

THE CONVERGENCE OF ADAMIC AND *MERKABAH*
TRADITIONS IN THE CHRISTOLOGY OF HEBREWS*

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The presence of *merkabah* mysticism in Hebrews was proposed as early as four decades ago. Ronald Williamson, Hans-Martin Schenke, and Otfried Hofius read several of the epistle's motifs, particularly the heavenly throne/enthronement, the heavenly temple and its liturgy, and the divine glory, in conjunction to *merkabah* mysticism.¹ However, subsequently such connections were largely dismissed based primarily on the late date of the Jewish texts used in these studies (mostly from *Hekhalot* literature). Moreover, Williamson undermined his own argument for *merkabah* connections in noting that most of the above motifs could be explained "on the basis of a common indebtedness to the Old Testament."² Furthermore, in 1990 David Hurst made a strong argument against *merkabah* connections: first, most of the motifs occur in apocalyptic literature and psalms, and, second, Hebrews never mentions the texts "which one normally associates with the later phenomenon of *Merkabah* mysticism," these being Ezekiel 1, Daniel 7, Psalm 97, and Isaiah 6.³ To his credit, Hurst asks the basic question on the issue: "Was there in the first century an entity which may confidently be labelled as '*Merkabah* mysticism,' with which Hebrews may be compared in the

* The argument of offered in this study was presented in a more concise form at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (Atlanta, Georgia), as part of the "Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism" group.

1. Hans-Martin Schenke, "Erwägung zum Rätsel des Hebräerbriefes," in *Neues Testament und christliche Existenz: Festschrift H. Braun* (ed. H. D. Betz and L. Schrottroff; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1972), 421–37; Ronald Williamson, "The Background of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *ExpTim* 87 (1975–76): 232–37; Otfried Hofius, *Der Christushymnus Philipper 2, 6-11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1976), 87–88.

2. Williamson, "Background," 236.

3. L. David Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 82–84.

same way it is compared with Philo, Qumran, Paul, Acts 7, etc.?”⁴ He then goes on to subscribe to Scholem’s line between Second Temple apocalyptic literature, the *merkabah* speculations of the Mishnah, and the post-Talmudic *merkabah* mysticism, and to acknowledge that one may discern “‘pre-*Merkabah*’ tendencies within Jewish apocalyptic which may then have gone on to influence *Auctor*.”⁵ More recently Timo Eskola proposed a re-evaluation of the *merkabah* connection based on the fact “that an ascent structure is clearly present in the Christology of the letter, and that the idea of the heavenly temple is one of its cornerstones.”⁶

The assumptions on which Hurst refuted the connections between Hebrews and *merkabah* mysticism are highly problematic for several reasons. First and foremost, to answer Hurst’s somewhat rhetorical question, *merkabah* mysticism is not confined to a clearly definable and homogeneous body of literature, either ancient or medieval, like the Philonic corpus. In other words, there is no *merkabah* literature or *merkabah* “entity.”⁷ Requiring such a corpus in order to distinguish *merkabah* influences is incongruous. The discernable difference between later and earlier *merkabah* texts is that the former adhere to their *merkabah* interests more consistently and explicitly and use their “*merkabah*” urtexts (that is, Ezek 1, Dan 7, Ps 97, and Isa 6) more thoroughly.

Second, *merkabah* mysticism, at least as it transpires in texts, does not seem to be a stylistic device as to qualify as a genre, nor can it be defined as a literary motif. Rather, it is a cluster of motifs that express religious belief and praxis in different generic milieus, such as apocalypticism. In between genre and motif (although closer to genre), I would suggest that the *merkabah* mysticism of ancient and medieval texts is a literary interest. The concept of “literary interest” is used quite technically among language theorists to indicate the reader’s interest in fiction and his/her inventive additions to it, or, more specifically, “the appeal of invented narrative,” as one study has it.⁸ I do not use this phrase in the

4. Hurst, *Hebrews*, 84.

5. Hurst, *Hebrews*, 85.

6. Timo Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne: Jewish Merkabah Mysticism and Early Christian Exaltation Discourse* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 202–11 (p. 203).

7. Most of what scholars would deem as “*merkabah*” speculations survive in the *Hekhalot* corpus.

8. Mark Schoening, “Literary Interest Now,” *Modern Language Studies* 29 (1999): 175–87. For the different ways in which “literary interest” is discussed in specialty literature, see also Steven Knapp, *Literary Interest: The Limits of Anti-Formalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

same way here.⁹ I am not approaching *merkabah* mysticism as a form of readership here, but as a form of authorship. Also, I do not mean to suggest that *merkabah* mysticism is simply a literary construct.¹⁰ By “literary interest” I mean the authorial interest in creating a particular atmosphere within the text by transcribing a specific form of religious experience into text.

Third, if we are to define *merkabah* mysticism through the text that provided its name, then *ma‘aseh merkabah*, one of the two main branches of Jewish mysticism according to *m. Hag. 2:1*, is strictly a mystical interpretation of Ezekiel 1. However, despite this seemingly narrow interpretive character, *merkabah* mysticism, like any genre, should not be identified based on the presence of specific individual markers, but rather based on the presence of an underlying *merkabah* ideology and of a cluster of markers, of which one or more may be missing in any specific text. One should accept that, as with any genre, there is no essential identifier for *merkabah* mysticism and that this literary interest does not depend on any single individual marker, even the overt use of Ezekiel 1 or explicit descriptions of the divine throne.

The presence in Hebrews of motifs from Adamic traditions has also been timidly advanced before, but, to my knowledge, Adamic traditions have not yet been proposed as a broad conceptual background for the letter, despite the fact that in 1999 Crispin Fletcher-Louis advanced the proposal that Second Temple Jewish traditions about divine humanity, which profess the worship and the inclusion of different beings (including Adam) into the godhead without posing a threat to monotheism, must be seen as a precedent to the early Christian worship of Jesus.¹¹ However,

9. Although it could be used, since there is undoubtedly a literary aspect to *merkabah* mysticism, as it originated with interpretations of Ezek 1 that most probably exceeded the intended meaning of that biblical chapter.

