

## **11 A Discourse Analysis of Hebrews 1-7: Syntagmatic Use of the “Son” in Light of the Quotations and Allusions of Old Testament Scripture**

In this chapter, we will continue our discussion of the sonship motif. Our topic is how this sonship motif is used to carry the high priesthood in Hebrews, especially Hebrews 5-7. Our approach is a discourse analysis employing a syntagmatic study of a few key words in relationship to *uiόć* “son,” in Hebrews. Moreover, since Hebrews 7 is the center of the discussion of the Melchizedek’s priesthood, Hebrews 7 will be closely examined. In both studies (as first and second major sections of this chapter), the use of the OT in Hebrews remains the focal point of our investigation: how does the use of the OT shape the theme and structure of Hebrews 1-7? In the third section, we will put the use of the OT shaping Hebrews into a larger perspective and draw some conclusions. (In our final chapter, we will review the hermeneutical issue of the use of the OT in the OT, and the use of the OT in the NT, with special reference to the use of the OT in Hebrews, and draw our conclusions from this project.)

## 11.1 A Syntagmatic Use of the Son, Carrying the Notion of High Priesthood in Hebrews 4:14-7:28, in Light of the OT References in Hebrews

When one examines the strategic position of the word *υἱός* with other key words, *Χριστός* and particularly *ἀρχιερεύς/ἱερεύς*,<sup>738</sup> in Hebrews, a syntagmatic effect is achieved and a thematic notion is made clear. Before we make any observations regarding these words, however, it is necessary to frame our view in context by examining the content of Hebrews 5-7, with 4:14-16 as its "introduction," where these words are syntagmatically used.

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**738** The term *ἀρχιερεύς* occurs in Heb 2:17, 3:1, 4:14, 15, 5:1, 5, 10, 6:20, 7:26, 27, 28, 8:1, 3, 9:7, 11, 25, 13:11. The term *ἱερεύς* appears in Heb 5:6, 7:1, 3, 11, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 23, 8:4, 9:6, 10:11, 21. See the following correlative distributions of *υἱός*, *Χριστός*, *ἱερεύς*, and *ἀρχιερεύς* in Hebrews (number in italics means two or more words are found in the same verse; \* means *υἱός* does not have any christological references):

Hebrews	<i>υἱός</i>	<i>Χριστός</i>	<i>ἱερεύς</i>	<i>Ἄρχιερεύς</i>
1:	2, 5, 8			
2:	6, 10*			17
3:	6	6, 14		1
4:	14			14, 15
5:	5, 8	5	6	1, 5, 10
6:	6	1		20
7:	3, 5*, 28		1, 3, 11, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 23	26, 27, 28
8:			4	1, 3
9:		11, 14, 24, 28	6	7, 11, 25
10:	29	10	11, 21	
11:	21*, 22*, 24*	26		
12:	5*, 6*, 7*, 8*			
13:		8, 21		11

See a discussion of the different use of these two priestly terms *ἱερεύς* and *ἀρχιερεύς* in John M. Scholer, *Proleptic Priest: Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, JSNTSup 49 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 83. See also G. Schrenk, "*ἱερεὺς/ἀρχιερεὺς*" in *TDNT* 3: 257-83, especially 274-82.

Regarding the content of Hebrews 5-7, after the transition paragraph of 4:14-16, one can divide Hebrews 5-7 as follows: 5:1-10, 5:11-6:12, 6:13-20 and 7:1-28.<sup>739</sup> Our focus will be on 5:1-10, 6:13-20 and 7:1-28 (omitting 5:11-6:12, which is generally regarded as “parenetic digression”<sup>740</sup> by scholars).

For 5:1-10, Ellingworth points out that scholars have already noted the chiastic structure in this text,<sup>741</sup> which is to lay a foundation for a fuller discussion of Jesus’ high priesthood in the order of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7.<sup>742</sup> The content of 5:1-10 can be summarized as follows: Christ as God’s son (5:5) has been conferred as the high priesthood in the order of Melchizedek (5:6, cf. v. 10) by God who called him (5:4). He is able to sympathize with our weakness (4:15, cf. 5:1-3), for he himself went through suffering (5:7-8) and emerged perfect (5:9-10).

Pertaining to 6:13-20, scholars generally recognize a change in genre from the previous material (5:11-6:12).<sup>743</sup> The content can be summarized as follows: in this text, the argument offered by the author of Hebrews is based on Genesis 22, particularly Gen 22:16-17. He argues that the certainty of God’s promise – confirmed by his divine oath – to Abraham is the basis for the hope that believers should take hold of (6:18,

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<sup>739</sup> This outline is indebted to Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, cii. Hugh Montefiore, Hans-Friedrich Weiss, Attridge and Ellingworth share nearly identical outlines for Hebrews 5-7: 5:1-10, 5:11-6:20 and 7:1-28 (with some minor refinements in each block). See Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, HNTC (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 31; Weiss, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1991), 8-9; Attridge, *The Hebrews*, 19 and Ellingworth, *The Hebrews*, vi. Other outlines, like F. F. Bruce’s and Philip E. Hughes’, are too refined to consider. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964), lxiii and Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1977), 3-4. We prefer to divide Hebrews 5-6 as Lane does for reasons explained later in this chapter.

<sup>740</sup> See Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 133. The text fills with metaphors for the purpose of admonition and encouragement to the readers of Hebrews but as Lane (*Hebrews 1-8*, 133-34) advocates, the text, “as a preliminary exhortation, . . . provides an appropriate preamble to the central exposition that follows in 7:1-10:18.”

<sup>741</sup> Ellingworth, *The Hebrews*, 271; Lane painstakingly lays out the concentric chiastic structure as follows:

- A The old office of high priest (5:1)
- B The solidarity of the high priest with the people (5:2-3)
- C The humility of the high priest (5:4)
- C’ The humility of Christ (5:5-6)
- B’ The solidarity of Christ with the people (5:7-8)
- A’ The new office of high priest (5:9-10)

Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 111.

<sup>742</sup> Recently, the monograph by Kurianal does not merely propose that Ps 110:4 serves as the substructure for Heb 5:1-10 and Heb 7 but also argues that Heb 5:1-10, as one literary unit, should be read in view of Hebrews 7. Please refer to Kurianal, *Our High Priest*.

<sup>743</sup> For example, Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 148; notwithstanding that 6:13-20 is treated as one unit, Weiss points to the links between 6:12 and 6:13-20: the use of γέρων and Stichwörter ἐπαγγελία, μακροθυμία and κληρονομεῖν (6:12, cf. 6:13, 15, 17). Weiss, *Der Brief*, 358.

cf. vv. 19-20),<sup>744</sup> given that is it impossible for God to lie (Heb 6:18), an allusion to Num 23:19 (the MT: נֶאֱשָׂר בְּלֹא).

Regarding Hebrews 7, which will be treated in an extensive exegetical study in a separate section of this chapter, our comments are confined to two areas. First, its connection to Heb 6:13-20 can be viewed from two angles: through a chiastic structure formed by Heb 6:19-20 with Hebrews 7 (through 10), as argued by Rice,<sup>746</sup> and – what is more obvious in our opinion – by the name Abraham (7:1-2), who, in Heb 6:13-20, was depicted as the recipient of God's unchanging promise, and was compared to Melchizedek in Heb 7:4-10.

Second, the comparison<sup>747</sup> between Abraham and Melchizedek (7:1-10) and the priestly order of Melchizedek versus the one of Levi or Aaron (7:11-28) has several implications that the author of Hebrews delineates in the rest of Hebrews 7: first, it is necessary to have a change of law because Melchizedek is characterized as κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου ("according to the power of an indestructible life") but the Aaronic priesthood as κατὰ νόμου ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης ("according to the law of fleshly command") in Heb 7:15-19. Second, the former priesthood is confirmed by an oath (cf. Heb 6:13-20), while the latter is not (Heb 7:20-22). Third, the life of the former

**744** The connection of Heb 6:13-20 to Heb 5:1-10 can be viewed as follows: at the onset of the discussion of Jesus' appointment to be high priest in 5:1-10, the author uses the word καλούμενος ("called", 5:4) and then ends the depiction of the appointment with another word, προσαγορευθείς ("called"), in 5:10 but this time the author adds a phrase, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ. This phrase does not appear again until 6:20, which is the closing verse of the text concerning God's promise and oath. The connection of Heb 6:13-20 and Hebrews 7 can be summarized as follows: at first glance, the promise and the oath in 6:13-20 seem irrelevant to what follows (Hebrews 7). Nevertheless, the God who cannot be a liar, as depicted in 6:18, is also the same God who called Jesus and made an oath that Jesus is the priest forever according to Melchizedek's order in 7:20-21. In our opinion, the call of Jesus to be high priest according to the order of Melchizedek (5:5-6) is implicit in God's unchanging promise and oath in Heb 6:13-20. This notion is later made explicit in 7:20-21: Καὶ καθ' ὅσον οὐ χωρὶς ὄρκωμοσίας· οἱ μὲν γὰρ χωρὶς ὄρκωμοσίας εἰσὶν ἵερεις γεγονότες, ὁ δὲ μετὰ ὄρκωμοσίας διὰ τοῦ λέγοντος πρὸς αὐτόν· ὅμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται· οὐ ἵερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (note that Ps 110:4 is cited in 7:21).

