

Hebrews 1-2 in the Light of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4QShirShabb; 11QShirShabb; MasShirShabb)

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1. Introduction

Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (hereafter called *Sabbath Songs* for short)¹⁾ is a Qumran document, which shows a highly developed angelology.²⁾ It gives a detailed picture of heavenly worship offered

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1) For the critical editions of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* see C. Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985); J. H. Charlesworth / C. Newsom eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. vol. 4B: *Angelic Liturgy* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/ J. Knox, 1998); E. Martinez / E. J. T. Tigchelaar / A. S. van der Woude, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*. vol. 23: *Qumran Cave 11* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998); B. Nitzan et al., *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*. vol. 29: *Qumran Cave 4, XX: Poetical and Liturgical Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999). See also E. Tov ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls on Microfiche: A Comprehensive Facsimile Edition of the Texts from the Judean Desert* (Leiden: Brill, 1993); T. H. Lim (in consultation with P. S. Alexander), *The Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Reference Library* vol.1 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

2) C. Newsom, "Angels," *ABD* 1.248-255; idem., "Introduction," *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. vol.4B: *Angelic Liturgy* (J. H. Charlesworth / C. Newsom eds.; Louisville, KY: Westminster/ J. Knox, 1998), 1-15; L. T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration Christology* (WUNT 2.70; Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 156-164; M. J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 235-254; H. Attridge, "The Epistle to

by the angels before the throne of God in heaven. It is noteworthy that this hymnic document describes the priestly functions the archangels perform in the heavenly sanctuary. This particular aspect might offer some clues for the understanding of the critical remarks about the angels in Hebrews 1-2. It is expected to answer three questions: (1) why is the superiority of Christ to the angels is stressed in Hebrews 1-2?, (2) why is the Hebrew term *מלאכים* translated as “angels” in Heb 2:7a = Ps 8:7a [6a]?, and (3) how are the arguments offered in the first two chapters related to the high priest Christology developed in chapters 3-10.

2. Priestly Functions of the Archangels

Sabbath Songs is filled with the scenes of heavenly liturgy conducted by the angels. The idea of angelic worship in heaven is presupposed in some Jewish and early Christian documents (T. Lev 3:5-8; 1 Enoch 40:3-5; As. Isa 7:15; 1QM 12.1-5; 1QH11[3].22-26; 11QPsa 26.12; Rev 4:1-5:14 etc.).³⁾ But the whole document is rarely devoted to the description of heavenly worship. On the other hand, some early Jewish texts refer to the priestly functions of angels (Tob 12:12, 15; T. Lev 3:5-8; Jub 1:27-29; 2:1; 31:14; 1 Enoch 47:2; 99:3).

the Hebrews and the Scrolls,” *When Judaism & Christianity Began* vol. 2 *Judaism & Christianity in the Beginning* (FS. A. J. Saldarini; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 319-323; P. Alexander, *The Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* (London: T & T Clark International, 2006), 55-59.

3) M. Weinfeld, “The Angelic Song over the Luminaries in the Qumran Text,” in *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness* eds. D. Dimant/ L. H. Schiffman (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 135-157.

In these texts, however, the angels are not called “priests.” It is noteworthy that *Sabbath Songs* places a strong emphasis on the priestly functions of the archangels.⁴⁾ They are explicitly called “priests” (4Q400 1.i.3, 8, 17, 19, 20; 4.2; 4Q401 13.3; 4Q403 1.ii.19, 24; 4Q405 20-21-22.1; 4Q411 35.4). They offer sacrifices at the altar in the heavenly sanctuary (4Q403 1.ii.26-29; 23.ii.1-13; 4Q405 23.i.5-6; 11QSS 8-7.2).⁵⁾ They atone for the Qumran community consisting of those who have repented of their sins (1Q400 1.i.16-18; cf. 11QMelk 2.6-8). Together with other angels they bless the righteous on earth (1Q403 1.i.10-26).

The members of the Qumran community were aware of the limitation of the worship offered by the mortal (4Q400 2.6-10). But they were supposed to participate in the heavenly liturgy performed by the heavenly beings through their simultaneous worship on earth (See also 1QH11[3].22-23; 1QSb iv.1.24-26; 4QBerb 2.12-13; 11QPa 26.9-12).⁶⁾ In this way the idea of heavenly worship by the angels helped the Qumran sectarians legitimize their own worship presided by the priestly members of the community.