10. It is still very much disputed among scholars whether *merkabah* mysticism and ascensional/visionary literature in general are mere works of fiction or are based on actual religious experience. For these disputes, see Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, “Religious Experience and the Apocalypses,” in *Experientia*. Vol. 1, *Inquiry for Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Frances Flanery et al.; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 125–44; Alan F. Segal, “Transcribing Experience,” in *With Letters of Light: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Early Jewish Apocalypticism, Magic, and Mysticism in Honor of Rachel Elijor* (ed. Daphna Arbel and Andrei Orlov; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 365–82.

11. Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, “The Worship of Divine Humanity as God’s Image and the Worship of Jesus,” in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (ed. Carey C. Newman et al.; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 112–28.

echoes of motifs traditionally associated with the protoplast have been detected in several small units of Hebrews. The argument of this article is that the Christology of Hebrews is indebted to both *merkabah* and Adamic traditions and that the converging use of the two traditions advances a Christology in which the Son is the human-like Glory of God.¹² The juxtaposition of the two trends is particularly visible in the first two chapters of Hebrews, in the polemic against angels and in the depiction of the Son as enthroned. This convergence echoes the rapprochement between Ezekiel 1 and Gen 1:26 in earlier texts and describes the Son as the glory (כבוד, δόξα) of God and the human-like image in which Adam is made.

I do not wish to suggest here that texts function insularly. Not only do texts reach other texts as the “always-already-read,” that is, “through the sedimented reading habits and categories developed by...inherited interpretive traditions,”¹³ but they also exist in relation to each other as “nodes within networks.”¹⁴ Moreover, to take Michel Foucault’s idea further, a text is inasmuch a product of a network as a producer of a network. This means that texts exist in the broader and more fluid shape of textual networks or cultures. To apply to texts an insightful analysis of cultures, a text is a transcultural “contact zone,” a place in which “disparate cultures meet, clash, grapple, with each other.”¹⁵ Of course, one must keep in mind that there is no such thing as pure cultures; for this reason all texts and all cultures are “contact zones.” Thus, texts not known directly in their wording can still be “read” both in and through the cultures that produced them and in and through the cultures that they produce. The burden of proof of intertextuality cannot be reduced to

12. It goes without saying that the epistle uses other sources and that its Christology incorporates other elements. For example, Hebrews draws explicitly on priestly Melchizedek and Noah traditions (on these connections, see Andrei Orlov, “*The Heir of Righteousness and the King of Righteousness: The Priestly Noachic Polemics in 2 Enoch and the Epistle to the Hebrews*,” *JTS* 58 [2007]: 46-65). I do not wish to suggest here that Adamic and *merkabah* traditions are present in Hebrews to the exclusion of these other elements.

13. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 2002), ix–x.

14. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2006), 25–26: “The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network... The book is not simply the object that one holds in one’s hands... Its unity is variable and relative.”

15. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1998), 181.

finding parallel clusters of literary motifs in similar literary genres. My primary assumption is that quests for intertextuality are ultimately exercises in interculturality. Therefore, my contention here is that Hebrews converges the “cultures” of *merkabah* and Adamic speculations as they emerge from *merkabah* and Adamic texts.

Merkabah Mysticism

An increasing number of scholars suggest that, based primarily on the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, the Dead Sea community viewed their cult as a transformative ascent to heaven.¹⁶ The affinities between this view of the ritual and the cultic imageries of Hebrews raise the intriguing possibility that the community behind the epistle may have had a similar heavenly understanding of themselves and their cult. For example, the scene of 4:16, “let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in time of need,”¹⁷ imagery from which many scholars still extract a simple metaphorical reference to the mundane act of prayer, may take place at once both in the earthly place of worship and the heavenly temple. Or better yet, there are no two places, but one. In Jesus’ ascensional priesthood the earthly temple becomes the heavenly temple. Thus, Jesus as *πρόδρομος* and *ἀρχηγός* allows his followers access and takes them to the heavenly sanctuary for participation into the heavenly cult (6:19-20; 12:2; cf. also 10:19-20).¹⁸ There is

16. See particularly Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 252–79; Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, “The Temple Within: The Embodied Divine Image and Its Worship in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish and Christian Sources,” *SBLSP* 37 (1998): 400–431; Carol Newsom, “Merkabah Exegesis in the Qumran Sabbath Shirot,” *JJS* 38 (1987): 11–30. The criticisms of this understanding of the *Songs* are receding. See, for example, the recent comments in Peter Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 112–53, 348–50, and the review of James R. Davila at <http://paleojudaica.bravehost.com/Review%20of%20Schäfer,%20Origins.pdf> (though the link is not currently operative).

17. This and all subsequent translations of Hebrews are from RSV, unless noted otherwise.

18. The meaning of *ἀρχηγός* is more disputed among scholars than *πρόδρομος*. While some propose to understand *ἀρχηγός* as “ruler” or “chief,” most probably the term indicates “one who leads the way.” For discussions on this term in Hebrews and elsewhere, see David L. Allen, *Hebrews* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 214–15, 574–75; Eric F. Mason, “*You Are a Priest Forever*”: *Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 10–11; Julius J. Scott, “*Archegos* in the Salvation History of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *JETS* 29 (1986): 47–54; G. Johnston, “Christ as

nothing in the broader units 4:14–5:10, which portrays Jesus as the high priest who passed through the heavens, and the similar 6:19–20, which describes Jesus as *πρόδρομος* to the divine presence behind the veil, to prevent the assumption that the followers are incorporated into the heavenly liturgy that Jesus leads and that this integration of the followers into the heavenly worship takes place here and now, in their earthly rituals. On the contrary, there is much in the epistle, at Qumran, and in later Jewish and Christian thought, to support this conclusion.

The picture that seems to coalesce from disparate elements is one of the “true” temple, the “heavenly” temple, or simply “heaven itself” (cf. 9:24), to which the community has access in their earthly liturgy, in which Christ has offered the only sacrifice, himself. Behind the curtain in the holy of holies (9:11), meaningfully called “rest” in chs. 3 and 4,¹⁹ the temple houses two thrones, the throne of God (4:16; 8:1) and at its right hand the throne of the eternal high-priest and sacrifice, Christ (4:16; 8:1; 10:12). In this heaven-temple, the community, surrounded in liturgy by a “great cloud of witnesses” (12:1) hears the following greeting: you have not come to Sinai,

to what may be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers entreat that no further messages be spoken to them...but to mount Zion and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven (Heb 12:18–23).

