him.
2. The Pharmakides version adds, "*the resurrection of the dead*." For this also takes place in baptism through the form of rising up, and is confirmed in the confession; for we confess that we believe in the resurrection of the dead. "*and eternal judgment*." That is, of the coming judgment, which grants either eternal good or punishment. This seems to say: since it was likely that they would be shaken, although they had already believed, either that if we live deeply, or fall away from faith, we shall be baptized again, or again be able to wash away sins, and to share in the same things as before. For they err in thinking these things.

3. The PG only reads, "He did not say Difficult, but Impossible."
4. The Pharmakides version adds, "For no one can give such things except one, God."
5. The PG only reads, "By the laying on of hands, as he says above (Heb. 6:2)."
6. The Pharmakides version identifies this excerpt to be from Photius. It was not identified in the PG nor in Staab's edition.
7. The Pharmakides version adds, the rain, however, is called the teaching, as elsewhere, "I command the clouds," says God, "not to rain upon the vineyard;" and again, "the river of God was filled with waters;" these, he who, having been graced by God to teach, was filled with the waters from above, that is, with gifts.
8. The PG only reads, "What is a suitable vegetation? The virtuous life."
9. The Pharmakides version adds, "So do not lose heart, but always hope for better things; for God is always righteous. Therefore, I have not spoken about you in a discouraging way; for I know that you are not worthy of curses."
10. The PG only reads, "To those who have already believed. For these provided what was necessary."
11. The Pharmakides version adds, "And he did not say, We wish; which would have been a teaching authority; but, we desire; which is of paternal affection. For this is not something we wish in words only, but our soul burns for you. For such a thing is meant by the phrase, we desire."
12. The Pharmakides version adds, "And this is also for their healing; for it leads them to the future time."
13. The Pharmakides version adds, "Of those who through faith inherited the promises... but through a long time."
14. The PG has a more condensed reading that says, When you see Christ saying, "Amen, amen, I say to you," understand that he swears by no one greater, and that even now the Son swears by Abraham. For the Word swears, "Indeed, I will bless you." He swore saying, "As I live, says the Lord." (Gen. 22:16) That is, *Surely I will bless you.*

15. The Pharmakides version adds, “He said that by being patient he obtained the promise, in order to show the great power of patience, and that it was not the promise alone that accomplished everything; but also patience.”
16. The Pharmakides version adds, “Both, however, the obtaining and the not yet obtaining, serve as encouragement to the faint-hearted; the one, that we also, if we endure patiently, will obtain; the other, that, since he has not yet obtained it, though perfected many years ago, we who are still struggling are not foolish because we have not yet obtained it.”
17. The Pharmakides version adds, “*an end of all dispute.*” And the conclusion of all contradiction and dispute to confirm what is said is the oath. For indeed many things are spoken and disputed on each side; but the oath, coming last and confirming, resolves all doubts.
18. The PG has a shorter reading, saying, “For there were indeed certain great things, then God had promised, and an oath had been added to the promise.”
19. The PG has a shorter reading, saying, “From which, and through which things.”
20. The PG has a shorter reading, saying, “an urging.”
21. The PG has a shorter reading, saying, “For he did not only enter, but he entered *on our behalf.* Where the *forerunner has entered,* there it is necessary for us to enter as well. The *forerunner* is necessary, so that he may be our *forerunner.* The entering with his flesh, is for us, so that we who have flesh may also enter in.”
22. The PG has a shorter reading, “Well said, “Having become,” because of the flesh. Therefore, where the high priest is, there also is the people.”

CHAPTER 7

About Melchizedek, the type of Christ according to his name and city,
and his life, and his priesthood.

Hebrews 7:1-4 *For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and having blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth of all, first being interpreted king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace, without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, abides a priest forever [διηνεκές]. Consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.*

It now also wishes to show the great excellence of the New Testament over the Old: and it demonstrates this through the priests. Saying, "According to the order of Melchizedek," (Heb. 7:17) he indicates that *Melchizedek* himself, the type of Christ (for he calls him a type of Christ), He surpassed the legal priests who were among the Jews: asserting this, he said that if the type of Christ was superior to those that were among the Jews, how much more the truth, that is, Christ himself.

"*king of Salem.*" Name of a city.

"*from the slaughter of the kings.*" When he returned after defeating the kings who had captured Lot. You know the history. (Gen. 14:1)

"*and having blessed him* [εὐλογήσας]." Instead of "he blessed him [εὐλόγησεν]."¹

"*gave a tenth.*" That is, to Melchizedek, Abraham gave a tenth, he says.

"*first being interpreted.*" Therefore, he wants to show how Melchizedek is a type of Christ, and first he does this from the name. For, he says, his name is interpreted, *king of righteousness; Melchizedek, king; Salem, peace.* Of whom else

could he be a type, except of Christ the true King of Righteousness?

Then he also mentions the other interpretation from the city. *Salem is peace*. Therefore, he is not only a *king of righteousness*, but also of *peace*, as from the city of which he reigned; both of these Christ is, being both King of Righteousness and King of Peace.

“*without father, without mother*.” Therefore, is it possible that this Melchizedek, being a man, is without father and without mother, and *having neither beginning of days nor end of life*? No. How then did he say this? Observe. For it could be objected to him: How is Christ according to the order of Melchizedek, who died and was not made a priest forever? See what he says: “We do not know,” he says, “who he has as father or mother, or what lineage Melchizedek is, nor when he was born, or when he died.” And what does this matter? Someone might say: “although we do not know these things, since they are not mentioned in Scripture, nevertheless he had both a father and lineage, and birth and death.”

How then is such a one without father and mother, and having no beginning or end of life? And he says: Just as Melchizedek, because he is not genealogically recorded in Scripture, appears to us who are ignorant to have no parents, nor beginning or end of life, so Christ truly is. For just as we do not know the beginning and end of Melchizedek, so neither truly do we know those of Christ; but the former because it is not written, the latter because of the truth; for the type is not equal in all things to the truth (since he himself is found to be truth, and identity rather than type); but he has certain images and likenesses; for example, Melchizedek is without father according to our ignorance, Christ is without father in his earthly birth; for according to the flesh he was born only of the Virgin Mary; Melchizedek is without

mother, Christ is without mother in his heavenly birth, in which he had neither beginning of days; for how could the maker of time have a beginning? For he was begotten from the Father alone before all ages, ineffably and unthinkable. And thus understand all things that Melchizedek had, which we are ignorant of concerning him, these things Christ truly has. For Melchizedek is a *king of peace* and *righteousness* even to the bare names; but Christ truly is so.

— [PHOTIUS] "*without genealogy.*" Melchizedek is without genealogy, as he is neither from the seed of Abraham nor is he traced through Moses, but his lineage is said to be unknown, and he is believed to spring from that cursed seed. It is just that he is declared righteous in himself, and not derived from righteous ancestors, nor from any righteous seed. It was therefore not right to uncover his genealogy, who in this way had reached the peak of righteousness. The lineage of Melchizedek was indeed of the Canaanites, as is shown. And it is indeed possible to demonstrate from those very things of which he held power and ruled over regions, and to which he drew near. For he was a neighbor of Sodom, and closer to Abraham who was dwelling near the oak of Mamre. You should think that there was also a *king of Salem*, which is Jerusalem. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"but made like the Son of God." And where is the similarity? That both Melchizedek and Christ, the end is unknown and the beginning. But for Melchizedek, it is because it has not been written, and for Christ, it is because it does not exist.

"abides a priest forever." In this way, accept the eternal, as well as the others. For he says, as far as it relates to us who are ignorant of when he died, he has set aside the priesthood, he is *a priest forever*. For the type of indistinct images preserves the original; or that the manner of the priesthood of Melchizedek (you know what I mean) remains forever.

"Consider how great this man was." Since he applied the type to the truth, he wishes to show that the type of Christ himself, namely Melchizedek, was greater than those priests among the Jews. And what do I say about the priests? He was indeed greater than the patriarch Abraham himself. If the type of Christ, he says, is greater than the patriarch himself, what then could anyone say about Christ? In one way, Abraham was greater than Melchizedek, but the type was the one who conquers. Thus, Cyril among the saints in the second book concerning On Adoration in Spirit and Truth...

"to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth." It is not to be said, he says, that he gave him tithes, as one who has shared in the war; (for this is why he said above, *'who met Abraham returning from the slaughter'*), but according to reverence and honor, just as giving first fruits. *"gave a tenth of the spoils."* From the loot and plunder. And if he is greater than the patriarch (and this is indicated by the giving of tithes), much more than those among the Jewish priests. For the patriarch is not brought forth without reason: but to show that if the patriarch, he says, has given, what is to be said about the priests?"

Hebrews 7:5-7 *And those who take the priesthood from the sons of Levi have a commandment to tithe the people according to the law, that is, their brothers, who have come out of the loins of Abraham. But he whose genealogy is not counted among them has tithed Abraham and blessed the one who has the promises. Without any contradiction, the lesser is blessed by the greater.*

It confirms that he who was in the figure of Christ was greater than the priests of the Jews. The Levites, he says, being more honorable than the rest of the people, receive the tithes. For what

is taken from brothers who have the same father? Therefore, it is evident that the tithes are a symbol of honor and of being more sacred. Thus, Melchizedek, being a foreigner and without genealogy, would not have received tithes from the patriarch unless he was greater than him. For Abraham would not have given to one who was not truly greater. If he is greater than the patriarch, it is evident that he is much greater than the priests among the Jews.

"*to tithe the people.*" To tithe means, for example, to take tithes from them; for the Levites were receiving tithes from the people.

— [PHOTIUS] "*who have come out.*" This is what it says: Although in all other respects they were equal in condition and honor, yet from the fact that these indeed gave tithes, while those received them, great excellence is shown. If this is so, it is clear that even in Abraham and Melchizedek, when Abraham gave tithes, Melchizedek received them. Therefore, he who was a type and figure of Christ was greater than the patriarch Abraham: and if Abraham himself, much more the priests. But if the type was greater, what can anyone say about Christ? [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"*But he whose genealogy is not counted among them.*" Among them, that is, among those. Therefore, he whose genealogy is not mentioned to among them, nor reckoned in the number with their kind, namely Melchizedek, received tithes.

"*and blessed the one who has the promises.*" He took up Abraham, so that Melchizedek might receive more. Since it was a great thing to Abraham to receive the promises from God, he now adds this, that Melchizedek, so great and so old, having been deemed worthy of divine fellowship, and having God as his debtor, was blessed by the type of Christ. The lesser is blessed by the greater. He said that Melchizedek blessed the aged Abraham; and we all commonly and unquestionably know that the one who

blesses is *greater* than the one who is blessed. Therefore, Melchizedek, the type of Christ, is greater than the patriarch himself.²

Hebrews 7:7-9 *And here indeed the men who die receive tithes. But there he receives them of whom it is testified that he lives: and so to speak, Levi himself, who receives tithes, was also tithing through Abraham. For he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met Abraham.*

It shows that there was great excellence in Melchizedek, and therefore he received tithes, and it says: Even the Levites receive; but this is not great, for they *die*; who, then, envies the honor of one who is about to die? However, Melchizedek, even if he received testimony *that he lives*, received tithes. And what it says about him receiving testimony *that he lives*, take according to the previously given understanding, namely because Scripture did not say the end of him, but only life, it seemed to testify only that he lived; as if to say: *Abraham* foresaw that the death of *Melchizedek* would not be revealed, nor was he moved to envy him the honor of tithes, for he knew his dignity. For he has superiority. The simpler way to accept what is said is that the priesthood of the Levites dies. For it has ceased. The truths have been revealed; but the one of Melchizedek lives.

"*that he lives.*" How then was he testified? In saying to God, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." (Heb. 7:17) And therefore, the distinction of Melchizedek from the priests among the Jews.

"*the men who die.*" For he says, it is not to be assumed that at any time he became greater, but after this he was established in a lesser portion. For in the law, the Levites receive tithes, and

those who die pass on their value to others. So that the same ones are not always those who receive the tithe. But here, we have learned nothing of the sort. Therefore, he should always be regarded as superior, if indeed he remains always upon his own value. For he remains, as I said, an everlasting priest, having taken this from Scripture, as in the saying, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek," (Heb. 7:17) showing that he is such an everlasting priest.

"*and so to speak.*" So that they may not say, "And what," he says, "*was also tithing through Abraham?*" Yes, he says. For Levi was in Abraham when he gave the tithes, even though he was not yet born. If therefore *Levi was in the loins of Abraham* when he gave the tithes, it is clear that *Levi himself*, the ancestor of the priests, gave tithes, when Abraham gave tithes. And the phrase, *so to speak*, means this, that, in short, or instead of saying, let me put it this way. For it seemed a bold statement to say that Levi, not yet born, was tithed by Melchizedek, and this was corrected.³

— Another. [PHOTIUS] Therefore, it is said that Abraham gave tithes, even Levi who receives tithes was himself tithed, that is, he gave tithes. Thus, concerning those words, "*through Abraham,*" a distinction must be made so that the meaning becomes completely undeniable. For because of Abraham's tithing, in a certain way, Levi, who was still in his *loins*, was also tithing. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

"*For he was still in the loins.*" The seed that was the beginning of Levi's life was within the loins of Abraham. Indeed, Isaac was the cause and origin of Levi.

That the priesthood of Aaron will cease on earth, but the heavenly one of Christ stands from another lineage, not according to the flesh, nor through a carnal law.

Hebrews 7:11-14 *If, therefore, the perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for the people were constituted by it), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek and not according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. For he of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has oversaw at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.*

When *Melchizedek* had shown that he was superior to Levi and the priests, indeed even to the patriarch Abraham himself, he then demonstrated that this priesthood of the New Testament is superior to the Old, and that the new covenant is more perfect than the old covenant. If *the Levitical priesthood* had not been perfect, he says, what need was there for Christ to rise not according to the *order of Aaron*, who was also of *the Levitical priesthood*? But did he not need to *rise according to the order of Melchizedek*? Is it not evident that this happened because of the imperfection, he says, *through the Levitical priesthood*?

"*for the people were constituted by it.*" For if the Levitical priesthood were perfect, it was necessary for Christ to arise from the lineage of Aaron, especially, he says, that the people are *constituted* to this Levitical priesthood, that is, to be used by it, to be arranged under it, to be led by it. Why then was it removed? Clearly because it was weak.⁴

"*For the priesthood being changed.*" See how skillfully he introduces the new covenant. Whenever, he says, there has been a change of the priesthood, so that it is no longer according to the order of Aaron, but a priest arises according to the order of Melchizedek, and no longer from the lineage of Levi but from

the lineage of Judah (for from this lineage Christ became a priest according to the flesh), it is necessary, he says, for the law and the covenant to be changed, that is, to be altered, and for another newer one to be introduced.

"For he of whom these things are spoken." It is certainly said concerning Christ, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." (Heb. 7:17)

"belongs to another tribe." And so great, he says, is the change and interchange of both the law and the old covenant, that even of that tribe, which administered the old priesthood, there has been a change. For Christ is of another tribe, not of Levi but of Judah, which tribe, neither at any time served as a priest at the altar.

For it is said, *"that our Lord arose from Judah."* The word *"arose"* is related to the fleshly birth of our Savior God.⁵ A crafted expression referring to the fleshly birth of our Savior, the word *"arose,"* taken from the prophecy of Balaam, "A star shall rise out of Jacob," (Num. 24:17) saying; and also from Malachi (4:2), calling him the sun of righteousness. Through these, it is shown that the coming of the Lord was for the enlightenment of the world.

"of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood." For Moses was chosen from the tribe of Levi.

Hebrews 7:15-17 *And even more evident is it, if according to the likeness of Melchizedek there arises another priest, who has not become a priest according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an everlasting life. For it is testified in this manner: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

And not only, he says, it is clear from this that the priesthood and the covenant have been changed from that of another tribe, and not from Levi, that the risen priest is from, but also it is evident from this more abundantly. Of which? From that *according to the order of Melchizedek*, and not according to the former priest Aaron, Christ became a priest.

"*if according to the likeness of Melchizedek there arises another priest.*" The "if," instead of "that," you will understand, or rather since; as if he said; And from this it is evident both the change and the transfer of the old covenant. Then *according to the likeness*. Since, he says, *according to the likeness of Melchizedek there arises another priest*, and not according to the likeness of Aaron.

"*who has not become a priest according to the law of a fleshly commandment.*" For Christ has become a high priest, not according to the law of a commandment concerning flesh, *but according to the power of an everlasting life*. What is *according to the law of a fleshly commandment?* That the law had commandments concerning the flesh, such as circumcision, rest, this one to eat, and that one not to eat. Which was of the flesh and did not come to the purification of the soul, therefore he says, *a priest according to the law of a fleshly commandments*. For he knew the Levites as priests. But he says, Christ has become a priest, both by his own power and that of the Father, and by eternal life.

"*For it is testified.*" And that, he says, Christ has not become *a priest according to the law of a fleshly commandment*. The testimony indicates the Father; for the Father testifies to him, saying, *a priest according to the order of Melchizedek*. For if he says, according to the law he was made, he ought to have been made according to the order of Aaron. But now, since it is written according to the order of Melchizedek, it is evident that

he is not made according to the law, but according to a different, more divine manner.⁶

Hebrews 7:18-25 *For annulment occurs of the preceding command due to weakness and uselessness: for the law did not lead anything to perfection, but is a certain introduction to a greater hope, through which we draw near to God: and this is greater, because the matter was not done without an oath. For they indeed became priests without an oath, but he with an oath by the one who said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." So much better is Jesus, the Guarantor of a better covenant. And indeed, there were many priests because they were prevented by death from continuing; but he holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever. Therefore, he is able to save those who come to God through him, always living to intercede for them.*

He said that the new covenant is better. And this indicates, he says, the difference of the priests. He said that everything has changed. Therefore, he speaks of the reason for the change, and he says, "*For annulment occurs of the preceding command.*" Therefore, an annulment occurs when the preceding commandment is in force, that is, of the older law. Not simply, but then when it was found to be weak and unprofitable. Since there is no fault, what need is there for the change? Therefore, he says, this is also the law. For this, the preceding commandment has been annulled *due to weakness and uselessness.*

For the law was not able to produce any *perfection* in virtue. For it only said, "Do this," and "Do not do that," and it was no longer

able to strengthen and assist in bringing about what was said, which now happens to us through the Spirit.⁷

"*but is a certain introduction.*" It is done in common.

"*of a greater hope.*" For the law had hope, but not such as that which was introduced. For those who were observing the law hoped to possess the land. "For you shall eat the good things of the land," (Is. 1:19) but the hope through Christ gives the kingdom of heaven, and the nearness to stand before God, and to serve Him with angels. He said above (Heb. 4:6): Entering into the inner part of the veil; but now: Through which we draw near to God, he says; for the hope that is with him leads us to the divine throne, and stands with the Cherubim.⁸

"*because the matter was not done without an oath.*" And so much, he says, the hope has been greatly improved, insofar as Christ has become a priest without an oath. For the oath indicates the unchangeable nature of his being a high priest forever.

