

Is a Systematic Theological Understanding about the Holy Spirit Imposed on Hebrews?

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Abstract

While belief in “the trinity” is a central tenet of Christianity, the doctrine of the Trinity began as “a naive formula” developed by early church fathers whereby non-biblical terminology was invented to describe and define itself centuries after the writing of the New Testament due predominantly to heresies about the person of Jesus. And while features about the three persons of the trinity — Father, Son, and Spirit — appear in many New Testament texts, not all three persons of the trinity appear in every New Testament writing, especially as the doctrine of the Trinity was later defined in the early creeds and subsequent systematic theologies. Such is the case when identifying God’s Spirit in Hebrews.

Belief in only “one God” is stated clearly in the Old Testament (Deut 6:4–5), reiterated by Jesus (Mark 12:28-29), and argued by James (James 2:19). Yet, the apostles and early church fathers found themselves redefining the long-standing Jewish understanding of monotheism. New Testament assertions suggesting three distinct divine persons within the godhead amplified the Old Testament meaning of “the Lord our God is one” (Deut 4:4; Isa 43:1–14). Consequently, New Testament statements about “one God” were later isolated and employed to construct several non-canonical creeds about a triune God. In fact, as members of the Evangelical Theological Society, we affirm yearly that “God is a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each an uncreated person, one in essence, equal in power and glory.”¹ Yet, in all fairness to New Testament authors who wrote many centuries prior to any church or society’s creed, is it to be argued that this central tenet of Christianity is evident in every Gospel, every letter, or in Revelation? More specifically, does Hebrews even support our present-day concept about a triune God? While some may *minimize*

¹ The entire doctrinal basis for the Evangelical Theological Society is clearly cited in every Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society: “The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs. God is a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each an uncreated person, one in essence, equal in power and glory.” *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (chp. 2) is a bit more comprehensive. “In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.” Hodge goes so far as to say that the doctrine of the Trinity is not “any arbitrary decision, nor from any bigoted adherence to hereditary beliefs, that the church has always refused to recognize as Christians those who reject this doctrine” (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, volume 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 443.

Trinitarianism in Hebrews,² others appear to *maximize* it with overly dramatic assertions like “If God is not triune, then the letter’s argument fails” and thereby Hebrews must be deemed “a Trinitarian work” as defined by subsequent Church councils.³ Yet, how did the doctrine of the trinity come to be a central tenant of Christianity and to what extent does Hebrews support trinitarianism?” More specifically, are any of the five mentions of the “holy spirit” (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον) in Hebrews (cf. 2:4; 3:7; 6:4; 9:8; 10:15) *explicit* references to the third person of the Godhead? Or might they merely reflect a typical first century Jewish manner for referencing God?

The Rise of Trinitarianism within the Early Church

It is not unusual to find an array of Old and New Testament texts in systematic theologies that uphold the deity of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.⁴ Yet, the “proof” texts chosen undergirding the doctrine of the trinity began as merely *implicit* assertions about God and only later collected and collated to support an *explicitly* well-defined doctrine of the trinity.⁵

² Swete contends, “In Hebrews there is no theology of the spirit [sic].” H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (1909; repr. Eugene Wipf & Stock, 1998) 248–49. While commenting on Hebrews 9:14, Attridge says, “Trinitarian speculation, advocated by patristic and some modern interpreters, is not involved. Hebrews’ references to the spirit are too diffuse and ill-focused to support a Trinitarian theology in this context.” See Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 250; Harold W. Attridge, “God in Hebrews: Urging Children to Heavenly Glory,” in *The Forgotten God: Perspectives in Biblical Theology*, edited by A. Andrew Das and Frank J. Matera (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 197–209. In dealing with ὅς διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἄμωμον τῷ θεῷ (who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God) in 9:14, Moffat argues, “it is irrelevant to drag in the dogma of the trinity.” James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1924, reprint 1979), 124.

³ For Holsteen, the “purpose of Hebrews necessitates this Trinitarian affirmation.” Nathan Holsteen, “The Trinity In The Book Of Hebrews,” *BSac* 168:671 (July 2011): 335–46. C. Merrill, professor of theology at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, wholeheartedly accepts Holsteen’s view and hermeneutical approach. <https://drmerrillsseminary.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-trinity-in-book-of-hebrews-critique.html> (viewed September 10, 2025). Similarly, Allison and Köstenberger agreed with Alan K. Hodson who argues that “while the Spirit is not the primary focal point of the argument in the letter, the author does appear to have a working theology of the Spirit that undergirds his overall presentation.” Gregg R. Allison & Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit in Theology for the People of God* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic), 168–76, cf. 168 n 5.

⁴ Undebated passages that support “God as One” are Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:11–12; Galatians 3:20.; James 2:19. Undebated passages that support the “Son as God” are Philippians 2:5–8, Colossians 1:15–20, 2:9, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:5–13, 2 Peter 1:1. Undebated passages that support the “Spirit as God” are John 3:5–8, 16:8–16; Acts 5:3–4; 1 Corinthians 2:10–11; 3:16; Ephesians 2:22. Several theologies were consulted. *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion* in The Library of Christian Classics, vol. XX (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1975), chps. 13–14. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena, Bibliology, Theology Proper*, Volume 1 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), 272–88. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology: Pneumatology*, Volume VI (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), 16–18. Reverend Herman Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1966), 140–52. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, volume 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 323–32. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, volume 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 688–90. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, volume 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 857–59.

⁵ The one *explicit* statement that supports the doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament appears in 1 John 5:7 (also known as the *Comma Johanneum*). Yet, it is disputed. Despite the fact that this is a succinct proof positive statement for the Trinity, it is never cited in the Trinitarian debates by Greek-speaking church fathers. Furthermore,

Unfortunately in creating the doctrine about a triune God, Church Fathers along with current theologians frequently ignore the Old and New Testament authors' historical contexts. And though Hoeksema admits that "there is progress in the revelation of the Trinity in Scriptures," he still argues anachronistically for Trinitarianism in the Old Testament.⁶ Nevertheless, Church Fathers are to be commended for their initial works. Centuries later, Hodge celebrated their work when he wrote, "No mere speculative doctrine, especially no doctrine so mysterious and so out of analogy with all other objects of human knowledge, as that of the Trinity, could ever have held the abiding control over the faith of the Church, which this doctrine has maintained."⁷ Yet, are there *any* human authors of scripture that articulate a clear Trinitarian statement? Obviously not.⁸ And though a seemingly plurality of the godhead appears in Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians

the longer reading appears to be a medieval interpolation into the text of 1 John 5 by way of a Latin homily in which the text was allegorized to refer to members of the Trinity. The allegorical rendering of the Spirit water and blood to represent the Trinity was noted in the margin, and subsequently was incorporated into the text. Its earliest appearance in Greek is in a Greek version of the Acts of the Lateran Council in 1215. The passage does not occur in the Latin Vulgate until after 800, and was pronounced authoritative by Pope Leo XIII in 1897. It appears in the 3rd edition of Erasmus' Greek text (1522), and eventually found entry into the *Textus Receptus* in 1633. So, the longer reading does not appear in any early manuscripts, patristic writings, or any Greek translation until 1215. Manuscript support for the *Comma Johanneum* occurs in minuscules: 221^{v1} (10th century), 629 (14th/15th century), 61 and 918 (16th century), and 2318 (18th century). The following minuscules include *Comma Johanneum* as either a marginal note 88^{v1} (16th century) or as an addition to 221^{v1} (10th century), 429^{v1} (16th century), 636^{v1} (15th century). For further reading see Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (New York: Oxford University Press, ed., 1992), 10 1–03; Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters in Hermeneia*, translated by Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 188–91.