Moreover, this liturgical location, temple/heaven/Sinai, is Edenic. The community of believers is compared to a land closely reminiscent of Paradise:

archegos,” *NTS* 27 (1980–81): 381–85; Paul-Gerhard Muller, *Christos Archegos: Der religionsgeschichtliche und theologische Hintergrund einer neutestamentlichen Christusprädikation* (Bern: Lang, 1973). Allen makes the point that “the title should be read with Heb 6:20 in mind, where Jesus is said to be our ‘forerunner’, indicating that others would follow on the trail he blazed” (*Hebrews*, 574). My reading of the term departs from Allen’s only in assuming that such liturgical following takes place in this life, mystically and formatively.

19. Following Otfried Hofius (*Katapausis. Die Vorstellung vom endzeitlichen Ruheort im Hebräerbrief* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1970]), most scholars agree that the term refers to the temple and the heavens as God’s resting place into which Jesus has entered as the forerunner of the believers. For recent reviews of positions, see Jon Laansma, “*I Will Give You Rest*”: *The Rest Motif in the New Testament with Special Reference to Mt 11 and Heb 3–4* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997); Allen, *Hebrews*, 290–99.

for land which has drunk the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed; its end is to be burned (Heb 6:7-8).

Several features of this passage allude to Eden: the fall of rain (see Gen 2:5 LXX), the generation of vegetation (τίκτουσα βοτάνην—see Gen 1:11-12; 2:5 LXX: βοτάνην), the cultivation for one’s sake (ἐκείνοις δι’ οὓς καὶ γεωργεῖται—see Gen 1:28-29; 2:25 LXX), the blessing from God (see Gen 1:22, 28 LXX), the cursing of the land (κατάρας—see Gen 3:17: ἐπικατάρατος ἢ γῆ), and the mention of “thorns and thistles” (ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους—see Gen 3:18 LXX: ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους). The description of the community in Edenic language recalls the placement of the community of the *Hodayot* hymns in heaven, as God’s spiritual temple, and echoes the *Hekhalot* story of the four mystics who entered Paradise.²⁰

Other transformative, visionary, and ascension motifs that resonate with *merkabah* mysticism are scattered throughout the text of Hebrews. The donning of regalia (1:8-9), anointing (1:8-9), the eating of holy spirit (μετόχους γεννηθέντας πνεύματος ἁγίου), the word (ῥῆμα) of God, and heavenly powers (δύναμεις, 6:4-5), and visions of the divine thrones in the holy of holies (4:16; 8:1; 10:12), imageries prominent in *merkabah*-type texts, are all mentioned.²¹ The interest in the ritual and particularly in its transformative and visionary nature is evident (9:2-5) and the author even stops short, dutifully and mystically, of describing the throne and the figure on it (9:5).

What emerges very clearly from this sketchy picture is that the interests of Hebrews that coincide with *merkabah* ideas are interwoven into the epistle’s understanding of the Son and the manner in which this πρόδρομος and ἀρχηγός relates to the community. After all, the community

20. For Edenic language in the *Hodayot* hymns and in the *Hekhalot* story, see James R. Davila, “The Hodayot Hymnist and the Four Who Entered Paradise,” *RevQ* 17 (1996): 457–78. See also Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, 115–16.

21. On the imagery of consumption of the divine presence in ancient Jewish and Christian mysticism, see Ira Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism: Studies in the History of Midrash* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982), 74–87; Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke–Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 66–68; David Goodman, “Do Angels Eat?,” *JJS* 37 (1986): 160–75; Alexander Golitzin, “The Demons Suggest an Illusion of God’s Glory in a Form: Controversy over the Divine Body and Vision of Glory in Some Late Fourth, Early Fifth Century Monastic Literature,” in *The Theophaneia School: Jewish Roots of Eastern Christian Mysticism* (ed. Basil Lurie and Andrei Orlov; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2009), 49–82.

has access to the holy of holies and it participates there in a transformative throne vision through the Son, who seems to be also one of the objects of this experience, enthroned at the right side of God.

The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews has retained much of the attention of recent scholarship.²² What has been particularly intriguing to researchers is the imagery of Christ's superiority to the angels prevalent in the first two chapters of Hebrews. For the nature and background of this Christology, particularly as it is reflected in the first two chapters of the early Christian epistle, scholars have proposed a stand against angelomorphic Christology,²³ a refutation of angel veneration,²⁴ or a polemic against Logos traditions.²⁵ A more nuanced proposal is that advanced by Charles Gieschen, who sees in Hebrews the development of an angelomorphic Christology.²⁶ In his words, "the author's effort to distinguish clearly between Christ and the angels does not preclude the presence of Angelomorphic Christology."²⁷ Even the worship of the Son by the angels "does not preclude Angelomorphic Christology since it has already been demonstrated that angels can and do worship an angelomorphic being in some texts."²⁸

A recent proposal by Richard Bauckham also stands out, but for other reasons:

22. For general overviews of opinions on the Christology of Hebrews, see Mason, "You Are a Priest Forever", 40–63; H. Attridge, *Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 25–27; W. R. G. Loader, *Sohn und Hoherpriester: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Christologie des Hebräerbriefes* (Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981).

23. On this stand, see William L. Lane, *Hebrews* (2 vols.; Dallas: Word, 1991), 1:8; Darrell D. Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael Traditions and Angel Christology in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 138–39; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 139; Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne*, 210; see also Mason, "You Are a Priest Forever", 134–35.

24. Thus Robert Jewett, *Letter to Pilgrims: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York: Pilgrim, 1981), 5–13.

25. Thus Charles F. D. Moule, *The Phenomenon of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1967), 167; Ronald H. Nash, "The Notion of Mediator in Alexandrian Judaism and the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Westminster Theological Journal* 40 (1977–78): 89–115 (92–95).

26. Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (AGAJU 42; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 295–98.

27. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 294.

28. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 299.

In Heb. 1–2 the angels function christologically in two ways: in ch. 1 Jesus' exaltation is understood as his exaltation over the angels, while in ch. 2 Jesus' humiliation in incarnation and death is understood as the meaning of Ps. 8's statement that God made him for a little while lower than the angels. In both cases Jesus is emphatically distinguished from the angels. In his exaltation he is not one of the angels, but divine. In his incarnation he is not one of the angels but human.²⁹

This explanation is highly problematic as it reads much later Christological developments (specifically the fifth-century dogmatic clarifications of Chalcedon) into Hebrews. The author admits this much:

These chapters [that is, Heb 1 and 2] are perhaps the closest the New Testament texts come to the conceptuality of the Chalcedonian Christology that emerged in the fifth century from the patristic christological controversies. Jesus is identified both with God (in ch. 1) and with humanity (in ch. 2)... In him, as Chalcedon insisted, true divinity and true humanity are both to be recognized.³⁰

In what regards the enthronement of the Son, the same author concludes that it is the definitive marker of divinity or the litmus test of the inclusion of a candidate for divinity into the boundary of the monotheistic Jewish godhead:

Sitting on the divine throne was the most powerful symbol Jewish monotheism had for the inclusion of a figure into in the exercise of the unique sovereignty over all things.³¹

My proposal here is that one must not take such a leap of faith all the way to Chalcedon to explain the imagery of Hebrews 1–2. Moreover, we need not presume such a marked transition in argument between chs. 1 and 2 to the point that we identify Chalcedonian dyophysitism in Hebrews. Most of the argument in Hebrews 1–2 and the imagery of the throne may be explained as an appropriation of Adamic and *merkabah* traditions.

29. Richard Bauckham, "Monotheism and Christology in Hebrews 1," in *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism* (ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E. S. North; London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 167–85 (170).

30. Bauckham, "Monotheism and Christology," 185.

31. Bauckham, "Monotheism and Christology," 182. See also the same argument in Bauckham, "The Throne of God and the Worship of Jesus," in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (ed. Carey C. Newman et al.; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 43–69.

Adamic Traditions

Regarding proximities between Hebrews 1–2 and Adamic traditions, two passages are particularly illuminating: 1:6 and 2:5-9. Hebrews 1:6 deserves full citation:

And again, when he introduces (εἰσαγάγη) the Firstborn into the world (εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην), he says, “And let all the angels of God worship him (προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ).”³²

This passage is best understood in comparison to the tradition according to which at his creation Adam is presented to the angels for veneration.³³ This tradition is expressed fully in the *Life of Adam and Eve* corpus, extant in Greek, Latin, Armenian, Georgian, Slavonic, and Romanian.³⁴ The story survives only in the Latin, Georgian and Armenian versions. According to it, when Adam is introduced to the world, the angels are requested to venerate the protoplast. The Armenian version of the story reads as follows:

Satan also wept loudly and said to Adam. “All my arrogance and sorrow came to pass because of you; for, because of you I went forth from my dwelling; and because of you I was alienated from the throne of the Cherubim who, having spread out a shelter, used to enclose me; because of you my feet have trodden the earth.” Adam replied and said to him, “What are our sins against you, that you did all this to us?” Satan replied and said, “You did nothing to me, but I came to this measure because of you, on the day on which you were created, for I went forth on that day. When God breathed his spirit into you, you received the likeness of his image. Thereupon, Michael came and made you bow down before God. God said to Michael, ‘Behold I have made Adam in the likeness of my image.’ Then Michael summoned all the angels and God said to them, ‘Come, bow down to god (*astowac*) whom I made.’ Michael bowed first. He called me and said. ‘You too, bow down to Adam.’ I said, ‘Go away, Michael! I shall not bow down to him who is posterior to me, for I am

32. My translation.

33. On the tradition about the angelic veneration of Adam, see Gary A. Anderson, “The Exaltation of Adam and the Fall of Satan,” in *Literature on Adam and Eve* (ed. Gary A. Anderson et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 83–110; A. Marmorstein, “Controversies Between the Angels and the Creator,” *Melilah* 3–4 (1950): 93–102 (in Hebrew); Alexander Altmann, “The Gnostic Background of the Rabbinic Adam Legends,” *JQR* 35 (1944–45): 371–91.

34. For succinct introductions to this corpus, see particularly Michael E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (SBLEJL 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); Marinus de Jonge and Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997); Silviu Bunta, “Adam and Eve, Life of,” *EBR* 1:339–41.

former. Why is it proper for me to bow down to him?’ The other angels, too, who were with me, heard this, and my words seemed pleasing to them and they did not prostrate themselves to you, Adam.” (Armenian *Life of Adam and Eve* 12.1–15.1)³⁵

It is commonly accepted today that the extant versions of the corpus derive from a common Greek *Vorlage*.³⁶ Although this scene is not extant in any manuscript of the Greek recension, Michael Stone argues convincingly that the extant Greek version presupposes the story and that the narrative was part of the *Vorlage*.³⁷ In 16:3, in an address to the serpent, Satan mentions his fall through Adam: “Rise up and we [that is, Satan and the serpent] will cause him [Adam] to be cast out of the Garden, even as we were cast out through him.”³⁸

The origins of the corpus are notoriously difficult to date.³⁹ Nevertheless, the fact that the tradition is recorded in many Jewish and Christian sources from the first centuries CE suggests that it knew a widespread circulation toward the end of the Second Temple period.⁴⁰ Moreover,

35. Armenian text and translation from Gary A. Anderson and Michael E. Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve* (2d ed.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 15E-17E.

36. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*, 42; de Jonge and Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve*, 41–44, 65–67.

37. Michael Stone, “The Fall of Satan and Adam’s Penance: Three Notes on *The Books of Adam and Eve*,” *JTS* 44 (1993): 143–56 (153–56).

38. Anderson and Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 50E.

39. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*, 53–58; Bunta, “Adam and Eve, Life of,” 340.