According to *the Manual of Discipline* (1QS) the Qumran community was led by the priestly leaders. They were seated in the front (1QS6.8; 8.1). They led the congregation to enter into the covenant with God at the covenant renewal fest (2.20-21). Furthermore, they praised God in worship (1.18-23), expiated the sins of the people (8.3-10; 9.4-5) and blessed the congregation in the name of God (2.1-4; cf. 1QM

4) Davidson, 238-243

5) Attridge, “Hebrews and the Scrolls,” 331; Alexander, 26-27.

6) J. Strugnell, “The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran – 4QSerek Šîrôt ‘Olot Haššabat,” *Congress Volume*, VTSup 7 (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 320; van der Woude, 332; Newsom, 18.

13.1; 1QSb1.1). The community rejected the Jerusalem temple, for it was allegedly polluted by the “persons of deceit”(1QS5.2). As they did not build their own temple, they could not offer sacrifices to the altar. Instead, they regarded ethical life and the words of praise as substitutes for sacrificial offerings (1QS9.26; 10.6, 14).⁷⁾ The Qumran community naturally observed the Sabbath. The sectarians rested from work on the seventh day to observe the Sabbath (1QpHab11.8; 1QM2.8; 11QT 11.9; 13.17; 25.9; 27.9-10) and gathered together before God for worship (11QT 27.8; 4Q512 33-35.1; see further Jub 2.17-22; 50.9-10). It is probable that *Sabbath Songs* preserves the songs sung in the liturgy on Sabbath.⁸⁾

3. Angelology in Hebrews 1-2

3.1 The Superiority of the Son to the Angels

In the preface of the entire work (Heb 1:1-4) the author makes a solemn Christological statement, which refers to the revelation through the Son (1:1-2ab), mediation of the Creation (1:2c), purification from sins, enthronement in heaven (1:3), and his superiority to the angels (1:4). The following passage (1:5-14) consists of a catena of

7) A. S. van der Woude, “Fragmente einer Rolle der Lieder für das Sabbatopfer aus Höhle XI von Qumran (11QS_{Sabb}),” in *Von Kanaan bis Kerara* (eds. W. C. Delsman et al.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 332

8) Newsom, 16-18; M. J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 236; A. M. Schwemer, “Gott als König in den Sabbatliedern,” in: *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult in Judentum, Urchristentum und in der hellenistischen Welt*, eds. M. Hengel / A.M. Schwemer; WUNT 55, (Tübingen; Mohr, 1991), 49, 58

OT citations which allegedly refer to the enthronement of the Son (Heb 1:5b=Ps2:7 LXX; Heb1:5c=2 Sam 7:14 LXX; Heb 1:13=Ps 110[109]:26-28 LXX), the eternity of his reign (Heb 1:10-12=Ps102 [101]:10-12), his superiority to the angels (Heb 1:6=32:43bd=Ps 97 [96]:7 LXX; Heb 1:7=Ps 104 [103]:4 LXX; Heb 1:8-9=Ps 45[44]:7-8 LXX; Heb 1:14). This portion serves to offer scriptural proof for the Christological statement made in the preface (Heb 1:1-4). This line of argumentation seems to presuppose a high esteem for angels held by the prospected readers, though we cannot say for sure if they actually venerated the angelic beings or not, for there is no explicit reference to the problem of angel worship in Hebrews (cf. Col 2:18; Rev 2:8-9).⁹⁾ The issue is closely related to the understanding of the status and functions assigned to the angels in heaven. Early Christian angelology is deeply indebted to early Jewish notion of the angels. It is, therefore, worthwhile to explore early Jewish literature in order to understand the notion of the angels held by the readers of Hebrews.

9) T. Manson, "The Problem of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *BJRL* 32 (1949-50), 1-17; Y. Yadin, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls* ed. C. Rabin Scriptura Hierosolymitana 4 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1965), 39-40; R. Jewett, *A Letter to Pilgrims: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York: Pilgrim, 1981), 5-13 presuppose that the Qumran community actually worshiped the angels. But L. D. Hurst, (SNTSMS 65; Cambridge: University Press, 1990), 45-46; E. Grässer, *An die Hebräer* EKK 17/1-3 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990-1997), 1.71-72, 82-83; H.-F. Weiss, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, KEK13; 15. Aufl. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 158-160; L. T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration Christology* (WUNT 2.70; Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 124-128, D. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 92, 95; Attridge, "Hebrews and Scrolls," 319; G. Schunack, *Der Hebräerbrief*, ZBK NT14 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2002), 25-28; A. Kawamura, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Sapporo: Ichibaku Shuppansha, 2004), 56 [in Japanese] are very critical of this view because of the lack of explicit polemic against angel worship found in Hebrews.