⁶ Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 142. While there are many systematic theologies that do so, compare Chafer, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena, Bibliology, Theology Proper*, v. 1, 298–302 and Erickson, *Christian Theology*, vol. 2, 688–90. In a similar way, Old Testament references to "the son" and "messiah" are anachronistically applied to Jesus' messiahship. Yet, variations of "son" could reference one's honored status or special relationship with God: God's chosen people (Exod 4:22, Hos 11:1, Jer 3 1:9), God's righteous people (Wisdom 2:18; 5:5), or even Adam (Luke 3:38). This is particularly true of David's heir, Solomon. In 2 Samuel 7, Solomon is heralded to be God's "son" (echoed in Psalm 2), and in Psalm 89:27 the expected ideal Davidite is called God's "firstborn son." For presentation of the progressive revelation about "messiah" and "son" traced through the Old Testament, second temple Jewish literature and the New Testament, see Herbert W. Bateman IV, Darrell L. Bock, Gordon H. Johnston, *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel's King* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013).

⁷ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, volume 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 443. Calvin makes a similar comment. "For he [God] so proclaims himself the sole God as to offer himself to be contemplated clearly in three persons. Unless we grasp these, only the bare and empty name of God flits about in our brain, to the exclusion of the true God." *Calvin: Institutes*, 122. See also Otto Weber's "The Problem and the Approach of the Doctrine of the Trinity in *Foundations of Dogmatics Vol 1*, translated and annotated by Darrell L. Guder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 349–70.

⁸ Hoeksema readily admits "the Trinity is a profound mystery," and that "the Scriptures do not speak of the Trinity, of three persons in one Essence, nor explain the relation of the three Persons to one another directly." Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 140. C. I. Scofield also admits that "The Trinity of God is confessedly a great mystery, something wholly beyond the possibility of complete explanation." *The New Scofield Reference Bible* (New York, NY: University Press), 1046. See also Pelikan's discussions about "The Mystery of the Trinity" (*Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 172–225).

13:14, Ephesians 4:4–6, and 1 Peter 1:2; it seems reasonable to pause and survey the rise of Trinitarianism as it unfolded within the Church’s historical context by first underscoring the Church’s move from a Jewish Christian to Gentile Christian dominance and then by tracing the rise of Trinitarianism within the Church.

From Jewish to Gentile Dominance

Few evangelicals, if any, deny that the initial Christian community was Jewish (e.g., Acts 2:1–11; 37–41), that their beliefs were linked to Hebrew Scriptures as they were often translated into Greek (e.g., Acts 17:10–11), and that all the writers of the New Testament were Jewish bar one, Luke.⁹ Pelikan rightly observes that, “The earliest Christians were Jews, and in their new faith they found continuity with the old.”¹⁰ So, early Jewish Christians, like those being addressed in Hebrews, grappled with God’s recent revelation about their “one” eternal transcendent God and rightfully so. Jewish people during the second temple period tended to practice a “rigorously monotheistic faith.”¹¹ So, the notion of a triune God was not only a new idea for any first century Jewish Christian, it is an admitted mystery by Jew and Gentile Christians even today. Yet, who were those who formulated the doctrine of the trinity and why?

As the good news about Jesus spread throughout the Roman world, more and more converts came from pagan environments rather than Jewish ones. Unfortunately, Gentile believers and subsequent leaders of the early church wrestled with the degree to which

⁹ Although most accept Luke to be a Gentile, Allen argues that even Luke was a Jew in an attempt to support Lukan authorship for the Book of Hebrews. See chapter six in David Allen’s *The Lukan Authorship of Hebrews*, NACSBT (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010); *idem*. “The Authorship of Hebrews: The Case for Luke,” *Faith and Mission* 17.2 (2001): 27–40.

¹⁰ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* in *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University Press, 1975), 13. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan Jr. was an American Scholar of the history of Christianity, Christian theology, and medieval intellectual history who earned his PhD at the University of Chicago and taught at Yale University from 1962–1996 before achieving emeritus status in 1996.

¹¹ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, vol. 1, 323. The Letter of Jeremiah and Bel and the Dragon are two second temple texts that reveal a determination to reject the worship of any idol as judgments against the actions of Israel and Judah evident in the Old Testament. Cohen reveals the complex process through which a gentile transitions into a Jew from the mid-second century B.C. to the A.D. third century. First and for most was for a Gentile to venerate the “One God” of the Jews and to deny or ignore pagan gods. So, conversion to Judaism involves the denial of foreign gods and accepts the God of Israel as the only true God. Shaye J.D. Cohen, “Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew,” *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 82, no. 1 (January 1989): 13–33, particularly 21–24. Most notably, however, were a group of Jewish Christians referred to as the Ebionites (Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 14). They were heretical “Judaizers” and were persistent in their adherence to the Law (e.g., circumcision, Sabbath, and sacrifices; cf. Tertullian’s response in “*Adversus Iudaeos*,” 3–5), rejection of the virgin birth (cf. Tertullian’s response in “*Adversus Iudaeos*,” 8), and belief that Jesus was a mere man and thereby rejected his preexistence (cf. Tertullian, “On the Flesh of Christ” [*De carne Christi*], 14). Jacob Neusner and William Scott Green, eds., “Ebionites” in *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 181–82.

Christianity related to Judaism. Pelikan claims, “What was offensive about Christianity in the eyes of Gentiles was. . . what it had inherited from Judaism.”¹² In time, early church fathers (none of whom were Jewish) tended to distance themselves from Judaism.¹³ In fact, Pelikan argues that “Most of Christian doctrine developed in a church uninformed by any knowledge of the original text of the Hebrew Bible” and sadly most of the Greek and Latin defenders of the faith “no longer gave serious consideration to the Old Testament or to the Jewish background of the New.”¹⁴ Consequently, a de-Judaization of Christianity appears to have occurred whereby Greek and Latin apologists developed church doctrines due to their disputes with Judaism as well as quarrels with the infiltration of Gentile pagan thought. “The climax of the doctrinal development of the early church was,” according to Pelikan, “the dogma of the Trinity. In this dogma,” he continues, “the church vindicated the monotheism that had been at issue in its conflicts with Judaism, and it came to terms with the concept of the Logos, over which it had disputed with paganism.”¹⁵ If Pelikan is correct, then *explicit* Trinitarian theism is a theological affirmation that arose *only* in later non-canonical creeds of the early church. But why?.

