

Appendix 3

Hebrews 1:10

Hebrews 1:10 says of the Son of God that he laid the foundation of the heaven and the earth.

There are three “proof texts” addressed to the Son in Hebrews 1:8-13. There is no hint in the text that they refer to someone other than the Son. Verse 8 begins, “But of the Son He [God] says...” Then follow three different quotes. The series ends in verse 13 with a proof that Jesus was not an angel: “But to which of the angels did He [God] ever say...” Psalm 110:1 is then quoted as referring to the Son, Jesus.

Much of chapter 1 of Hebrews compares the Son of God with angels, showing that the Son was never an angel and is superior to them. This proves that the Son cannot be God! It is not necessary to prove God superior to the angels. It is obvious. Equally clear is the fact that the Son cannot be an angel or archangel as maintained by Jehovah’s Witnesses. Both angels and archangels are angels! Jesus was never an angel, because high priests are “chosen from among men” (Heb. 5:1). And holy angels are immortal (Luke 20:36), which would make the death of Jesus the Son impossible.

What then of Hebrews 1:10? In what sense is the Son the founder of the heavens and earth? How can this be since Jesus nowhere claimed to be the Creator and it was not Jesus, but God who rested on the seventh day (Heb. 4:4)? “God [not Jesus] made them male and female” (Mark 10:6) and “The Lord God [not Jesus] formed man of dust from the ground” (Gen. 2:7). Fifty texts say that God, the Father, created the heavens and the earth. Luke 1:35, Matthew 1:18, 20 and 1 John 5:18 (not KJV) say that the Son *did not exist* until he was created/begotten in Mary. Was Jesus both six months younger than John the Baptist and billions of years older? Was Jesus thirty years old when he began his public ministry and yet really billions plus thirty years old? What part of Jesus was thirty and what part was billions of years old? Jesus cannot be so divided up, split in two. Mary bore a human being. She did not bear an angel. She did not bear GOD. She did not bear “impersonal human nature,” as Trinitarian theory says. Mary bore a lineal, biological son of David. Otherwise Jesus does not qualify to be the Messiah.

God cannot be begotten, and the Son of God was begotten. The immortal God (1 Tim. 6:16) cannot die. The Son of God died. God cannot be tempted (James 1:13), yet the Son of God was tempted. Not to observe these category differences is to throw away precious biblical instruction.

Hebrews 1:1-2 says that God did *not* speak through a Son in the Old Testament times. Verse 2 also says that God made the ages *through* Jesus. This could refer to future ages, or it may refer to Jesus being the reason for God's creation of everything. Hebrews 1:5, quoting the prophecy of Psalm 2:7, speaks of the *coming into existence* of Jesus, the Son: "Today I have begotten you." The same verse speaks of 2 Samuel 7:14's promise, given a thousand years before Jesus' birth, that God "will be a Father to him and he will be a Son." That promise was given to David and it referred to the Messiah who was to come. The beginning of Messiah's existence is the moment when God becomes the Father of the Messiah. Acts 13:33 refers also to the beginning of Jesus' existence, his raising up (not raising up *again* as wrongly translated in the KJV), and verse 34 to his resurrection. The same beginning of the Son is exactly what we find in Luke 1:35 and Matthew 1:20 ("that which is begotten in her is from the holy spirit").

Isaiah 44:24 says that God, unaccompanied, unaided, created the Genesis heavens and earth. He was entirely alone. "Who was with me?" At the time of the Genesis creation there was no Son with Him (cf. Heb. 1:1-2).

God did not speak in a Son until the New Testament. So then, who said, "Let there be light"? It would be a flat contradiction of Hebrews 1:1-2 to say it was the Son. The God of the Old Testament is quite distinct from His unique Son. The latter had his *genesis* in Matthew 1:18 ("the genesis of Jesus was as follows"). The Bible becomes a book of incomprehensible riddles if God can have a Son before He brought him into existence! Luke 1:35 describes how the Son of God *came to exist*. He was begotten. To beget in the Bible and in English is a word which of all words denotes a before and after. Therefore the Son had a beginning. There was a time before he was begotten, before he was. If he already existed, these testimonies in Matthew 1 and Luke 1 are nonsense. Mary bore a human being, not God or an angel. Human mothers bear humans. Mary certainly did not

just bear “human nature,” and “human nature” as Mary’s son would not be the descendant of David and thus not the Messiah.