According to Heb 1:5-14 the enthronement of the Son of God in heaven gives a decisive difference between Christ and the angels (Heb 1:5b=Ps 2:7 LXX; Heb 1:5c=2 Sam 7:14 LXX; Heb 1:13=Ps 110[109]:1 LXX). Hebrews cites various OT passages to emphasize the notion of the Son of God as the king of heaven (Heb 1:5b=Ps 2:7 LXX; Heb 1:5c=2 Sam 7:14 LXX). Heb 1:13 cites Ps 110[109]:1 LXX in order to present the idea of the Son “sitting at the right hand of God.” This notion is one of the constitutive elements of Christology in Hebrews (see also Heb 1:3d; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).¹⁰ On the other hand, Sabbath Songs calls the archangels as “princes” (נְשִׂאִים) (4Q400 1.ii.14; 3.ii.2; 4Q401 3.3; 14.ii.6; 23.1; 4Q403 1.i.1, 6, 10, 17, 18-19, 21, 23-24, 26; 1.ii.20, 21; 4Q405 3.i.12a; 3.ii.6; 8-9.5-6; 13.2-3, 4-5,7) or “chiefs” (רִאשִׁים) (4Q401 3.2; 13.3; 14.i.6; 4Q403 1.i.1, 21, 23-24, 31-32, 34, 43; 1.ii.3, 10, 11, 16, 20, 21, 24, 34; 4Q405 3.i.12a; 3.ii.6; 4-5.2; 6.4; 7.4; 8-9.5-6; 23.ii.10, 11, 12; 11 QSS5-6.8-9; MaSS ii.7). Though they are perceived as high officials at the heavenly court of God, it is only God that is called the king in heaven (4Q400 1.i.8, 13; 1.ii.7, 8, 14; 2.5; 4Q401 1.5; 13.1; 14.ii.8; 4Q402 2.4; 3.ii.11; 4Q403 1.i.31, 34, 38; 1.ii.23, 24, 25, 26; 4Q404 5.6; 6.2; 4Q405 14-15.i.3, 5, 7; 19.3, 8). The archangels are subject to him and are never equal to God in rank.¹¹ They never sit at the right hand of God.¹²

10) For a detailed lexical data see W. R. G. Loader, “Christ at the Right Hand - PS. CX.1 in the New Testament,” *NTS* 24 (1978), 199-217; M. Hengel, “Psalm 110 und die Erhöhung des Auserwählten zur Rechten Gottes,” in *Anfänge der Christologie* (eds. C. Breytenbach / H. Paulsen; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 43-74

11) Schwemer, 77-81, 86-94 Davidson, 245-246.

12) L. T. Stuckenbruck, 120-123

Sabbath Songs places a strong emphasis on the priestly functions of the archangels. They are called “priests” (כֹּהֲנִים) (4Q400 1.i.3, 8, 17, 19, 20; 4.2; 4Q401 13.3; 4Q403 1.ii.19, 24; 4Q405 20-21-22.1; 4Q411 35.4).¹³⁾ The archangels are privileged to have access to the throne of God the absolute ruler of heaven. They are called “the priests of the inner sanctum” (כֹּהֲנֵי קוֹרֵב) (4Q400 1.i.8, 17, 19; 4Q403 1.ii.19, 24; 4Q405 21.1) or “the holy ones of the inner sanctum” (קְדוּשֵׁי קוֹרֵב) (4Q401 16.3; 4Q402 9.4) or “the spirits of the inner sanctum” (רוּחֵי קוֹרֵב) (4Q405 14-15.i.4).¹⁴⁾ They are assigned to the task of mediating between God and human beings or angels in lower ranks (4Q400 1.i.3-4). The archangels (4Q403 1.i.2-10; 1.i.10-28; 1.ii.27-29) approach the throne (4Q400 1.1.7-10, 16-17) in order to atone for the Qumran community (1Q400 1.i.16-18). Together with other angels they bless the righteous on earth (1Q403 1.i.10-26). They are honored by the host in heaven and the human congregation on earth (1Q400 2.1-7; 4Q401 14.i.7).¹⁵⁾ They offer sacrifices at the altar in the heavenly temple (4Q403 1.ii.26-29; 23.ii.1-13; 4Q405 23.i.5-6; 11QSS 8-7.2). Their tongues praising God are powerful (4Q403 1.ii.27-29), and their seven words of blessings are praised as the “words of wonder” (רְבֵדֵי פִלְאָ) (4Q403 3.ii-5 5-6; 1.i.1,4,11,13,16, 21-22,24,25; 4Q405 3.ii.5; 13.5; MassSS ii.23,25).