40. The tradition appears in *Gospel of Bartholomew* 4:52-56 (Edgar Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* [2 vols.; ed. W. Schneemelcher; trans. R. M. Wilson; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963], 1:500), a Coptic text attributed to Peter of Alexandria (W. E. Crum, “Texts Attributed to Peter of Alexandria,” *JTS* 4 [1903]: 387–97 [396–97]), a Coptic *Encomium on Michael* (396–97 n. 3, also found in E. W. Budge, *Miscellaneous Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* [London: British Museum, 1915], 904–905), a Coptic *Enthronement of Michael* (C. D. G. Müller, *Die Bucher der Einsetzung der Erzengel Michael und Gabriel* [CSCO 225/226; Louvain: Peeters, 1962], 14–15), the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* (Brit. Mus. MS. Add. 25875, fol. 5b, cols. 1-2; Su-Min Ri, *La Caverne de Trésors. Les deux recensions syriaques* [CSCO 486-487; Louvain: Peeters, 1987]), Origen’s *De Principiis* I.V.4-5 (*ANF* 4:258–60), Tertullian’s *On Patience* 5 (*ANF* 3:709–11), and the *Apocalypse of Sedrach* 5:1-2. Moreover, Stone also notes that *2 En.* 31:5-6 (recension J) and *22:7* reflect a similar tradition of the fall of Satan (“The Fall of Satan,” 146–47). It is also possible that the narrative of Jesus’ temptation (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13) alludes to the story of Satan’s fall at least in three aspects. First, Jesus fasts for 40 days, as does Adam after the fall (and Eve, according to the shorter recensions of the *Life of Adam and Eve*). Second, the first of Jesus’ temptations is food. Not

based on conspicuous literary and conceptual affinities between the *Life of Adam and Eve* passage and Daniel 3, an argument has been made that the pseudepigraphic scene of angelic veneration “owes its genius to the early Hellenistic period when Daniel 3 was written.”⁴¹ This hypothesis is further supported by 4Q381 1,10-11. The text, dated paleographically to the first half of the first century BCE,⁴² and possibly a copy of an original from the Persian or early Hellenistic periods,⁴³ refers fragmentarily to the angels’ ministry of Adam: “All His hosts and [His] ange[ls...] to serve man (or Adam) and to minister to him (ולעבד לאדם ולשרתו)...”⁴⁴ It has been previously noted that “both the verbs שרת and עבד which are used in 4Q381 have a strongly cultic orientation for the community that used the text” and that 4Q381 “may preserve the earliest datable witness to the belief that before his fall Adam was to be recipient of worship” from the angels.⁴⁵

To my knowledge, the only scholar to see any similarities between Heb 1:6 and the *Life of Adam and Eve* story is Frederick F. Bruce.⁴⁶ However, Bruce does not detect any close parallels between these two texts, yet the particular elements of Heb 1:6 evoke closely the tradition about the veneration of Adam. The use of ὅταν (“when”) suggests a specific time referent for the introduction of the Firstborn to the world (εἰσαγάγη εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην). Given this specificity, scholars have

only was food the object of Eve’s first temptation, but, according to the Latin, Armenian, and Georgian texts of the *Life of Adam and Eve* (9:4-5), food is also the first thing that Satan tempts Eve with the second time. Moreover, food plays a major role in the Adamic corpus. Third and more importantly for this investigation, Satan’s request in the gospel story that Jesus should worship him contrasts with God’s request in the *Life of Adam and Eve* narrative that the angels, including Satan, worship the image of God, Adam.

41. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 103.

42. E. M. Schuller, “4QNon-Canonical Psalms,” in *Qumran Cave 4.VI: Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part I* (DJD 11; ed. E. Eshel et al.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 75–172 (88).

43. E. M. Schuller, *Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran: A Pseudepigraphic Collection* (HSS 28; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 21–52.

44. The Hebrew and the translation are from Schuller, *Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran*, 76; the translation is reprinted in Schuller, “4QNon-Canonical Psalms,” 75–172.

45. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 99–100.

46. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament; 2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 57. Donald Guthrie notes the Adamic tradition tangentially, but he assumes that Heb 1:6 is indebted to Deut 32:43 (*The Letter to the Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983], 74 n. 1).

located the introduction at incarnation, birth, baptism, ascension, or second coming.⁴⁷ However, none of these options makes perfect sense. Given that the introduction to the *οἰκουμένη* here results in veneration by angels, it is safe to assume that *οἰκουμένη* means here the heavenly world and not the entire cosmos⁴⁸ and that an introduction to the angels at these moments in Christ's existence makes no sense.⁴⁹ However, such presentation to the angels, followed by a call for veneration and resulting implicitly in an act of worship, parallels the Adamic tradition quite closely.⁵⁰ The actual call for veneration (*προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ*) speaks for itself.⁵¹

Regarding Heb 2:5-9, scholars generally agree that it is a unit within the longer introduction on Christ's superiority over angels.⁵²

⁵ For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶ It has been testified somewhere, "What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man (*υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου*), that you care for him? ⁷ You made him for a little while lower than the angels, You crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸ putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in

47. See the reviews of these positions in Attridge, *Hebrews*, 55, and Allen, *Hebrews*, 175.

48. See the discussion in Allen, *Hebrews*, 174; O. Michels, "οἰκουμένη," *TDNT* 5:157–59; *pace* Attridge, *Hebrews*, 56. Although Allen takes *οἰκουμένη* to mean the angelic world, he concludes that the introduction to the angels could take place at the enthronement. This reading does not take into account the full strength of *εἰσαγάγη*. If the Firstborn is introduced (*εἰσαγάγη*) to the *οἰκουμένη*, given that *εἰσαγάγη* has this connotation of novelty, the Firstborn could have hardly been part of the angelic world before this introduction.

49. Moreover, Christ's birth is described in Heb 10:5 as *εἰσερχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον*.

50. Second, scholars have taken *πρωτότοκος* to be an allusion to traditions surrounding the figures of Wisdom, Logos, or the highest angels, although the term is not used in any of the texts commonly cited. See the discussion in Attridge, *Hebrews*, 56.