"*For they indeed became priests without an oath.*" Then, from the lesser, the comparisons of the priests among the Jews and our High Priest. For the legal priests, he says, were made priests without an oath; for God never found it necessary to swear: "You shall be a priest according to the law." But Christ, with an oath, made by the one who said to Him, as it were, by God; for God spoke through David: "You are a priest," in a certain new way; for He is not according to Aaron, but according to Melchizedek.⁹

"*by the one who said to him.*" As through God. For God spoke through David, "*So much better is Jesus.*" "*For,*" he says, "*they indeed became priests without an oath,* but Christ has become a high priest with an oath. And this would not have happened, he says, if the difference were not great. Therefore, there is also a great difference between the new and the old."

"the Guarantor [Ἐγγύος]." Like a guarantor [έγγυητής], Mediator.

"*And indeed, there were many.*" And according to another, he says, the high priest is greater than us, not only because of the oath, but also because he is immortal.

"*because they were prevented by death.*" For it is through death and change, namely of the priest.

"*from continuing.*" in the priesthood, namely, "*permanently.*" Lacking succession, *forever*, "*Therefore.*" Since he *always living*. "*always.*" Not only in this age, but also in the future. For this is what they want entirely and completely.

"*those who come to God.*" Through the faith that is in Him. For whoever believes in the Son, comes to the Father certainly; for he himself is the way to the Father, and whoever takes hold of this, dwells there.¹⁰

"*always living.*" Therefore, He saves completely, because He always lives. Furthermore, He saves because He *intercedes* for those who approach God the Father.

"*to intercede for them.*" Concerning Christ, as He is according to the flesh, this humble word has been said. However, when I say according to the flesh, I do not mean division. Far from it: but I know Him to be worshiped indivisibly, without confusion in one hypostasis along with His flesh. But what does it mean, "*to intercede for them* "? For example, He asks his Father on our behalf. For when he called him a priest, it is characteristic of a priest to ask on behalf of the people; for this reason, he said, "*to intercede.*" That this has been said for this reason is evident. For He who raises the dead by His own authority, forgives sins, does not need the Father to save, as if He were powerless to save by His own power.

— [OECUMENIUS] What he says: "*to intercede*," take as what is said: "We have an advocate with the Father." (1 Jn. 2:1) From His very incarnation, He asks and intercedes with the Father that He may have mercy on us. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

Hebrews 7:25-28 *For such a high priest was fitting for us, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He does not need, like the high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; he did this once for all when he offered up himself. For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been made perfect forever.*

It is obvious from these things that he is speaking about Christ according to the flesh in the preceding statements and these as well. For how could he say such things about divinity and not be ashamed, attributing these things to that incomprehensible nature? Therefore, he is holy, who neglects none of the things owed to him. He is innocent, blameless, and without deceit. "For no deceit," he says, "was found in His mouth." (Is. 53:9)¹¹

"*unstained*." No one would call this a praise of God; for it is in his nature not to be defiled. But it is clear that this concerns the humanity of the one Christ.¹²

"*separated from sinners*." The chief priests among the Jews, he says, even if they were holy in other respects, as human beings they are still subject to evil and are not entirely separated from sinners; for how could they be, if they themselves are guilty of sins?

"*and exalted above the heavens*." For He sat down on the throne of the Father. But does the term "*exalted*" not cry out that he

speaks about His flesh? For the Word of God was always higher than the heavens.

"He does not need, like the high priests, to offer sacrifices daily." Not only, he says, is the difference from the sinless one in relation to the Jewish priests, but also from the manner of the sacrifice, that He does not offer for Himself first, then for the people, and that He made the sacrifice once for the people only.

"like the high priests." That is, of the Jews.

"he did this once for all." What is this? To offer himself as a sacrifice for the people. For himself, he did not do so even once. For he had no need, being sinless, to offer for himself. Therefore, when you hear him called a high priest, think of him as always being a priest. For having done this once, he sat down at the right hand of the Father. For to minister is to stand. But to sit down indicates that having offered the sacrifice once, namely, his own body, he has sat down; ministering under the authority of spiritual powers.

"For the law appoints men." And for whose sake did he not need, he says, to offer a sacrifice for himself? Nor did he often offer for the people, as the high priests do, but having offered once, he was sufficient; why? Because the priests who are appointed from the law are under sin. Therefore, they must always offer a sacrifice for both themselves and the people. But God, by the oath made after the law, appointing the high priest Christ, who is the Son, established him as a perfect priest, and not subject to the same weakness and sin as those according to the law, once as the Son of God and God, *"has been made perfect forever."* In common. He established him as a priest, he says, for made perfect forever, that is, not only now being without sin, but also to be such for all time. If then he is both Son and perfect forever, for whose sake was he to need many sacrifices?

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 7

1. [« Καὶ εύλογήσας αὐτόν. » Ἀντὶ τοῦ εύλογησεν αὐτόν.] For εύλογήσας is taken for εύλογησεν, that is, the participle for the verb.
2. The PG has a shorter readings, saying, Abraham lifted up to exalt Melchizedek more. "*the lesser is blessed by the greater.*" Therefore, the type of Christ was superior and better than the patriarch himself.
3. The Pharmakides version adds, "And the phrase, so to speak, means this, that, in short, or instead of saying, let me put it this way. For it seemed a bold statement to say that Levi, not yet born, was tithed by Melchizedek, and this was corrected."
4. The Pharmakides version adds, "Why then was it removed? Clearly because it was weak."
5. The PG only reads, "The word 'arose' is related to the fleshly birth of our Savior God." The Pharmakides version does not have that reading, but I put both readings together, with the PG reading first and the Pharmakides version second.
6. The Pharmakides version adds, "But now, since it is written according to the order of Melchizedek, it is evident that he is not made according to the law, but according to a different, more divine manner."
7. The Pharmakides version adds, "which now happens to us through the Spirit."
8. The Pharmakides version adds, "He said above: Entering into the inner part of the veil; but now: Through which we draw near to God, he says; for the hope that is with him leads us to the divine throne, and stands with the Cherubim."
9. The Pharmakides version adds, For the legal priests, he says, were made priests without an oath; for God never found it necessary to swear: "You shall be a priest according to the law." But Christ, with an oath, made by the one who said to Him, as it were, by God; for God spoke through David: "You are a priest," in a certain new way; for He is not according to Aaron, but according to Melchizedek.

10. The Pharmakides version adds, "For whoever believes in the Son, comes to the Father certainly; for he himself is the way to the Father, and whoever takes hold of this, dwells there."

11. The PG has a shorter reading, saying, You see that he speaks about these things concerning Christ according to the flesh: For how could he speak about His divinity, being sinless, that is, without deceit? "For no deceit," he says, "was found in His mouth." (Is. 53:9)

12. The Pharmakides version adds, "*unstained*." No one would call this a praise of God; for it is in his nature not to be defiled. But it is clear that this concerns the humanity of the one Christ.

CHAPTER 8

Hebrews 8:1-6 *Moreover, the main point of what we say is this: we have such a high priest who has sat down at the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord set up, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this one also to have something to offer. For if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law, who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was instructed when he was about to erect the tabernacle. He said, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain." But now he has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.*

"*Moreover, the main point.*" He always calls that which is greatest the *main point*. Whenever someone intends to

summarize the main points briefly, he says that the discourse is made into a *point*; just as the head, though small, is the most important part of the body. Therefore, the apostle also says now: "*Moreover, the main point of what we say is this*"—that is, to say the greatest and most comprehensive, we have a God as high priest; for the priesthood belongs to no one else but God.¹

"*we have such a high priest.*" This mixes the humble with the awe-inspiring in this place, so that through the humble it may prepare the way for the awe-inspiring. The humble are to be a priest and an administrator; the awe-inspiring is to sit at the right hand of God and in the heavens.

"*of the throne of majesty.*" He calls it the throne of majesty, the paternal throne, or that majesty might also be said to belong to the Father; or simply thus, the throne of majesty, the greatest throne.²

"*a minister of the sanctuary.*" The *High Priest*, he says, is of men who have been sanctified by him. For he is our *High Priest*. If he sat at the right hand of the Father, how is he a *minister*? For it is proper for ministers to stand and serve; but to sit is the role of God to whom the ministry is rendered. But, as has been said, the humble mingles with the awe-inspiring, so that by sitting he may show divinity, and by ministering the guardianship and humanity concerning us.

— [PHOTIUS] For this is the ministry and this is the priesthood, to cleanse men from sins and to make them holy. For such a minister and worker of the saints must sit at the right hand of the Father as the true God and Son. [end of the Photius excerpt] —

"*and of the true tabernacle.*" Here, he refers to the heavens as the *tabernacle*. For they were saying, perhaps, the believers from Judea: If he is a high priest, where is the *tabernacle* in which he performs his priestly duties? He indicates that there is also a

tabernacle, and the difference of it compared to the Jewish *tabernacle*, wanting to show that it was established by the Lord and not by man.

"*For every high priest.*" For he says, it is proper for the high priests *to offer gifts and sacrifices* (for this is why they are established), it is necessary for the Christ also to offer something, I mean sacrifices. Therefore, he took on his own flesh, which he also offered. He said this, so that no one would say, If he is a high priest forever, why did he die? Why? So that he might offer himself as a sacrifice. For without sacrifices, he would not even be a high priest.

"*thus it is necessary for this one also to have something to offer.*" Such as Christ.

"*For if he were on earth.*" This was the case, if he had not died, nor had he been taken up after rising.

"*he would not be a priest at all.*" For there would be others, even a rebellion would be present. But now he has died, so that he may offer the sacrifice. Rising from the dead, he was taken up, so that he might have a place in heaven, where he must serve as a priest. To serve as a priest means to intercede for us. All these humble words were said, both because of humanity and because of the childishness of those who hear.

"*who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.*" Those who are priests of the Jews, he says. And how do they *serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things?* For he says,

"*See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain.*" And the things shown to him were heavenly. There were also services, and prayers, and sacrifices, and the construction of the tabernacle.

"*just as Moses was instructed.*" "He has heard, he knows."

"According to the pattern shown to you." Since the sight is easier to learn than hearing, for this reason God showed Moses everything, not only the construction of the tabernacle, but also concerning the sacrifices and the other worship.³

"But now he has obtained a more excellent ministry." Now, he says, since it is not on earth, but in heaven, a better ministry has been attained, that is, the high priest is for a better ministry. See how he engages with the humble because of the weakness of those who are listening. But if he were to say something awe-inspiring, he would immediately be dismissed, fearing that it would not be accepted.

"inasmuch as he is also the mediator of a better covenant." Thus, he says, the ministry is better than the old, as the new covenant, of which Christ is the *mediator*, is new, I say, the covenant of faith in Him, in which He mediated for Himself and for the Father,

"which was established on better promises." This covenant, he says, was enacted on better promises. For the old promised the good things of the earth; but the new, the kingdom of heaven. And thus the promises from this are better, because the former has been abolished. Therefore, the new triumphs, because it is better, and is given on *better promises*. And the better one has the promises, for it is better, is evident everywhere.

The excellence of the New Testament over the Old is due to atonement and holiness.

Hebrews 8:7-9 *For if that first one was without blemish, there would have been no place sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of*

Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them," says the Lord.

Behold the order! He said that the covenant according to Christ is superior to the old one. And how is this evident? Because, he says, it is established on better promises. For if the promises and the recompenses are better, it is clear that the covenant is also better, and the commandments more divine. But how is it evident that the promises are better? From this, he says, that the former was set aside, but this one has taken its place. For this reason, the New covenant prevails, because it is better and more perfect. For if the former had been faultless, that is, if it had nothing lacking, if it made people blameless—then no second covenant would have been introduced.⁴

If he had nothing lacking, he says, if he made men without fault, how then was he so disturbed? "*For finding fault with them.*" To whom? The Jews who received and were governed by the laws in the Old Testament.

"Behold, the days are coming." "After having made the new covenant better than the old in many ways above, now clearly he also mocks the removal of the old, but he does not do this of his own accord, lest he become burdensome, and he brings forth Jeremiah saying, "*in the day when I took them by the hand.*" (Jer. 31:32)

"in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." So that they do not suppose that the exodus is according to the covenant with Abraham; for it has occurred in Christ, "For to your seed," he says, "who is Christ;" (Gal. 3:16) it brings forth what kind of covenant the exodus has become. That of the Exodus, he says, made through Moses. For to say,

"not according to that covenant," he shows it to be cast away, as if he were saying, "I will give another covenant, not such as I have already given. For that one, because of its weakness, has been cast away from me."

"because they did not continue." As if the statement serves as a defense for God's negligence; for He says, *they did not continue My covenant.* For from them began the disobedience, and thus God's negligence followed.

Hebrews 8:10-13 *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor, and each one his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more. In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*

"For this is the covenant." Which one? The New one.

That is to say, *"after those days."* Which days? Some say, those of the Exodus, in which the Mosaic law was given; but it seems to me that it speaks of those days mentioned above: "Behold, the days are coming." After those days have passed, I will make such a covenant as you will hear next.⁵

"I will put my laws." I will establish, giving my laws, *"on their hearts."* For neither in letters was the new established, but through the Holy Spirit. And this is indicated by Christ

speaking to the apostles. "He (that is, the Comforter) coming, will remind you and teach you all things." (Jn. 14:26) Do you see that the new is not in letters, but through the Holy Spirit? Therefore, consider how much greater the New Covenant is.

"And I will be their God." This was accomplished through the gospel. For those who formerly worshiped idols, now having known the true God, have become His people.⁶

— [OECUMENIUS] For this is evident. Who easily persuades someone in the ancient times to turn away from their own superstition? On the contrary, Israel was turning from the knowledge of God into error. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor." Here it speaks of a teaching that is more laborious. For behold, we see that there is no need for more words for those whose minds are healthy, to persuade them to believe in Christ. For all men are taught by God; for Christ has written His laws upon our hearts.

"for they shall all know me." For the Jewish knowledge and faith were confined to one corner of the world, Palestine. And few knew it; but the voice of the apostles went out to all the earth. Moreover, since God dwelt on earth in the flesh, and by taking on our nature made it divine, the light of true knowledge of God shone in all souls, and a certain ability was granted to human nature by grace to truly know God.⁷

"For I will be merciful toward their iniquities." To those who have gone before. Mercy is granted, having been left to us in baptism.

"and I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." For those forgiven in baptism are no longer remembered.

"In speaking of a new covenant." For to call it altogether new has made the first covenant old.

"And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away." Now, having taken boldness from the prophet, he himself declares. This, he says, is new, but that one is old. The old is being abolished, he says. Therefore, it has been cast out and dissolved because of old age; as if he were saying: The new has not suddenly ceased the old, but because of its old age and antiquity, that is, because of its weakness and uselessness. "what the law could not do." he says elsewhere, in that part where it "was weakened by the flesh". (Rom. 8:3)

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 8

1. The PG only reads for this section, "He always calls that which is greatest the *main point*."
2. The Pharmakides version adds, "*of the throne of majesty.*" He calls it the throne of majesty, the paternal throne, or that majesty might also be said to belong to the Father; or simply thus, the throne of majesty, the greatest throne.
3. The PG only reads, "*According to the pattern shown to you.*" Since the sight is easier to learn than hearing,
4. The Pharmakides version adds the entire paragraph, "Behold the order! He ... no second covenant would have been introduced."
5. The PG only reads, "What days? The days of the exodus, in which I received the law."
6. The Pharmakides version adds, "This was accomplished through the gospel. For those who formerly worshiped idols, now having known the true God, have become His people."
7. The Pharmakides version adds, "and few knew it; but the voice of the apostles went out to all the earth. Moreover, since God dwelt on earth in the flesh, and by taking on our nature made it divine, the light of true knowledge of God shone in all souls, and a certain aptitude was granted to human nature by grace to truly know God."

CHAPTER 9

Hebrews 9:1-5 *The first tabernacle indeed had rights of worship, and the holy world. For the first tabernacle was constructed, in which were the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the holy place. And after the second veil, the tabernacle called the Holy of Holies, having a golden censer, and the Ark of the Covenant covered all around with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and the rod of Aaron that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the Cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; about which we cannot now speak in detail.*

The superior things are shown from the change of the priest, the sacrifice, and the covenant, which the old has come to an end, and that which is new is better in many ways; it now wishes to show from the very arrangement of the *tabernacle* that those were the figures of the true things: moreover, the figure takes an end where the truth approaches. What he says: "had," signifies that it now does not have. Therefore, although it has not completely ceased, since some still cling to it, nevertheless, it has no *rights*.

— In another way. [PHOTIUS] *The first tabernacle indeed had rights of worship*, I think it is not about the tabernacle, but about the old covenant itself. For it did not compare the tabernacle with the new covenant, but the entire old covenant with the new, and it showed the superiority of this over that entire one. "For behold," he says, "the days are coming, and I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant I made with their fathers." (Jer. 31:31-33; Heb. 8:8-10) And again: "In speaking of a new covenant, he has made the first obsolete."(Heb. 8:13)

And after saying this, he adds: "He had also had it before." (Heb. 10:15) Therefore, it is evident that the discussion is still about the covenant. For since he had depressed it in comparison to the new, lest anyone should say that it had always been rejected, he anticipates by saying that it also *had rights of worship*, laws, and order, and those things which pertain to the proper worship of God. Saying that by lineage he *had rights of worship*, he proceeds also in part, beginning from the tabernacle.

"He had," he says, "*the holy world*." Then after the *holy world* and all that is sacred, he had again another tabernacle, set apart from the more secret and holier tabernacle. And in the set-apart one, both the lampstand and the arrangement of the loaves, which tabernacle is not called the *holy world*, just as the entire tabernacle, the first, but simply holy. [*end of the Photius excerpt*]

— After that tabernacle. [OECUMENIUS] The first, you say, as to the *holy of holies*, since it was not the first, but the middle. For the first was where the bronze altar of the sacrifices and the burnt offerings was. This is the second, concerning which it is said, "*in which were the lampstand, the table, and the showbread*." The third, in which is *a golden censer, and the Ark of the Covenant*. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"*the holy world*." It is called world because it is open to all. Here, the temple is rightly called holy, in which the liturgy [*λειτουργίαν*] was performed to God, or even the tabernacle, since they had previously had this in the order of the temple, thus calling it so. And this can be learned from the first book of Kings, which clearly states: "And Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord, where the Ark of God was." (1 Sam. 3:3)

Therefore, he says, the *holy* was in the old covenant as something worldly, so that he might say when the temple was constructed as a type of the *world*. God indeed created heaven

and earth, as Moses says, in the beginning, (Gen. 1) saying heaven above, on the second day, preparing for this heaven to be established in the midst of the waters; so that even being elevated, the waters have it above. Therefore, as a symbol of the world, commanding Moses to construct a certain type, God instructed him to make the tabernacle.