In Heb 1:3c the task of the purification of sins (1:3c) is closely connected with the heavenly enthronement (1:3d; see also 10:12).¹⁶⁾

13) Spelled as כֹּהֲנִים in the Masoretic text

14) The Hebrew term קֹרֵב is spelled as קוֹרֵב in the orthography of the Dead Sea Scrolls. See E. Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 65.

15) Davidson, 252; Stuckenbruch, 156-161

16) Loader, 207-208; H.-F. Weiss, 149

The purification of sins or the expiation of the sins forms the core of the priestly office of Christ in heaven (9:26, 28; 10:12, 14). If the power to redeem the sinners is based on the office of the Son sitting at the right hand of God, the task of redemption would be logically impossible for the angels lacking such a privileged status. The emphasis on the enthronement of the Son in 1:5-14 therefore functions as an implicit denial of the priestly functions of the angels. In Hebrews the angels are only assigned to the task of worshipping Christ the Son of God (Heb 1:6=32:43bd=Ps 97 [96]:7 LXX) and that of ministering to the believers who hope for the ultimate salvation at the end time (Heb 1:14), for they are the servants of Christ (Heb 1:7=Ps104 [103]:4 LXX).

3.2 Angels as Revealers of God's Hidden Plan

In *Sabbath Songs* the archangels are also called “deities of knowledge [דעת אלי]” (4Q400 2.1, 8; 4Q403 1.i.30-31; 1.i.38; 4Q404 4.7; 4Q405 23.i.8), “spirits of truth and righteousness [רוחי דעת אמת וצדיקות]” (4Q405 19.4), or “angels of knowledge [מלאכי הדעת]” (11QSS 2-1-9 5). They are thought to have direct access to the knowledge of God (4Q400 1.i.5-6; 2.7). Based on this special knowledge, they are able to teach the true meaning of the divine commandments to the other angels and human beings (4Q400 1.i.17; 4Q401 14.i.6-8; 4Q405 13.5; 23.ii.13; MasSS i.2).¹⁷⁾

Heb 2:2 states that the revelation of the Torah in the salvation history of Israel was mediated by the angels (Exod 20:1-23:33; Deut 5:6-21). The notion that the Sinai covenant was mediated by the angels

17) Alexander, 16-17.

was shared by some early Jewish and Christian texts (Josephus, Ant. 15.136; Jub 1.27, 29; 2.1; Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19)¹⁸). On the other hand, Heb 1:1-2 states that God spoke through the Son at the end time, while he spoke through the prophets in the past. The author of Hebrews thinks the Torah mediated by the hands of the angels belongs to the past history of Israel in the face of the decisive revelation given through Christ (Heb 7:18; 8:13). The author tries to deny the role of the angels in the revelation of God's will at the present time facing the imminent end of the world. There is no room for the activities of the "deities of knowledge [תְּאֵלֵי דַעַת]" (4Q400 2.1, 8; 4Q403 1.i.30-31; 1.i.38; 4Q404 4.7; 4Q405 23.i.8), the "spirits of truth and righteousness [רוּחֵי דַעַת אֱמֶת וצְדִיקוּת]" (4Q405 19.4), or the "angels of knowledge [מַלְאֲכֵי הַדַּעַת]" (11QSS 2-1-9 5).

3.3 Translation of אֱלֹהִים in Heb 2:7a=Ps8:7a[6a]

The MT reads ותחסדו מעט מאֱלֹהִים (he put him a little lower than God), but the LXX has translated the text as ἡλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχὺ ἢ τι παρ' ἄγγελους (he put him a little lower than angels). Heb 2:7a cites the text based on the LXX.¹⁹ This passage refers to the

18) See B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (2nd ed.; London: Macmillan, 1892) 37-38; G. W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews* (AB 36; Garden City: Doubleday, 1972) 24-25; G. Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 8; H. Braun, *An die Hebräer* (HNT 14; Tübingen: Mohr, 1984) 48; H. W. Attridge, *Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989) 65 n.29; L. D. Hurst, "The Christology of Hebrews 1 and 2," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament*, eds. L. D. Hurst/N. T. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 156; idem., *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 103; Lane, 37-38; Weiss, 185 n.13; deSilva, 93