The Rise of Trinitarianism

The rise of Trinitarianism should begin with the term itself. The word *trinity* is not a biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek term, but one that originates from the Latin word *trinitas* meaning “threeness.” Initially, Theophilus of Antioch used a corresponding Greek term τριάς to

¹² Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 14.

¹³ First, Justin Martyr declares, “We are the true Israel,” and thereby replaces the Jews as the chosen people of God (*Dial.* 11.5). Later in the same work, he confiscates Jewish Scriptures as belonging to the Church (*Dial.* 29.2). Murray points out that Justin Martyr was the first to make such an explicit claim in writing. Michele Murray, *Flaying a Jewish Game: Gentile Christian Judaizing in the First and Second Centuries CE* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2004), 93. Second, while defending his decision to use “Judean” rather than “Jewish” for Ἰουδαϊκός, Mason avers that Tertullian seems to be a “pivotal figure” in that his “writings were crucial to Christian self-definition and in creating a Latin theological vocabulary.” Furthermore, “for Tertullian,” says Mason, “*Judaismus* ended in principle with the coming of Jesus and it survives only vestigially.” He was responsible for “decoupling of the Judean people from its land and legitimacy” and made Judaism “*different in kind* from Christian belief.” So, “Judaism was an unchanging, fossilized faith, not to be taken seriously or deserving proper attention.” Steve Mason, *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins: Methods and Categories* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009), 141–84 esp. 152–55. A third example is Augustine’s move from a literal promised kingdom to a pure spiritual one. See apocalyptic vision and its transformation in Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 123–32. See also the above note for “rigorously monotheistic faith” (n. 11).

¹⁴ Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 21. Some noted exceptions, however, are Origen, Jerome, and Augustine. Nevertheless, each contributed to the “de-Judaization” of perceptions and presentations of the first century Jewish Church. See the previous note about Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Augustine.

¹⁵ Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 172.

describe God as (1) the Father, (2) his word, and (3) his wisdom.¹⁶ Only later does Tertullian of Carthage coin the Latin term *trinitas* to speak of God as one substance consisting in three persons.¹⁷ In his earlier works, Tertullian wrote only of God the Father and God the Son. He tended not to write much about the Spirit. Only later, due to his contacts with Montanism, did Tertullian begin to think of the Holy Spirit (παράκλητος and ὁ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον in John 14:16, 26) in more personal terms. In fact, “the crucial place for an examination of the significance of Montanism for the history of the doctrine of the Trinity” according to Pelikan, “is Tertullian.”¹⁸ Furthermore, Pelikan stresses “the great influence of Tertullian on the subsequent trinitarian discussion would mean, then, that while some Montanists held to a *naïve formula* for the Trinity that was shared by other Christians, Tertullian’s Montanism helped him to insights by which the church eventually transcended this formula and developed a more consistent doctrine of the Trinity.”¹⁹ Yet, nowhere is Tertullian’s Trinitarian concept more noticeably developed than in subsequent church councils.

Early Church fathers struggled for centuries with the concept of Jesus as the God-Man. After a series of ecumenical councils, a rather lucid doctrine of the trinity emerged. Several councils drafted cogent creeds (from Latin *credo*, “I believe”) in order to address several heresies about the deity of Jesus. So centuries after the mostly Jewish authors wrote the New Testament, early Greek and Latin church Fathers de-Judaized Christianity and confronted four major early

¹⁶ The Greek apologist Theophilus, a Gentile born near the Euphrates, was *converted from paganism to Christianity* as an adult, became the seventh bishop of Antioch, and died sometime between 185 and 191. He wrote (*circa* 181), “The three days before the luminaries were created are types of the Trinity: God, His Word, and His Wisdom” (Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolytus*, 2.15). William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, vol. 1 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, vol. 1, 1970), 73–77; Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1:472–73.

¹⁷ Tertullian, a Gentile Christian born in Carthage of pagan parents (*circa* 155), became a lawyer, converted to Christianity (*circa* 193), became a defender of Christianity (*circa* 197–220), and died sometime between 240–250 (cf. Kerr, *Readings in Christian Thought*, 36–37; Richard C. and Catherine C. Kroeger, “Tertullian” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 74–75).

¹⁸ Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 105. In his treatise *Against Praxeas*, Tertullian wrote (*circa* 213), “We do indeed believe that there is only one God; but we believe that under this dispensation, or, as we say, οἰκονομία, there is also a Son of this one only God, His Word [*Serma*], who proceeded from Him. . . .” “We believe that He was sent down from the Father, in accord with His one promise, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete . . .,” “And at the same time the mystery of the οἰκονομία is safeguarded, for the Unity is distributed in a Trinity. Placed in order, the Three are Father, Son, and Spirit. They are Three, however not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in kind; of one substance, however, and one condition, and one power, because He is one God of whom these degrees and forms and kinds are taken into account in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 1:154; cf. also Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 1:593–622).

¹⁹ Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 105. The emphasis on a *naïve formula* is mine.

church controversies: Arianism, which denied the full deity of Jesus;²⁰ Apollinarianism, which denied the full humanity of Jesus;²¹ Nestorianism, which denied the union of two natures of Jesus;²² and Eutychianism that denied the distinction between the divine and human natures.²³ Early creeds of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) were foundational for the much more explicit Trinitarian definition created at the Council of Chalcedon (451). In fact, it seems

²⁰ Arianism taught that the Word was created out of nothing and that there was a time when the Word did not exist: he was God, but he was not true God. Anus, born in Libya circa 270, was a student of the Greek scholar Lucian of Antioch. In 307, he was ordained a deacon in Alexandria during the bishopric of Peter of Alexandria (300–311), ordained to the priesthood by Achillas, a Bishop of Alexandria (311), and given a church in Baucalis. His tensions over the deity of Jesus resulted in numerous excommunications. Eventually, Emperor Constantine called for the first ecumenical council at Nicaea (May 10, 325). At that time, they coined “of one substance with the Father” whereby the Greek word *homousioudia* became a catchword of orthodoxy. As for Anus, he was declared a heretic, banished to Illyricum, permitted to return to Alexandria in 331, promised readmission to the church in 334, but died in 336 at Constantinople before his readmission. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 1:27–76; Victor I. Walter, “Arianism” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 74–75; Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 2:684–702. Michael Grant, *Constantine the Great: The Man and His Times* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 172–77.