"Make a sanctuary from the curtains, divided in the middle by another." (Ex. 26:4) Thus indeed the temple later became a type according to the same pattern. And the whole house was divided by a wall in the middle, so that the outer part was the house, in which it was necessary for the priests to perform the service through the sacrifices and to render all the rest to God; this was a symbol of that very place upon the earth, where it has now happened that we dwell; but the inner part, in which it was necessary for the high priest to enter only once a year, was a symbol of the heavenly, where the Jews believed God to dwell.

"For the first tabernacle was constructed." — [OECUMENIUS] I noted that there were three tabernacles in the Octateuch¹ that exist; one, concerning which the *holy world* speaks, where there was the bronze altar of burnt offerings, and it was permitted for all the people to enter and to perform the sacrifices; the second, where the priests were always permitted to perform the services, where there was the *lampstand and the table and the showbread*; the third, where there was the *censer and the Ark*, into which only the high priest entered once a year. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"And after the second veil." Therefore, there was not only one veil. A tabernacle is called everywhere, because there God dwells.²

"the Ark of the Covenant." It carries the symbols of the covenant, such as the *tablets* of the law and the others.

"having a golden censor." All these were in the Ark, rebuking the ingratitude of the Jews.

"*the rod*", because of the insurrection against the priesthood.³

the tablets, because the Jews had a ploy to break the first commandments.

and *the manna*, because of their grumbling while eating. Therefore, these symbols should also be sent to their descendants for their caution.

"*Above it.*" Of the ark.

"*Cherubim of glory.*" Which are the glorious, or the beings of glory, namely, of God.

— [OECUMENIUS] "*overshadowing the mercy seat.*" For above the ark, as if a square golden table, which was called *the mercy seat*, typifying Christ (Jn. 2:2), who is called to us the propitiation and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). See the passage in Exodus, in the places concerning these things. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"*about which we cannot now speak in detail.*" He wishes to show that the things seen were mysteries and types of the Truth. Therefore, it is not now, he says, to speak of them in part. For more words are needed than according to the present urge.

Hebrews 9:6-7 With these things thus arranged, the priests enter the first tabernacle at all times, performing the services; but into the second, once a year, the high priest alone, not without blood, which he offers for himself and of the ignorance of the people.

And it happened that the Jews neither saw the things that were happening, as the veil was being torn. So it was not more for them than for those who were prefigured, that is, for us,

"*once a year, the high priest alone.*" Since he approached them while they were still infants, how could one sacrifice of Christ cleanse the sins of the world? This is also shown in the old, which is a type of the new.

— [OECUMENIUS] In Exodus, in the places concerning these things, it says that on the day the high priest entered the Holy of Holies with the holy incense. And it is written thus; "And he shall burn incense upon it." (that is, upon the golden altar that was in the Holy of Holies); Aaron shall burn a finely blended incense in the morning when he tends to the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lights the lamps in the evening, he shall burn incense, a continual incense. (Ex. 30:10) [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

How then does the divine Paul say in this place, "*once a year, the high priest alone?*" And we say that he indeed entered with blood once a year: as is also said in the aforementioned place of Exodus; but to offer, on these days every day.

[But know that they were also perplexed and ignorant; for Aaron did not burn incense on the golden altar of incense every day, but on the golden altar of sacrifice; and this was not in the holy of holies, but in the middle of the tabernacle, where both the lampstand and the table were; since after the golden altar of incense he entered once a year into the holy of holies; for the altar of incense is different from the altar of sacrifice. I have also presented the difficulty, so that the reader may not be misled by hearing this from others, thinking that it is sound.]⁴

Indeed, he also adds here: "*not without blood*," that is, with blood; so that this is the sense: Once a year the high priest with blood, not with incense.

"without blood." After sacrifices, he says. So also the blood was a type of Christ.

"*which he offers for himself*." He adds everywhere, For himself, showing Christ's excellence above the high priest of the Jews. For the legal high priest offered for himself; but Christ did not offer for himself; for how could he, who is separate from sinners? Thus there is a great difference between the two.⁵

"*and of the ignorance of the people*", he says. And from this, he shows the difference, that the sacrifices according to the law were offered for *ignorance*. For those in ignorance were allowed sins, indeed, the sacrifice of Christ, even those sins whom we knowingly have committed.

Hebrews 9:8-10 That signifies that the way of the saints had not yet been made clear by the Holy Spirit, while the former tabernacle was still standing; which was a symbol for the time then present, according to which gifts and sacrifices were offered, which could not perfect the worshiper in regard to conscience, only in foods and drinks, and various baptisms and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of restructuring [διορθώσεως].

"*made clear by the Holy Spirit*." For this reason, he says, the tabernacle was thus constructed, where the lampstand and the table of showbread are in the first sanctuary, and since the remaining priests ascend into the Holy of Holies, it is evident that heaven remains inaccessible. For the Holy of Holies is a type of heaven. But only the high priest enters there, which was a type that only Christ, the true high priest, has ascended into

heaven. But thereafter, having ascended, he brought in the race of mankind, for before this it was inaccessible. Now, however, it has become accessible through Christ.

"*not yet been made clear.*" It is not yet a path that is walkable and accessible to the heavens, which Christ first initiated.

"*was still standing,*" he says, and in a certain way blocking the passage to the Holy of Holies.

"*which was a symbol.*" He says, a type of those in the tabernacle, *for the time then present*, from which they are fulfilled, he says, and have an end. And justly. For if those were a type of Christ, it is fitting that with the revelation of Christ, the types are fulfilled, and they have an end.

"*according to which gifts and sacrifices were offered.*" In which *a symbol* and according to which type the offerings of both *gifts and sacrifices were offered*,

"*which could not perfect the worshiper in regard to conscience.*" As if he said, In which type, that is, in the priestly service according to the law, the sacrifices were offered, but they were not able to cleanse the soul and conscience. For being bodily, they cleansed the body.

"*in regard to conscience;*" or according to the soul.

"*which could not perfect the worshiper.*" Not even those who offered the sacrifices could be purified.

"*only.*" By hyperbaton [ὑπερβατὸν], the word imposed is to be joined:

"*in foods and drinks.*" The sacrifices and worship offered, he says, could not render anyone perfect concerning the soul, but only had power regarding the flesh and carnal matters: and in this, they satisfied the offerers so that they would eat this and not

eat that, and that they would be washed with water those who had communicated, or were made common and unclean; which are the justifications of the flesh, that is, purifying the flesh, and not at all the soul; not at all the inner man, but were exercised concerning the outer. But how did he say, "*and drinks*," although the law did not make a distinction concerning drinks? This, then, he says, concerns the priest not drinking wine when he was about to enter the sanctuary; or also concerning vows, that is, promises, concerning abstaining from wine; simply belittling such ordinances and ridiculing them, this is what he said.⁶

"*and various baptisms.*" There were various baptisms. For if someone touched a dead body, or a leper, or someone became afflicted with gonorrhea, they were baptized, and in this way it was thought they were being purified. But these were just *ordinances* of the flesh, fleshly things cleansing the flesh, and nowhere the soul, nowhere the mind, nor concerning the inner man, but they were concerned with the outer. However, they were not meant to last forever, but only *until the time of restructuring*. And what is this *time of restructuring*? Clearly, it is the coming of the Savior, who would correct these things and introduce true and spiritual worship.⁷

"*Imposed.*" It is well said, "*imposed*"; for the burden was only those things in the law, as the apostles say; "Which neither we, he says, nor our fathers were able to bear." (Acts 15:10)

Hebrews 9:11-12 But Christ, having come as a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, nor by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered once and for all into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption.

“But Christ, having come as a high priest.” The old covenant high priests, Paul says, worship did not enter into the heavens; but Christ, having come, entered once for all into the holy place; for here the meaning is given. He did not say, “having become a high priest”, but *having come as a high priest*, that is, having come for this purpose. He did not come first, and then, after this happened, become a high priest; but the purpose of his coming to earth was the priesthood.

“of the good things to come.” He did not say, High Priest of those being sacrificed, but, of the future good things, the good things that have evidently come to us; since the word could not fully present everything precisely, he simply and vaguely called good those things that have come to us; but he said these are future, as to the time of the law. For just as he called that one present, so he calls those future things according to Christ, as in comparison to that one; or even of the mysteries that will be revealed to us in the coming age.

“through the greater and more perfect tabernacle.” He refers to the body of Christ as the *tabernacle*, because in it all the fullness of deity dwells bodily. (Col. 2:9) “*Greater*”, because it is God; *more perfect*, because it perfects those who draw near to Him.

— [THEODORET] Here a not-made-by-hand tabernacle called the human nature, which the Lord Christ took upon Himself. For it was not made according to the law of marriage, but the Most Holy Spirit prepared the tabernacle. And the phrase, Not of this creation, instead of, Not according to the law of nature, which is governed in creation. [*end of the Theodoret excerpt*] —⁸

“not made with hands.” Not according to the imitation, he says, of the tabernacle among the Jews. For here he called *the tabernacle not made with hands* the human nature that Christ the Lord took on. For it is not only a marriage chamber that is

prepared for the marriages, but the most Holy Spirit has constructed the tabernacle.

And the phrase, "*not of this creation*," instead of "Not according to the law of nature as it is governed in creation." "*Not of this creation*." The body of Christ, and this was of creation, and not of this. Of this, inasmuch as it is and is similar to our body, but not of this, inasmuch as it possesses the divinity without confusion and without division. Therefore, what is said to the Apostle, "*Not of this creation*," accept as pertaining to the possession of divinity. As for the body itself, it was consubstantial with ours. The fact that it was *not of this creation*, he says, from which the tabernacle of the Jews came. For since he had called the body of Christ a tabernacle, it was necessary to prescribe words of this kind.

"*nor by the blood of goats and calves*." For it was Jewish, and through which the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies.

"*He entered once and for all into the Holy Place*." That is, into heaven.

"*having obtained eternal redemption*." That is, having succeeded, he found eternal redemption. Not for himself, (for how could the sinless one?) but for his people.

— [OECUMENIUS] Since the head of humanity deemed it fitting to be, the Apostle says that the things which were *obtained* for us were *obtained* by Him. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

Hebrews 9:13-14 For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered

Himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Then, since it seemed doubtful that a single sacrifice and the blood of one could provide eternal redemption, he prepares it and shows that it is plausible and not unattainable with the belief held by the Jews. *For if you*, he says, believe that you are cleansed by being sprinkled with the blood of a calf, and again with water poured on its *ashes*; (for the ashes were observed for *the purification* of those who had been defiled, that is, those who were contaminated;) how then does *the blood of Christ* not cleanse the souls?⁹

"*sanctifies for the purification of the flesh.*" It sanctifies not spiritually, but for the cleansing of the flesh. See it speaking precisely.¹⁰

"*who through the eternal Spirit.*" No high priest offered Christ, but He offered Himself; and not through fire, as the calves in the Old Testament, but through the Holy Spirit, so as to perpetuate both grace and redemption.¹¹

"*without blemish to God.*" And the ancient priesthood that was presented sought to be without blemish. There was a place of the body of Christ, the unblemished and absolutely pure. "For he did no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth," says Isaiah. (1 Peter 2:22; Isa. 53:9)

"*purify your conscience.*" For the blood of bulls and the ashes of a heifer, it said, for the purity of the flesh; but concerning the blood of Christ, it says, *your conscience*. See the difference in purification. What is *your conscience*? That is to say, it also purifies our soul, so that we may no longer be aware of any sin against ourselves from this time.

"from dead works." Of the wicked, those who defile the soul. For one who touches a dead body, among the Jews, is defiled, but among us, the strange [ἄτοπα] works defile.

"To serve the living God." This indicates that one cannot serve God unless they are pure from dead works. Thus, those who serve with them do not serve, but are condemned.

Hebrews 9:15-18 *And for this reason, he is the mediator of the new covenant: that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, those who are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where there is a covenant, there must also of necessity be the death of the one who made it. A covenant is not valid in the case of the dead: for it does not take effect while the one who made it lives. Therefore, even the first was not dedicated without blood.*

Since the death of Christ troubled many of the weaker ones (for they said, "If He died, how will He give what He promised?"), Paul now, healing this, shows that it is because this remains that His covenant is sure; for He died—for a covenant is not called valid while the one who made it is alive. Therefore, he says, "He died to cleanse us, and in the covenant He left us forgiveness and the enjoyment of the ancestral goods, becoming a mediator of the Father and us." The Father willed that we become heirs of the promises, but we could not, being enemies and having been at war with Him. What then? The Son interceded and reconciled us to the Father. But since it was necessary to also provide retribution for those on earth for what we had transgressed (for God is both loving and just), the Son himself endured this for us and made us worthy of the covenant, and henceforth the

covenant became sure through the death of the Son, so that it did not send the inheritance to the unworthy.¹²

"called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance." For if the death of Christ did not deliver us from sins, through which we once fought against the Father, how would we receive the heavenly inheritance? But the term "called" shows this: that at first, God was related to us as a father to children, and we were called to the inheritance; but afterward, through our sins, we made ourselves unworthy of it.¹³

"that by means of death," for the covenant is confirmed by death. Therefore, Christ died so that His covenant with us might be confirmed. This is set forth, since especially the death of Christ troubled the weak.¹⁴

"for the redemption." Do you see that the death of Christ has become for our redemption? How then do you think this is weakness, Him who was so powerful as to heal even the transgressions under the law? How then do you run to the law, which is so powerless that it cannot even correct the transgressions against it? Not that it was evil, but that it was weak.¹⁵

"there must also of necessity be the death of the one who made it," This is what disturbs them, the death of Christ. For how, he says, can the one who has died give us the promises? Therefore, he turns and shows that we can only receive the inheritance and the promise if Christ has died. For if he had not died, he would not have made a will, so that we might inherit; (for it is indisputable that a will is in force only after death;) nor would we be worthy of an inheritance at all, as long as the enmity remains unresolved.¹⁶

"for it does not take effect while the one who made it lives." Read according to the question.¹⁷

"even the first was not." And thus, he says, by death, the covenant is confirmed, for the first had the blood as a symbol of death; but the new has the actual death. As those were types, the truth is in the new.

"not dedicated without blood." As if he were saying: The blood has not ceased or been interrupted for a short time, but immediately as the covenant was dedicated, it also had successive blood.¹⁸

Hebrews 9:19-22 *For when every commandment had been spoken according to the law by Moses to all the people, taking the blood of calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, he sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded for you." And he likewise sprinkled with blood the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. Therefore it was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

"For when every commandment had been spoken." For after he spoke the commandment, then Moses sprinkled the blood.

"according to the law." As He says, God legislated, according to the law of God. Or of every command according to the law, these, of the legislated one.¹⁹

"taken the blood of calves." This blood was a type of the blood of God and our Savior, who cleansed us from all stain.

"with water." Water was the figure of baptism.

"and scarlet wool and hyssop." Wool and hyssop were used for their preservation. Indeed, hyssop, being dense and tender, retained and sprinkled blood, and wool likewise. Scarlet, however, was wool so that by its very color it would bear the type of the blood of Christ.

"the book itself." The book was a type of the faithful, those who have the law of God within themselves.

Saying, *"This is the blood of the covenant."* But Christ: This is the blood of the new covenant (Matt. 26:28), for the forgiveness of sins; but there, neither new nor forgiveness of sins. Do you see then how he called the blood a covenant? For where a covenant is spoken of, death must be understood.²⁰

"the tabernacle and." And the tabernacle was a type of the faithful, because of, "I will dwell in them and walk among them." (Lev. 26:12; 2 Cor. 6:16)

"And almost all things." Almost, for this he said, because it was not being purified clearly and sincerely at that time. For then the purifications were physical, being types of those that now purify souls and bodies.

"and without shedding of blood is no remission." For even then, such purifications were thought to provide remission, but they did not actually provide it.²¹

"Therefore it was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens." The heavenly things in the new covenant are said to be, since the initiation in it is heavenly, and the faithful are citizens of heaven, even if they are still living on earth. For the examples of the old covenant are types of the new covenant.

"should be purified with these." These have been mentioned, with the blood of calves and goats, and with the ashes of a heifer, and with the other things so lowly.²²

"but the heavenly things." Which are in the New Testament.

"with better sacrifices." Therefore, since it was necessary according to their values to have *better sacrifices*, the Son of God Himself was offered, so that the death of the Lord not only benefited and enacted the confirmation of the covenant but also to affect the true purification of the soul. And in the preceding and following, it demonstrates that the death of the Lord worked salvation for humankind, because some weaker ones were offended because of the cross.

Hebrews 9:24-28 *For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was he to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own. For then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

Since the Jews were greatly concerned about the temple, see how it is diminished in comparison to heaven. *"a mere copy of the true one."* For the temple was handmade and was constructed as a type of heaven.

— [PHOTIUS] *"but he entered into heaven itself."* The phrase, *"he entered into heaven,"* should be understood from a common perspective, as if to say, Nor does he frequently offer himself, for

he has entered into heaven. For indeed, frequently to offer sacrifices through blood belongs to those who enter into the *copies of the true one*, but not to him who has entered into heaven itself. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"*now to appear.*" With the flesh, he says, it appears.

"*in the presence of God.*" What do you say? Unless he had entered into heaven, he would not appear in the sight of the Father, who is present everywhere and fills all things? Do you see that these are humble matters of privilege?

"*on our behalf.*" When the victim of his own body ascended to appear before the Father for us, this is to reconcile us to himself. Indeed, having made mention of the flesh, blessed Paul speaks boldly of all things humble.

"*Nor was he to offer himself repeatedly,*" he says, this is what it means to ascend to heaven. For the offering of many sacrifices in blood is for those who enter into the copies of the true things, but not for the one who has entered into heaven itself.²³

"*as the high priest.*" Do you see the difference? This one does it annually, but Christ once.

"*with blood not his own.*" This one in the blood of others, of bulls and goats, but Christ in his own.

"*For then he would have had to suffer repeatedly.*" For if it were necessary for him to offer a sacrifice more often, he would have had to suffer frequently since the foundation of the world was laid, as he would have to offer his own blood.