19) Takaaki Haraguchi, "The Influence of the LXX on Hebrews," *Pedilavium* 42 (1995) 3 [In Japanese]; R. Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews*, WUNT 2.160 (Tübingen: Mohr, 2003), 44-46..

son of man in the preceding verse (Heb 2:6b=Ps 8:6b[5b]). In the original context of Psalm 8 the term “son of man” does not have any messianic implications. It simply means a “human being” (Ps 8:5a[6a]). The author of Hebrews has interpreted it as a reference to Jesus Christ.²⁰⁾ In his understanding Ps 8:5-7 can serve as a scriptural proof for Christ’s incarnation and exaltation.²¹⁾ Ps 2:7a =Ps 8:6a[7a] (he put him a little lower than angels) is understood as a reference to the earthly life of Christ (Heb 1:2, 5, 8; cf. Phil 2:5-11). This kind of interpretation is made possible by the citation according to the LXX, for it reads παρ’ ἄγγελους rather than מַאֲלֵהִים.²²⁾ But why did the LXX translate מַאֲלֵהִים as παρ’ ἄγγελους? Some commentators explain the phenomenon as an expression of awe of God.²³⁾ Nevertheless, we can offer another explanation about this translation when we examine the use of אֱלִים (gods / deities) and אֱלֹהִים (gods / deities) in Sabbath Songs. In the Dead Sea Scrolls angels are often called אֱלִים (gods / deities) (1QH10.8; 18.11; 1QM1.10, 11;

20) Weiss, 194; G. Schunack, *Der Hebräerbrief*; ZBK NT14 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2002), 33.

21) Kuss, 30-32; Buchanan, 38-51; Braun, 54; Attridge, 73-74; Weiss, 194; Hurst, *Christology*, 152-154; idem., *Hebrews*, 110-111; H. Kosmala, *Hebräer-Essener-Christen. Studien zur Vorgeschichte der frühchristlichen Verkündigung* (Leiden: Brill, 1957), 4-5, 78; R. N. Brawley, “Discursive Structure and the Unseen in Hebrews 2:8 and 11:1: A Neglected Aspect of the Context,” *CBQ* 55 (1993), 84.

22) Attridge, 71; Gheorghita, 103-107; Takaaki Haraguchi, “The Influence of the LXX on Hebrews,” *Pedilavium* 42 (1995) 3 [In Japanese]; O. Kuss, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, RNT 8 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1966) 40; F. Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefs als Schriftausleger* (Biblische Untersuchungen 4; Regensburg: Pustet, 1968), 82; P. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, 1993), 50-151.

23) W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC 47A (Waco, TX: Word, 1991), 47; L. Burns, “Hermeneutical Issues and Principles in Hebrews as Exemplified in the Second Chapter,” *JETS* 39 (1996), 599.

18.6; 1QSb 2.5; 11QT25.16; 28.7, 10). The frequency of the usage is especially high in Sabbath Songs (4Q400 1.i.4, 20; 1.ii.17; 2.i.7; 4Q401 14.i.5; 4Q402 4.i.8; 4Q403 1.i.21; 1.ii.26; 4Q405 14.i.3; 11QSS5.1.6). Behind the usage there seems to be a conception of the angels as the princes surrounding the throne of God in the heavenly court (cf. אֱלֹהִים [God of gods] 4Q403 1.ii.26; 4Q405 14.i.3).

Moreover, the Hebrew noun אֱלֹהִים (אלוהים in the Masoretic orthography) is used in reference to the angels (4Q403 1.ii.6; 4Q405 6.5; 14.1.5, 7; 19.i.4, 6; 20.ii.11). The notion of the heavenly court consisting of deities is derived from the Canaanite polytheistic idea taken over by the OT. In the OT the deities are reinterpreted as the angels serving God in heaven. In Ps 29:1; 89:7, for example, they are called “the sons of gods” (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים). They are exhorted to praise YHWH. On the other hand, the heavenly council members are called “sons of God (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים)” (Gen 6:2; Deut^{4QDt} 32:8; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7), which is translated as “the angels of God (οἱ ἄγγελοι του Θεου) in the LXX.²⁴⁾ The polytheistic notion of the council of gods is transformed into that of the heavenly court consisting of God and his angels. In this religio-historical background, it is not surprising that the LXX has translated the phrase מַאֲלֹהִים in Ps 8:7a[6a] as παρ’ ἄγγελου (see also Ps 97 [96]:7, 9 LXX).²⁵⁾ Hebrews presupposes the notion of heavenly court /temple where angels are serving and praising God (Heb 12:22; see further Rev 7:11-17). The author has not found it difficult to accept the LXX version of Ps 8:7a[6a].²⁶⁾

24) See R. Hanhart, “Die Söhne Israels, die Söhne Gottes und die Engel in der Masora, in Qumran und in der Septuaginta,” in *Vergegenwärtigung des Alten Testaments*, eds. C. Bultmann / W. Dietrich / C. Levin (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 170-178.