**745** See Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 152, where he lists other OT texts being alluded to. The LXX of Num 23:19 is not helpful here.

**746** Rice, "Chiastic Structure," 243-46. Rice, not satisfied with Vanhoye's analysis (in his *La structure littéraire*, 114-24) of 6:13-20, argues that a chiastic structure can be detected with 6:19-10:39 (see Rice, "Chiastic Structure," 245 for the presentation of the chiasm). See also Hughes who points to the connection of Hebrews 7:18-21 to 6:13-20 as noted by some scholars. Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, 20-23 (see endnote 65, p. 152, where bibliographical references are given).

**747** Greek rhetoric's *Synkrisis* (comparison), is applied to the study of Hebrews 7 by Timothy W. Seid in his "Synkrisis in Hebrews 7: The Rhetorical Structure and Strategy," in *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, JSNTSup 180 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 322-47. Note that this article is a summary of Seid, "The Rhetorical Form of the Melchizedek/Christ Comparison in Hebrews 7" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1996).

priesthood continues forever, while the life of the latter is hindered by death (Heb 7:23-25). Heb 7:26-28 recapitulates the entire argument that the priesthood by the Son according to Melchizedek is more “fitting” (έπρεπεν, v. 26) than the Levitical priesthood.

With the content of Hebrews 5-7 just summarized, we can now examine the syntagmatic use of these three words, “son,” “Christ,” and “high priest” in view of the OT quotations and allusions in Hebrews 5-7. Three observations with their respective arguments will be considered: the syntagmatic use of *υἱός* and *ἀρχιερεύς*; the syntagmatic use of *υἱός*, *Χριστός* and *ἀρχιερεύς*; and the syntagmatic use of *υἱός*, *Χριστός*, *ἱερεύς* and *ἀρχιερεύς*.

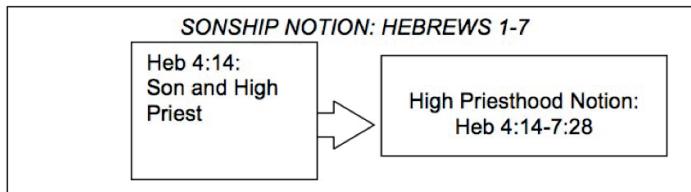
The first co-appearance of *υἱός* and *ἀρχιερεύς*<sup>748</sup> in Heb 4:14 produces the initial syntagmatic contact point of the sonship notion and the high priesthood notion. To reframe, a switch of – though notably not a total departure from – the thematic notions occurs in Heb 4:14. From 4:14 onward and throughout Hebrews 7, the notion of high priesthood takes a more prominent place even though it should still be regarded as embedded in the sonship notion.<sup>749</sup> Heb 4:14 reads: “Ἐχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανούς, Ἱησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας (italics ours for emphasis). Note how this verse is part of the transitional passage (4:14-16)<sup>750</sup> in the overall structure of Hebrews. Figure 12 enables us to visualize the function of this transitional passage:

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**748** The next two co-appearances these two words are in 5:5 and 7:28.

**749** Trotter’s comments are close to our argument. He explains Heb 4:14 in the following way: “We see Jesus called ‘a great high priest,’ but also referred to as ‘Jesus the Son of God.’ . . . The theme of Jesus’ high priesthood is then developed further, though the author briefly returns to the sonship motif by quoting Ps 2:7 [in 5:5].” Trotter, *Interpreting the Epistle*, 205. Wallace also states: “The priesthood of Christ derives its eminence from the sonship of Christ.” Wallace, “Text in Tandem,” 199. Victor C. Pfitzner, after remarking that both “son” and “high priest” appear with equal frequency in Hebrews, comments: “Christ’s sonship is the constant point of reference for the author’s Christology”; Pfitzner then gives four observations. His last observation of the first and last reference of the “son” in Hebrews 7 (vv. 3 and 28 respectively) resembles our discussion of the rhetorical inclusio of the “son” in chapter ten. After his last observation, he concludes: “Although both titles [son and high priest] are vital for the Christology of the Letter, the primary title is ‘Son.’” Ffitzner, *Hebrews*, ANTC (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1997), 38. Note that all these are found in one paragraph.

**750** Guthrie labels it (also 10:19-25) “overlapping constituents” whose function is to serve both as a conclusion for the previous block of material (3:1-4:16) and as an introduction to the next block of material (5:1-10:18). Guthrie, *Structure of Hebrews*, 102-103. We, however, disagree with Guthrie at one point, namely, that his next block of material, 5:1-10:18, should be divided into two: 5:1-7:28 and 8:3-10:18, with 8:1-2 as another transition paragraph, as we have argued earlier (concerning 8:1-2) in chapter ten.



**Figure 12.** The Notion of the Royal High Priesthood Embedded in the Notion of Sonship in Hebrews 1-7

These two notions, though not quite of equal importance in the thematic development of Hebrews,<sup>751</sup> are also noticed by biblical exegetes.<sup>752</sup> For example, Stanley, who views Psalm 110 as providing a structure for the entire book of Hebrews,<sup>753</sup> comments on Hebrews 1-7:

The first seven chapters are spent, therefore making the connection between Jesus as Sovereign Son (Ps 110:1 – read in light of Ps 2:7) and Jesus as the priest in the order of Melchizedek (Ps 110:4), and showing the significance of having a priest who is also a son.<sup>754</sup>

Stanley's comment is significant in a sense that the basis for combining these two notions – the sonship and priesthood – is the reading of Psalms 2 and 110, or the Psalter if we will, by the author of Hebrews. Our understanding, therefore, is that these two Psalms shape the structure and theme of Hebrews, which is reinforced by our next observation.

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<sup>751</sup> Some scholars give priority to the high priesthood over the sonship in their studies of the structure and motif of Hebrews. See, for example, Keijo Nissilä, *Das Hohepriestermotiv im Hebräerbrief: Eine exegetische Unterschung* (Helsinki: Oy Liiton Kirjapaino, 1979). In this monograph, Nissilä selectively studies some key passages: 2:14-18, 3:1-6 and 4:14-16 under the topic "die hohepriesterliche Menschlichkeit Jesu," and 5:1-10 and 7:26-28 under "die himmlische Berufung des Hohenpriesters," and sundry texts in Hebrews 8-13 under "die Funktion des erhöhten Hohenpriesters." See also Heinrich Zimmermann, *Der Hohepriester-Christologie des Hebräerbriefes* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1964). Others give equal status to the notions of sonship and priest. Ellingworth (*The Hebrews*, 67) regards the son as one pole with the high priest as the other pole; the former has been traditionally accepted by the church while the latter is the author of Hebrews' own meditation of Psalm 110. Wallace, when referring to these two notions, uses the word "coalesce" to describe their relationship ("Text in Tandem," 221).

<sup>752</sup> Rooke has observed that "the two major christological strands in Hebrews concerning sonship and priesthood are seen as belonging together." Rooke, "Royal Priest," 82. William R. G. Loader makes the two notions as two topics in his *Sohn und Hoherpriester: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Christologie des Hebräerbriefes*, WMANT 53 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1981).

<sup>753</sup> See the outline of Hebrews by Stanley, "Structure of Hebrews," 254.

<sup>754</sup> Ibid., 252. In our opinion, Stanley gives priority to Psalm 110 in his understanding of the structure and theme of Hebrews. We would argue that Psalm 2 also plays a crucial role, very likely equal to Psalm 110 in this regard.