The notion that the Son of God was in fact God would make a charade out of his whole struggle in obedience to God and on our behalf as Savior and model. The whole point of a High Priest is that he must be “selected from among men” (Heb. 5:1). He is the “man Messiah Jesus” in contrast to his Father (1 Tim. 2:5). The Father in John 17:3 is “the only one who is God.” If God is the only one who is God, no one else is God except the Father, which is exactly what Paul declared when rehearsing the creed in 1 Corinthians 8: “There is no God except the one God the Father” (combining vv. 4 and 6).

If the Son were God, there would be two Gods. To call Jesus God and the Father God is not monotheism, however much the label may be applied. The Bible never uses “God” to mean a triune or biune God.

In Hebrews 1:10, there is a complication *due to the fact that the writer quotes Psalm 102 from the Greek version (LXX) and not the Hebrew version*. The LXX has a different sense entirely in Psalm 102:23-25. It introduces thoughts not found in the Hebrew text. The LXX says, “He [God] answered him [the suppliant]...Tell me [God speaking to the suppliant]...Thou, lord [God addressing *someone else* called ‘lord’].” But the Hebrew text has “He [God] *weakened* me...I [the suppliant] say, ‘O my God...’”

Thus the LXX introduces a second lord who is addressed by God: “At the beginning you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands” (v. 25). The writer to the Hebrews had open before him the LXX and not the Hebrew (rather as today someone might quote the NIV instead of the KJV). F.F. Bruce in the *New International Commentary* on Hebrews explains:

In the Septuagint text the person to whom these words [“of old you laid the foundation of the earth”] are spoken is addressed explicitly as “Lord”; and it is God who addresses him thus. Whereas in the Hebrew text the suppliant is the speaker from the beginning to the end of the psalm, in the Greek text his prayer comes to an end with v. 22, and the next words read as follows: “He [God] answered him [the suppliant] in the way of his strength: ‘Declare to me the shortness of my days: Bring me not up in the midst of my days. Thy [the suppliant’s] years are throughout all

generations. Thou, Lord [the suppliant, viewed here as the Messiah by Hebrews], in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth.”¹ This is God’s answer to the suppliant; he bids him acknowledge the shortness of God’s set time (for the restoration of Jerusalem, as in v. 13) and not summon him [God] to act when that set time has only half expired, while he [God] assures him [the suppliant] that he and his servants’ children will be preserved forever...

Bacon suggested that the Hebrew, as well as the Greek, text of this psalm formed a basis for messianic eschatology, especially its reference to the “shortness” of God’s days, i.e., of the period destined to elapse before the consummation of his purpose [the arrival of the yet future Messianic Kingdom on earth]; he found here the OT background of Matt. 24:22, Mark 13:20 and *Ep. Barn.* 4.3 (“as Enoch says, ‘For to this end the Master [God] has cut short the times and the days, that his Beloved [Jesus] should make haste and come to his inheritance’”)...

But to whom (a Christian reader of the Septuagint might well ask) could God speak in words like these? And whom

¹The reason for the completely different translations, between Greek and Hebrew, is the Hebrew vowel points. The sense can be altered if the vowel points are changed, and sometimes it is not clear which of the possible senses is the right one. Thus the Hebrew takes *innah* to mean “He [God] afflicted” (v. 23) but the LXX repoints the same Hebrew consonants as *anah* which means “He [God] answered [him].” So then in the LXX God is answering the one praying and addressing that person as “lord.” The LXX adds “lord” in v. 25. Next the Hebrew has *omar eli* (“I say, ‘O my God,’ v. 24). But the LXX reads these consonants as *emor elai* (“Say to me,” v. 23b; i.e. the person praying is commanded by God to tell God). The idea is that God is asked to cut short the days which have to elapse before the Kingdom comes (cf. Matt. 24:22). Ps. 102 is largely about the age to come and the restoration of Israel in the future Kingdom and so was entirely appropriate as a proof text for Hebrews 1 in regard to what the Son is destined to do in the future, indeed his role in the new, not the Genesis creation. This sense is reversed when it is made to support the unbiblical idea that Jesus was the Creator in Genesis!

would God himself address as “Lord,” as the maker [or founder] of earth and heaven?²

Reading the LXX the Hebrews writer sees an obvious reference to the new heavens and earth of the *future* Kingdom and he sees God addressing the Messianic Lord in connection with the prophecies of the rest of Psalm 102 which speak of “the generation to come” (v. 18) and of the set time for Yahweh to build up Zion and appear in His glory.