²¹ Apollinarianism, a fourth-century heresy, taught Jesus was the divine logos, but that he had no human soul. Apollinarius, a Gentile Christian born circa 310 in Laodicea in Syria and appears to have lived there his entire life. He welcomed Athanasius back from exile in 346, and like others supported the concept of *homoousion*. In 361, he became Bishop of the Nicaea church at Laodicea. Yet Athanasius argued to the contrary suggesting that Jesus had both a divine and human soul in 362. In 375, Apollinarius left the Orthodox Church but continued to argue the Alexandrian view that Jesus had no human soul against the Antiochene School that argued for a “word-flesh” Christology. Eventually Eastern councils of Alexandria (378), Antioch (379), Constantinople (381), and the Western Church in Rome (377) condemned both him and his views. He died circa 391, however, before the Council of Chalcedon when the conflict was resolved in 451. V. L. Walter, “Apollinarianism,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 67–68; G. T. D. Angel, “Apollinarius, Apollinarianism,” in *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, general editor, 3. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974, revised ed. 1978), 55–56.

²² Nestorianism centers on the two natures in Christ. Nestorius was a Gentile Christian born circa 381 of Persian parents at Gennanicia in Syria Euphratensis. He received his theological training at the School of Antioch, perhaps under Theodore of Mopsuestia. He was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople on April 10, 428. His first official act was burning an Arian chapel. In 428, Nestorius preached sermons attacking the desire of some to attribute the title *Theotokos* (God-bearing”) to Mary, the mother of Jesus. He preferred to call Mary *Christokos* (“Christ-bearing”) because he struggled with the uniting of the human and the divine natures of Christ into one. When he did not retract his statements in 430, a Third Ecumenical Council convened at Ephesus in June 431 over which Cyril of Alexandria presided. The council condemned his teachings and declared him a heretic. On August 3, 435, Emperor Theodosius II (reign: 408–450) sent Nestorius to the Great Oasis of Hibis in Libya where he died in 453. In 1895, a text was discovered, written by Nestorius, affirming his belief of Jesus as “the same one is twofold” similar to the orthodox formula used at the Council of Chalcedon (451). Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 264–68. William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, vol. 2 (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1979), 201–03; Howard Griffith, “Nestorius, Nestorianism” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 758–59.

²³ Eutychianism or monophysitism taught the incarnate Jesus had only a single (*mono*) divine nature (*physis*), clothed only in human flesh. Eutyches was a Gentile Christian born circa 375, and for a time served as the Archbishop of Constantinople. He was schooled in the Alexandrian way of thinking and speaking about Jesus and his personhood, but Eutyches eventually argued that Christ’s humanity was absorbed in his divinity and that to accept two natures at all was to be in agreement with Nestorianism (at the Council of Ephesus, 431). So, the humanity of Jesus was less than complete. He was accused of heresy in November 448 but declared orthodox on August 1, 449. Nevertheless, his teachings were rejected at the Council of Chalcedon (451) and he died in exile circa 454. David A. Hubbard, “Monophysitism” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 730; William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, vol. 3 (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1979), 3:303, 309. “Eutyches” in *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition, 2008. *Encyclopedia.com* (November 2, 2009). <http://www.Encyclopedia.com/doc/1 El -Eutyches.html>.

Augustine brought unanimity of opinion to the entire Western church concerning Trinitarian thoughts in his work *On the Trinity* (*De Trinitate libri quindecim*, 400-416).²⁴ He summed up the doctrine of the trinity in this manner.

All the Catholic interpreters of the divine books of the Old and New Testaments whom I have been able to read, who wrote before me about the Trinity, which is God, intended to teach in accord with the Scriptures that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are of one and the same substance constituting a divine unity with an inseparable equality; and therefore there are not three gods but one God, although the Father begot the Son, and therefore he that is the Father is not the Son; and the Son is begotten by the Father, and therefore He that is the Son is not the Father; and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but only the Spirit of the Father and the Son, Himself, too, coequal to the Father and to the Son, and belonging to the unity of the Trinity.²⁵

In conclusion, then, the doctrine of the trinity involved a redefining of a long-standing Jewish understanding of and rigorously defended form of monotheism. The term *trinity* had its roots in a naive formula of the third century and the predominately Gentile church. It is a doctrine that employs non-biblical terminology as a means to describe and define itself. It is a doctrine that emerged centuries after the writing of the New Testament due to Jewish and Gentile heresies regarding the person of Jesus. It is a doctrine created by Gentile Christian leaders, who took into consideration numerous isolated passages from the Old and New Testament texts for support. It is a doctrine whose word choices were honed and became more precise over time and is an essential belief for twenty-first century orthodox Christians. Yet, how does the canonical book of Hebrews contribute to the church's non-canonical doctrine of the trinity found in the early creeds, if at all?

Tracing Trinitarianism in Hebrews

It is generally agreed that Hebrews is a Jewish work, written by a Jewish author, addressed to Jewish Christians in Rome, and composed to speak to a first century Jewish community's need.²⁶ Naturally, Hebrews reflects several presuppositions held by many Jewish

²⁴ Augustine, a Gentile Christian, was born in Tagaste, North Africa (present day Algeria) in 354. His father, Patricius, was a pagan, but his mother, Monica, was a Christian. Educated in Carthage, he eventually taught grammar and rhetoric in North Africa (373–382) and then Rome (383). After years of spiritual wrestling, Augustine was converted through the teachings of Ambrose and subsequently baptized by him in 387. Augustine established a monastery in Hippo, became its bishop, and wrote numerous works. He died on August 28, 430.

²⁵ Kerr, *Readings in Christian Thought*, 50-51; Norman L. Geisler, "Augustine of Hippo" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 105–07; Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 3:73. Kannengeriesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 2:1149–1181. For a more complete survey concerning the development of the dogma of the Trinity, see Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 226–77.

²⁶ Herbert W. Bateman IV and Steven W. Smith, *Hebrews: A Commentary for Biblical Preaching and Teaching* in Kerux Commentaries (Grand Rapids, Kregel, 2021), 39–55. Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Charts on the Book of*

people during the first century. One assumption was the belief in one God.²⁷ The other was the belief in a forthcoming messianic figure spoken of in one of four ways in non-canonical Jewish literature: Messiah, branch, prince, and son with various variations. All were rooted in the Old Testament and reflected upon in later second temple Jewish literature, predominantly literature found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.²⁸

Epithets for Expectant Messianic Figures				
	Messiah, Anointed, Anointed One	Branch, Shoot, Root	Prince, Chief, Leader	Son, Son of God, Firstborn, Son of Man
Hebrew Scripture Sources	1 Samuel 1 Kings 1 Chronicles Psalms Zechariah	Isaiah Jeremiah Zechariah	Ezekiel	2 Samuel 7 Psalm 2 Psalm 89 Daniel 7
Dead Sea Scroll Sources	CD 1Q28 1Q28a 4Q252 4Q266 4Q382 4Q458 4Q52 1	4Q161 4Q174 4Q252 4Q285	CD 1Q28b 1QM 4Q161 4Q266 4Q285 4Q376 4Q423 4Q496	1Q28a 4Q174 4Q246 4Q369
Jewish Pseudepigrapha Sources	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	<i>Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs: T. Judah</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon 1 Enoch 4 Ezra</i>