Second, the co-appearance of *υἱός*, *Χριστός* and *ἀρχιερεύς* in Heb 5:5 does not merely pave the way to a later exposition of Christ's high priesthood in the order of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7 but also strengthens our notion that the priesthood motif, with the kingly motif,<sup>755</sup> is viewed under the mega-theme of sonship. This is accomplished by the citation of Psalms 2 and 110 in the sequence concerning the sonship first, then the priesthood. Note how in 5:5, with 5:6 where *ἱερεύς* makes its the first debut in Hebrews, both Psalms 2 (v. 7) and 110 (v. 4) are cited: *οὗτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἐαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γενηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα ἀλλ’ ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν*. *Υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε.* *καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἐτέρῳ λέγει· σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ* (italics ours for emphasis). Syntagmatically, *Χριστός* and *υἱός* have already co-appeared in 3:6 (*Χριστὸς δὲ ὡς υἱὸς*) but Christ is called "high priest" for the first time in 5:6. Yet the author of Hebrews seems to qualify this Christ-as-high priest in 5:6 by 5:5: *Οὗτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἐαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γενηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα ἀλλ’ ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν, Υἱός μου εἶ σύ.*<sup>756</sup> Thus, from the viewpoint of discourse analysis, the two verses form a theme-rheme progression: Christ is first affirmed as "son" then as "priest" (or "high priest").<sup>757</sup>

This theme-rheme progression is shaped by the author's reading of the Psalter, particularly Psalms 2 and 110. In the course of this chapter's analysis, note how the sequence of the Psalm citations always places Ps 2: 7, which concerns the sonship, first, and places Ps 110:4 (or in some other cases, v. 1) concerning the priesthood, next. One can visualize the theme (motif), allusion to, and citation of Hebrews 1-7 in view of Psalms 2 and 110 as indicated below (figure 13):<sup>758</sup>

Hebrews	OT texts	Theme/Motif
1:2	allusion to Ps 2:7-8	Sonship/heirship
1:3	allusion to Ps 110:1	Exaltation/kingship
1:5	citation to Ps 2:7	Sonship
1:13	citation to Ps 110:1	Exaltation/kingship
5:5	citation to Ps 2:7	Sonship
5:6	citation to Ps 110:4	Priesthood
7:28	allusion to Ps 2:7	Sonship
7:28	allusion to Ps 110:4	Priesthood

Figure 13. Correlation of the Theme/Motif and Allusions/Citations of Psalms 2 and 110 in Hebrews 1-7

<sup>755</sup> In Simon Kistemaker's view, the citation of Psalms 2 and 110 in Heb 5:5-6 is to remind the readers of Hebrews 1 (v. 3) where the kingship of the son has already been established. See Kistemaker, *Psalms Citations*, 116.

<sup>756</sup> Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, cxli; Kistemaker, *Psalm Citations*, 97.

<sup>757</sup> Cf. Weiss, *Der Brief*, 308-309; Weiss emphasizes the two quotations in 5:5-6 as God's address (Anrede Gottes or Gottespruch) to Jesus first as "Son" and then as "priest." See also James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1924), 64.

<sup>758</sup> For the allusions to Ps 2:7 and 110:4 in Heb 7:28, see our previous chapter.

Our last observation of the syntagmatic use of *υἱός*, *Χριστός*, *ἱερεύς* and *ἀρχιερεύς* centers on Hebrews 7, with the following combinations: *υἱός* with *ἱερεύς* in 7:3 and *υἱός* with *ἀρχιερεύς* in 7:28. Two explanations are offered for each of the two combinations that may highlight the contribution to the sonship-priesthood notion in Hebrews 7. First, for the syntagmatic use of *υἱός* and *ἱερεύς* in 7:3, Melchizedek is depicted as *ἀφωμοιωμένος* δὲ τῷ *υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ*, μένει *ἱερεύς* εἰς τὸ διηγεκές τὸ διηγεκές (in 7:3b, italics ours for emphasis) after Gen 14:17-20 is cited in 7:1-2.<sup>759</sup> Following a length discussion of 7:1-3, Lane rightly points out that the phrase *ἀφωμοιωμένος* δὲ τῷ *υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ*<sup>760</sup> "appears to assume the subordination of Melchizedek to the eternal Son."<sup>761</sup>

The second explanation for the syntagmatic use of *υἱός* with *ἀρχιερεύς* in 7:28 is brief, partly because we have already delineated 7:28 – *υἱός* as *inclusio* for Hebrews 7 – in our previous chapter. Since 7:28 is the last verse of Hebrews 1-7, we can label it as the "zenith" of the discussions of the sonship notion for Hebrews 1-7, with the overlaying notion of the Melchizedek priesthood of the Son for Hebrews 4:14-7:28. In this culminating point, both words, *υἱός* and *ἀρχιερεύς*, appear together.

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**759** Does Heb 7:1-2 cite or only allude to Gen 14:17-20? When one compares the NT and the LXX (which is remarkably close to the MT text), Heb 7:1-2 follows the LXX very closely: (Gen 14:17a) ἐξῆλθεν δὲ βασιλεὺς Σοδομῶν εἰς (14:17b) συνάντησιν αὐτῷ μετὰ τὸ ἀναστρέψαι αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς κοπῆς τοῦ Χοδολογομορ καὶ τῶν βασιλέων (14:17c) τῶν μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν κοιλάδα τὴν Σαυη τοῦτο ἦν τὸ πεδίον βασιλέως, (v. 18) καὶ Μελχισεδεκ βασιλεὺς Σαλημ ἐξήνεγκεν ἄρτους καὶ οἶνον ἦν δὲ *ἱερεύς* τοῦ θεοῦτοῦ ὑψίστου, (v. 19a) καὶ τὸν θύλαγχον τὸν Αβραμ (14:19b) καὶ εἶπεν εὐλογημένος Αβραμ τῷ θεῷ τῷ ὑψίστῳ δὲς ἔκτισεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν, (v. 20a) καὶ εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὑψίστος δὲς παρέδωκεν τοὺς ἔχθρούς σου ὑποχειρίους σοι (14:20b) καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ δεκάτην ἀπὸ πάντων (words in italics reflected in Heb 7:1-2, 4). Our observation can conclude that part of Gen 14:17a, c and part of vv. 19b-20a are missing, which are probably neither important, nor relevant to the author's argument. (See Ellingworth, who lists four explanations for the omission of the text of Gen 14:17-20 in Heb 7:1-2. *Idem, The Hebrews*, 355.) At any rate, the author possibly cites the text of Genesis (the LXX), with some modifications. The modifications by the author of Hebrews are mostly for the purpose of clarifying an expression but not its meaning; for example, συναντήσας Ἀβραὰμ in Heb 7:1 is read as συνάντησιν αὐτῷ in the LXX.

**760** What does the phrase *ἀφωμοιωμένος* δὲ τῷ *υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ* mean? A theophany of Christ in Melchizedek? To this issue, the best solution in our opinion is Seid's proposal, which rules out the mystical nature or the possible theophany that this verse may suggest, that this phrase should be viewed, from rhetorical criticism, as a "comparison" between Christ and Melchizedek, thus glossing it as "but in comparison to the Son of God." Seid, "Rhetorical Form," 120 (see pp. 120-22 for further discussion).

**761** Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 166. Lane argues that the use of Melchizedek in Heb 7:10 is "thoroughly christological. He has no independent significance; he is introduced only for the sake of clarifying the character of the Son. His function is prophetic." Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, cxlii. Lane cites Horton as his supporting reference; see Fred L. Horton, Jr., *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 156. Horton's comment regarding Heb 7:3 is found in his concluding chapter (pp. 152-70) following his survey of the Melchizedek tradition found in the OT, Philo, Qumran and Josephus (as background source) and materials in the early church, the rabbis and gnosticism (as later sources) in his book.

A remark is due regarding the syntagmatic use of *νιός* with *ἱερεὺς* in 7:3 and *νιός* with *ἀρχιερεὺς* in 7:28. Their usage can be viewed as inclusio or creating a bracketing effect of Hebrews 7, an effect built on the observation that the word *νιός* appears in 7:3, 28, serving as inclusio: *τῷ νιῷ τοῦ θεοῦ* and *νιὸν* for Hebrews (if we take Heb 7:1-2 as roughly a quotation of Genesis 14). The bracketing effect for the chapter is that the sonship notion (signified by *νιός*, one at each end) still embraces the priesthood notion, which is discussed in detail in Heb 7:4-28.<sup>762</sup>

Since Hebrews 7 is both the culminating point of the sonship notion and priesthood notion for Jesus, it is necessary to interpret this text. Our interpretation of Hebrews 7, however, will bear in mind a perspective of how the OT quotations and allusions have influenced the composition of the chapter.