"*he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages.*" Here something also is revealed concerning the mystery, why *at the end of the ages*, after many sins. For if death had come from the beginning itself, when sin was not yet so widespread, then no one would have believed, (there would have been no need to die

a second time,) all would have been in vain. But now, since later the sins were many, it is fitting that *at the end of the ages*, that is, at the very fulfillment of the ages, and at the very end, it has been revealed; that is, with the flesh in the world; it has been revealed for the annulment of sin, that is, to annul and wipe out the sin of the world through His sacrifice, which He offered for us, that is, through the death of His flesh. Such a thing He also said elsewhere: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." (Rom. 5:20)²⁴

"*to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*" That is, together with the flesh in the world.²⁵

"*And just as it is appointed for men.*" Now he also speaks of the cause, through which Christ died once for all; for, he says, he became the ransom for one death. For *it is appointed to men once to die.* Therefore, this *once*, Christ died for us. What then? Do we not die now? Yes, but we are not held by death, as before, which in its power is not even to die.²⁶

— [OECUMENIUS] "*so Christ.*" Since he was a man as well as being God, he himself, he says, endured the common lot of humanity. For just *as men die once, so Christ, having been offered once*, offered himself. For he is not only a high priest but also a victim. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"*to bear the sins.*" Just as in the holy liturgy we bring up the sins and say: Whether unwillingly or willingly we have sinned, forgive us; that is, we first remember them, and then we ask for forgiveness; so He Himself said to the Father: For them I sanctify Myself (Jn. 17:19). Or, He bore the sins of men to the Father, so that He might forgive and erase them.²⁷

And why did He say, "*of many,*" and not "*of all?*" Because not all have believed. For the sins of those who believe are taken away. For He died to save all, yet He forgives the sins only of the

faithful. That is, "*to bear the sins of many*," He says, so that He might also extinguish them, taking the punishment on their behalf.

"*will appear a second time, not to deal with sin.*" Wherever he returns, he does not come to die again for your sins, nor that he will no longer free you from sins, as it now takes away; nor that he will not punish the guilty and those subject to sins, because he was crucified for us.

— [OECUMENIUS] Or that He says He bore the sins of many on the cross, so that He might also blot them out, giving the penalty on their behalf. Now, having made Himself sin, the Father sent Him; for Christ was indeed very sinful, having taken upon Himself and assumed the sins of the whole world. But He gave the penalty due to sinners through the cross, which belonged to them, and henceforth He will come with the glory of the Father, no longer as a sinner, no longer reckoned among the lawless. For if Christ is sinful, listen: for He who knew no sin, it is said, made sin to be sin, as if sin itself. (2 Cor. 5:21) [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 9

1. The meaning of Octateuch [Οκτάτευχον] is a collection of eight books; especially the first eight books of the Old Testament.
2. The PG reads, "according to the act of tabernacling."
3. The PG reads, "because of the insurrection of Korah."
4. The Pharmakides version adds an excerpt from Theophylact, which is an obvious addition.
5. The Pharmakides version adds, "For the legal high priest offered for himself; but Christ did not offer for himself; for how could he, who is separate from sinners? Thus there is a great difference between the two."

6. The Pharmakides version omits, “or were made common and unclean; which are the justifications of the flesh, that is, purifying the flesh, and not at all the soul; not at all the inner man, but were exercised concerning the outer.” The PG omits, “But how did he say, ‘and drinks,’ although the law did not make a distinction concerning drinks? This, then, he says, concerns the priest not drinking wine when he was about to enter the sanctuary; or also concerning vows, that is, promises, concerning abstaining from wine; simply belittling such ordinances and ridiculing them, this is what he said.”
7. The Pharmakides version adds the entire comments on various baptisms.
8. This excerpt from Theodoret does not appear in the PG.
9. The PG has a variant reading, beginning with, “Then, since it seemed doubtful that a single sacrifice and the blood of one could provide eternal redemption, he prepares it and shows that it is plausible and not unattainable.” And then the PG reads, “*And the ashes of a heifer.*” The blood was sprinkled, the ashes of the heifer mixed with water were drunk for purification in the Old Testament”, whereas the Pharmakides version has, “*For if you, he says, believe that you are cleansed by being sprinkled with the blood of a calf, and again with water poured on its ashes;* (for the ashes were observed for *the purification* of those who had been defiled, that is, those who were contaminated;) how then does *the blood of Christ* not cleanse the souls?”
10. The Pharmakides version omits this comment.
11. The PG has a slightly shorter reading, “Not by the burning of fire, nor by the sacrifices of the Old Testament, but through the Holy Spirit offering.”
12. The PG has a shorter reading, “The Father willed that we become heirs of the promises, but we could not, being enemies and having been at war with Him. What then? The Son interceded and reconciled us to the Father. But since it was necessary to also provide retribution for those on earth for what we had transgressed (for God is both loving and just), the Son endured this very punishment for us, being crucified.”
14. The Pharmakides version omits, “This is set forth, since especially the death of Christ troubled the weak.”

15. The PG reads a bit differently than the Pharmakides version. The PG reads, “For the death of Christ has occurred in order to redeem and to put an end to the transgressions under the first covenant, so that in this way we might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, the called ones. But we have deprived ourselves by sinning. Therefore, this is corrected by Christ being revealed.”
16. The Pharmakides version adds, “For if he had not died, he would not have made a will, so that we might inherit; (for it is indisputable that a will is in force only after death;) nor would we be worthy of an inheritance at all, as long as the enmity remains unresolved.”
17. “Read according to the question.” [Κατ’ ἐρώτησιν ἀνάγγωθι.] This phrase is often found in commentaries or scholarly works on Ancient Greek texts, particularly those dealing with the Bible or philosophical writings. It indicates that the following text should be interpreted as an answer or explanation to a previously posed question, even if the question isn't explicitly written out immediately before the response. This was not in the Pharmakides version.
18. The Pharmakides version reads, “What does it mean, it has been dedicated? It means it received the beginning of ratification and confirmation. For it could not have begun to be effective otherwise than by the shedding of blood.”
19. The Pharmakides version adds, “Or of every command according to the law, these, of the legislated one.”
20. The Pharmakides version adds, Saying, “*This is the blood of the covenant.*” But Christ: This is the blood of the new covenant (Matt. 26:28), for the forgiveness of sins; but there, neither new nor forgiveness of sins. Do you see then how he called the blood a covenant? For where a covenant is spoken of, death must be understood.
21. The Pharmakides version adds, “but they did not actually provide it.”
22. The Pharmakides version adds, “with the blood of calves and goats, and with the ashes of a heifer, and with the other things so lowly.”
23. The Pharmakides version adds, “For the offering of many sacrifices in blood is for those who enter into the copies of the true things, but not for the one who has entered into heaven itself.”

24. The PG has a shorter reading, saying, "At the end of the ages, that is, at the very fulfillment of the ages, and at that very end of time. The extraordinary has been made evident; it has been made evident to annul and extinguish the sin of the world through his sacrifice, which he offered on our behalf."

25. The Pharmakides version omits, "*to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*" That is, together with the flesh in the world.

26. The PG has a slightly different reading, *Once*, he says, all humanity was *to die*. This one-time Christ died for us. So even as we are dying now, we are not held by death, which by virtue, is not to die at all.

27. The Pharmakides version adds, Just as in the holy liturgy we bring up the sins and say: Whether unwillingly or willingly we have sinned, forgive us; that is, we first remember them, and then we ask for forgiveness; so He Himself said to the Father: For them I sanctify Myself (Jn. 17:19).

CHAPTER 10

Hebrews 10:1-4 *For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, with the same sacrifices which they offer year by year continually, can never make those who approach perfect. For they would not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

"*For the law having a shadow.*" It is merely a type of the future good things, namely of the new covenant. Not the very image of the things themselves. These, not the very truth. Of what things? Of sacrifice, of forgiveness. For the old things were like a shadowy outline, being dim; but the new things are an image; these, in truth, as having been clearly manifested and accomplished.

It is also possible to understand in this way.¹ — [OECUMENIUS] It is said by holy Gregory², who is among the saints, in the *Apologeticus*³ and in the *Address to the Politicians*⁴, that the present laws are types of greater mysteries. And again in the *Treatise on the Resurrection*; "We will partake of the Passover," he says, "now in a typical manner, but later in a more perfect way." For I dare to say that the legal Passover was a type of a type.

Having said these things, in none of these does the Apostle refer to *a shadow* and *an image*, and *the good things to come*, which he also calls true things. For as concerning the presentation of a *shadow* and *an image*, the things indicate truth, and indeed they are truth. Therefore, he knows the things in the law as a *shadow*, the *image* as our own of the Christians, and *the good things to come* and true things that are in the coming age. For as much as the *image* departs from the truth, so much is the *shadow* of the *image*. For the *image*, even if it does not have the truth itself, is nevertheless a clear imitation of the truth, preserving the form through colors, and the proportion of the parts, and the color of the subject.

The *shadow* is a faint image of the reality, nothing of those things which the *image* reveals. And I suppose the theologian was led from these apostolic statements to speak about the topics at hand. And similar to Gregory, many other fathers have spoken likewise. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

— [THEODORET] "*of the things.*" He calls the future life *things*; the *image* of things, the evangelical life; and the *shadow* of the *image* of things, the Old Testament. For the *image* more clearly shows the archetypes. But the outline of the *image* reveals these things more faintly. For in this way, the weakness of the Old Testament is illustrated. For many, he says, offering sacrifices and the same ones year by year, *can never make*

perfect those who are governed by the law. [*end of the Theodoret excerpt*] —⁵

"*year by year.*" What then? Do we not always bring forth unbloody sacrifices? But we also make memorials of one death of Christ and we always eat one body of Christ. For now we do not have one Christ, and at another time another, but always the same. The sacrifices of the Jews had various victims, such as sheep, oxen, goats. Therefore, there were many sacrifices. For ours, even if there are many in action, are one in power.

"*with the same sacrifices.*" In the same way. For the offerings are various.

"*continually.*" For they were offered annually without end.

"*can never.*" The law, that is.

"*make those who approach perfect.*" Why? Because it is a type. For the truth, that is Christ, did this, having accomplished purification through one sacrifice.

"*For they would not have ceased.*" According to the question, read. For if they had *ceased*, he says, those sacrifices would certainly not have *ceased to be offered*, because the *consciousness of sins* would no longer have been taken away, because it has been once for all *purified*.

"*But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins.*" In them, he says, those sacrifices are only a reminder and a proof of sins, but there is no longer any forgiveness. And the proof that there is no forgiveness is the continual existence of *sacrifices*.

— [OECUMENIUS]For, he says, not only are the sacrifices offered for the sins that arise, but rather for all, as they have not been forgiven, for the sins that have already occurred. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls." Therefore, he shows the truth of what has been said, from the insignificance of *the blood*.

Testimony on single purification and access to God.

Hebrews 10:5-10 *Therefore, when he comes into the world, he says, "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me. Burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you did not take pleasure in." Then I said, "Behold, I have come." In the scroll of the book, it is written of me: to do your will, O God. Above, he says, "Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you did not desire nor did you take pleasure in," which are offered according to the law. Then he said, "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By that will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

"Therefore, when he comes into the world." Christ, he says, entering the world in a body, speaks through David. If sacrifices are useless, he says, why were they made at all? Why? Because of the dispute of the Jews, and because they always oppose God. And he shows them, even before the incarnation of the Lord, as hated by God; for he did not say, When Christ enters, but, *when he comes into*, indicating that before he enters, they were hated.

— [PHOTIUS] *when coming into the world*, Christ said, but coming into. He was coming into, namely, when he promised to David, and he was extending, from the fruit of his womb, to sit

him upon his throne forever. (Ps. 131:11) Therefore, entering the world through the covenants with David, and this he says through him, that "Since you did not desire sacrifice and offering," (Ps. 39:7) nor were you pleased with the things done in the law. And he did not say, "You do not take pleasure nor desire," but, "*you did not desire, you did not take pleasure in,*" only saying, as if from the very foundation of them and the beginning of those things, that the whole sacrifices were not acceptable and pleasing to you. But even if something of theirs has been accepted by you, it has been accepted due to the weakness of those presenting it. Therefore, when I have also dismissed these things and have prepared a body for myself, then I come to do your will. For this has been said about me not simply and in passing, but as the main point and premise of the book concerning my proclamation. And the book speaks of the whole old one. For the chief point and the most esteemed hypothesis of the old covenant is the prophecies concerning Christ. [*end of the Photius excerpt*⁶] —

"*Sacrifice and offering you did not desire.*" Those prescribed by the law, evidently. But offering here signifies something different from sacrifice; and I think the bloodless ones are indicated by the name.⁷ From here the person of Christ is introduced, saying to the Father, Since, He says, O Father, "*Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you did not desire nor did you take pleasure in,*" which are offered according to the law."

"*for sin.*" That is, an offering concerning sin. Commonly, you have taken pleasure. And he rightly says, "*for sin.*" For of the sacrifices, some were offered for salvation, and others for sin; as if he said, "Since in no way did you will any offering or sacrifice, nor burnt offerings, neither concerning salvation, nor concerning sin, I have come, having taken a body, to become a pleasing sacrifice to you, which I myself have prepared."

For the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High overshadowed the Virgin. (Luke 1:35) And it was said, that I may do your will, O Father (Jn. 6:38); that those whom you have given me, I may not lose any of them. (Jn. 18:9) The title of the book, the Hebrews say, is the Law. Isaiah, teaching about the mystery of the Incarnation of the Only Begotten, heard; "Write for me in it with a man's pen." (Isa. 8:1) That it is a sacrifice and offering. Do you see that the sacrifices were cast aside even before the incarnation?

For after not wanting, he says, *Burnt offerings and sacrifices, Then I said, "Behold, I have come.* Who said, *Behold, I come?* Christ, obviously. I have come *to do your will.* But what is the will of the Father, but that the Son be crucified? And that *I have come*, he says, and I will do your will, it is written *in the scroll of the book*, he says, about me these things. Thus it is necessary to arrange. For being prophetic, it is a difficulty. The *scroll of the book* is the bundle of the law, that is, the book of the Old Testament. Therefore, in this Scripture it is written concerning my coming and that I am to be offered for the world.⁸

"*you did not desire nor did you take pleasure in.*" Paul himself interprets the Davidic more clearly.

"*which are offered according to the law,*" that is, the Jewish law, and they are offered by the Jews. Do you see that before the descent, the sacrifices were hated?

"*to do your will, O God.*" What then? Were the sacrifices according to the law not the will of God? They were, but necessarily. For he did not say to them only this, that in general the sacrifices of animals are detestable to me, the incorporeal one. But since you desire to offer sacrifices, at least offer them to me and not to the idols, which was not of a pure and original will.

"the first in order to establish the second." What is the first? The sacrifices. What is *the second*? The cross. Therefore, the sacrifices are expelled, and the cross, that is, the sacrifice of Christ, is introduced.

"we have been sanctified." By which will, he says, you are sanctified. Of which? Of the cross, *through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ*. For we have not only obtained forgiveness, but we have also been sanctified.

"the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." Behold, he has interpreted what the will of the Father is; *the offering of the body of Christ*. For since he was speaking above and below about the will, he then said what the will is.

"Once," he says, that is, not in the manner of the Jewish sacrifices, but once. *"Once, indeed."* *The offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* That is, those who are sanctified through the once-for-all offering of the body of Jesus Christ.⁹

Hebrews 10:11-18 *And every priest stands daily ministering and offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days," says the Lord, "I will put My laws upon their hearts, and on their mind I will write them," He then says, "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.*

"And every priest stands." Therefore, to stand is a sign of serving. But to sit, just as Christ sat at the right hand of the Father, is a sign of being served, as being God.

— *"Daily offering."* [PHOTIUS] He says that the same sacrifices were offered for the same things, and since the sacrifices and offerings that had been made were no longer effective, they could not completely and perfectly take away sin. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"But He, having offered one sacrifice," Christ evidently.

"for sins." For our sins, for which he suffered.

"for all time." Christ, clearly, offered one sacrifice, namely, His own body, for our sins, sufficient for us forever, so that there would be no need for a second.¹⁰

"sat down at the right hand of God." He is not only a high priest, but also God. After completing the work, through which He also became a high priest and stewarded the administration, He sat down as God and awaits.¹¹

"from that time onward." And for what reason were his enemies not immediately placed under his feet? For the sake of those who are to become and give birth to believers. For not only demons are enemies, but also unbelievers. But now Paul especially calls the unbelieving Hebrews enemies, comforting the faithful from the Jews who have suffered countless terrible things at their hands.¹²

"until His enemies be made." He did not say "they will be subjected," but signifying the greatest of subjection, he said "they be made," *a footstool for his feet*. For their being made as a footstool is a proof of his sitting *at the right hand* of the Father.

"For by one offering," which Christ offered, he *perfected*, having made perfect, he completely freed from sins.

"those who are being sanctified." That is, the faithful. For they are sanctified by the aforementioned offering.

"And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us." What does it bear witness to? That our sins have been forgiven.

"And their sins." He added, he says, *"And their sins I will remember no more."* Do you see that he testified to the forgiveness of sins? Then he forgave when he established the new covenant. And the new covenant was given through the sacrifice of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Now where there is forgiveness of these things." Of sins, obviously.

"there is no longer an offering for sin." For who, he says, has need of many offerings, when the one that Christ presented is sufficient to take away sins?

Hebrews 10:19-23 *Therefore, having boldness, brothers, to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, which He inaugurated for us a new and living way through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. For He who promised is faithful.*

Since he demonstrated the superiority of our high priest over the former ones, and the superiority of the new covenant over the old one, and the superiority of Christ's offering over the legal

sacrifices; and that through it we have been freed from sins, he indeed refreshes the doctrinal discourse, giving the listener a breathing space; but he also very aptly moves on to the discourse concerning life. Pay close attention: for having been reminded of the forgiveness of sins, he subsequently exhorts us not to fall into the same sins again.¹³

"*Boldness to enter.*" Just as, he says, we were previously ashamed, full of sins, so now we have boldness to enter into heaven, because of the forgiveness granted to us.

"*to enter the holy places.*" He speaks of heaven and the progress into the spiritual. *By the blood of Jesus.* "*by the blood.*" For by the blood of the cross of Christ, we have forgiveness and *boldness*.

"*which He inaugurated for us.*" It was the entrance of the holy places, and a path leading to it, recently cut. For this, it is said, was *inaugurated*.

"*new.*" Which in our times, he says, took its beginning. And this is our claim, that in the times around Abraham, this road did not exist, but was established among us.

"*and living.*" For the first way led to death and to disbelief; this one, however, truly brings to life, since it itself lives and endures.

— [PHOTIUS] Having said "recent," so that no one might say: "If recent, then it will cease"; for this one too will grow old and become obsolete just as the old covenant will be abolished. He says, however: "But being recent, it will always be *new* and *living*, never accepting death and dissolution." [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"*through the veil.*" For all these good things have come to us through the flesh of Christ and His sacrifice. This also recently prepared the way to heaven, having walked it first. And rightly is

the flesh of Christ called *the veil*. For when He was lifted up, that is, on the cross, then the things in heaven were revealed, which belong to the veil, and that it concealed the Divinity within itself. And this is also the characteristic of a *veil*.

"*a great priest.*" This, having, in common. He calls the Lord a *priest*.

— [OECUMENIUS] "*over the house of God.*" He speaks of the house of God as the faithful, according to, "I will dwell in them, and walk among them." (Lev. 26:12; 2 Cor. 6:16) [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"*let us draw near with a true heart.*" In the faith of Christ with truth, having nothing false or deceitful.