51. The text quoted does not exist in exactly the same words anywhere in the Old Testament. Scholars have looked at two possible sources for this quote: Ps 97:6 in its Septuagint form (96:7: *προσκυνήσατε αὐτῷ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ*) and Deut 32:43, the latter in three recensions, namely, the Septuagint at Deut 32:43 (*προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ*), 4QDeut at Deut 32:43 (version close to the LXX), and the Septuagint's *Odes* 2:43 version of Deut 32:43 (*προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ*). The closest in form is the Septuagint's *Odes* 2:43, which only differs from Heb 1:6 in using the definite article *οἱ* in *οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ*.

52. George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-linguistic Analysis* (NovTSup 73; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 63–65, 92–102, 109.

subjection to him.⁹ But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made 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.

There is also a widespread agreement that *γάρα* of the opening verse of the unit reaches all the way back to the first chapter and refers to the theme of Christ's superiority over angels.⁵³

The intriguing aspect of this unit is the use of Ps 8:4-6, particularly in the context of the broader theme of Christ's superiority over the angels.⁵⁴ The connections between Hebrews and the use of Psalm 8 in Adam speculations noted in previous scholarship have been limited to 1QS 3:17-22, 3 *En.* 5:10; *b. Sanh.* 38b; and 4 *Ezra* 6:53-54.⁵⁵ The conclusion offered based on these texts has been that "in extrabiblical Jewish texts, the psalm primarily emphasizes the insignificance of human beings, but a few use the psalm to speak of human dignity."⁵⁶

James D. G. Dunn perceives a connection with Adamic literature and offers the following observation:

[Jesus] fulfils God's original intention for man—Jesus exalted after death. The risen Christ is crowned with the glory that Adam failed to reach by virtue of his sin... [yet] Christ could not become the last Adam, progenitor of a new manhood beyond death, if he had not first been Adam, one with the manhood which the first Adam begot.⁵⁷

Bruce has also noted an application here of Adamic motifs to "Christ as the last Adam, the head of the new creation and ruler of the world to come."⁵⁸

53. See, among other sources, Bruce, *Hebrews*, 71; Lane, *Hebrews*, 1:45; Allen, *Hebrews*, 202 n. 167; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 93. For short overviews of this and dissenting opinions see Allen, *Hebrews*, 202, and Attridge, *Hebrews*, 69–70.

54. Previous scholarship has noted that this psalm is used in three other places in the New Testament: Matt 21:16; 1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:20-22. This does suggest that the Psalm became part of early Christological discourses early on in the history of Christianity (see the evidence in George H. Guthrie and Russell D. Quin, "A Discourse Analysis of the Use of Psalm 8:4-6 in Hebrews 2:5-9," *JETS* 49 [2006]: 235–46).

55. Guthrie and Quin, "A Discourse Analysis," 236–37.

56. Guthrie and Quin, "A Discourse Analysis," 237.

57. James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 109–11.

58. Bruce, *Hebrews*, 72; see also the extensive observations on pp. 72–75.

These interpretations overlook the most obvious connotation of the first line of Psalm 8 quoted in Heb 2:5-9 (Ps 8:4: “What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him?”): whoever is the “man” and/or the “son of man,” the psalm is clearly derogatory toward this person. This line of Psalm 8 is only used in two of the texts noted in previous scholarship, namely *3 En.* 5:10 and *b. Sanh.* 38b, and in both it is taken in its obvious sense, as a defamation of the “man” and/or the “son of man.” In *3 En.* 5:10 the angels protest with it the forgiveness of the generation of Enosh. In *b. Sanh.* 38b Ps 8:4 is the angels’ argument against the creation of Adam. The same use of this verse of the psalm is attested in *Gen. Rab.* 8:6 and *Pirqe R. El.* 13.⁵⁹ Angels also use this verse to oppose the ascents of Rabbi Ishmael (*3 En.* 2) and Rabbi Akibah (*b. Hag.* 15b), the elevation of Enoch (*3 En.* 4:6-10), and the revelation of the Torah to Moses (*b. Šabb.* 88b-89a; *Pes. Rab.* 25:4; *3 En.* 15B).

It appears clear that Ps 8:4 figures prominently in the broader Jewish tradition about the angels’ animosity toward humans.⁶⁰ The inclusion of this line of Psalm 8 into the Hebrews theme of Christ’s superiority over angels, a context in which the derogatory connotations of the psalmic verse only come in clearer focus, suggests that this use of the psalm is also best understood within the larger Jewish tradition of the angelic opposition to humanity.⁶¹ It is telling that, as scholars have previously noted, Heb 2:5-9 does not transform υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου into the common Christological title ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.⁶² The argument that the author

59. The motif of angelic opposition to the creation of Adam, without the use of Ps 8, is further attested in *Gen. Rab.* 8:4-5 and *3 En.* 4:6.

60. On these traditions see Altmann, “The Gnostic Background,” 371–91; Marmorstein, “Controversies between the Angels and the Creator,” 93–102; Joseph P. Schultz, “Angelic Opposition to the Ascension of Moses and the Revelation of the Law,” *JQR* 61 (1970–71): 282–307; Peter Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen. Untersuchungen zur Rabbinischen Engelvorbildung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975); Anderson, “The Exaltation of Adam,” 89–108.

61. Subsequent Christologies develop a similar theme of angelic opposition to the ascending anthropomorphic Christ, attested, among other sources, in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, Justin, and Origen. See the evidence in J. G. Davies, *He Ascended into Heaven: A Study In the History of Doctrine* (London: Lutterworth, 1958), 210; E. Kähler, *Studien zum Te Deum und zur Geschichte des 24 Psalmes in der Alten Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958); David J. Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Response to Ezekiel’s Vision* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 341–43, 351.