## 11.2 An Interpretation of Hebrews 7, With Special Reference to Genesis 14 and Psalms 2 and 110

While Heb 7:1-2a is a citation – with modifications – of Gen 14:17-20, 7:1-3 may serve two functions in the overall structure and motif in Hebrews: first, it explicates the notion of kingship alongside the notion of priesthood in Hebrews 5-7 under the overarching sonship motif for Hebrews 1-7. Second, Heb 7:1-3 becomes a foundational text on which the rest of Hebrews 7 attempts to elaborate.<sup>763</sup> Our scheme is to study these two functions in this manner. We will explore the notion of kingship in 7:1-2. Afterwards, we will delineate how 7:1-3 serves as foundational text for Hebrews 7 according to the following: (1) The double themes, blessing, and tithes in 7:1a (*εὐλογήσας*) and 7:2a (*δεκάτην*), with the phrase *ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν*<sup>764</sup> (7:3a), are delineated in 7:4-10. (2) Due to the implication of this phrase, *ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν*, the high priesthood is not conferred by law (genealogy) but by oath; the law and oath are further explicated in 7:11-19 and 7:20-22 respectively. (3) The phrase *μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων . . . μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές* (7:3b)

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**762** Therefore, it is understandable that the word *νιός* is absent in the “main body” (vv. 4-25) of Hebrews 7 because the subject matter is now focusing on the priesthood (*ἱερεὺς* appears nine times while *ἀρχιερεὺς* appears 3 times in Hebrews 7) in vv. 4-28.

**763** Cockerill shares a similar view. Apart from his contention that 7:1-25 is an independent midrash, he shows that 7:4-25 is a well-balanced structural unit based on 7:1-3, in which vv. 20-25 balance vv. 4-10. See Cockerill, *The Melchizedek Christology in Heb. 7:1-28* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1979), 277-307; quoted in Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 178, cf. 159.

**764** It seems arbitrary to divide the phrase *μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων* into two but our study (what follows) will justify such division.

is explained in 7:23-25. (4) Finally, the phrase ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ (7:3c) is summarized in 7:26-28, particularly in v. 28.<sup>765</sup>

### 11.2.1 The Kingship Notion (Alongside the Priesthood Notion) in Hebrews 7:1-2

In Hebrews 5-7, the priestly status of Melchizedek has been explored to its fullest extent. Nonetheless, his kingly notion should not be overlooked, particularly in view of 7:1-2. In these two verses (forty-four Greek words), βασιλεύς appears five times. What interests most scholars is 7:2. Therefore, significant attention is paid to the author's treatment of etymology.<sup>766</sup> By studying the etymological interpretation of the author of Hebrews, these scholars argue for either the Alexandrine (allegorical) interpretation,<sup>767</sup> a typological exegesis,<sup>768</sup> or "eine Mischung von beiden" employed by the author of Hebrews.<sup>769</sup> Nevertheless, we contend that the author of Hebrews combines the kingly motif to the notion of priesthood by explicating that Melchizedek contains the word "king" in it, part of a word-play technique commonly employed by biblical writers;<sup>770</sup> and taking away the geographical motif in the name "king of

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**765** Others view Hebrews 7:1-28 as based on the assumption that Ps 110:4 is a substructure of Hebrews 7. See, for example, Kurianal, who, based on his notion that Ps 110:4b (σὺ εἶ ιερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ) is the substructure for Hebrews 5 and 7, provides a different interpretation. Kurianal sees Heb 7:1-10 as a midrash of the name Μελχισέδεκ, 7:11-19 of κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ, and 7:20-25 of εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, with 7:26-28 forming a conclusion of the exposition of the theme of high priesthood. Idem, *Our High Priest*, chaps. 4-5. Kurianal's scheme of how Hebrews 7 interprets Ps 110:4b is not new, nor Kurianal seem to aware of Strobel's work. See August Strobel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, NTD 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 145-46. The reference of Strobel's work is indebted to Grässer, *Hebräer: 7,1-10,18, 34* (footnote 1). Others, in a similar vein, look at key words as organizational structure for the exposition in Hebrews 7. For example, see Schröger, *Der Verfasser*, 133 (see also pp. 133-56). Schröger lists 7 words/phrases expounded in Hebrews 7 (*Der Verfasser*, 133): Μελχισέδεκ in 7:2b-3, δεκάτη in vv. 4-10, τάξιν in vv. 11-14, νόμος in vv. 15-19, ὄρκωμοσίας in vv. 20-22, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα in vv. 23-25 and ἀρχιερεύς in vv. 26-28. For item (4), we have discussed the sonship notion in 7:28 earlier in chapter ten, thus we will skip our explanation for this item.

**766** See, for example, Attridge, *The Hebrews*, 188-89.

**767** Montefiore, *The Hebrews*, 118. Cf. Longenecker comments that there is a "mild allegorical-etymological treatment" in Heb 7:2. Longenecker, "The Melchizedek Argument of Hebrews: A Study in the Development and Circumstantial Expression of the New Testament Thoughts," in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology*, ed. Robert Guelich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 176.

**768** Bruce, *The Hebrews*, 135.

**769** See Grässer, *Hebräer: 7,1-10,18, 8*.

**770** See, for example, chapter four of this project for the word-play of the writer of Genesis. Clearly in Hebrew, the reader can detect the word "king" in the proper noun מלך־ישראל (italics ours) but this is lost in its Greek translation Μελχισέδεκ. For a survey of literary devices and features employed by the author of Hebrews, see David Alan Black, "Literary Artistry in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *FilNeot* 7 (1994): 43-51; cf. Trotter, *Interpreting the Epistle*, chap. 8.

Salem", which in light of Heb 12:18-24 – especially 12:22 – is not important.<sup>771</sup> The reiteration of the kingship motif at the onset of a detailed discussion of Melchizedek's priestly order, by which Jesus assumes his high priesthood, echoes the kingly motif – embedded in the sonship notion – in Hebrews 1.<sup>772</sup> Furthermore, what adds to the priestly notion contended in Hebrews 7 is a "royal" factor: Melchizedek's order of priesthood is a royal priesthood, by which Jesus, the Son of God, will assume his office.

The encounter of Melchizedek and Abraham in Gen 14:18-20 not only brings in the royal priesthood notion to Hebrews 7 but also brings in the themes of tithe and blessing. That is the substance of our next study.

### 11.2.2 Heb 7:4-10 as an Explanation for the Motifs of Blessing and Tithes, Found in Genesis 14

The text of Heb 7:4-10 clearly attempts to explain the themes of the tithe and blessing because of the repeated occurrence of these two key words in 7:1-2: δέκατος and εὐλογέω. For δέκατος, Heb 7:4-10 contains the noun form of δέκατος "tithe" three times (7:4, 8,<sup>773</sup> 9) and the verbal form of δέκατόω "give one tenth" two times (7:6, 9), with its related word ἀποδέκατόω "collecting a tithe" one time (7:5). As for, it repeats in 7:6 and 7. With its first appearance in Hebrews 7 (v. 1),<sup>774</sup> it should interest any interpreter to note that the triple-occurrence of εὐλογέω in Hebrews 7 echoes the number of appearances of קרבן<sup>775</sup> in Gen 14:18-20.

By packing together these two words (εὐλογέω and δέκατος),<sup>776</sup> the author of Hebrews seems to note the same themes in Gen 14:18-20 and therefore, in our opinion, he must have followed the text of Genesis 14 very closely. To further support our opinion, the name "Abraham," besides its appearance in the foundational text of 7:1-3

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<sup>771</sup> Lane, like others (cf. Ellingworth, *The Hebrews*, 357; Grässer, *Hebräer: 7,1-10,18, 18* and Attridge, *The Hebrews*, 189), points out that the etymological interpretation of Heb 7:2 is to explicate the notions of peace and righteousness tied to the messiah but this does not make sense here because neither notion is stressed in Hebrews. Lane then comments: "All interest is concentrated on the priesthood of Melchizedek." Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 164.