"*in full assurance of faith.*" For hereafter, nothing is visible, neither the temple, that is, the heaven, nor the high priest, that is, Christ, nor the sacrifice, that is, his body, but there is a need for *faith*. And since there is both believing and doubting, he says, "*in full assurance of faith,*" that is, so that we may be fully informed about these things.

"*having our hearts sprinkled.*" This shows that there is a need not only for faith but also for a righteous life.

"*sprinkled.*" The Jews, he says, sprinkle their bodies; but let us *sprinkle* and purify our consciences, so that we may not have any evil consciousness of ourselves.

"*with pure water,*" that is, with baptism. For the Jews, by washing, only cleanse the body; but we purify the soul with baptism. For the *water* we have is *pure*, that is, purifying.

"*let us hold fast the confession.*" *Let us hold fast*, he says, the *confession of our hope*, firm and *without wavering*. What *hope*? To hope through the blood of Christ for entrance into heaven. To

have our sins forgiven through Him. To be made worthy of adoption through Him.

"For faithful," that is, "true is *He who promised*." And what did He *promise*? That we would enter into His kingdom; "for I will," He says, "that where I am, there these may be also." (Jn. 16:24) For "these" He spoke of the faithful.

The call to virtue from the fear of future judgment.

Hebrews 10:24-25 *And let us consider one another in this, to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some are; but encouraging one another, and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.*

"*And let us consider one another*," he says, for we are brothers, as there is one flock under one shepherd. For this will increase the love among us.

— [PHOTIUS] But let us consider around these things, whose curiosity and inquiry and consideration sharpen and incite love: this, however, is done by those who bear nothing wrong about each other, but reject everything in a good and healthier direction, even those things that seem to be faults. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"to provoke unto love." To stir up and increase love for one another.

"and good works." And to provoke each other to zeal in good works.

"not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." For to always come together in the same place is a source of love. Therefore, it prohibits separation. For the work of love is not

division, but the exact union. He called the assembly the harmony.

— [PHOTIUS] "but encouraging one another." Whom? The assembly of ourselves, that is, each other. For we must receive the assembly of ourselves in common. And the encouragement of the assembly is the willingness to be joined together for a long time. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

— [PHOTIUS] In another way. "but encouraging." To the weaker ones, obviously. And so much, he says, we ought to be more in need of love and good works, as the day of judgment draws nearer. This was also a comfort for them, having been tested by temptations. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —¹⁴

Hebrews 10:26-31 *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery anger which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, and having shared in the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

"*For if we sin willfully.*" As the involuntary has a lighter punishment.

— [OECUMENIUS] "*if we sin.*" Note that he did not say 'having sinned,' but used the present tense to indicate the persistence in

sin until the end. For from this, it is especially clear that he does not deny repentance. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"*after we have received the knowledge.*" That is, the faith concerning Christ.

"*there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.*" In order to erase sins. For among the Jews there were victims that were offered for their remission, so that they were not for involuntary sins.

"*remains a sacrifice.*" It does not abolish repentance, may it not be; but it prohibits the existence of a second baptism. For here, it calls the cross and baptism a sacrifice, just as it says elsewhere. "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified." (Heb. 10:14)

"*and fiery anger.*" Just as that fiery, being pierced by some anger, consumes and devours those who are struck. He speaks of opposers, not only of the unbelievers, but also of those who act directly against the commandments of Christ.

"*Anyone who has rejected Moses' law.*" A comparison is made from the lesser. For he wishes to show the destruction by fire justly inflicted against the *adversaries*. However, he speaks of the law to Moses (Lev. 4:26), because he commanded many things that are contained in the law.

"*on the testimony of two or three witnesses.*" If two or three had testified, there was no longer a place for mercy or pardon, but he would die. Therefore, if someone who has transgressed the law of man, that is, of Moses, dies without pardon after a strong testimony, he says, what should happen to those who have trampled the law of Christ?

"*who has trampled the Son of God.*" How does one trample on the Son of God? When he does not listen to Him, when he who

shares in Him commits sins: for that is to trample, namely to despise.

"*in the blood of the covenant.*" He refers to the blood of Christ: for through it we have received the new covenant.

"*and having shared.*" Having shared, as having nothing more excellent than the others, just as those who say that he is a naked man. For they say that he is nothing but blood, in which he differs from ours as far as honor is concerned. Then, showing their ingratitude, he says: *by which he was sanctified.*

"*and insulted the Spirit of grace?*" For he who has not received the benefit of the gift insulted the one who gave it. He made you a son of God, but you prefer to become a servant. He came to dwell in you, yet you introduce the Devil within yourself. Are these not injuries and insults against the Spirit?

"*For we know Him who said.*" And that these things are true, God himself testifies who says: "*Vengeance is mine.*" This is with me, to take vengeance: "*I will repay, says the Lord.*" But by saying this, he comforts them about the evils they have suffered from their own fellow citizens. As if he were saying: He said this gently, and he comforts them regarding the evils they suffered from their own fellow citizens, as if he were saying: "Why are you anxious? You have the one who avenges and gives back justice to those who serve you."¹⁶

A good beginning leads to a good end.

Hebrews 10:32-36 *Remember the earlier days when, after being illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings, partly while you were made a spectacle both by accusations and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated.*

For you had compassion on my chains, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.

"Remember the earlier days." Behold, he speaks to them more plainly, urging them not to lose patience. He says, therefore: Do not imitate others, but imitate yourselves. For at the beginning of your faith you struggled; keep this *struggle* in mind; do not lose what you have achieved through laziness. Behold the cleverness; shaking their souls with the memory of that fire, he now encourages them with praises.

"*after being illuminated.*" Either concerning baptism, he says, they are *illuminated*, or concerning the knowledge of Christ.

"*you endured a great struggle with sufferings, partly.*" A strong soul is needed to bear *accusations and tribulations*, even if they are done privately and secretly; however, since they were done openly and in front of everyone (for this means: *you were made a spectacle*), a stronger one is necessary.

"*partly while you became companions.*" He says that not only did you endure your own tribulations with a masculine spirit, but you also shared in the sufferings of those who were wronged, signifying the apostles, who were indeed engaged in *accusations and tribulations*.

"*For you had compassion on my chains.*" He said, Not only did you not need relief, but you also extended helping hands to others who were bound.

"*the plundering.*" It is great to bear the plunder of resources. And when it is accepted even with joy, it is apostolic [ἀποστολικόν].

"*and you joyfully accepted.*" He praises their voluntary patience.

"*knowing that you have.*" Behold, he also affirms that they have faith.

"*and enduring.*" This is firm, not as perishing, and passing from one to another.

They still show them holding onto the same things. "*your confidence.*" For they have boldness before God, those who endure such things for Him.

— [PHOTIUS] "*Therefore, do not cast away your confidence,*" which comes from your works, from faith, from trials, from patience; for these are the things that give us great confidence, that we will receive the promise, freely given. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —¹⁵

"*which has great reward.*" And from where is this evident? You, he says, are witnesses, you who know that you have a better existence in heaven and one that endures.

"*For you have need of endurance.*" I seek not increase, but patience, so that you may persevere in the same things.

"*so that after you have done the will of God.*" The will of God is that you persevere in the same things until the end, and endure the delay of retribution and promise.

— [PHOTIUS] *The will of God* is that you sincerely believe in Him and perform good deeds, and moreover, when the time demands it, you should strive even to the point of shedding blood: for such ones receive the promise. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

Hebrews 10:37-39 *For yet a very little while, and he who is coming will come and will not delay. But the righteous shall live by faith; and if he becomes sluggish, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who withdraw to destruction, but of those who have faith to the saving of the soul.*

And when can we receive the promise? Do not become sluggish, he says: he who repays is near. “*For yet a very little while, and he who is coming will come and will not delay.*” For what he says, " a very little while, [ὅσον ὅσον¹⁷], signifies a very short time.

“*But the righteous shall live by faith.*” Therefore, it is necessary to believe that He will come, for the righteous shall live by faith.

But if he *becomes sluggish*, he says, and withdraws himself, either from faith or from afflictions, he will not be approved in my soul: As from Christ, receive all this.

“*But we are not of those who withdraw to destruction.*” Since he astonished them by saying, “*and if he becomes sluggish,*” he says, “*my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*” He corrects it and says: We are not those who withdraw ourselves or are sluggish, which leads to destruction: but we pertain to faith, to possess and save our souls.

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 10

1. The PG only has, “*For the law having a shadow.*” It is merely a type of the future good things, namely of the new covenant. You can understand it this way.
2. Gregory of Nazianzus, was an early Roman Christian theologian and prelate who served as Archbishop of Constantinople from 380 to 381.
3. Apologeticus (Oration 2)

4. The Last Farewell in the Presence of the One Hundred and Fifty Bishops (Oration 42)
5. The excerpt from Theodoret is not indicated in the PG, but it was given an indicator of the source by Pharmakides.
6. This excerpt from Photius is not identified by the PG nor Pharmakides, but I was able to find the source in Staab's edition.
7. The Pharmakides version adds, "Those prescribed by the law, evidently. But offering here signifies something different from sacrifice; and I think the bloodless ones are indicated by the name."
8. The Pharmakides version adds, "The scroll of the book is the bundle of the law, that is, the book of the Old Testament. Therefore, in this scripture it is written concerning my coming and that I am to be offered for the world."
9. The Pharmakides version adds, "That is, those who are sanctified through the once-for-all offering of the body of Jesus Christ."
10. The PG only reads, "One, once for all, having heard."
11. Not in the PG. Pharmakides grafted in from Theophylact.
12. "But now Paul especially calls the unbelieving Hebrews enemies, comforting the faithful from the Jews who have suffered countless terrible things at their hands." This is not in the PG, but it was grafted in by Pharmakides from Theophylact.
13. The PG reads, "Since he has demonstrated much the difference between the new and the old, he has come to the discourse about faith and life." Pharmakides grafted in the reading by Theophylact, which makes more sense.
14. The PG indicates that the excerpt is from Photius, but I was unable to confirm that., and I did not find it in Staab's Photius fragments. Pharmakides has the excerpt but does not give any indication of the source.
15. The PG incorrectly indicates that the Photius excerpt begins at, "They still show them holding onto the same things. *'your confidence.'* For they have boldness before God, those who endure such things for Him." But the Photius excerpt is only "*Therefore, do not cast away your confidence,*" which is from your works, which is from faith, which is from

temptations, which is from endurance. For these are the great things for us, our *confidence*, that we may obtain the promise, graciously." The Pharmakides version gives the correct indicators, but does not actually list Photius as the source, only lines at the beginning of the excerpt to the end.

16. Oecumenius does not appear to comment on Hebrew 10:31, "The Lord will judge His people." *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* I am not sure whether Oecumenius did not comment on it or whether at some point an editor/copyist accidentally omitted it. But for the sake of edification, I am adding an excerpt here in the footnotes for anyone who wants to read an interpretation for that verse. Since Oecumenius and most Greek Church Fathers rely heavily upon John Chrysostom, I am providing a direct quote from his Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews for this verse. "*Let us fall*", it is said, "*into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men.*" (*Sirach 2:18*) *But if you repent not, you shall fall into the hands of God: that is fearful: it is nothing, to fall into the hands of men. When, he means, we see any man punished here, let us not be terrified at the things present, but shudder at the things to come. For according to His mercy, so is His wrath. "And, His indignation will rest upon sinners."* (*Sirach 5:6*)

17. "ὅσον ὅσον", is a reduplication of the Greek word ὅσον and serves to give intensity and emphasis to a qualifying word. That is why I translated it "For yet a very little while," instead of "For yet a little while."

CHAPTER 11

Of the faith which also glorified the ancients.

Hebrews 11:1-4 Now faith is the substance of things which are hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen: for by it the elders have obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the ages were formed by the word of God, so that what is seen was not brought into being from anything visible. By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he

obtained a report that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks.

It consequently expresses what *faith* is, and says: *Faith is the substance and essence of those things which are hoped for.* For since those things that exist in hope cannot be perceived, as they are not present in the meantime, *faith* is a certain essence and *substance* of them, causing them to be and in a way to become present, because one believes them to be. Moreover, *faith* is the proof and demonstration of *things that are not seen.* For faith presents visible things that are invisible. How? By the mind itself seeing those things that do not appear.

"*for by it the elders have obtained a good report.*" By faith, they received a report from God that they were pleasing to Him.

"*the elders.*" Who are they? About whom Paul is about to speak.

"*Through faith we understand that the ages were formed.*" For what reason could this be demonstrated? Therefore, it is necessary to persuade oneself by faith:

"*so that what is seen was not brought into being from anything visible.*" For what word will demonstrate that those things were brought into being from what was not visible? None; but faith alone. Therefore, by faith we understand the ages to have been framed, that is, to have come into being, by the word of God. Why, by faith? So that the visible things did not come from things appearing; because the visible things came from things not appearing; the man of faith is needed.¹

"*Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice.*" For whose example did Abel honor God, except that he believed by faith that there would be a compensation for these things?

"*by which he obtained a report that he was righteous.*" For when God said to Cain, "If you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly,"

(Gen. 4:7) He testified concerning Abel that he both offered rightly and divided rightly. It is also said that fire descended from heaven upon his burnt offering.

"*and by it he being dead.*" Indeed, the victim was the occasion for the slaughter itself.

— [PHOTIUS] What is said: "*and by it he being dead yet speaks,*" or it is understood that this victim was the occasion for envy and rivalry against his brother: moreover, this gave rise to murder. Or that he speaks through him, although dead: For this reason, it has become the cause for Abel to be remembered and regarded as unfailing. Or, if someone examines both more closely, taking into account that, through it, as it is referred to *both being Dead yet Speaks*: so that the meaning is: By itself or because of itself the *dead* host still speaks through it. [*break in Photius excerpt*] —

— [OECUMENIUS] Or through itself the faith; however, it speaks through reputation, glory, by remembrance. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

— [PHOTIUS] "*yet speaks.*" He is immortal; his deed, done through faith, does not allow him to fall into oblivion, he says. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

Hebrews 11:5-7 *By faith, Enoch was taken away so that he would not see death, and he was not found because God had taken him. For before his removal [μεταθέσεως²], he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith, it is impossible to please Him. For he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. By faith, Noah, having been warned of things not yet*

seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household. By which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

"*By faith, Enoch.*" From him, the abolition of death was prefigured. Indeed, through Abel, the approval of the sentence was shown, but through Enoch, it is abolition. Enoch believed that God is a rewarder of those who seek Him; therefore, he was also pleasing to God: and to such an extent was his faith that what seemed contrary also appeared. For Abel, although he had pleased God, was slain, and God did not wish to overlook his death; therefore, Enoch was pleasing to God only by faith, believing in the reward of the good. For the sake of faith, therefore, he was pleasing, and because he was pleasing, he was taken away.

"*he would not see death,*" For he was indeed removed, and still lives: moreover, where and how, it is uncertain.

"*But without faith, it is impossible to please Him.*" For if someone does not believe in the payment of good deeds and evils, he would not please. For who would tread the laborious path of virtue, not being convinced that there are rewards?

"*For he who comes to God must believe that He is.*" It is not about what it is, nor about examining His essence, but one must only believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek it.

"*By faith, Noah, having been warned.*" Connect the "*by faith*" with "*being cautious,*" so that it reads: "*having been warned by faith, Noah prepared an ark concerning things not yet seen, being cautious and fearful.*" For it was by faith that he heard what would be the flood, to be cautious and terrified.

"having been warned." Having heard from God. Elsewhere it is said, "He was warned by the Spirit." (Luke 2:26) Do you see equality? Just as the Father calls, so also does the Holy Spirit.

"of things not yet seen." He speaks of the flood.

"By which he condemned the world." He showed them to be worthy of punishment, that even when seeing the ark being constructed, they did not believe that there would be a flood.

"of the righteousness which is according to faith." What is established through faith. For that faith justified him by which he believed in God.

Hebrews 11:8-12 *By faith, Abraham was called to go out to the place which he was to receive as an inheritance, and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith, he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith, Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she considered Him faithful who had promised. Therefore, from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude, innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.*

"By faith, Abraham was called." For he would not have followed, if he had not believed that God speaks the truth, to dwell in that land. And the very act of going out was an act of *faith*. For when God *called*, he obeyed, believing that he was being called for good.

"not knowing where he was going." And the greater aspect of faith is that he did not even know what he was being called to.

"By faith he dwelt in the land of promise." See what it says: In the land which God had promised, saying, To you I will give it and to your seed, he lived as a foreigner, and seeing that the promise of God was not yet fulfilled. For God had said he would give it. Yet he, as a stranger, dwelt in a foreign land, and thus he did not weaken in faith, but even with his descendants he regarded it as foreign; nevertheless, he still believed that it would be given to him and to his seed.

"dwelling in tents." So much did he dwell in it as a foreign land, that he did not even have a house, but dwelt in tents; for to dwell in tents is the lot of strangers and foreigners of the land, those who move from one place to another because they have no permanent possession.³

"with Isaac and Jacob." And this shows their faith, that even being co-heirs, they lived in that land as strangers. And Isaac was driven out by Ishmael, while Jacob was fleeing from Esau. Neither did they therefore doubt that the land would not be given to them.

"For he waited." And by what word, he says, did these not weaken in faith, as if dwelling in a foreign land concerning the promised land? For, he says, they were not concerned with the earth, but indeed having received the land of promise, they sought the greater things and were expecting the heavenly city. For if they had been attached to the earth, they would have been shaken by not receiving it. Thus, he says, we also ought to seek the things above, and not have a word about those here.

"the city which has foundations." This is said because of its permanence and certainty, meaning it *has foundations*, or that it

alone has foundations. For those on earth, in comparison to it, do not have foundations.

"*whose builder and maker is God.*" The greatest praise of the one in heaven.

"*By faith, Sarah herself also.*" It is a challenge that even Sarah herself, as if to say: If a woman has believed, it is a shame if we are found to be of less faith than a woman. But how did she believe? And yet she laughed. But afterwards she was afraid when rebuked, which is what faith is.

"*received strength to conceive seed.*" For the reception of the seed, that is to say, she was strengthened to receive the seed that produces children.

"*and she bore a child when she was past the age.*" This, too, means not only, he says, that she was barren, but also that beyond the proper age, that is to say, in her very old age, she was strengthened to receive the seed.

"*because she considered Him faithful.*" Faithful, that is, truthful. But where did he promise? According to this time, he says, I will come, and there will be a son for Sarah.

"*Therefore, from one man.*" Therefore, all who are of the seed of Abraham were born from one seed, and because of the age, they are as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea.