Although these epithets circulated within Judea, devout Jews from Rome were known to go up to Jerusalem to celebrate Jewish religious festivals (e.g., Acts 2:9) and without a doubt were aware of these messianic expectations. Nevertheless, merging the two assumptions about “one God” and an anticipated messiah figure added a dimension to monotheism that was both unfamiliar

Hebrews in Kregel Charts of the Bible and Theology (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 26–39. See also David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2010), 29–74. Attridge, *Hebrews*; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* in NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, revised edition, 1990). Gareth L. Cockerill, *Hebrews: A Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 1999); idem. *The Epistle to the Hebrews* in NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); Paul Ellingworth, *Commentary on Hebrews* in NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Donald A. Hagner, *Hebrews* in NIBC (Peabody, MA: 1990); Simon J. Kistemaker, *Hebrews* in NTL (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984). Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews* in AB (New York: Doubleday, 2001); William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* in WBC (Dallas: Word, 1991). Victor C. Pfitzner, *Hebrews* in ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997); Ray C. Stedman, *Hebrews* in NTC (Downers Grove, 1992); R. V. G. Tasker, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* in TNTC (Grand Rapids: IVP, 1960).

²⁷ Within the variety of first century Judaism, there is a set of core beliefs that appear common to all groups. “There is one god, who made the entire universe, and this god is in covenant with Israel. He has chosen her for a purpose: she is to be the light of the world.” Summarized they are “monotheism, election, and eschatology.” See N.T. Wright, *The New Testament People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 247, 279.

²⁸ Herbert W. Bateman IV, “Expectations of a King” in Bateman, Bock, Johnson, *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel’s King* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 211–329.

and probably perplexing for the original Jewish Christian in Rome. Yet, do any of these epithets, when singled out in Hebrews, evoke the concept of a divine Messiah?

Epithets in Hebrews

Although Jesus is not specifically mentioned until 2:9 and again 3:1, there are at least sixteen epithets ascribed to Jesus in Hebrews. Most notably are “Messiah,”²⁹ “son,”³⁰ “son of God,”³¹ and “son of man.”³² Yet, these epithets are not unique to Hebrews because they appear, for instance, in Mark’s Gospel to describe Jesus.³³ There are, however, four that are unique to Hebrews: “heir” (1:2), “Melchizedekian priest,”³⁴ “great priest” (10:21), and “high priest.”³⁵ Nevertheless, there is nothing about these epithets that would create an uneasy stir among any Jewish Christian of the first century because they also appear in other Jewish literature of the latter second temple period (between *circa* 200 BC and AD 30).

Title	Second Temple Literature	Hebrews
Son	1Q28a 2:11-15 (“father” within Ps 2:7) 4Q174 3:2-13 4Q369 1:6-12 <i>Psalms of Solomon</i> 17: 21-25 (Son of David) 4 Ezra 7:26-36 (synonymous with messiah)	1:2, 5 (within Ps 2:7), 8; 3:6, 5:5 (Within Ps 2:7), 8; 7:28
Son of God	4Q246 2:1-9	4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29
Son of Man	1 Enoch 46:3-4; 48:2; 62:5,7, 8, 14; 63:11; 69:27, 29; 70:1; 71:17 (synonymous with messiah)	2:6 (within Ps 8:4-6)
Christ or Messiah	CD 12:23-3:1; 19:10-11;20:1 CD 14:19(=4Q266f10:12) 1Q289:11 1Q28a 2:11-12; 2: 14-15; 2:20-21 4Q252 534 4Q382 16:2	3:6, 14; 5:5; 6:1; 9:11, 14, 24,28; 10:10; 11:26; 13:8, 21

²⁹ Hebrews 3:6, 14; 5:5; 6:1; 9:11, 14, 24, 28; 10:10; 11:26; 13:8, 21 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 121).

³⁰ Hebrews 1:2, 5 within Psalm 2:7; 2:8; 3:6; 5:5 within Psalm 2:7; 5:8; 7:28 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 119–20).

³¹ Hebrews 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 119–20).

³² Hebrews 2:6 within Psalm 8:4-6 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 119–20).

³³ Herbert W. Bateman IV, “Defining the Titles ‘Christ’ and ‘Son of God’ in Mark’s Narrative Presentation of Jesus,” *JETS* 50 (Sept 2007): 537–59.

³⁴ Hebrews 5:6; 7:17 within Psalm 110:4 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 119).

³⁵ Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14, 15; 5:10; 6:20; 7:27; 8:1; 9:11 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 119).

Heir (2nd Temple Literature heir = Prince)	CD 7:19b-20 (4Q266 f3iii:21) 1Q28b 5:20-28 1QM 5.1 3:15 (= 4Q496 f1O:3-4) 4Q161 2-6:ii:19 4Q285 4:2,6; 5:4; 6:2 (4Q11) 4Q376 fliii:1, 3 (11Q29) 4Q423 fS:2 (4Q418a 3)	1:2
Melchizedek Figure	1 QMelch 2.18 (possible allusion to Ps 110)	5:6; 7:17 (within Ps 110:4)
High Priest	CD 12:23-3:1; 20:1 CD 14:19 (=4Q266 f1Oi:12) CD 19:10-11 1Q28 9.11 4Q375 li:9	2:17; 3:1; 4:14,15; 5:10; 6:20; 7:27; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21

For Ellingworth, however, “the author’s thinking about Christ revolves around the two poles represented by the titles ‘Son’ (1:2) and ‘high priest’ (2:17).”³⁶ So, “Son” according to Ellingworth, “might superficially appear to refer to Christ’s status, and ‘(high) priest’ to his work.” Yet, Ellingworth’s statement might be a bit limiting because there are several non-regal titles that highlight different aspects of Jesus’ sonship. Unique to Hebrews are “apostle” (3:1), “forerunner” (6:20), and “minister” (8:2). Other epithets appear, though infrequently, elsewhere in the New Testament: “pioneer,”³⁷ “mediator,”³⁸ and “great shepherd.”³⁹ Nevertheless, it appears that like God in the Old Testament, Jesus has numerous titles ascribed to him that highlight his various roles.⁴⁰ More significantly, however, is when “Son” is linked to both God (1:8 within Psalm 45:6-7) and “Lord” (1:10 within Ps 102:25-27; Heb 7:14; 13:20). Neither are accidents. So, we ask, does the rhetorical strategy and emotive warnings in Hebrews help in appreciating a first century Jewish Christian’s new and escalated truth about monotheism?

Rhetorical Strategy and Emotive Expressions

Hebrews presents a rhetorical strategy that provides several “better than” comparisons with various tenets of Judaism. Due to the Son’s unique relationship with God, he is *better* than

³⁶ Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 67.

³⁷ Hebrews 2:10; 12:2; cf. Acts 3:15; 5:31 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 122; Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 120–21, 329).