<sup>772</sup> We have discussed the kingly motif in chapter ten.

<sup>773</sup> In 7:8, linking to the tithe, the mention of Levitical priests as ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀνθρώποι is set in contrast to Melchizedek as ζῆ. Both Greek phrases function as a foreshadowing to 7:23-25; cf. Attridge, *The Hebrews*, 196.

<sup>774</sup> The word εὐλογέω has *all* its occurrences in Hebrews as follows: 6:14 (quoting Genesis 22), 7:1, 6, 7, 11:20, 21.

<sup>775</sup> The LXX has εὐλογέω for קרבן . . . ωκραβν (Gen 14:19) but εὐλογητός for קירב (Gen 14:20).

<sup>776</sup> Lane points out the inverse order of (the meeting,) blessing and the giving of the tithe in vv. 12 and 4-10. Lane, *Hebrews, 1-8*, 159-60.

(cf. vv. 1, 2), appears four times in Hebrews 7; all in 7:4-10.<sup>777</sup> The notion of Melchizedek's blessing upon Abraham and, in return, his receipt of the tithe from Abraham,<sup>778</sup> is explicated by the author of Hebrews to argue that the Levitical priesthood is in an inferior position (cf. 7:7) in comparison with the priesthood by the order of Melchizedek.

### 11.2.3 Heb 7:4-10 as an Explanation for the Phrase ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος "Without Father, Without Mother, Without Genealogy"

The text of 7:4-10, particularly vv. 5-6, also explicates the phrase ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος.<sup>779</sup> On the one hand, anyone who serves in the Levitical priesthood has to have a genealogical link to be "the sons of Levi" (ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Λευὶ), as dictated by the law (see 7:5). On the other hand, Melchizedek, who received a tithe from Abraham, is characterized as μὴ γενεαλογούμενος "not tracing one's descent" (from γενεαλογέομαι, 7:6), a hapax word that clearly reminiscences the one in v. 3: ἀγενεαλόγητος, another hapax word. Certainly compared to Abraham's (see Gen 11:27-31), the genealogy of Melchizedek is nowhere to be found in the OT, nor is it comparable to the genealogy of Levi (Gen 29:34; cf. vv. 32-33; see also 46:8-25, especially vv. 11). Nonetheless, the author of Hebrews concludes the significance of the *absence*<sup>780</sup> of Melchizedek's genealogy

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777 The name "Abraham" and the verb συναντάω "to meet" seem to form an inclusio for Heb 7:1-10; see vv. 1 and 10. See Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 150.

778 We have dealt with the ambiguity of the phrase לְאַב רְשָׁפָחָה in Gen 14:20b in appendix 4. This is also how the author of Hebrews reads this phrase "he [Abraham] gave him [Melchizedek] a tenth of everything."

779 See how most interpreters explain this clause (especially ἀπάτωρ and ἀμήτωρ) in a survey done by Attridge, *The Hebrews*, 190 (bibliographical data in his footnotes 51-53) and Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 165 (also bibliographical data for various interpretation). See Jerome H. Neyrey, "'Without Beginning of Days or End of Life' (Hebrews 7:3): Topos for a True Deity," *CBQ* 53 (1991): 439-55, not mentioned in Lane's commentary. We propose, however, that ἀγενεαλόγητος is an explication of ἀπάτωρ and ἀμήτωρ. Lane has a similar idea: "The first clause consists of an alpha-privative (ἀ) triad. The key to its interpretation is provided by the third term ἀγενεαλόγητος, 'without recorded descent,' which amplifies the meaning of the first two words." Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 165, cf. 158 (textual note d). In other words, the stress is on ἀγενεαλόγητος and thus prevents any mystical or mythological idea of Melchizedek as seen by most interpreters. See our exposition of μὴ γενεαλογούμενος following. Note also that the alliteration of the phrase ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος is pointed out by Attridge, *The Hebrews*, 189 (note 37).

780 There is a debate that the argument of the author of Hebrews in Heb 7:4-10 is based on "silence." Nonetheless, argumentation based on silence is not only an ancient but a modern practice. For example, Ellingworth, when discussing the Scriptural quotation, comments that "of the quotations for which divine authority is specifically claimed, all but one . . . are from Psalms, and none from the Torah. Possibly the author felt that the authority of the Pentateuch did not need to be affirmed." His last statement is an argument based on silence (*The Hebrews*, 38-39). Cf. footnote in our chapter 4.

in his exposition in Heb 7:4-10.<sup>781</sup> At this point in our study, we recap our contention as follows: the primary literary influence on Heb 7:1-10 is the text of Gen 14:17-20 (plus its cotext).<sup>782</sup> This notion of literary influence is based on the following: the syntagmatic use of δέκατος and εὐλογέω (see 7:1-2, 4-9 that either word can be found); the two proper nouns, Abraham and Melchizedek, with the Greek word συναντάω (vv. 1, 10) that links them together; and the citation of Gen 14:17-20 in Heb 7:1-2.

As mentioned above, the Levitical priesthood is based on one's genealogy dictated by the law (ἐντολή and κατὰ τὸν νόμον in 7:5). The implication of this change of priesthood from Levitical to Melchizedek's, therefore, requires a change of law as the author expounds in 7:11-19.

#### 11.2.4 The Implication of a Change of Priesthood: A Change of Law as Explained in Hebrews 7:11-19

Before we explore the text, the structure of Heb 7:11-19 should be viewed from three angles. First, the text is structured by an inclusio of τελείωσις and ἐτελείωσεν (from τελειώνω) in 7:11 and 19,<sup>783</sup> second, the text, with 7:20-28, is an exposition of Ps 110:4 since in several places, this psalm-verse has either been cited or alluded to;<sup>784</sup> and last, there is an allusion to Ps 110:4 (κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ)<sup>785</sup> in 7:11, which by itself is a rhetorical question that sets up the contrast of the two priestly systems: Aaron's order versus Melchizedek's order.

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**781** Attridge, when commenting on 7:9, remarks that the "demonstration of Melchizedek's superiority to the Levites is based on more *fanciful exegetical grounds*: Levi, the tither, was tithed through Abraham. . . . [B]y analogous logic, Jesus too could be said to have paid a tithe to Melchizedek." Attridge, *The Hebrews*, 197 (italics ours). We disagree with Attridge's assessment in two areas: (1) the author of Hebrews has been shown to be a careful exegete, and has a great knowledge of the OT Scriptures. Thus, to say it is his "fanciful" exegesis is not a fair assessment of the author, and (2) it is impossible to apply "analogous logic" (that Jesus could be said to have tithed to Melchizedek) because the author of Hebrews states his case very careful by v. 3: ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ οὐτῷ τοῦ θεοῦ; Melchizedek was seen to be subordinate to the Son.

**782** The cotexts of Genesis 14 could include texts of genealogy (listed earlier) and texts in Pentateuch concerning tithes, particularly Lev 18:21, Num 18:26-28.

**783** Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 178. The idea of the "imperfection" of the Levitical priesthood (7:11, 19) to the "better hope" (7:19) offered by Jesus according to Melchizedek's priesthood should be noted.

**784** See Heb 7:11, 17, 21, 24 and 28. Cf. footnote 46 of chapter ten: list of the allusion and quotations of Ps 110:4.

**785** See M. J. Paul, "The Order of Melchizedek," 202-203 for a brief history of the interpretation of the phrase κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ. Cf. Anderson, *The King-Priest*, 213-14 and footnote in our chapter 7.

The text of Heb 7:11-19 is built on an earlier yet brief presentation in 7:5 that by law (κατὰ<sup>786</sup> τὸν νόμον and also ἐντολὴν), the Levitical priests received tithes from their brothers.<sup>787</sup> That law, also governing the other areas of the Levitical priestly system, is the focus of Heb 7:11-19. This passage advances an argument that a change of priesthood demands a change of law (see 7:12). That change of law is no longer based on the physical descent as dictated by law: δις οὐ κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης γέγονεν (7:16a)<sup>788</sup> but on something else. That "something else" has two aspects.