Hebrews 11:13-16 *According to faith, all these died, not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar and greeted them, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. And if they had been thinking of that land from which they went out, they would have had an opportunity to return. But now they desire a better*

country, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Two are sought here. How, having said above that God removed Enoch so that he would not see death, now has he said, "*According to faith, all these died*"? And again he said, "*not having received the promises,*" although he said above that they had received the rewards of faith. For Noah was saved with his house. And Enoch was removed, and he did not see death. And Abel still speaks through his glory; and Abraham both took possession of the promised land and fathered from Sarah. — The solution. On the one hand, they all died, accept, with Enoch having been taken away. On the other hand, not having received the promises, it says about all, indicating that to those concerning Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, not only land was promised, but also, through their virtue, the heavenly things. This also applies to the others. For, he says, the generous God would not have released Abel for the sake of being glorified, Enoch for the sake of being removed, Noah for the sake of escaping immediate death, or Abraham for the sake of becoming a father of children, or to take hold of the land as in a sojourn. But these things were granted to them in part. And there was a taste of the truly promised things. For it indicates that they had learned beforehand concerning the kingdom of heaven, saying, having seen them from afar and greeted them. —

— [PHOTIUS] "*but having seen them from afar.*" Thus, he says, they believed in them, from afar by hope, that they also rejoiced in them, and not only were they embracing them. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —⁴

— The phrase, "*having seen from afar,*" some say, refers to those around Abraham regarding the return of their descendants from Egypt. But this is unfitting. We say that they were evangelized

concerning the kingdom of heaven, and all that Christ preached. For if they had not heard these things, why would they call themselves foreigners and sojourners? For they did not say these things longing for an earthly homeland, since they could have returned to their own land, but they were seeking heaven. Moreover, if this were not the case, both Abel and Enoch and Noah would be found, having not received the promise from God. For neither was anything earthly promised to them. Nor did it say to Noah that he would be saved in the promise. —⁵

"*and greeted them.*" Being persuaded.

"*they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*" Not of the promised (for this is not great), but of the whole world.

"*make it clear.*" They show.

"*that they are seeking a homeland.*" That in heaven, obviously.

"*And if they had been.*" For that they sought the one in heaven is clear from this. For if they sought their own from which God had expelled them, they had the strength to return. For they had time for this to return to their own. But now, seeking a homeland, not returning from which they went out, it is clear that they desire something better and heavenly.

"*Therefore God is not ashamed.*" For just as God is called the God of the world, so Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are called by Him, having made them counterparts of creation. And this is the greatest honor, to deem God to be called their God. For just as God is adorned by the patriarchs, so He is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

"*for He has prepared a city for them.*" God is not ashamed to be called their God. And therefore, He says, He is not ashamed because He has fulfilled their desire. They desired a city in heaven, and He has prepared a city for them in it.

Hebrews 11:17-22 *By faith, Abraham offered up Isaac, being tested, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son, to whom it was said, "In Isaac shall your offspring be named," considering that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith, Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and adored at the top of his staff. By faith, Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions concerning his bones.*

"*By faith, Abraham offered up Isaac.*" By what faith? That God is able to raise him even from the dead.

"*being tested.*" God tested Abraham, not because he himself wanted to learn about Abraham (for how could He who searches our hearts be alone in this?); (Ps. 7:10) but rather, he would make it evident to us.

"*his only begotten.*" For in case anyone say that he still had a child, and was expecting the promise to be fulfilled through him, he willingly offered Isaac, for he says, he was not the only begotten; he was only begotten in terms of the promise, since he also had Ishmael.

"*to whom it was said.*" Thus, it is said, as to the apparent, God seems to command the opposite of what He promised. And yet Abraham did not waver. For how could Isaac be called his seed, when he was commanded to sacrifice Isaac? Nevertheless, he did not hesitate even then.

"*considering that God was able even to raise him from the dead.*" Do you see how by faith Abraham did everything? For he

believed that God could even raise him from the dead after he was sacrificed.

"*from which, figuratively speaking.*" And Abraham himself and Isaac himself. For it is fitting concerning the two. But see this, "*figuratively.*" Abraham was a type of God the Father, and Isaac, of the Son of God. For since God was about to provide us with something great, the sacrifice of His Son, being very compassionate, so that we might not think that we are saved by grace alone, He made it necessary to deliver Christ. And the necessity is thus: "Just as," he says, "Abraham was willing to deliver his only-begotten for me to death, so also I," he says, "must deliver my Only-begotten to death for the sake of men." And the "*figuratively,*" we can also understand this way, connecting it to the person of Isaac: He brought Isaac, and made him a figure and a type and an example of Christ, so that just as Isaac was sacrificed according to Abraham's intention, so also Christ was sacrificed, in truth. And thus, the "*figuratively,*" understand; that is, he says, he brought Isaac in a figure, that is, instead of the type and the example. For he indicated the ram, and having given it instead of him, he received Isaac. But the first interpretation, as I think, is much better.

— In another way. [PHOTIUS] That is, "*from which, figuratively speaking,*" it is possible to understand it this way: From where Abraham also brought Isaac in a figure. For he says, he demonstrated some overwhelming obedience, and faith that overcame even the laws of nature, he again receives the son, not as one who offered him, but with a great addition and value of his own faith. For he brought him bearing a figure and a likeness to the Son of God and God. Such things faith is able to accomplish. If, however, you take the common point in the figure from both Abraham and Isaac, that one served as a type of the Father and as a figure and likeness through the offering of the child, while Isaac served as a type of the Son, thus the

aforementioned understanding is fulfilled. So great a gain, he says, faith brought to Abraham, that having offered his son, *he received him back* with the greatest addition.

Of which addition was this? The one in the figure, both in relation to the Father and in relation to the Son to be brought forth. That is to say, He brought forth the Son for such a gain, in which the Father willed for both to be made a type of approach to be accomplished upon the Son. In the figure, God brought forth Isaac; that is, because of the faith and willingness of Abraham, although a ram was presented, and then not brought forth by Abraham, but by God Himself, who also brought forth. Thus, God accepted the sacrifice, as if bringing forth Isaac Himself through the figure and the substitution of the ram. Therefore, it is said, from where He brought him forth, as Isaac, in the parable and substitution of the ram, that is, as the purpose was fulfilled, and the willingness of his faith, therefore, God accepted the sacrifice of Abraham. [*end of the Photius excerpt*]

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"*By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*" From where were such good things promised to his sons, if he did not believe that God would give the promises? And what is it, concerning things to come? Or concerning what is to happen to them, or concerning what is to be given to their offspring. For neither did they themselves enjoy the promise. Jacob, however, is first named because of his virtue.

— [PHOTIUS] "*By faith Jacob, as he was dying.*" — Here, he says not only this, but also therefore he encouraged those to come, as he would also demonstrate in the work itself. For he was about to rise another king from Ephraim.

Therefore, he says, *And he adored at the top of his staff*, that is, even being old, he worships Joseph, indicating the worship of all, that which was to come to him. And this because he knew that

his brothers had adored [προσεκύνησεν] him. It was about to be revealed later, through the ten tribes. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —⁷

— [THEODORET] "and he adored at the top of the staff." For he signified the kingdom of Ephraim and the overthrow of the ten tribes. Therefore, he himself prefigures their adoration. [*end of the Theodore excerpt*] —⁸

— For he believed so much, he says, in what was to come, that he also *adored* with the staff, thinking he was seeing what was to come. For from the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, kings were to arise from the seed of Ephraim. Therefore, revealing the kingdom to his seed, he adored at the top of the staff of Manasseh. It is written in the book of Genesis thus: "And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years." (Gen. 47:28) And the days of Jacob's life were one hundred and forty-seven years. And the days of Israel drew near to die, and he called his son Joseph and said to him: "If I have found grace in your sight, put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers; carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place. And he said, I will do as you have said. And he said, Swear to me. And he swore to him. And Israel bowed himself upon the head of the bed." (Gen. 47:29-31) —

By faith, Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning his bones. For he believed so much that they would come out of Egypt, that he also swore that his bones would be carried away. What then? So that always remembering the oaths of Joseph, they might see also the matters concerning the exodus. For who would have sworn that his bones would be carried away, if he did not strongly believe that they would go out?

Hebrews 11:23-26 *By faith, when Moses was born, he was hidden for three months by his parents because they saw that he was a beautiful child, and they were not afraid of the king's decree. By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the momentary pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked to the reward.*

Where he had listed righteous men who acted with faith, he also speaks about the parents of Moses, who were of no reputation. encouraging them, and almost saying: They were so obscure yet had faith, but you waver? For what reason did they hide him for three months, and this despite a royal decree that male children should be immediately killed? It is clear that they believed he would be saved. But what was the source of their faith? From the fact that the child was beautiful. For, he says, without divine grace, he would not have been such from the swaddling clothes.

"*By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused.*" For he did this, hoping to receive greater goods than those present. And the phrase "*refused*" indicates that he was determined to alienate himself."

"*to enjoy the momentary pleasures of sin,*" He called it a sin, not to collaborate or to suffer together with the people of God: not to enjoy the benefits of this sin. Whose? So that he would not be afflicted with the sufferings of the people of God.

"*greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.*" He did not say; he considered the greater wealth of the treasures in Egypt to be the goods laid up in heaven, but rather, showing more of his virtue, he said, "*the reproach of Christ,*" that is, to be reproached as

Christ was. "Who made you ruler over us?" (Ex. 2:14) For this is what Christ also heard, "By what authority do you do these things?" (Matt. 21:23) It is the shame of being reproached for the sake of Christ. "The rock was Christ." (1 Cor. 10:4) But he, for that rock and to give water from it (Ex. 27:1), was greatly reviled by the Jews.

— [PHOTIUS] "*the reproach of Christ.*" What is the reproach of Christ? That is to say, to be reproached in such a way, showing the reproach that Christ endured. The fact that he endured it for the sake of Christ. The rock was Christ. It is also fitting that he was affected by shame. When he heard: "Do you wish to kill me as you killed the Egyptians yesterday?" (Ex. 2:11-12; Acts 7:28) this is the reproach of Christ, being subjected to evils and injuries until the very end of his spirit: just as he endured and heard insults, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Matt. 27:40) For both were being reproached by their own kindred, on behalf of those whom they had benefited. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —⁹

For he was looking. Do you see the faith?

Hebrews 11:27-31 *By faith, he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king (for he endured as seeing him who is invisible). By faith, he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. By faith, they crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith, Rahab the harlot did not perish with those who were disobedient, having received the spies with peace.*

"By faith, he left Egypt." He went out by faith, so as not to test God whether He saves. And not to test Him was by faith. For believing, he would come and bring out the people.

"not fearing the wrath of the king." And yet, in the Exodus, it is said that he was afraid. But there is nothing contradictory. For he was not afraid to such an extent, but returned again. For he was afraid that he would not return to Egypt anymore. Therefore, the phrase *"not fearing the wrath of the king"* implies the understanding of returning again. The first time he was afraid, not of the king, but not wanting to throw himself into imminent danger. For this was a test of faith in God.

— [OECUMENIUS] And that he was not afraid that the anger would be so great as to seek him out after he had fled. Therefore, he did not flee far, but from neighboring places. And this was a matter of faith. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"for he endured as seeing him who is invisible." He saw God, who is invisible, as if he had seen Him with physical eyes. However, he saw Him with the eyes of the mind, and he bravely endured everything, namely the hardships along with the people of God, flight, and all other things. For the sake of great patience, it is important to have God in mind.

"By faith, he kept the Passover." For Moses said: "Mark the doorposts so that you may be saved," (Ex. 12:23) and they believed that they were to be saved. Indeed, they believed that they would be saved through the blood of the lamb, he says, and they achieved this. Therefore, how will you not believe even more that you are to be saved through the blood of Christ, and you will be saved from all who lie in wait for you?

"and the sprinkling of blood." He called the sprinkling of blood the anointing of the doorposts, *so that the Destroyer* angel would not touch them. This was, however, a type of the blood of the

Lamb of God. For through His blood we drive away the destroyer Satan.

"By faith they passed through the Red Sea." Indeed, they believed that they would pass through, and they did pass through. Such is the power of faith, that it makes possible even those things that are impossible.

"but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same." For perhaps they suspected that the sea was land, and they also tried to pass through, but their destruction showed that it was truly the sea, and not some kind of illusion. For it was divided beyond its nature for Israel, allowing them to walk on foot; however, it enclosed the Egyptians according to its nature. The purpose, however, was to lead them to believe and hope for the future, and for this reason, he stirred up all this discourse.

"By faith, the walls of Jericho." For they believed that the future would fall, and certainly faith directed even those things that were above nature.

"By faith, Rahab the harlot." For when she had heard the men reporting, she believed and received them, although the others remained unbelieving.

Hebrews 11:32-40 *And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith they conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, closed the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were*

tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, pressed down, afflicted, of whom the world was not worthy, wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

When he had finished speaking about the harlot and had urged them based on the quality of the person, for the sake of conciseness he does not enumerate all the names: yet he does not cease the discourse.

— [OECUMENIUS] "*For time will fail me.*" He speaks of time as suitable for the letter and proportionate. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"*of Gideon.*" What kind Gideon was.

"*of David.*" As for what David was, in that he was established on his throne, according to the literal sense indeed Solomon, but according to the spiritual understanding, Solomon, the spiritual Lord Jesus.

"through faith." All these did what they did by faith: Abraham, Moses, Joshua.

"*they conquered.*" They defeated, they destroyed whom? Abraham defeated the kings who had taken his nephew Lot captive, and the king of Gerar. Moses defeated the king of Egypt, and many others. Joshua, most of all. (Gen. 14:20; 15; Num. 25)

"enforced justice. " Abraham, Phinehas.

— [PHOTIUS] In this place, I believe he speaks of David. And he called kindness righteousness. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"obtained promises," of the Patriarchs, namely, Elijah, David, Joshua, Caleb, and many others.

"closed the mouths of lions." Daniel, Samson.

"quenched the power of fire." The three boys, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael.

"escaped the edge of the sword," For example, Elijah, from Jezebel, and David himself, from Saul.¹⁰

"were made strong out of weakness." And he speaks of those who returned from Babylonian captivity, and of Hezekiah.

"became mighty in war." Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samson, and David. Or that they not only returned from captivity through faith but also defeated neighboring nations.

"Women received back their dead." The Shunammite through Elisha, and before that the woman of Zarephath through Elijah.

"Some were tortured." They were cut off, like James and John, and those who were beheaded. Or they died by clubs. Others say that being *tortured* means being flayed. It is also said about the Maccabees, *"refusing to accept release."* (2 Macc. 7:1) As if they did not accept to be released from the punishment that was brought upon them. Although it was possible for them, he says, to live, they did not wish to. And this was also a matter of faith, therefore he says: *"so that they might rise again to a better life,"* or the other people. For the resurrection is common to all, but these will rise, he says, to eternal life, and those to eternal punishment.

"Others suffered mocking," such as Elisha (2 Kings 2), those around Peter later and John.

"and even chains and imprisonment." Jeremiah and Micah. (Jer. 32:38; 1 Kings 22)

"they were stoned." He speaks about Stephen and Naboth. (Acts 7; 1 Kings 21)

"they were sawn in two." It is said about Isaiah, whom they also sawed with a wooden saw, so that the punishment would last a long time.¹¹

"they were tempted." Like Abraham (Gen. 22:1-2), Jacob, Moses, and Job. (Job 1:2)¹²

"they were killed with the sword." Micah, John, James, and Zechariah.

"they went about in skins of sheep." Like Elijah, Elisha. This they suffered from poverty. (2 Kings 4)

"destitute." As the prophets whom Obadiah nourished. (1 King 18)

“afflicted.” Effected by evil.

"of whom the world was not worthy." This also encourages them. For if this world was not worthy of those who suffer badly for the sake of God, that is, all people and this creation itself, why do you, he says, wish to receive the rewards here for the sufferings endured for Christ? For being better than the world, do not seek anything in this world.

"wandering about in deserts." But Elijah, and the prophets whom Obadiah fed. (1 Kings 23:19) Note, however, that it does not say, "They found rest in the occupied desert," but rather that they also wandered there in fear of their persecutors.

"And all these." What, he says, do you mourn and become indignant, you who are still in the struggle, if you do not receive the rewards? Yet all those previously mentioned saints, having earned a testimony by faith that pleased God, have not yet obtained the good things promised to the righteous.

"since God had provided something better for us." How is it better? Indeed, so that they would not have anything more than we do in that they were crowned before us, He defined one time, so that we may also be crowned with them. This, however, is for us: for they sit in honor, awaiting our completion.

"that apart from us they should not be made perfect." He did not say, "They would be crowned," but rather, with greater emphasis, *"they should not be made perfect,"* or "They would be perfected," that is, they would receive the end of goods, for which all effort and toil of one who is endowed with virtue strives.

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 11

1. The Pharmakides version grafted in an addition from Theodoret for clarity, "None; but faith alone. Therefore, by faith we understand the ages to have been framed, that is, to have come into being, by the word of God. Why, by faith? So that the visible things did not come from things appearing; because the visible things came from things not appearing; the man of faith is needed."

2. removal [μεταθέσεως]. This word has been used three times in the New Testament. It can be defined as, "a removal", "translation", Heb. 11:5; 12:27; "a transmutation", "change by the abolition of one thing", and "the substitution of another", Heb. 7:12.

3. The PG only reads, "for to dwell in tents is the lot of strangers and foreigners of the land."

4. The PG gives no indication for the Photius excerpt. Pharmakides does give a line to indicate but he did not list him by name, nor did he put a line to indicate at the beginning of the excerpt.

5. The Pharmakides added lines as indicators of there being an excerpt from someone but does not add a name. The PG does not have any indicators.
6. The PG does not provide an indicator to the end of the Photius excerpt, but the Pharmakides version correctly does. There is a line in the PG in the Latin translation that incorrectly has an indicator that makes it look like the Photius excerpt ends at "*Patri perfici in Filio.*"
7. The PG does not give an indicator for the end of the Photius excerpt, though the Pharmakides version does.
8. The PG does not give any indications about the source of the Theodoret excerpt, but Pharmakides does.
9. The PG does not give any indications about the source of the Photius excerpt. The Pharmakides does correctly list the source and provides indicators from beginning to end.
10. The PG only reads, "As Elijah did."
11. The tradition that the prophet Isaiah was sawn in half with a wooden saw is found in extra-biblical texts and traditions, not in the canonical Bible. The story is most notably detailed in the apocryphal book known as the Ascension of Isaiah, which is a merged Jewish and Christian text.
12. The PG only lists Job as being tempted. The patriarch Jacob was tempted by several things, including his own desires for the firstborn's birthright and blessings, the schemes of his father-in-law Laban, and the temptations for deception that arose within his family and his own self-interest.

CHAPTER 12

Of patience from the imitation of Christ.

Hebrews 12:1-2 *Therefore, let us also, with the cloud of witnesses surrounding us, laying aside every burden and the sin which clings so closely, run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set*

*before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and
is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

He did not say that danger is looming over us or that we are being raised above, but, what is greater, that we are inspired.

"*A cloud of witnesses.*" Indeed, the memory of the witnesses or martyrs stirs them to similar zeal for struggles. He called them a *cloud*, either from the metaphor of those who are consumed by heat and enter a refreshing cloud to receive comfort. For the memory of the martyrs comforts those who have been dissolved by the heat of temptations: or because they distribute spiritual dew to us, interceding with God on our behalf.