³⁸ Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24; cf. 1 Timothy 2:5 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 122 Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 235, 253–54, 347).

³⁹ Hebrews 13:20; cf. John 10:2, 14 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 122).

⁴⁰ For instance, God is referred to as Elohim (God), El (mighty one), El Shaddai (almighty God), Adonai (master), El Elyon (most high God), Avinu (our Father), etc. These are not names, but titles, highlighting different aspects of YHWH, and the various attributes of God throughout the Old Testament and ultimately his role in the lives of his people.

the angels (1:4) and as God's royal high priest, the Son mediates a *better* covenant (8:6). So, Jewish followers of Jesus in Rome are to be confident of *better* things associated with salvation (6:9); they have a *better* hope (7:19); they have a *better* possession (10:34); they will obtain a *better* resurrection (11:35); and they desire a *better* country, a heavenly one (11:16).⁴¹ This perspective is further supported when addressing the existence of a new priesthood (7:1–28), a new covenant (8:6–13), and a new sacrifice (10:5–10), while interjecting the inefficiencies of previous sacrifices (10:1–4, 11–14) and ultimate demise of the preceding priesthood and covenant (9:1–10; 12:22–24). So, relationship with God has been improved upon through Jesus.

Parallel to the “better than” comparisons with Judaism is the author's personal fear. Not so much that this particular group(s) of Jewish Christians in Rome were contemplating a return to the bankrupted system of Judaism,⁴² but rather that their apparent lack of confidence⁴³ or their staying power⁴⁴ in Jesus was alarming. Consequently, the author articulates several emotive

⁴¹ Bateman, *Charts*, 123; Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 77–78, 195, 219–20, 288–89, 312, 320–21.

⁴² Commentators appear to reject the notion that the Jewish community was considering a return to Judaism. Attridge suggests that “from the response he gives to the problem, it would appear that the author conceives of the threat to the community in two broad but interrelated categories, external pressure or ‘persecution’ (10:36–12:13) and a waning commitment to the community's confessed faith” Attridge, *Hebrews*, 13. Similarly deSilva argues “the situation. . . appears to be a crisis not of impending persecution, nor of heretical subversion, but rather of commitment occasioned as a result of the difficulties of remaining long without honor in the world.” David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle “to the Hebrew”* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 18. See also Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews* in AB volume 36 (New York: Doubleday, 200t), 64–76. Yet, Bateman suggests that the community was second guessing whether Jesus was the Messiah (Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 47–55).

⁴³ Although *παρρησία* (“confidence”) occurs four times in Hebrews (3:6, 4:16, 10:19, 35), its significance in Hebrews varies according to context. Two references are significant. First in 3:6, context suggests a *conviction*, a *resolve*, or a *determination* that “takes possession of or “holds firmly to” one's status as members of God's house (“we are of his house”). It invokes courage to be steady or true to one's convictions. The house (i.e., kingdom) is ruled over by the divine royal Son (3:6a) whose function is that of a royal (1:5–13) priest (3:1, 10:21; cf. 1 Macc 13:42; *TLevi* 8:14, 18:2–14; cf. Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 136–37). So, “hold firmly to our confidence” might also be rendered as “hold firmly to your *resolve* about the Christ” (Cockerill, *Hebrews*, 92) or paraphrased as a prohibition: “Do not give up your *citizen's rights*” (Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 211). Second in 10:35, readers are warned: “do not throw away your confidence” or “do not throw away your *resolve*,” which reiterates the initial concern evident in 3:6. For other significant terms, see Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 32 n.14; 33 n.17; 38 n.23.

⁴⁴ For instance, the verb ἀφίστημι (“to turn away” or “to withdraw from”) occurs fourteen times in the New Testament. Yet, its single occurrence in Hebrews 3:12 (ἀποστῆναι) is rendered several ways: “falls(ing) away from the living God” (NASB, RSV, ESV, BDAG, s.v. “ἀφίστημι,” 2a), “turn(ing) away from the living God” (NIV, NRSV, NLT), “forsakes the living God” (NET), “in departing from the living God” (KJV). Yet, they all allude to past apostasy. Psalm 95:7–11 (quoted in Heb 3:7–10) recalls the wilderness community who *turned away* from God (Num 14:9, 32:9; cf. 13:1–14:45). Ezekiel also recalls the wilderness community's *turning away* from God (e.g., first temple; 966–586 BC) and their departure from the living God (Ezek 20:8, 38; cf. Jer 2:5; Dan 9:5, 9; Bar 3:8). Likewise, second temple (514 BC–AD 70) Jewish communities depart from God through “abandoning the religion of their fathers” (1 Macc 2:19) and through the actions “of the lawless who rebelled against God” (1 QpHab 8:11, 16; *TDOT*, s.v. *mrd*, 9:1–5). Turning from God is deliberate rebellion: “Far be it from us that we should rebel (ἀποστραφῆναι) against the LORD, and turn away (ἀποστῆναι) this day from following the LORD. . .” (LXX Josh

appeals for the Jewish Christian community(ies) in Rome to maintain their faith in the Son (e.g., Jesus) because he is God’s divine Davidic regal priest through whom God speaks (1:1–14), through whom God has fulfilled his covenantal promises (10:12–18), and through whom they stand at the threshold of entering an unshakable kingdom (4:1–11; 12:25–29). Jesus, then, is the centerpiece of Hebrews whereby the Jewish Christian author opens with a divine presentation of “the Son” that equates “the Son” (i.e., Jesus) with God.

The Deity of “The Son” in Hebrews One

The prologue (vv. 1–4) and exposition (vv. 5–14) of Hebrews 1:1–14 asserts clearly the Son’s deity. Both sections evidence a chiasmic structure⁴⁵ whereby a well-designed Jewish presentation about “the Son” would have resonated with the original Jewish Christians in Rome. On the one hand, the prologue identifies the Son’s superiority to former prophets, to former Davidic regal-priests, and to angelic beings by way of the son’s credentials: he is heir of God’s kingdom, he is the creating agent of the universe, he is the expression and manifestation of God, he is sustainer of the universe, and he is a ruler alongside God. Of utmost significance is the description of the Son as “the expression and manifestation of God” duly noted in the following chiasmic structure.

A The Son’s superiority: The Son is superior to former prophets (1:1-2a)

B The Son’s appointment: He is *heir* of all things (1:2b)

C The Son’s relationship with the universe: He *created* the created order (1:2c)

D The Son’s relationship with God: He is the *reflection and representation* of God’s Glory (1:3a)

C¹ The Son’s relationship with the universe: He *sustains* the created order (1:3b)

B¹ The Son’s appointment: He is *exalted* (enthroned) at God’s right hand (1 :3c)

A¹ The Son’s superiority: The Son is superior to angels (1:4)

22:29; cf. WisSol 3:10). In Hebrews 3:12, forsaking the living God is the concern (Jer 17:5; Sir 10:12). So, cautions (Βλέπετε: “take care” or “see to it”) about a hardened heart (3:8, 15) or evil heart (3:12) are highlighted. Relationship with God now comes through the Son, the one through whom God now speaks (1:2 in contrast to Moses 3:1-6); do not turn away from Jesus (cf. Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 131–38; 143–51).