Twice the phrase κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ is quoted (7:11, 17) in this passage. When it appears the first time, it is quoted in the form of a question: why does it need another priesthood in the order of Melchizedek (τίς ἔτι χρεία κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ ἔτερον ἀνίστασθαι ἵερα)? When used a second time, it serves as a testimony (cf. μαρτυρεῖται in 7:17) to that indestructible life in 7:16. The phrase εἰς τὸν αἰώνα in the quotation (7:17) gives testimony that through his resurrection, Jesus has an indestructible life that makes him qualified to be a priest forever.<sup>789</sup> The notion of the change of law is further supported by the appearance of either of the Greek words νόμος and ἐντολή, connoting law or command, in 7:12, 16, 18 and 19.<sup>790</sup>

Though there is an annulment (ἀθέτησις, 7:18) of the law and there is a testimony (compare μαρτυρεῖται, 7:17) of the indestructible life (of Jesus) in this new priesthood, the author of Hebrews continues to justify the eternal priesthood by 7:20-22. Such eternal priesthood is further confirmed by the divine oath.

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**786** Note the word κατὰ appears in Hebrews 7 in vv. 5, 11 (twice), 15, 16 (twice), 17, 20, 22, and 27. Its syntagmatic use is illuminating when we examine 7:5, 11, 15, 16, 17 (note its idiomatic use in 7:20, 22 and 27). First, the phrase in 7:5 κατὰ τὸν νόμον sets the stage for the main discussion in 7:10-19 (where all its syntagmatic appearances will be examined). Second, the debate of the two priestly systems, one κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ vs. the other one κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Ἀαρὼν, is put into a rhetorical question in 7:11. Third, the phrase, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ, is further explicated in 7:15-16 by two other phrases, κατὰ τὴν ὄμοιότητα Μελχισέδεκ and ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου to set against κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης. Finally, the author concludes this debate with a quotation containing κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ in 7:17 (cf. to 7:21, when this phrase κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ is absent in the same quotation of Ps 110:4a in a section [7:20-22] where the oath, not the order of priesthood, is the main topic. See more in our discussion following).

**787** Heb 7:5a reads: καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐκ τῶν νίῶν Λευὶ τὴν ἱερατείαν λαμβάνοντες ἐντολὴν ἔχουσιν ἀποδεκατοῦν τὸν νόμον κατὰ τὸν νόμον (italics ours for emphasis).

**788** See Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 182-83 on vv. 13-14 and its tie to v. 15-17.

**789** *Ibid.*, 184.

**790** See also 7:11, the verbal form, relating to the law, νενομοθέτηται (from νομοθέτεομαι); cf. 8:6, the only other time this Greek verb occurs.

### 11.2.5 The Change of Priesthood Confirmed by the Divine Oath in Hebrews 7:20-22

In Hebrews, when citing Ps 110:4, the phrase ὄμοσεν κύριος (with καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται) is written out fully only in 7:21. On the one hand, it reminds the perceptive reader of Hebrews of 6:13-20 that God made firm his promise also by his oath against himself (ὄμοσεν καθ' ἑαυτοῦ, 6:13) and on the other hand, it justifies the legitimacy of the priesthood conferred upon Jesus. The author of Hebrews develops his justification by this key word ὄρκωμοσία ("oath-taking"),<sup>791</sup> which appears three times in 7:20-21 prior to the citation of Psalm 110:4, that the priesthood Jesus assumes is affirmed by the divine oath. This oath-affirming priesthood is set in marked contrast to the Levitical one established without an oath (7:20b).

The contrast of the two priestly orders continues in Heb 7:22-25. This time the phrase μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων ... μένει ἵερεὺς εἰς τὸ Διηγεκές in the foundational text (7:3) is expounded.

### 11.2.6 The Priesthood of Melchizedek Continues Because the Son (of God) Lives Forever in Hebrews 7:23-25

While the Levitical priesthood is hindered by death (contrast to life; 7:23a: διὰ τὸ θανάτῳ κωλύεσθαι παραμένειν), the priesthood according to Melchizedek is characterized by these phrases: μένειν ... εἰς τὸν αἰώνα and πάντοτε ζῶν (7:24, 25), noting that εἰς τὸν αἰώνα is an allusion to Ps 110:4. The allusion of Ps 110:4 in the phrase εἰς τὸν αἰώνα, with μένειν, makes a full circle back to 7:3: μένει ἵερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηγεκές.<sup>792</sup> In summary, the priesthood according to Melchizedek is highlighted in this phrase ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην ("he holds an unchangeable priesthood," 7:24).

### 11.2.7 A Summary of Our Finding in Hebrews 7

In the previous sections, we have explained Hebrews 7:4-28 as an expansion of the foundational text in 7:1-3. In our delineation, we have pointed out several times that both Genesis 14 and Psalm 110 have exerted their literary-theological influence on Heb 7:10 and 7:11-28 respectively, either through citation or allusion. This result – the message of Hebrews 7 is influenced by Psalm 110 and Genesis 14 – should be put into a larger context of our study, namely, Hebrews 1-7. This is what we plan to discuss in our next section.

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<sup>791</sup> This is a "rare" word according to the comment by J. Schneider, "ὄρκωμοσία," in *TDNT* 5: 463.

<sup>792</sup> Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 189. Lane also notes the contrast of the two priestly orders by the Greek structure: οἱ μὲν πλείονές ... ὁ δε (vv. 23-24). Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 188.

### 11.3 The Quotations and Allusions of the OT Shaping the Theme and Structure of Hebrews (1-7): A Summary

In this section, we need to summarize our findings regarding the OT citations and allusions in Hebrews 1-7 from the last chapter as well as this one, with special references to the texts (and the cotexts) of Genesis and Psalms, and discuss the shaping of these texts to Hebrews 1-7. We can summarize our findings thus far (figure 14):

Hebrews	OT Texts Cited or Alluded (in italics)
1:2	<i>Ps 2:7-8</i>
1:3	<i>Ps 110:1</i>
1:5	<i>Ps 2:7; 2 Sam 7:14</i>
1:13	<i>Ps 110:1</i>
5:5-6	<i>Pss 2:7, 110:4</i>
6:13-14	<i>Gen 22:16-17</i>
6:18	<i>Num 23:19</i>
7:1-10 (especially vv. 1-3)	<i>Gen 14:17-20; Ps 2:7</i>
7:11-28 (especially vv. 11, 17, 21, 24, 28	<i>Ps 110:4</i> (sometimes quoted but also alluded to)
7:28	<i>Ps 2:7, 110:4</i>
8:2	<i>Num 24:6</i>

**Figure 14.** Highlight of the OT Citations/Allusions of Genesis 14, Psalms 2 and 110, Including Some of Their Cotexts Cited/Alluded to<sup>793</sup>

While reviewing the above chart, several remarks are necessary to highlight the significance of the OT allusions and quotations in Hebrews 1-7. First, Hebrews 1 is dictated by two key OT psalms (2 and 110), either by allusion or direct quotation. Second, Hebrews 5, serving as an introduction to a later in-depth discussion of Melchizedek's priesthood in chapter 7, cites Pss 2:7 and 110:4. Third, Genesis 14, being expounded on in Heb 7:1-10, is preceded by the use of its cotexts, Genesis 22 and Num 23:19 (allusion) in Heb 6:13-20. (Another cotext of Genesis 14, Num 24:6, is quoted in Heb 8:2, which follows Hebrews 7.) Last, the phrase σὺ εἶ ἵερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰώνα κατὰ τὴν

<sup>793</sup> We add Heb 8:2, a transitional text, that is not totally irrelevant to Hebrews 7. The use of Num 24:6 in Heb 8:2 is also a focus of interest in this project: cf καὶ ὡσεὶ σκηναὶ ἐς ἐπηξεν κύριος (Num 24:6, the LXX) to καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς, ἦν ἐπηξεν ὁ κύριος (8:2). Even though there is no formal citation of the text of Numbers in Hebrews, the allusions to it are impressive compared to other NT books. Based on "the index of allusions and verbal parallels" in *UBSGNT*, fourth rev. ed., 893, Hebrews contains the highest number of allusions to Numbers: 17 times (cf. to 14 times in 1 Corinthians and 10 times in Acts, the next two highest) out of a total of 70 times these allusions are made in NT books.

τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ in Psalm 110:4, with ὅμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται, becomes the main point of discussion in 7:11-28: a new priesthood in the order of Melchizedek (κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ) requires a change of law (7:11-19). The new priesthood is affirmed by the divine oath (ὅμοσεν κύριος) in 7:20-22, and the new priesthood is characterized by its eternity (εἰς τὸν αἰώνα) in 7:22-25.