The important article by B.W. Bacon (alluded to by Bruce above) stresses the fact that “The word ‘lord’ is wholly absent from the Hebrew [and English] text of Psalm 102:25.” But it appears in the LXX cited by Hebrews.

[With the translation in the LXX “he answered him”] the whole passage down to the end of the psalm becomes *the answer* of Yahweh to the suppliant who accordingly appears to be addressed as *Kurie* [lord] and creator of heaven and earth...Instead of understanding the verse as a complaint of the psalmist at the shortness of his days which are cut off in the midst, *LXX and the Vulgate understand the utterance to be Yahweh's answer* to the psalmist's plea that he will intervene to save Zion, because “it is time to have pity on her, yea, the set time is come” (v. 13). He is bidden acknowledge (or prescribe?) the shortness of Yahweh's set time, and not to summon him when it is but half expired. On the other hand he [the Messianic lord] is promised that his own endurance shall be perpetual with the children of his servants.³

This is exactly the point, and it can only be made clear when we see that 1) the Hebrews writer is reading the LXX, not the Hebrew text, and finding there a wonderful prophecy of the age to come (Kingdom, restoration of Israel) which fits his context exactly and that 2) there is a Messianic Lord addressed *by* Yahweh and invited to initiate a founding of the heaven and earth, the new political order in Palestine, exactly as said in Isaiah 51:16. This is precisely the message the Hebrews writer wants to convey about the superiority of Jesus over angels. Jesus is the founder of that coming new Kingdom

²F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews (New International Commentary on the New Testament)*, Eerdmans, 1990, 62-63.

³B.W. Bacon, “Heb. 1:10-12 and the Septuagint Rendering of Ps. 102:23,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 3, 1902, 280-285.

order. The Hebrews writer in 2:5 tells us expressly that it is about “the inhabited earth of the future that we are speaking.”

This is really not so difficult when this difference in the LXX is explained. Both Psalm 102 and Hebrews 2:5 and indeed the whole of Hebrews 1 refer to the new order of things initiated by Jesus and it would not matter whether we think of the new order as initiated at the ascension (“All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me,” Matt. 28:18), or at the second coming.

Psalm 102 is all about the coming age of the Kingdom and the restoration of Jerusalem in the millennium (see vv. 13-22). The writer looks forward to the restoration of the city when God appears in His glory (v. 16). The Psalm is written for the “generation to come” (v. 18) and a newly created people of the future Kingdom on earth. Hebrews is speaking not of the Genesis creation but the “economy to come” (2:5).

Isaiah 51:16 confirms this explanation. It speaks of an agent of God in whom God puts His words and whom He uses “to plant the heavens and earth.” The *Word Biblical Commentary* says:

That makes no sense if it refers to the original [Genesis] creation...In the other instances God acts alone, using no agent. Here the one he has hidden in the shadow of his hand is his agent. *Heavens* and *land* here must refer metaphorically to the totality of order in Palestine, *heavens* meaning the broader overarching structure of the Empire, while *land* is the political order in Palestine itself.⁴

Thus both in Psalm 102 (LXX) and in Isaiah the Messiah is the agent whom God will use to establish the new political order of the age to come. Hebrews 1:10 is a prophecy, written in the past tense (as customarily prophecies are), but referring to the “inhabited earth of the future about which we are speaking” (Heb. 2:5). That is the concern in Hebrews 1:10. Jesus is the “father of the age to come” (Isa. 9:6, LXX).

Finally, in Hebrews 9:11 the writer speaks of “the good things to come” as the things “not of *this* creation.” By this he means that the things to come are of the new, future creation (see Heb. 2:5). That creation is under way since Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God where he is now co-creator, under the Father, of the new creation, and

⁴*Word Biblical Commentary: Isaiah 34-66*, Word Books, 1987, 212.

has “all authority in heaven and earth” (Matt. 28:18). Even the millennial age of the future will be replaced by a further renewed heaven and earth (Rev. 20:11; 21:1).

Once again, eschatology is the great factor in revealing the truth. God has a new creation in Jesus and we are to be new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). The world is going to be reborn and it will come under the supervision of Jesus and his followers (Matt. 19:28, etc.) We must resist the temptation to be looking backwards to Genesis when the whole book of Hebrews bids us look forward to the “inhabited earth of the future” (Heb. 2:5). Note that in several places Hebrews speaks of the eternal redemption, inheritance, covenant, judgment, salvation and spirit “of the age [to come]” (*aionios*). *Aionios* refers to the Kingdom age to come and not just to eternity. Christians receive now the “holy spirit of the promise” (Eph. 1:13, NJB).