25) H. W. Attridge, *Hebrews Hermeneia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 71 n.21.

26) Löhr, 197-202.

3.4 Incarnation of the Son and the Angels

Heb 2:5-9 forms a Christian Midrash consisting of introduction (2:5-6a), scriptural citation (2:6b-7a=Ps 8:5-7a[4-6a]) and interpretative comments (2:8b-9).²⁷⁾ According to Ps 8:6-7a [4-6a] humankind is inferior to God, but has a privilege to rule over the other creatures on earth. The author has interpreted it as a proof text for Christ's humility in incarnation and glorious status after his death and exaltation. In his earthly life Christ was placed lower than heavenly beings but all the world will be subjected to Christ's reign at the end time (Heb 2:8-9).²⁸⁾ The contrast between Christ's humility in earthly life and glory in exaltation occurs in Phil 2:5-11 as well.²⁹⁾ The Son of God became a human being to seek solidarity with ordinary human beings. Humanity is mortal while the angels are free from death. That is a basic difference between human beings and heavenly beings (Heb 2:9, 14-15). Christ accomplished salvation of the world through his death (Heb 2:9). Christ accepted the fate of death to liberate those placed under the threat of death (2:14-15). Moreover, Christ experienced trials during his earthly life so as to prepare for his priestly office to make intercessions for those in trial and temptation (2:17-18). A priest functions as a mediator between God and people by performing various rituals at the altar. For the heavenly priesthood, the establishment of solidarity with human

27) Lane, 43.

28) In the New Testament Ps8:7a[6a] is often cited as a proof text for Christ's eschatological rule over the whole world (1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:22; 1 Pet 3:22).

29) Weiss, 196; H. Hegemann, "Christologie im Hebräerbrief," in *Anfänge der Christologie* hrsg. v. C. Breytenbach/H. Paulsen (Göttingen: V & R, 1991), 344-345; H. W. Bateman, "Two First-Century Messianic Uses of the OT: Heb 1:5-13 and 4QFlor 1.1-19," *JETS* 38 (1995), 25.

beings through incarnation (Heb 2:9, 14-15; 4:14-16) is essentially important in addition to being exalted to sit at the right hand of God (Heb 1:3d, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). The experience that Christ became human and was placed lower than angels made him eligible for his priestly task in heaven. A seemingly abrupt reference to Christ's priestly function as a "faithful high priest" in 2:17-18 virtually summarizes the arguments offered in Hebrews 1-2 and prepares for the discussion on the high priesthood of Christ in heaven in the following chapters (cf. 3:1-4:13; 4:14-5:9; 6:9-20; 7:1-10:39).

4. Conclusions

The real aim of the comments emphasizing Christ's superiority to the angels in Hebrews 1-2 is to prove the qualification of Christ for the heavenly priesthood based on his unique status of the Son of God. For that reason Christ became incarnate to be equal to ordinary human beings (Heb 2:9, 14-15) and was exalted to the right hand of God after his death and resurrection (Heb1:3d, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). This fact functions as an implicit denial of the heavenly priesthood of the archangels (4Q400 1.i.3, 8, 17, 19, 20; 4.2; 4Q401 13.3; 4Q403 1.ii.19, 24; 4Q405 20-21-22.1; 4Q411 35.4), who cannot taste death.

Moreover, the argument on Christ's superiority to the angels in chaps 1-2 is not unrelated to the high priest Christology discussed extensively in the succeeding chapters. In 1:5-2:18 Christ's priesthood in heaven is emphasized at the cost of angelic priesthood. In 3:1-4:13 the author compares it with the priesthood of Moses. In 4:14-5:9; 6:9-20; 7:1-28 he discusses it from the perspective of the eternal

priesthood in the order of Melchizedek. In 9:1-10:39 he reflects on its superiority to the Aaronic priesthood. The theme of heavenly priesthood is, therefore, consistently developed both in chaps 1-2 and 3-10.

- **Key Words**

Sabbath, Sacrifice, Qumran, Angel.

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