We have shown in the above study that Hebrews is shaped first and foremost by the Psalter, particularly Psalms 2 and 110, followed by Genesis and some of its cotexts.<sup>794</sup> The shaping takes two forms in Hebrews: the structure of Hebrews 1-7 and the motif of Hebrews, which will be the focus of elucidation in the following two sections devoted to each form.

### 11.3.1 The Quotations and Allusions of the OT, Especially Psalms 2 and 110 with Genesis 14 and its Cotexts, Shaping the Structure of Hebrews (1-7)

With regard to the structure, we have discussed the use of the texts in the Psalter to form an inclusio at the beginning and end of the major sections. For example, on a smaller scale, in Hebrews 1, both Psalms 2 and 110 are alluded to and cited at the beginning and end of the first chapter of Hebrews. On a larger scale, both Psalms 2 and 110 are alluded to in Heb 1:2-3 and 7:28.

The use of Genesis 14 and its cotexts also shape the structure of Hebrews 1-7, especially 6-7.<sup>795</sup> Heb 6:13-8:2 is literary influenced by Genesis 22 (with Numbers 23) in 6:13-20, then by Gen 14:17-20 in Heb 7:1-10, and by Numbers 24 alluded to in Heb 8:1-2.

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<sup>794</sup> The topic “what influenced Hebrews” has been studied by scholars. We do not deny the influence of extra-biblical materials on Hebrews as argued by scholars: see Attridge, *The Hebrews*, 192-95, “Excursus: Melchizedek”; Kurianal, *Our High Priest*, chap. 6; Horton, *Melchizedek Tradition*, chaps. 3-5 and Weiss, *Der Brief*, 381-87. We, however, contend that the OT has exerted, to a certain degree, a greater influence upon the composition of Hebrews as our study so far have proved. Is the author of Hebrew innovative in his approach of collocating all these texts (Genesis 12-22, Numbers 22-24, Psalms 2, 110 and 2 Samuel 7) as he interprets them messianically? A survey of ancient (Jewish and Qumran) literature could be illuminative but impossible to address here due to space constraints; readers are referred to Gerbern S. Oegema, *The Anointed and His People: Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kochba*, JSPSup 27 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 294-99 (table 2) and 300-302 (table 3), where Oegema lists ancient (Jewish or Qumran) citations of some of the OT texts – including those texts studied in this project – to be considered as messianic. Here we only give two examples. In 4Q174 (*Florilegium*), we can find a messianic reading of portions of Psalms 1, 2, and 89, and 2 Samuel 7, collocated in the same document (we only list those texts that are in our interest); see Oegema, *The Anointed*, 120-22. In 4Q175 (*Testimonia*), the text of Num 24:15-17, with some other OT texts, is quoted to support a royal messiah; see Kenneth E. Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism: Its History and Significance for Messianism*, SBLEJL 7 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1995), 245.

<sup>795</sup> Two other texts are alluded to in Heb 6:13-20: (1) Exod 22:11 in 6:16 and (2) Lev 16:2-3, 12, 15 in 6:19.

The text (and cotexts) of Genesis, however, is enclosed by the text of the Psalter (Psalms 2 and 110) in Hebrews 5:1-10 and 7:10-28.

### 11.3.2 The Quotations and Allusions of the OT, Especially Psalms 2 and 110 with Genesis 14 and its Cotexts, Shaping the Message or Theme of Hebrews (1-7)

In terms of the theme of Hebrews, the sonship theme is highlighted by quoting Ps 2:7 and Ps 110 in a patterned sequence as in Heb 5:5-6 or in a larger scheme, by alluding to Pss 2:7 and 110:1 or 4 in Heb 1:1-2 and 7:28. In other words, both psalms set the sonship notion as the major theme for the book. In addition, the priesthood notion (Hebrews 5-7) is subordinated to the sonship theme by the patterned sequence of the allusion or quotation of the two psalms.

Furthermore, sonship as the major theme also encompasses the kingly notion besides the priestly notion previously mentioned. While the priestly notion is mainly detected in the use of Psalm 110 (v. 4) in Heb 5:6 and 7:10-28, the kingly notion is achieved by an allusions to Psalms 2 and 110 in Heb 1:2-3 and also by the quotation of Gen 14:17-20 in Heb 7:1-2. A word about Genesis 14 and its cotexts is needed here. To a lesser degree, Genesis 14 and its cotexts (Genesis 22, Numbers 23-24 and 2 Samuel 7)<sup>796</sup> do shape the development of the sonship notion in Hebrews 1-7. The quotation of 2 Sam 7:14 (with Ps 2:7) in 1:5, sets in motion the sonship theme. The text of Genesis 22 (quoted in Hebrews 6) concerning the unchanging oath by God to Abraham prepares the reader for the oath in Ps 110:4 (Heb 7:20-22), by which Jesus' high priesthood is affirmed in the order of Melchizedek. That unchanging oath is corroborated by an allusion to Num 23:19 (in Heb 6:18). The use of Genesis 14 in Hebrews 7:1-10 not only brings Melchizedek into the discussion of the two priestly systems, but also brings the theme of blessing (with tithe) and the kingly notion that comes with this priesthood order to the reader's attention.

There are two conclusions we can draw from the above discussion. First, the author of Hebrews seems to be familiar with the Psalter in his composition of the letter. Psalms 2 and 110, at least, seem to be his basic texts, not to mention other Psalms that are quoted or alluded to in Hebrews 1-7 (to name a few, see Ps 104:4 in Heb 1:7, Ps 45:6-7 in Heb 1:8-9, and Ps 95:7-11 in Heb 3:7-11).<sup>797</sup> Furthermore, the author of Hebrews seems to read Psalms 2 and 110, or the Psalter messianically; thus, the

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<sup>796</sup> See chapters five and six of this project concerning our study of the literary-thematic relationship between Genesis 14 and 22, Genesis 14 and Numbers 22-24 and Genesis 14 and 2 Samuel 7.

<sup>797</sup> As stated above, there are other psalm citations in Hebrews. Nonetheless, based on our argument set out in our chapters eight and nine, we propose to read these psalms cited in Hebrews messianically. Cf. Motyer, "Psalm Quotations," 13-21.

author of Hebrews' reading of the Psalter is close to what we have outlined in chapters seven through nine of this project.

There is a second conclusion we can draw. In the exposition of Hebrews 6-7, particularly 7:1-10, the adept author is well-versed in the text and the contexts of Genesis 14 and he interprets them as a reference to the promise of the messiah. This messianic promise contains – besides a priestly aspect (Psalm 110) – a sonship aspect (2 Samuel 7), a kingly aspect (Numbers 22-24), and the blessing (Genesis 14), which links together all of these non-Psalm texts. Each of these aspects has been studied and delineated in our project's chapters four through six. Nonetheless, all of these aspects culminate in the account and person of Melchizedek.

Our two conclusions have raised an issue about the priority of Psalms 2 and 110 versus Genesis 14 in shaping Hebrews in structure and theme. In particular, the tension existing between Psalm 110 and Genesis 14 as the primary literary-theological influence on Hebrews 7 does not escape scholarly debate.<sup>798</sup> Determining which of these two texts are given priority in shaping Hebrews 7, however, should take into account that Psalm 110 is an interpretation of Genesis 14 (and its contexts) as we have discussed in chapter nine of this project. The author of Hebrews may possibly interpret Genesis 14 (and its contexts) independently from his understanding of Psalm 110 (with Psalm 2). However, based on our study so far,<sup>799</sup> the author of Hebrews follows closely how Genesis 14 (and its contexts) was interpreted by Psalm 110 (with Psalm 2). Such notion does not exclude the author of Hebrews adds his own reading of Genesis 14. The demonstrated level of competency in literary and interpretative skill seems to suggest that the author of Hebrews can do both. It is no easy task ascertaining conclusively that one text is given priority over the other in shaping Hebrews 7. Nonetheless, the author of Hebrews could have ignored Genesis 14 if he contended with the

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<sup>798</sup> As one of the most recent voices, Kurianal argues that Ps 110:4 is the substructure of Heb 5:1-7:28, regarding Genesis 14 only as a background or secondary text in Heb 7:1-10. See Kurianal, *Our High Priest*, 86-97; particularly, 86-88 and 91; also 248-49. Cf. Cockerill, *The Melchizedek Christology*, 22; quoted in Kurianal, *Our High Priest*, 246. For a contrary view, see Fitzmyer, "Now This Melchizedek," 305-306 and 309-21, where he argues for Gen 14:18-20 as primary text for Hebrews 7.