"*laying aside every burden.*" Deposited with the gravity of worldly matters, and with all negligence and idleness at once.

"*the sin which clings so closely.*" Either because it easily clings to us or because it can easily undergo fall and rejection; therefore it is said.

"*run with endurance.*" For no one casts off the weight of worldly matters except through *endurance*. Furthermore, he mentions *endurance* as a thing most suitable for them. Consider indeed that he did not say, "Let us fight with fists," or "Let us battle," but rather, "*run with endurance the race.*" For this present life is a *race*: a race, I say, against sins and desires, or against those who oppose us spiritually. Therefore, let us run in this *race* and act with courage.

"*looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.*" Then it comes to the very head of encouragement and comfort, namely Christ, and says: If we want to have patience and run rightly, let us look to Christ, and let us learn to run rightly and endure, calling Him the *leader and perfecter*, showing that He was the cause for our belief and will set the limit of faith, so that we may have it firm and unshakeable.

“Who for the joy set before Him.” He said, It would have been acceptable to live in this world with joy and glory: for he says, “I have the power to lay down my life and to take it up again;” (Jn. 10:18) but he did not want to, rather he willingly endured the cross.

“endured the cross.” For it was a disgraceful and accursed death inflicted by the cross. If therefore we look upon this, we too will endure, just as he endured.

— [OECUMENIUS] Or to accept instead of the joy set before him, as Gregory says; to whom, he says, being able to remain in his own glory and divinity, he not only emptied himself to the form of a servant, but also endured the cross, despising its shame. Therefore, he says, he is able to also repay you for the sufferings endured on his account; for he was not only crucified, but also sits at the right hand of God, presenting the equality of the right hand and the throne. *“and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”* [end of the Oecumenius excerpt] —¹

Or what is said, For *the joy set before him*, understand it as Gregory says. To whom, he says, when it was free for him to remain in his own glory and divinity, he not only emptied himself to the form of a servant, but also endured the cross, disregarding the shame.

“and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Therefore, he is worthy to reward you for the afflictions you suffer for him. For he was not only crucified, but also sits *at the right hand of God.* The *right hand* and the *throne* signify equality of honor.

Hebrews 12:3-9 Consider him who has endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not

yet resisted to the point of shedding blood, and you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he disciplines everyone he accepts as his son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined, and everyone undergoes discipline, then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!

"*Consider him.*" For if one who reflects on the afflictions of the brethren finds comfort in his own afflictions, how much more will he who weighs the afflictions of the Lord.

"*from sinners,*" for it is greater that even sinners have endured these things. However, he calls contradictions mockery, scourges, ridicules, and whatever opposed his teachings and doctrines: similarly, the shouts with which they cried out under Pilate.

"*so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*" For if you weigh these things in your mind, you will be hardened against afflictions, knowing that you have become imitators of God.

"*you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood.*" In the above, he testified to them that they had struggled greatly, where he says: You have endured a great race of afflictions: therefore, lest they be exalted by this, he now says: You have not yet contended perfectly; you need something else: which is also a kind of exhortation. For he says: You have come to persecutions,

to the plundering of your possessions, but not to death: yet Jesus Christ went even to death.

"In your struggle against sin." It shows that sin passionately breathes and they themselves struggle in opposition. For it says, *"resisted,"* as if in battle, as if also resisting sin.

"and you have forgotten that word of encouragement." Therefore, he said, he is so saddened and disappointed in spirit that he has even forgotten the words that contribute to courage. This, however, signifies that they are very slow in their actions: for those who are like this forget even the things that are in their hands.

"addresses you as sons." For Solomon was not speaking to his own children, but was bringing forth common teaching: therefore he says *"as."*

"when he rebukes you." It is the greatest encouragement and comfort to know that afflictions come to us by God's promise for our benefit, since afflictions lead us to divine wisdom [φιλοσοφεῖν]: and if they come by God's permission, they seem to be sent and imposed by Him.

"because the Lord disciplines those he loves." Indeed, no one can show anyone to be righteous without affliction: for "narrow and hard is the way that leads to life." (Matt. 7:14) Therefore, as far as correction is concerned, God calls you, not to punishment. Therefore, in the very fact that they thought they were forsaken by God, namely because of afflictions, He persuades them that they are cared for by God; rather, in the opposite way: You would be forsaken, He says, if you acted without afflictions.

"he accepts as his son." He who takes to himself, who accepts as his son. "Just as the Son offers himself to you, God." (Matt. 20:28) Therefore, since it is a sign of sons to be corrected, endure, he says, affliction. But the righteous are the sons of God.

"If you are not disciplined." Where he had sought from the things themselves, namely with all the saints brought forth who had fought through afflictions, now he strives to persuade even from human reasoning.

"then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all." If, therefore, the sign of illegitimate children is not to be punished, but legitimate children are punished, it is necessary, he says, to rejoice in punishment.

"and we respected them for it." We heard, he says, and we respected them.

"Father of spirits." Whether of spiritual gifts or of souls or spiritual virtues.

"and live." For this is life, to be subject to God.

Hebrews 12:10-11 *And indeed they disciplined us for a few days according to what seemed right to them; however, here for our benefit, in that he may communicate to us his holiness. But every chastisement indeed does not seem to be a cause of joy at present, but of sorrow. Yet afterwards, it yields peaceful fruit to those who have been trained by it in righteousness.*

— [OECUMENIUS] "And indeed they disciplined us for a few days." For they cannot always teach us to make us perfect; but God, who always educates and corrects, makes us perfect. For the death of a father or the growth of a son halts correction. [end of the Oecumenius excerpt] —

"to what seemed right to them." What seems good to the father does not always benefit the son: for often they teach even disgraceful arts.

"however, here for our benefit." Moreover, God always seeks our effectiveness. For He does not bestow as if to receive something from us, like earthly fathers, but rather to give, and to give not something mediocre, but holiness, that is, purity: so that as much as possible, we may become worthy of it.

"*But every chastisement.*" Again, from common understanding, he takes opportunities for encouragement and says: "*every chastisement,*" not only spiritual but also bodily, "*does not seem to be a cause of joy.*" He rightly says, *seem*: for it is not truly sorrow; for how could it properly be sorrow, when it is the mother of joy? But as if speaking to us, he said: It seems, for we bear discipline and chastisement heavily.

"*Yet afterwards.*" For after this present chastisement, there will be peace in the future, joy and righteousness and whatever is of this kind.

Concerning temperance, while the opportunity for correction is given, let us not fail in the manner of Esau, not finding a place for repentance.

Hebrews 12:12-17 *Therefore, strengthen your limp hands and your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.*

"Therefore, strengthen your limp hands." *Limp*, loosened. He spoke of the whole by mentioning a part. For not only the hands and knees were loosened by afflictions, but together with the whole body, both mind and soul. Indeed, this is caused by deep sadness and sorrow.

— [PHOTIUS] However, he did not speak of the *knees* and *hands*, but of the thoughts that limp and are loosened by a multitude of afflictions and temptations. [*end of excerpt by Photius*] —²

"and make straight paths for your feet," or " and make straight paths for your footprints": as if speaking to the runners and boxers themselves. He indicates, however, that it is necessary for thoughts to be confirmed (which arise not from hatred, but from God's governance, corrections, and afflictions) and thoughts about faith and doctrines. For when they were still infants, they clung to certain Jewish matters in life and conduct. Let not the initiated evil (for this he calls a *limp*) become incurable, but rather let it be corrected. Behold, he has clearly admitted repentance, and take note of this because of the Novatians³.

"Pursue peace with all." And among you mutually and among the slanderers. For there is great range when it is said, *with all*. Indeed, "With those," he says, "who hated peace, I was peaceful." (Ps. 120:7) For if indeed he injures, and you do not take revenge, peace will quickly be achieved.

"and the holiness." Holiness refers to purity, that is, virginity or chastity. For even one who is chaste in marriage fulfills holiness, although not properly. For marriage is not called holy, but honorable, even so, it accomplishes holiness.

"without which no one will see the Lord." For if neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor those like them will inherit the

kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9), how will they see the Lord who are not chaste, as it is necessary to see, without holiness?

"*See to it that no one fails to obtain.*" Just as those walking a long road in company, considering, he says, this is diligently looking ahead and analyzing, so that nobody *fails to obtain the grace of God*. For it is necessary to take care both for yourselves and for your brothers, that no one lacks these things. Moreover, he calls *the grace of God* the future goods, whether faith or a suitable way of life. For all these things are *the grace of God*.

"*that no root of bitterness springs up.*" The root of bitterness refers to sin. Therefore, he says: If there is anyone among you who is not rightly affected, let such a one be cut off, lest sin be brought forth into action (for this is what he means by "*springs up*"), lest it also become an occasion of sin for the others.

He says: "*and by it many become defiled.*" Indeed, when someone sees a neighbor sinning, he will come to imitation, so that he himself may sin. He rightly called the *root of bitterness*, sin. For the bitter root can produce sweet fruits, but the root of bitterness is bitter to itself and to those to whom it is a root: for the *root of bitterness* is substance and, as it were, essence.

"*that no one is sexually immoral.*" He did not say *sexually immoral*, referring to Esau, but it is placed in opposition to what preceded, "Pursue holiness." The *defiled* is indeed placed as if it refers to Esau; however, he called him a glutton, because he had *sold* away God's gift, namely the *birthright, for a single meal*. For it is written in the book of Genesis: "And the boys grew; and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field: but Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebecca loved Jacob. And Jacob boiled pottage. And Esau came from the field, and he was faint: and Esau said to Jacob, 'Feed me, I beg you, with that same red pottage; for I am weak.' Therefore was his name called Edom.

And Jacob said, 'Sell me this day your birthright.' And Esau said, 'Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?' And Jacob said, 'Swear to me this day.' And he swore to him: and he sold his birthright to Jacob." (Gen. 25:26-33) Therefore, at that time, the right of the firstborn is ours, and not that of the Jews. For we are descended from Isaac and Jacob.

"*he was rejected.*" He was rejected by God. For God is the cause of Isaac being deceived, to bless Jacob.

— [OECUMENIUS] "*though he sought it with tears.*" Some interpret it this way: Although he had sought it with tears, namely the blessing: and what is said: and there was no place found by means of repentance for him. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"*though he sought it.*" Does he therefore reject repentance? Certainly not. How then, if he sought repentance with tears, did he not attain it? He did seek it, but he did not find it; for he did not seek it rightly. How so? Because he was not properly repentant. For what kind of words of repentance did he speak? "The days of mourning for my father are approaching, and I will kill my brother Jacob." (Gen. 27:41) Therefore, for this reason, he does not find repentance, because he did not seek it as he ought. Either this is the case, or Paul terrifies those who have not yet fallen so that they do not fall, as if the greatest sins do not deserve repentance: and to those who have not yet sinned, he speaks in such a way, preserving them from falling by fear. But when he sees that some have completely fallen, consider how he changes his speech. For Paul says: "My little children, for whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you." (Gal. 4:19) For that he writes this to those who have already fallen is evident. For he says: "You who are justified by the law have fallen from grace." (Gal. 5:4) You see that when he testifies with them that

they have fallen, lest they come to despair, he says: "Of whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you?" (Gal. 4:19) Do you not recognize that he does not reject this holy repentance, but is speaking in an economical manner⁴ [οἰκονομικῶς]?

That the future punishments are more formidable than those inflicted under Moses, and that it is fitting that greater attention should be given to the present.

Hebrews 12:18-21 *For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire, and to darkness and gloom and a storm, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear what was commanded. Even if a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned, or shot through with an arrow. And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling."*

There is fire, for this reason, that God may appear more fearsome to those who were delivering the law. "*And to darkness and gloom.*" *Darkness and gloom* signify the shadow of the Old Testament. For if those were figures, it is evident that until the truth came, the figures were obscure, while it was not known what they signified. Moreover, *darkness* also signifies the invisibility of God. "*and to darkness,*" he says, "*under his feet.*" (Ps. 17:10)

"*and a storm.*" By the word, *storm*, he excites them when they were sluggish. Indeed, the *storm* is a twisting of the wind.

And the *trumpet*, however, as if in the presence of the king; for this will be in the second coming.

"*and the voice of words.*" For Moses spoke, and God answered. Indeed, it was necessary for *the voice* of God to be formed (Ex.

19:19), so that the lawgiving would be worthy of faith, and it would not be thought to be from Moses, through whom God was about to bring the law.

"*For they could not bear what was commanded.*" He stated the reason for the excuse, because they could not bear what was being defined, that is, what was being commanded or said. Indeed, they said to Moses: "Speak to us, and let not God speak to us." (Ex. 20:19)

"*Even if a beast touched the mountain.*" Such was the terror that if the beast touched the mountain, it was stoned.

"*And so terrifying was the sight.*" It wishes to show that the New Testament also excels in relation to the Old. For indeed, even if the Old had nothing of this kind that the New has, it was to be feared in some way; however, the New, having perfection, is gentle and without terror.

"*that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.."*" This was also said by the one who was about to enter into darkness.

Hebrews 12:22-24 *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and to multitudes of angels, to the festive gathering and assembly of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks better than the blood of Abel.*

"*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and to multitudes of angels.*" Instead of the people of Judah, angels are present. And he says there is a *festive gathering* among the *multitude of angels*. He also speaks

of the firstborn, the faithful, whose names are written in the book of life. For this is what the Lord also says to the disciples: "Rejoice because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20)

— [OECUMENIUS] He calls the *firstborn* holy, who have something excellent beyond other faithful ones who have received adoption from the firstborn who are among us, who by the right of the firstborn have some special birthrights. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"*and to God the judge of all.*" As if he were saying: They did not even dare to listen to the word; but you, on the other hand, have approached the very judge, that is, Christ. "For the Father," he says, "does not judge anyone, but has given all judgment to the Son." (Jn. 5:22) —⁵

"*and to the spirits of the righteous.*" For you will be with them, who have come to the New Testament. Paul calls them, as those who will then have their perfection, just as he says above: "Lest they be made perfect without us." (Heb. 11:40)

"*and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.*" Instead of Moses, here is Christ.

"*The sprinkled blood,*" however, refers to the precious blood of Christ.

"*that speaks better than the blood of Abel.*" For what is *the blood of Abel*? Did it speak? Certainly. For through it, he says, the dead still speaks (Heb. 11:4), namely in glory and reputation. But concerning the blood of Christ, it is clear that it speaks more through glory, since it is suitable for purifying the whole world. He always, however, makes comparisons from the very smallest things, due to the childishness of those who hear.

— [CYRIL] For the blood of Abel cries out against the murderer. But that of Christ speaks for us to the Father. Therefore, it is said, “*that speaks better than the blood of Abel.*” [end of the excerpt by Cyril] —

Hebrews 12:25-26 *See that you do not deny the one speaking. For if they did not escape, having refused the one warning on earth, much more shall we, who turn away from the one from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth, but now has promised, saying: "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." And this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, so that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

"*do not deny the one speaking.*" This is due to disbelief or despair. Who is *the one speaking* and calling to his own kingdom? It is Christ, obviously. For if his blood speaks, much more he lives.

"*For if they did not escape.*" The danger, that is, the loss. The danger, that is, the loss.

— [PHOTIUS] "*having refused the one warning on earth,*" or the one who engages in earthly matters, promising the earthly and temporary, flowing with milk and honey, the dominion of enemies, good upbringing, and a long life.

“*from the one from heaven,*” he speaks, promising the same heaven as an inheritance, granting the enjoyment of that overwhelming glory and eternity. It is possible to say: On earth, to engage in matters, since almost all of the physical purifications were found in the lawgiving through Moses. The new law given to us through Christ is a cleansing and illumination of the soul. Therefore, those things are said to be on

earth, as they are humble and related to the material body. But these things are from heaven, as they are divine and lofty, purifying the soul and elevating it to the heavens. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —⁶

For on earth, it is said that Moses speaks. He says, This is the case: If the Jews, having rejected the message of Moses, did not escape destruction, how shall we escape if we reject the one who speaks from heaven, that is, Christ? Is it not because, while the law was given by another long ago, now another speaks, and calls to his kingdom and faith, but because he is more fearful now, speaking from heaven and by himself, than he was before, when he spoke from the earth through Moses, from whom he is more justly to be heard?

That the former lawgiver is not different from the one speaking now, he himself makes clear by saying, "*whose voice then shook the earth.*" When? He says, when he gave the law on Mount Sinai.

"*but now has promised, saying.*" Do you see that the same one is both then and now? But the difference is in the manner of his preaching. For then he proclaimed from the earth and through Moses, but now from heaven and through himself.

"*who turn away from the one from heaven.*" In common, that which is speaking, as in proclaiming.

— [OECUMENIUS] "*Yet once more I shake,*" that is, "*once more,*" clearly, that which comes after the second, is added another once. For previously the world was shaken at the lawgiving in Sinai. "Indeed, the earth shook," says David (Ps. 68:8). Again, during the presence in the flesh; the world will be shaken; for "all Jerusalem was shaken." (Matt. 21:10)

"And the handmade things of Egypt shall be shaken." (Isa. 19:16) By "shaking," it is said to be the renowned nature of the

preaching, by which they were shaken from their former state of wandering and the people were transformed. Therefore, speaks holy Cyril: But the "yet once more," he says, will be at his second glorious coming, when he will transform and renew creation; for then creation will be shaken most truly, the true shaking and uproar or the transformation from evil to good of those then being saved. Refer also to the commentary of the blessed Cyril on the Song of Songs. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —⁷

"*as of things that are made*," that is, those suffering according to nature. For since it takes a beginning and reaches an end, he says, *as of things that are made*. For since it has been made, and it began from motion, that which comes from non-being to being will reasonably be shaken and moved again in the change.

"*so that the things which cannot be shaken may remain*." The creation shakes and alternates, so that the unshakable may remain; that is, those that will no longer be shaken or changed; as if it were saying: Therefore, it shakes and alternates the creation, so that in the future the unshakable may remain in its place, no longer subject to shaking or changing. The unchanging, therefore, rightly will no longer be subject to shaking. For once it has received the first change, it will be incorruptible.

Hebrews 12:28-29 *Therefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.*

"*Therefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken*." If creation is unshakable, much more the kingdom of heaven, which you are about to receive as a reward for the sufferings here

for Christ. Since the sufferings are the cause of the kingdom, let us give thanks to God for them.

“*by which we may serve.*” For which, with thanksgiving; for it is by giving thanks to God even for tribulations and temptations that one serves Him acceptably.

“*with reverence and godly fear.*” And it is not enough, Paul says, to be merely grateful, unless there is also shame, both towards all and towards God, accompanying piety.