62. Thus Lane, *Hebrews*, 47; James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (3d ed.; London: SCM, 2006), 35–40.

simply follows the Septuagint version of the psalm and this faithfulness prevails over the temptation to make the construction fit the author's Christological stand cannot be made here. After all, the author already takes some freedom in quoting Psalm 8 here⁶³ and rewrites so many other scriptural passages elsewhere in the text. Neither can one simply assume that the phrase can only refer to Jesus (the author identifies the referent, the "man"/"son of man," with Jesus in 2:9).⁶⁴ I would suggest that the author wants the audience to understand υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου in Psalm 8 in reference both to the Son and humankind. The overtly Christological title ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is purposely avoided in order to preserve here a second reference to humanity in general.⁶⁵ Eric Mason arrives at a similar conclusion: "The quotation is best understood as intentionally ambiguous: it is applied to Jesus but intended to evoke its original application to humanity in general."⁶⁶

The Convergence of Adamic and Merkabah Traditions

As I mentioned above, the thrones of God and of the Son in the holy of holies are mentioned several times in the epistle (cf. Heb 4:16; 8:1; 10:12). The first two chapters of the letter refer to the Son's enthronement three times (1:3, 8, 13). The enthronement of the Son comes into clearer focus in conjunction with the other prominent features of his portrait, which show indebtedness to Adamic traditions: the superiority over the angels, the rivalry with the angels indicated by the use of Ps 8:4 within the theme of superiority, the angelic worship, and the designations ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης and χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ. Given this convergence of Adamic and enthronement imageries, I would suggest that the source essential to the argument of Hebrews 1–2 is the text that

63. See the detailed discussion of this in Attridge, *Hebrews*, 71.

64. Thus also in Allen, *Hebrews*, 205.

65. Hebrews' double reading of υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, textually in reference to humankind, interpretively in reference to Jesus (in 2:9), has confused modern commentators. See the discussion of this confusion in Allen, *Hebrews*, 204–205. C. K. Barrett, *On Paul: Aspects of His Life, Work and Influence in the Early Church* (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 202; Bruce, *Hebrews*, 72; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 72; David A. DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 108–10.

66. Mason, "You Are a Priest Forever", 20. See also Lane, *Hebrews*, 41–50. It is interesting that early Christian interpreters understand the "man" to be Adam and the "son of man" to be the deified humanity, first accomplished in Christ (e.g. Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms*, Psalm 8:10-12, *NPNF* 8:30–31).

the author never quotes or alludes to: Ezekiel 1. It has been argued above that such omission does not detract from the *merkabah* character of the letter or specifically of its first two chapters.

Scholars have previously argued that already in the Second Temple period Ezekiel 1 was read in conjunction with Gen 1:26 toward a tradition in which the Glory (כבוד, δόξα) of God is the anthropomorphic Image in which Adam is made.⁶⁷ In the words of Gilles Quispel, the divine כבוד is “the glorious manifestation of God as Man.”⁶⁸ This conjunction between Ezekiel 1 and Gen 1:26 makes the divine Glory the anthropomorphic prototype of humanity.⁶⁹

A rapprochement between Ezekiel 1 and Gen 1:26 may be seen in the tradition of the angels’ veneration of Adam in the Armenian recension of the *Life of Adam and Eve*. In this form of the tradition Adam receives worship because he is made in “the likeness of the image” of God,⁷⁰ the image being apparently someone other than Adam.⁷¹

67. See Jarl E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 269–78; *idem*, “Jewish-Christian Christology and Jewish Mysticism,” *VC* 37 (1983): 260–87; *idem*, “Colossians 1.15-18a in the Light of Jewish Mysticism and Gnosticism,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 183–201; *idem*, “Glory,” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (ed. K. van der Toorn et al.; 2d ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 348–52; Gilles Quispel, “Ezekiel 1:26 in Jewish Mysticism and Gnosis,” *VC* 34 (1980): 1-13.

68. Quispel, “Ezekiel 1:26,” 2.

69. For the ramifications of this resemblance between humanity and the divine in ancient and medieval Jewish thought, see Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), particularly 21–26, 63–73, 128–33.

70. Only the Georgian recension describes Adam along the lines of Gen 1:26 (MT) as “in the image and likeness of divinity.” The Latin has *vultus et similitudo tua ad imaginem dei*, but the subsequent call of Michael reads *adorate imaginem dei* (see the synoptic presentation of these versions in Anderson and Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 15–17). There need not be a contradiction in the Latin recension. Judaism, like iconodulic Christianity later on, has developed the vocabulary of the participation of the image into its prototype (Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 197–200). Given this language, Adam can both *copy* the image as something external to himself and *be* the image. This language of identity is also evident in the Armenian recension of the *Life*, in which Adam, although only made “in the likeness of the image” of God is called straightforwardly “god”.

71. This resemblance with the image makes the protoplast “god,” a lesser god as it were. As I have noted elsewhere, the term means both “god” and “idol,” and has a cultic connotation. See Silviu Bunta, “The Likeness of the Image: Adamic Motifs and צלם Anthropology in Rabbinic Traditions about Jacob’s Image Enthroned in Heaven,” *JSJ* 37 (2006): 55–84, here p. 67.

The roots of the Image-Glory tradition go well back into the Second Temple period. 4Q504 8 (Puech col.I), 1-7 attests to the ongoing association of the Image of Gen 1:26 with the כבוד prior to the first century BCE.⁷² The fragment reads:

¹ [Remem]ber, Lord, that [...² [...] us. And you, who live for ev[er,...]³ [...] the marvels of old and the portents [...] ⁴ ...Adam,] our [fat]her, you fashioned in the likeness of [your] glory ([הַבְּרָאָה בְּדְמוּת כְּבוֹד] כְּה) [...] ⁵ [...the breath of life] you [b]lew into his nostril, and intelligence and knowledge [...] ⁶ [...] in the gard]en of Eden, which you had planted. You made [him] govern [...] ⁷ [...] and so that he would walk in a glorious land...⁷³

As it has been previously pointed out, the phrase [הַבְּרָאָה בְּדְמוּת כְּבוֹד] כְּה recalls both the creation of Adam in the צֶלֶם and דְמוּת of God in Gen 1:26 and the depiction of the כבוד in Ezek 1:28 as מְרֵאָה דְמוּת כְּבוֹד יְהוָה.⁷⁴

It can be argued that the Septuagint version of Gen 1:26, in which the protoplast is made not “in” or “into” the image, but “according to the image” (κατ’ εἰκόνα), points to the same tradition according to which the image of God is not the protoplast, but someone distinct from Adam, an anthropomorphic embodiment of the divine. The Image–Glory tradition also seems to surface in Philo’s conception of the Logos, who is both ὁ κατ’ εἰκόνα ἄνθρωπος (*Conf.* 146) and θεός (*QG* 2:62), and “neither uncreated as God, nor created as you, but midway between the two extremes, a surety to both sides” (*Her.* 205-206).⁷⁵