⁴⁵ Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 73, 89; Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5–13: The Impact of Early Jewish Exegesis of the Interpretation of a Significant New Testament Passage in Theology and Religion*, vol. 193 (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1997), 240–46. For chiasms in the New Testament, see Nils W. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in the Form and Function of Chiasmic Structures* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1942; reprint, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992); Donald R. Miesner, “Chiasmus and the Composition and Message of Paul’s Missionary Sermons” (S.T.D. diss., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1974); John W. Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981); R. E. Man, “The Value of Chiasm for New Testament Interpretation,” *BibSac* 141 (1984): 148–54; Albert Vanhoy, *Structure and Message of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, *Subsidia Biblica*, vol. 12 (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1989); Victor Rhee, *Faith in Hebrews: Analysis within the Context of Christology, Eschatology, and Ethics*, *Studies in Biblical Literature* 19 (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2001).

Letter “D” underscores the main point of these verses: “the son is the *reflection of God’s glory* and the *exact representation of this being*.”⁴⁶ He is like God in that he too is divine. Letters “C” and “C¹” identify the Son’s relationship with the universe as the one who both created and holds it together through his powerful word (divine acts).⁴⁷ Letters “B” and “B¹” identify the Son’s appointment and exaltation as heir (regal-priest). Finally, “A” and “A¹” identify the Son’s superiority over God’s messengers of prophecy who spoke in the past as well as over angelic beings. It may be argued that the Son is presented to be God via the concept of divine wisdom through whom God created and held together the universe.

The personification of Wisdom first appears in Proverbs 8:27–28. She later reappears as a woman in the Wisdom of Solomon as a literary personification or a divine hypostasis, “a quasi-personification of certain attributes proper to God,” according to Winston, “occupying an intermediate position between personalities and abstract beings.”⁴⁸ Unlike Wisdom in Proverbs, however, she is “an eternal divine emanation who appears for the first time in Hellenistic Jewish writings as a hypostasis.”⁴⁹ So, applying the concept of wisdom to “the Son” provides some justification for Dunn who goes so far as to say, “Jesus is the man Wisdom became.”⁵⁰ The Son

⁴⁶ The noun “radiance” (ἀπαύγασμα) is a *hapax legomena* that has two renderings: (1) “reflection” (NASB, cp. Gregory of Nyssa, *Apoll* 2:47) or “reflects” (RSV, NET), and (2) “Who being the brightness (effulgence or radiance) of his glory” (KJV, NIV, ESV). Extra-biblical literature uses the term to speak of the “radiance” of divine wisdom (WisSol 7:26) and the radiance of “divine reason” (Philo *Op4f* 146). On the one hand, the phrase “who is the ἀπαύγασμα of His glory” may be synonymous with “the exact imprint of God’s very being” (NASB). So, the Son’s reflection of God’s glory corresponds with the statement that the Son bears the very stamp of God’s nature (*EDNT*, s.v. “ἀπαύγασμα,” 1–2). On the other hand, the parallelism may not necessarily be synonymous, but antithetical. So, the Son is not only “the radiance of God’s glory” but also “the exact representation of God’s being.” In either case, the son is divine (1:5–13; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 44f; cf. BDAG, s.v. “ἀπαύγασμα”; Westcott, *Hebrews*, 100).

⁴⁷ By his powerful word” (τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ) tells how the Son sustains the universe with authority. During the Son’s pre-existence he created the universe by his word (Heb. 1:3—ῥήματι; cf. John 1:1–3, Col 1:16). Looking retrospectively at his incarnation through post-resurrection eyes, it is through his spoken word that Jesus stilled the Sea of Galilee (Matt 8:23–27, Luke 8:22–25, Mark 4:36–41), healed leprosy (Matt 8:1–4, Luke 5:12–14, Mark 8:2–4), cured the paralyzed (Matt 8:5–13, Luke 7:1–10, Matt 9:1–2), healed the blind (Matt 9:27–31); raised the dead (Matt 9:18–19, 23–25; Luke 7:11–16; John 11:1–44), and cast out demons (Matt 8:28–34, Luke 8:26–27, Mark 5:1–17, Matt 9:32–33, Matt 17:14–19, Luke 9:37–45, Mark 17:14–19). So, it is by his word that the son presently maintains and moves the universe towards its appointed course.

⁴⁸ David Winston, “Wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon” in *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie* (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox, 1993), 149–64.

⁴⁹ Winston, “Wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon,” 150. Wilson, however, tends to emphasize a Hellenistic view of wisdom, which may counter a more Jewish presentation of the wisdom. In fact, Wilson’s work may provide insight into how later church fathers applied wisdom terminology. Nevertheless, for identifying the parallels in the Wisdom of Solomon, Hebrews, and other New Testament texts, see Bateman, *Charts*, 115–18.

⁵⁰ James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), chp. 6.176. Similar wisdom language appears in Colossians 1:16–17 where Jesus is the one through whom all things were created (ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς), through whom all things are held together (τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν), and the

is creator⁵¹ who is the radiance of God's glory,⁵² who bears God's image,⁵³ who sustains creation,⁵⁴ and who sits alongside God.⁵⁵ So, Ellingworth rightly perceives that "there is virtually no basis in Hebrews for the more technical statements of Chalcedon regarding the interrelation of the divine and human natures of Christ."⁵⁶

On the other hand, the exposition of Hebrews 1:5–14 presents an equally impressive chiasmic structure providing scriptural validation for 1:1–4 that also draws direct attention to the Son's divine status.

A The Son's Status as Davidic King: He is the *heir of promise* in Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14 (1:5)

B The Son's Status as Divine: *Creation honors* him in Deuteronomy 32:43 and serves him in Psalm 104:4 (1:6–7)

C The Son's Status as Divine Davidic King: His *epithet* and *rulership* is the same as God's in Psalm 45:6–7 (1:8–9)

B¹ The Son's Status as Divine: He is *creator* King in Psalm 102:25–27 (1:10–12)

A¹ The Son's Status as Davidic King: He is *exalted (enthroned)* at God's right hand in Psalm 110:1 (1:13)

Two truths about the son are duly emphasized: he is God's viceregent and he is divine. Whereas letters "A" and "A¹" (vv. 5 and 13) present one conceptual image to explain why the Son is unequalled among the angels—this Son is Israel's ultimate Davidic king via 2 Samuel 2:7, Psalms 2:7 and 110:1; letters "B" and "B¹" (vv. 6 and 7) present the other reason—the Son is God via Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 104:4, and Psalm 102:25–27. Naturally, letter "C" features the main point of these verses: the Son is a divine messianic figure who presently rules over his kingdom in righteousness. The human king and divine wisdom themes are united into one. More specifically, Davidic sonship (Pss 2:7, 110:1; 2 Sam 7:14) and testimonials to Yahweh (Deut 32:43; Pss 104:4, 102:25–27) are merged together in verses 8–9 with Psalm 45.⁵⁷ Consequently, conceptual linking and weaving together of Old Testament themes describe the Son as the divine

one who is the image of the invisible God. See T. J. Sappington, *Revelation and Redemption at Colossae* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 171–79. Compare P. T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* in WBC (Waco: Word, 1982), 42–48; S. Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1981, reprint Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 256–68.