<sup>799</sup> Two opposite views of the interpretative relationship between Genesis 14 and Psalm 110 are presented: Bruce Demarest argues that the Hebrews' writer turns to Genesis 14 because the "full significance" of Ps 110:4 is not clear. Idem, *A History of Interpretation of Hebrews 7, 1-10 from the Reformation to the Present* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1976), 131. Contrarily, Longenecker argues that "the Melchizedek of Genesis 14 is an enigma that finds its solution in Psalm 110:4 – but only when Psalm 110 is recognized as having messianic relevance" ("Melchizedek Argument," 176). Nonetheless, we have shown that Psalm 110 should be read messianically and that Psalm 110 is an interpretation of Genesis (in our chapters 8-9).

interpretation of Genesis by Psalm 110.<sup>800</sup> That is not the case here, however. The author provides his own interpretation of both texts in Hebrews 7: first of Genesis 14 in Heb 7:1-10, then of Psalm 110 in Heb 7:11-28, possibly also taking into consideration how Psalm 110 interprets Genesis 14.<sup>801</sup> Therefore, for the author of Hebrews, both texts are equally important in Hebrews 7. On a larger level (Hebrews 1-7), however, Psalm 2 and 110 take priority for the author in shaping Hebrews.

Our two conclusions offered above, however, are based on a study limited to a few texts, Psalms 2 and 110, Genesis 14, along with some of its contexts. In order to make a fair assessment and draw a fair conclusion, we need to widen the scope of how other allusions and quotations of OT texts shape Hebrews; for this purpose we now proceed to our next segment.

### 11.3.3 The Quotations of and Allusions to the OT in Hebrews Shaping the Book Itself

Offered in our statistical chart are all of the allusions and quotations found in Hebrews, based on *UBSGNT* (table 4).<sup>802</sup> We can provide a few observations to support our contention of the OT Scriptures shaping Hebrews. First, we will look at the quotations, followed by the allusions, and by an overview of the use of the OT.

In quotations, the texts of the Psalter are quoted extensively in Hebrews, comprising 43 percent of the total quotations; likewise, the texts of the Pentateuch are quoted heavily, comprising 35 percent of the total quotations. Taken together, the texts of the Pentateuch and Psalter take up 78 percent of the total quotations.

Regarding the quotations used in Hebrews 1-7, note how 64 percent of the texts of the Psalter are quoted in Hebrews 1-7. When the Psalter and the Pentateuch are put together, 86 percent of the quotations are found in either of these two blocks of material in Hebrews 1-7.

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**800** Cf. some modern authors, like Baylis, whose dissertation is entitled "The Author of Hebrews' Use of Melchizedek from the Context of Genesis," ignore the role of Psalm 110 in the interpretation of Genesis 14 by Hebrews. Nevertheless, he quotes Psalm 110 again and again in his project. Baylis, "Hebrews' Use of Melchizedek," 121 (footnote 17), cf. 127-28 where he quotes Psalm 110.

**801** Hay's comment is noteworthy: "Since the author of Hebrews connects so much of his doctrinal argument with vss 1 and 4 of the psalm [110], however, it is likely that he, at least, studied the psalm text directly" (*The Right Hand*, 44).

**802** *UBSGNT*, 890, 891-901. Note that a reference can quote or allude to multi-verses. For example, Gen 3:17-18 is alluded to in Heb 6:8, or Ps 95:9-11 is cited in Heb 3:7-11. Cf. the list "Chart of OT References in Hebrews," prepared by Guthrie, "Old Testament in Hebrews," in *DLNTD*, 846-49. Guthrie adds two more categories, "Summary" and "Name/Topic" in the discussion. We provide two sub-totals and a grand total (in italics): one sub-total for the Pentateuch, one sub-total for the historical books, and a grand total for the OT.

**Table 4.** Allusions and Quotations of the OT in Hebrews, with Special Reference to Hebrews 1-7 (in square bracket)

The OT Books	Total Number of Quotations	Total Number of Allusions	Total
Genesis	6 [3]	31 [4]	37 [7]
Exodus	3 [0]	30 [2]	33 [2]
Leviticus		21 [7]	21 [7]
Numbers		17 [8]	17 [8]
Deuteronomy	4 [2]	12 [1]	16 [3]
<i>Pentateuch</i>	<i>13 [5]</i>	<i>111 [22]</i>	<i>124 [27]</i>
Joshua		5 [1]	5 [1]
Judges		2 [0]	2 [0]
1 Samuel		2 [1]	2 [1]
2 Samuel	1 [1]	3 [1]	4 [2]
1 Kings		2 [0]	2 [0]
2 Kings		1 [0]	1 [0]
1 Chronicles		2 [1]	2 [1]
2 Chronicles		3 [0]	3 [0]
<i>Historical Books</i>	<i>1 [1]</i>	<i>20 [4]</i>	<i>21 [5]</i>
Psalms	16[14]	23 [8]	39 [22]
Proverbs	1 [0]	1 [0]	2 [0]
Isaiah	2 [2]	13 [5]	15 [7]
Jeremiah	2 [0]	4 [0]	6 [0]
Ezekiel		3 [0]	3 [0]
Daniel		3 [0]	3 [0]
Hosea		1 [0]	1 [0]
Habakkuk	1 [0]		1 [0]
Haggai	1 [0]		1 [0]
Zechariah		1 [0]	1 [0]
<i>Total</i>	<i>37[22]</i>	<i>180[39]</i>	<i>217[61]</i>

Concerning allusions, about 62 percent of the allusions are found in the Pentateuch, with Genesis being alluded to the most among the five books of Moses, followed by Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Isaiah is most heavily alluded to among all the prophetic books.

In terms of the *total* allusions and quotations, the Psalter is cited or/and alluded to the most (39), followed by Genesis (37). Note also how half of the materials of the Psalter are equally found in Hebrews 1-7 and 8-13.

What can we conclude from the data? If the most often quoted or alluded to materials shape the thoughts of Hebrews, then the texts of the Pentateuch and the Psalter are clearly influential.<sup>803</sup> Understandably, the Pentateuch, containing abundant materials on the Levitical priestly system and given its canonical status in the OT, should come as no surprise as an influence on Hebrews (or other NT books). Nonetheless, the literary-theological impact of the Psalter on Hebrews<sup>804</sup> is close to what we have studied above. It is safe to say we can argue that the Pentateuch and the Psalter have shaped the structure and theme of Hebrews, particularly Genesis 14 and Psalm 110 with Psalm 2.

## 11.4 Conclusion of the Study of Hebrews 1-7

Our study (this and in the previous chapter), through a rhetorical and discourse analysis, has concluded that the sonship motif is the overarching theme for Hebrews, or at least for Hebrews 1-7. The sonship motif, however, encompasses several sub-themes, namely, the kingship notion (Hebrews 1 and 5) and the high priestly notion (Hebrews 5-7). This sonship christology in Hebrews could be detected through the author's skillful use of OT Scriptures. In particular, the two most basic OT texts that shape the author's composition are Psalms 2 and 110 (with Genesis 14 and its cotexts in Hebrew 6-7). In our opinion, the frequent juxtaposition of these two psalms either by allusion or quotation in Hebrews, suggests the author read and interpreted them in light of each other.

The questions raised at the beginning of chapter ten – did the author of Hebrews, when using an OT text, Psalm 110 as in our case, also take the cotext(s) of that OT text, Psalm 2, into consideration, and did he allow Psalm 110 and its cotext to shape the

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<sup>803</sup> Scholars like Lane and Barth also note the Pentateuch and the Psalter are heavily used in Hebrews. Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, cxvi and Markus Barth, "The Old Testament in Hebrews," in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation*, ed. William Klassen and Graydon F. Snyder (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 55.

<sup>804</sup> Paul-Gerhard Müller, after providing the number of citations of and allusions to the Pentateuch, the Historical Books, the Prophetic Books and the Psalter of the OT, acknowledges the "spezifischen Funktion" and the "massgebliche Rolle" of the Psalter in Hebrews, particularly in christology. See *idem*, "Die Funktion der Psalmenzitate im Hebräerbrief," in *der Weisung des Herrn*, 223.

theme and structure of the letter? – seem to be answered in the study of these two chapters. In our next chapter from a hermeneutical angle, we will assess the use of the OT in Hebrews and the use of the OT in the OT.