72. For short analyses of this text, see M. Baillet, *Qumrân grotte 4.III (4Q482–4Q520)* (DJD 7; Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 163; Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory*, 92–93. The earliest copy of this scroll has been paleographically dated to around 150 BCE (Baillet, *Qumrân grotte 4.III*, 137). The autograph predates the middle of the second century BCE and is possibly non-Qumranic: E. G. Chazon, “Is *Divrei Hamerot* a Sectarian Prayer?,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research* (ed. D. Dimant and U. Rappaport; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 1–17; D. K. Falk, “Qumran Prayer Texts and the Temple,” in *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts from Qumran: Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the International Organization of Qumran Studies Oslo 1998* (ed. D. K. Falk et al.; STDJ 35; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 106–26 (109).

73. The text is that in Baillet, *Qumrân grotte 4.III*, 163. The translation is from F. García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 2:1008-1009.

74. Baillet, *Qumrân grotte 4.III*, 163; Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory*, 93; *idem*, “Some Reflections on Angelomorphic Humanity Texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *DSD* 7 (2000): 292–312 (297).

75. Translation from F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, *Philo* (LCL; Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, multiple editions). See also *Somn.* 1.143. For a lucid and thorough discussion of Philo’s concerns about and challenges to the divine

It has been noted in previous scholarship that this Image–Glory tradition has become one of the Christological vocabularies of emerging Christianity. It is the most obvious background of the hymn in Col 1:15–20, which names Christ “the image of the invisible God” (εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου), “the firstborn of all creation” (πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως), the demiurge, and the embodiment of “the fullness of God.”⁷⁶ A century later Irenaeus writes of Christ in similar terms.⁷⁷

I would argue here that Hebrews 1–2 feeds into this lore and depicts Christ as the subject of both Ezek 1:26 and Gen 1:26; he is the divine Glory of Ezekiel 1 and the anthropomorphic Image of God that is the prototype of Adam. More concepts in Hebrews 1–2 reflect these Adam speculations. The Christological titles ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης and χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ (Heb 1:3) are particularly illuminating. As Harold Attridge notes, χαρακτήρ conveys “the notion... frequently expressed in terms of the εἰκὼν of the divine, as at 2 Cor 4:4; Rom 8:29; and Col 1:15.”⁷⁸ In a parallel expression in *1 Clement*, a Christian letter dated to the end of the first century,⁷⁹ the protoplast is depicted as τῆς ἑαυτοῦ εἰκόνας χαρακτῆρα, “a representation of his [God’s] own image” (*1 Clem.* 33:4).⁸⁰ ἀπαύγασμα is used in parallelism with εἰκὼν in Wis 7:26. *1 Clement* calls Jesus ἀπαύγασμα τῆς μεγαλωσύνης αὐτοῦ, “the radiance of his majesty” (*1 Clem.* 36:2).⁸¹ The letter paraphrases Heb 1:3 here; it then quotes Heb 1:4.

Conclusions

At this stage of the research it seems safe to draw the following conclusions. First, a major purpose of Hebrews seems to be mystagogical: it introduces the meaning of the ritual, which is heavenly and transformative. If there is not enough evidence in the text to assert that the *primary* purpose of the ritual is to achieve visionary experiences (of which one was not apparently supposed to be too descriptive), this

boundaries, see Alan Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 159–81. For Philo’s thought on the Logos in conjunction with this Image–Glory tradition, see Fossum, “Colossians 1.15–18a,” 187–89.

76. Fossum, “Colossians 1.15–18a,” 183–201.

77. E.g. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 4.33.4; *Epid.* 22.

78. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 43 n. 105; see also pp. 43–44.

79. Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 23–24.

80. Text and translation from Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 64–65.

81. Text and translation from Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 68–69.

function of the cult is certainly not insignificant. The epistle's echoes of *merkabah* mysticism extend beyond the understanding of the cult as a transformative ascent to the heavens/temple, mainly to the Edenic features of the transformed community and its engagement in visionary experiences, particularly visions of the divine thrones located in the holy of holies.

Second, the opening two chapters of Hebrews incorporate several elements of Adamic traditions into their Christology: the broader theme of superiority over the angels, the rivalry with the angels indicated by the use of Ps 8:4 within the theme of superiority, angelic worship (of the Son, in the case of Hebrews, of Adam, in Adamic literature), and the Christological designations *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης* and *χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ*. The combination of these Adamic features with enthronement imagery in the portrayal of the Son reflects the rapprochement between Ezekiel 1 and Gen 1:26 attested in earlier Jewish and Christian traditions. In this Image–Glory lore the divine Glory is an anthropomorphic intermediary between humanity and the divine. This lore has become one of the backgrounds of early Christology, as attested in the hymn of Col 1:15-20. In the Christian application of the pre-existing Jewish tradition the Son of God stands at the boundary between divine and human or is both divine and human even before the incarnation. One could speak, as it were, of a pre-incarnational Christ. The evidence adduced here suggests that Hebrews feeds into this development and advances such an Image-Glory Christology, in which even before the creation of Adam the boundary between humanity and divinity collapses in the Son, the embodiment of the divine and the anthropomorphic prototype of Adam. It is then telling that Adam is never mentioned in Hebrews and there is no direct reference or allusion to Gen 1:26. This Image–Glory tradition places in better focus the description of Christ as the *πρόδρομος* and *ἀρχηγός* of the community and the deliberate ambiguities in the text that locate the Son even before the incarnation within the boundaries of humanity.

Lastly, this Image–Glory Christology need not impede on the Son's preexistence or on his general inclusion into the godhead, as it indeed need not impede on his pre-incarnational inclusion into humanity. We need to readjust the narrowness and specificity of our terminology in light of the fluidity of the boundaries between the divine and the human in ancient Judaism and emerging Christianity. In this context, an appeal to Chalcedon could not be more unnecessary, out of place, and misleading.