— [OECUMENIUS] “*For our God is a consuming fire.*” By saying this, Paul either wishes to frighten them not to be ungrateful, nor to complain about their tribulations, lest they suffer the wrath and punishment of God; or to comfort them; as if he were saying: let us give thanks in our tribulations; for we have a Master who is able to consume our adversaries. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 12

1. The PG gives one beginning indicator of an Oecumenius excerpt but does not indicate where it ends. The Pharmakides version has no indicators. The reading given above is from Staab's fragments that are gleaned from catena manuscripts [Af.217r, Bf.263r; Gf.362rv der 2.]. The PG reads, Or what is said, For the joy set before him, understand it as Gregory says. To whom, he says, when it was free for him to remain in his own glory and divinity, he not only emptied himself to the form of a servant, but also endured the cross, disregarding the shame. “*and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*”
2. The excerpt by Photius here is not found in the fragments by Staab but are indicated by the PG and Pharmakides version.
3. Novatian was a schismatic of the third century, and founder of the sect of the Novatians; he was a Roman priest, and made himself antipope. The Novatian Schism was a schism within the Church of Rome in the third century that originated in the differing positions

regarding the policy concerning the proper treatment that the church should accord to Christians who had lapsed, that is denied their faith, during times of persecution.

4. “an economical manner.” [οἰκονομικῶς] The term is here used in a theological context to mean a divine plan or economy, particularly God's plan for salvation. Therefore, οἰκονομικῶς could describe something done in accordance with such a divine plan. Strong's- administration (of a household or estate); specially, a (religious) "economy":—dispensation, stewardship.

5. The PG has the excerpt labeled “ANOTHER WAY” ending at “but has given all judgment to the Son.” (Jn. 5:22)”. The Pharmakides version as the excerpt ending shorter at “of the firstborn have some special birthrights.”

6. Neither the PG nor the Pharmakides version give any indicators that this is a Photius excerpt. It is listed in Staab's edition.

7. The beginning of the excerpt to the ending of it is somewhat obscure based upon the PG and the Pharmakides version. The Pharmakides version gives indicator lines showing that the excerpt is “He calls the earthquake the kind of unheard-of proclamation, through which people were shaken from the ancient state of error and were transformed. Thus speaks Saint Cyril.” The PG only has one indicator line and nothing to indicate where it ends. Therefore I placed the indicator line where the PG has it beginning, and then I placed the indicator line at the end of where the Pharmakides version has it.

CHAPTER 13

Concerning brotherly love and hospitality; also, concerning temperance, self-sufficiency, and the imitation of fathers.

Hebrews 13:1-6 *Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to show hospitality, in this way, some have been unaware while they entertained angels. Remember those who are in bonds, as bound with them; and those who suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.*

Marriage is honorable in all things, and the bed undefiled; but God will judge fornicators and adulterers. Let your conversation be without greed; and be content with such things as you have: for he has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” So that we may boldly say, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me.”

“*Let brotherly love continue.*” Let it be unwavering, do not allow it to escape from you.

“*Do not forget to show hospitality.*” For as they had been plundered of their possessions, they might perhaps have been more sparing. But by saying, let it remain, and do not forget, it shows that they had long possessed these virtues, but now, due to the continuous hardships, they were in danger of becoming indifferent to these virtues; therefore, Paul again encourages them towards these things.

“*in this way, some have been unaware while they entertained angels.*” Thus, Paul says, great is hospitality, so that it became a cause for those around Abraham and Lot to receive the angels. (Gen. 18) And the fact that they were *unaware*, instead of not knowing, that the guests were angels, and yet they received them so hospitably; therefore this great reward for them; for if they had known, they would have done nothing great.

“*as bound.*” For he who is bound to someone, even if he wishes to forget, cannot.

“*and those who suffer adversity.*” Of those who are suffering either in prisons, or in famine, or in another affliction. For if someone were to consider that he himself is surrounded by a body that suffers similarly, he would have more compassion for them, both because of sympathy, and because of the fear that he too might experience similar sufferings from inhumanity.

“Marriage is honorable in all things.” How much indeed is the discourse about moderation! For also earlier, recalling sanctification, Paul spoke about this, and again after this he will speak about prostitutes and adulterers. Therefore, in all things, that is, not honorable in this part and not in another, but entirely throughout honorable and unblemished, let it be. In all ways and at all times; not in distress, but in ease let it not be.

“but God will judge fornicators and adulterers.” And here, along with punishments, is the prohibition of fornication and adultery. For God will judge, or rather condemn. And rightly so. For if marriage is permitted, and it is lawful to fulfill desire without sin, what excuse will there be for adulterers and fornicators?

“Let your conversation be without greed.” Paul did not say, "Do not possess anything"; (and it is clear from what he leads to: Being content with what is present, whatever it may be.) but rather, "You have a philosophical and ungreedy opinion." For he himself has said:

“for he has said, ‘I will never leave you, nor forsake you.’” Since your possessions have been seized; for Paul said: And you have received the confiscation of your possessions with joy (Heb. 10:34); he advises them to be content with what is present; lest they say: With what present things shall we be content? We have been seized, and we have nothing; he says: but even if you have been seized, you can be content with what remains, even if it is very little, because of the one who says, God: 'I will not forsake you,' that is, I will not leave you, nor will I abandon you.

“So that we may boldly say.” If he does not allow it, God does not abandon either, therefore, he says, we must speak boldly the words of David: *“The Lord is my helper.”* (Ps. 118:6-7) For if God helps, one should not be afraid of those who seize or threaten."

Hebrews 13:7-8 *Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

"Remember your leaders." Of the teachers. This Paul also advised the Thessalonians, so that they hold them in honor exceedingly. (1 Thess. 5:13) And just as they share in the word, so if it is possible, to help them in their bodily needs. For this is hinted at by the phrase, "remember". It also encourages them to imitate them.

"consider the outcome of their." Reflecting, examining. This can be said both about the deceased and the living; concerning the deceased: reflecting, Paul says, on how they exited life, what kind of conduct they had in the world, imitate their faith; for a pure life is based on faith. For if they had not believed in what was to come, but had hesitated, they would not have demonstrated the best way of life. *Concerning their way of life:* Reflecting, he says, on how they conduct themselves well in life, become imitators of their faith.

"the outcome of their way of life." The community until the end.

"Jesus Christ yesterday and today." Some among them were saying, The crucified one, the proclaimed and expected Christ does not exist. Another, they say, will come. Therefore, Paul says, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*" By "yesterday," he indicates the past ages; by "today," the present; by "*the same forever,*" the future. As if he said: Another Christ will not come. For this one who has come is the one who was before, and he is and will be forever.

Concerning living not physically according to the law, but spiritually, according to Christ in virtue.

Hebrew 13:9-11 *Do not be carried away by diverse and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those who were occupied with them. We have an altar, from which those who serve the tabernacle have no authority to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp.*

"*diverse and strange teachings.*" Paul says, do not be led astray by teachings that go beyond doctrines, neither different nor strange ones. For the doctrine itself is also recognizable; but to be carried away, as from the metaphor of those who are mad, who are carried here and there, has been said.

"*for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace.*" For the heart established by the grace of God will not be led astray by *diverse and strange teachings*, but will keep to the truth.

"*not by foods.*" Therefore, by faith, which is active through the grace of God, the heart must be strengthened, not being strengthened in regard to the observance *of foods*; for those who walk in these observances, that is, those who keep them, have gained nothing from them. It is said that some among them observe the food according to Jewish customs.

"*We have an altar.*" Since Paul said that we should not observe foods, lest they think our offerings are shameful by being unobserved, he says: For do we not also have observances? But not of foods, rather of our altar, namely, of the unbloody sacrifice of the life-giving body. For even the very high priests of the Jews are not permitted to partake of this; for they who serve in the tabernacle, as it were, in the type and shadow, and not in truth.

"from which those who serve the tabernacle have no authority to eat." Not such as the Jewish ones, Paul says, and ours; so that it is not even lawful for the high priest to partake of them.

"For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into." Then Paul shows the solemn things among the Jews, being types of our own, and he says that those sacrifices were nothing, of which the people were prevented from partaking; but neither do the high priests of our law partake of our sacrifice; for those were the ones that they typified. Just as in the sacrifices offered for sin, the blood was brought into the holy place by the high priest; the bodies were burned outside the camp; so also Christ, suffering for the sins of the world, brought his own blood into the holy place to the Father as high priest; but his body was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem, because the bodies of the sacrifices for sin were burned outside the camp. Therefore, this blood is brought in by our high priest to our altar. Thus, it is not permitted for the Jewish high priests to eat from that altar.

Hebrews 13:12-15 *Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp, bearing the reproach he endured; for we have no lasting city here, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*

"Therefore Jesus also." — [PHOTIUS] This is addressed to those who would wonder, How do you say you have an altar? For what was offered upon it? And indeed, Christ himself, whom you claim was offered above and below, that he became a sacrifice for the world and an offering, was not himself sacrificed upon your altar; for it is evident that he suffered outside the city of Jerusalem. Therefore, to these, Paul says, Yes, he *suffered*

outside, but through this it is rather established that we have an altar. For even among them, the Jews, the bodies of those being sacrificed are not burned on their altars, but *outside the camp*. And again, for this reason *he suffered outside the gate*, so that he might sanctify all, and not only the priests. If he became a sacrifice for all, how is it not also an altar?

The phrase, *in order to sanctify the people*, gives another meaning. Paul says that those who serve at the tabernacle have no authority to eat from our altar, not because it is impossible for them, but because they consider themselves unworthy in their own opinion; since from the love of Christ, they are not only not hindered, but also have suffered for this very reason. For he says, *in order to sanctify the people*, not this one, or that one, but the whole people, and make them have authority to eat from his altar, he suffered *outside the gate*. [end of the Photius excerpt]

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"*Let us then go to him outside.*" Since Christ suffered outside the gate, let us go out to Him *outside the camp*, that is, outside the world, bearing nothing worldly, neither earthly nor carrying the filth of the earth. This, *outside the gate*, that is, outside the world, *bearing His reproach*, that is, suffering the same things as He did, if He should ask; for this indicates, *bearing the reproach he endured*, which He Himself endured through both the mockeries and the scorn.

— [CYRIL] It seems that the divine Paul, *outside the camp*, outside the world, speaks; for he takes us out of worldly life. [end of the excerpt by Cyril] —²

"*for we have no lasting city here.*" Therefore, we must willingly choose the death for Christ; and especially because these cities are not ours, but we must seek another, the one that remains; for these are perishing.

"Through him then." As for the high priest according to the flesh, *let us offer up* to the Father *a sacrifice of praise*, that is, thanksgiving. For we give thanks to the Father, as he has given his Son to sanctify us. This is for the weak. Since the grace of the Son, it is clear that the honor is equal; for he says, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. (Jn. 5:23)

"that is, the fruit of lips." What then is the *fruit of lips*? Prayers, hymns, requests to God. For when he said, *"sacrifice,"* let them not think that he is speaking of sacrifices made through animals, Paul explained himself. He says, I mean the sacrifices that are without blood, those made through *lips*, those in prayers and hymns and supplications.

"that acknowledge his name." Acknowledge with the *lips His name*, that is, giving thanks knowing that He died for our sins. That is, confessing with our lips His name.

Hebrews 13:16-19 *Do not forget the good deeds and the fellowship; for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us; for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you to do this more sincerely, in order that I may be restored to you sooner.*

"Do not forget the good deeds and the fellowship." Paul speaks of *good deeds* and *fellowship* as the same.

"God is pleased." That is, He is pleased; for the term *"is pleased"* [εὐαρεστεῖται] indicates to be well-pleased. Therefore, it is necessary not only to offer the fruit of the lips, but also *such*

sacrifices, like those of thanksgiving and good deeds. For the grateful person, it is evident that he is also generous, knowing what he is worthy of.

"Obey your leaders." Paul speaks about bishops. Earlier, having praised them in saying that they are faithful and worthy of being rivalled, in saying: "Considering the outcome of their conduct, imitate their faith," (Heb. 13:7) he then adds, "*Obey*." What then? Should one obey every ruler? One should not obey the one who believes wrongly; but one should obey the one who lives poorly, yet believes well. For he says, "be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach." (Matt. 23:3) And concerning those corrupted regarding the faith he says: "Do not be led astray by various and strange teachings." (Heb. 13:9) Why is that? Because the one who lives poorly would not advise others to live poorly; for even he, doing these things, is ashamed; and it is clear that he is trying in every way to hide what he does; but the one who is wicked regarding the faith will proclaim wickedness to the people.

"and submit to them." The stretched persuasion through the phrase, "*and submit to them*," indicates that they may also serve them through deeds, if it is necessary.

"for they are keeping watch over your souls." Let the leaders hear that, just as it is necessary for the people to be obedient, so too must the priest be *keeping watch* for the sins of the people; for the leaders are subject to punishment for the sins of the people.

"Let them do this with joy." They will certainly stay awake for your souls; but whether you are obedient or not will prepare them to do this either with joy or with *groaning*, which will be unprofitable for you, that is to say, *no advantage to you*, useless; for God will help.

"Pray for us." Because some were slandering the apostle, as teaching apostasy from the law, many of the Hebrews had a strong distaste toward him; therefore, Paul did not even place his name at the beginning of the letter, so that they would not find the name of Paul and then not read the letter. Therefore, he now defends himself to them. And first, he asks them to *pray* for him, as we are accustomed to ask from those who love us. Then he also shows himself to be innocent; *for we are sure*, he says, *that we have a clear conscience*; that is, we have done nothing with hypocrisy, but our conscience is clear, and we are not aware that we have plotted against you, or have done anything evil against you, or have slandered you.

"desiring to act honorably in all things." That is, in all things, living without offense and without causing scandal; not proclaiming a departure from the law, as some slander, but rather transitioning from the letter and the shadow to the spirit and the truth (Jn. 4:24); which is not a departure, but rather a fulfillment and promotion of the law.

"I urge you to do this more sincerely." What is this? To pray for us. This was something they greatly loved, to want to pray for them *sincerely* and with all diligence, so that they might quickly be *restored*.

"in order that I may be restored to you sooner." This was said because Paul had a good conscience, wanting to persuade them in person; which he would not have done if he were aware of any wrongdoing in himself.

A prayer to God regarding the guidance and management towards virtue.

Hebrews 13:20-25 *Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the*

sheep, our Lord Jesus, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you in every good work, that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. I urge you, brothers, bear with my word of encouragement, for I have written to you briefly. You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon. Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. Grace be with all of you. Amen.

"*the God of peace.*" First, asking for their prayers and honoring them even in this way, Paul himself also prays for them. Since, he says, God is peace, you ought not to be stirred up against me from mere gossip and to have hostility.

"*who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep.*" Which one? Our *Lord*, he says, *Jesus*. He affirms to them a certain word about the resurrection, taking the use from the prophecy of Isaiah (Isa. 40:11). And while there were also other shepherds, minor ones, he said the *great* one. For many are the prophets and teachers, but one is the instructor, Christ.

"*by the blood of the eternal covenant.*" That is to say, He raised him from the dead who had died, and having poured out his blood, that this might be for us an eternal covenant, that is, not to be cancelled, as the legal one, but everlasting. Thus: He raised him from the dead *by the blood of an eternal covenant*. For when he was raised, his blood was granted to us for an *eternal covenant*. For if he had not been raised, his blood would not have been for us a covenant.

"*equip you in every good work.*" That is, to fulfill, to perfect. It shows, therefore, that they have begun the good works; they needed to be perfected in them; Paul who also prays for them.

But see, that we must begin first, and then ask from God for the end.

"That you do His will." For he who is equipped and filled for every good work, he has the strength to do the will of God. And he says every work, work and faith.

"working in us that which is pleasing in his sight." When He equips us for every good work, to do His will, then He produces in us what is pleasing to Him. And what is pleasing to Him? It is to do His will. And when He said, *which is pleasing*, He added, *in His sight*. For we are truly pleasing when we appear good before God, not when we appear so only before men.

"through Jesus Christ." He says, He does what is pleasing to Him, through us as go-betweens. Do you see that everything is of God? This He will do and accomplish for us, what is pleasing to Him, through Christ. For if He wished to be a mediator between God and us, it is fitting that the Father will accomplish what is pleasing to Himself for us through Him.

"bear with the word of encouragement." Gladly accept the encouragement sent to you through the letters from me. Paul does not say, of counsel or exhortation, but, because of the tribulations in which they were, he speaks of *encouragement*, that is, of consolation, of the call to endure.

"for I have written to you briefly." Briefly, as it relates to what is to be said in the future, there are indeed many things, if everything has been said.

"You should know that our brother Timothy has been released." Rather, they did not have a grudge against Timothy, which is why Paul writes about him. What does it mean, "*released*"? Either that he was in prison and was released; or that he was being released from Athens, because he was there.

"with whom I shall see you if he comes soon." Timothy was released; but if he comes to me soon, I will see you together with him, coming to you. For it was likely that he had been released, but had not yet gone to Paul.

"Greet all your leaders." See how Paul honors them, for he addresses the leaders through them; for it was more fitting to command the leaders and to address the ones being led through them; but he wisely heals the weaker ones.

"Those from Italy greet you." Therefore, I am so filled with you that not only do I greet you myself, but I also establish such a longing towards you in others, that even from such a distance they desire you, and for this reason, they *greet you*.

"Grace be with all of you." Since grace is something common, it is prayed for mutually for all, both leaders and those being led. But what is grace? It is the forgiveness of sins, the cleansing, the participation in the Spirit. How can it be with you all? If you do not insult the support of God, sinning and being negligent, if you do not live unworthily of it. For grace remains when we have good works; it departs when we do not live according to the command of the one who gives it to us. But let it be, knowing this, and all that we have received through it, not to conduct ourselves in arrogance towards such great goods bestowed upon us; but through good works glorifying Him, and showing that this grace was not given to ungrateful and thankless people, to have it unyielding in our souls, in Christ Himself, the supporter of our souls. With whom be glory to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, now and always, and until forever and ever. Amen.

The end, with the aid of divine favor, of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

It was written from Italy by Timothy.³

Translation notes for Hebrews chapter 13

1. Neither the PG nor the Pharmakides version give any indicators that this is a Photius excerpt. My source is from Staab's version.
2. The PG mistakenly claims that this excerpt is from Oecumenius. The Pharmakides version just reads "OTHER" [ΑΛΛΟ.] But the quote comes from St. Cyril of Alexandria, On the Adoration and Worship in Spirit and Truth -- Book 15, on Sin Offerings & Purification.
3. "It was written from Italy by Timothy." The Cambridge Bible for School and Colleges says this, "The superscription "Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy" is wholly without authority, though found in K and some versions. It contradicts the obvious inference suggested by Hebrews 13:23-24. We have no clue to the bearer of the Epistle, or the local community for which it was primarily intended, or the effect which it produced. But it would scarcely be possible to suppose that such a composition did not have a powerful influence in checking all tendency to reversing into Judaism from the deeper and far more enormous blessings of the New Covenant. The Manuscripts κ and C have only "To the Hebrews." A has "It was written to the Hebrews from Rome."