⁵¹ Hebrews 1:2b (cf. Prov 8:27–28; WisSol 9:2, 9; cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 116, 118; Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 227).

⁵² Hebrews 1:3a (cf. WisSol 7:25a; 7:26a (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 116, 118; Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 210–11).

⁵³ Hebrews 1:3b (cf. WisSol 7:26 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 116, 118; Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 211–12).

⁵⁴ Hebrews 1:3c (cf. WisSol 7:27; 8:1 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 116, 118; Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 212–13).

⁵⁵ Hebrews 1:3b (cf. WisSol 9:4, 10 (cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 116, 118).

⁵⁶ Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 67. Other passages are Philippians 2:5–8 and Colossians 1:15–20.

⁵⁷ Herbert W. Bateman IV, "Psalm 45:6–7 and Its Christological Contributions to Hebrews," *Trinity Journal* 22NS (2001), 3–21.

Davidic messiah who presently rules over his kingdom in righteousness.⁵⁸

So then, Hebrews chapter one presents the Son as God-man viewed through the eyes of a first century Jewish Christian author by way of two Old Testament themes. Conceptual connections about a regal priest and divine wisdom are interwoven in Hebrews 1 portraying “the Son” as a divine regal priest, whom God has appointed and exalted to rule over and sustain all creation. Terms like “heir” (κληρονόμος) “son” (υἱός), “father” (πατέρα), and “sat at the right hand” (ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ or παρέδον) link Jesus to the Jewish concept of messiah; while words like “creator” (ἐποίησεν or ἐποίεις), “radiance of glory” (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης), and “imprint” or “image” (χαρακτήρ or εἰκὼν) link Jesus to the Jewish concept of divine wisdom. It, then, is self-evident that like God, the Son (e.g., Jesus) creates and sustains the creation order (1:2c, 3b, 10–12), he reflects God (1:3a), he rules with God (1:13), he is called God (1:8), and he is eternal (1:12; cf. 13:8).⁵⁹ As a result, the presentation of the Son as a divine regal priest is the basis for Jewish Christians in Rome to heed the five warnings in Hebrews.⁶⁰ No non-canonical creed could portray the Trinitarian relationship (or “intra-trinitarian relationship) between God and Son any better.⁶¹ Yet, can the same be said about the spirit in Hebrews?

⁵⁸ For a more detailed discussion see Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics*, 149–206; Herbert W. Bateman IV, “Two First Century Messianic Uses of the Old Testament: Hebrews 1:5–13 and 4QFlorilegium 1:1–19,” *JETS* 38 (March 1995): 11–27. Meier, however, suggests that the Christological points in 1:2b–4 and 1:5–14 are designed as a ring structure that begins with the Son’s exaltation (1:2b, 1:5–6), moves back to creation (1:2c; 1:7), moves further back to preexistence (1:3a; 1:8bc) moves forward to creation again (1:3b; 1:10–12), moves up to exaltation again (1:3d; 1:13) and then draws a final conclusion comparing the son’s exalted status to the angels (1:4; 1:14). See J.P. Meier, “Symmetry and Theology in the Old Testament Citations of Heb 1:5–15,” *Bib* 66 (1985): 523. Even though both emphasize the divine and regal status, the chiasmic structure appears more in keeping with the rest of the work.

⁵⁹ For an extensive portrait of God in the Old Testament that parallels the portrait with Jesus in Hebrews, see Bateman, *Charts*, 112.

⁶⁰ The five warnings appear in 2:1–4, 13:12–4:11, 6:4–12, 10:19–31, 12:25–29 (for alternatives cf. Bateman, *Charts*, 149). For interaction with various views about the warning passages see Herbert W. Bateman IV editor, *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006).

⁶¹ Harnack considered the fourth century doctrinal development of *homoousios* and *ek tes ousias* a work of Greek philosophical thought. Adolf von Hamack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan from the 3rd German edition, 7 vols. (New York: Dover, 1961), 1:21–23. Blaising, however, argues that the Nicene “Creed was formed by a careful, deliberate, and even intense hermeneutical development of central biblical confession of one God.” Blaising readily admits that though the Son’s deity is supported via *ousia* and in particular *homoousios* in 1 Corinthians 8:6, subsequent support in John 1:3, Colossians 1:15, and Hebrews 1:2 is questionable. Craig Blaising, “Creedal Formation as Hermeneutical Development,” presented at the Biblical Interpretation in Early Christianity session of the Society of Biblical Literature International Congress, July 8, 2009, at Auckland, New Zealand and again for the Patristics and Medieval History Group at the 60th annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, November 20, 2008, Providence, RI. Blaising’s point is further supported via the disputed interpretation of ὑποστασις in Hebrews 1:3. On the one hand, ὑποστασις indicates “representation” (NET) or “nature” (ESV; (BDAG, s.v. “ὑποστασις,” 2a) and may be rendered “representation” (NET) or “nature” (ESV). Elsewhere, ὑποστασις indicates confidence in a plan devised for action (2 Cor 9:4; 11:17; BDAG, s.v. “ὑποστασις,” 2; cf. ESV, NET). Later in Hebrews 11:1, ὑποστασις is rendered “being sure” (NET) or “assurance” (NRSV, ESV), or “certain” (NIV).

Disclosures about God and His Spirit

Disclosures about God in Hebrews are straightforward. God is described as a living God (e.g., 3:12), a creator God (e.g., 1:2), a relational God (e.g., 1:1–2), and a God who judges (e.g., 10:31).⁶² Yet, God is never called “the Father” as articulated in non-canonical creeds.

Translations render God as *like* a father to Jesus (1:5 quoting Ps 2:7 and 2 Sam 7:14),⁶³ and *like* earthly fathers God disciplines (12:7, 9). So, God is never presented as *a divine Father* in 1:5 or 12:7, 9.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Jewish people, prior to the time of Jesus, often prayed to God as their “Father” without a tri-unity interpretation (Tob 13:4; WisSol 11:10; 3 Macc 5:5–7).⁶⁵

Consequently, the appellation “father” in Hebrews does not affirm the later Gentile Christian Trinitarian definition about God as divine Father. Yet, what can be said about various mentions about the “holy spirit” (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον) in Hebrews?⁶⁶

Erickson readily admits, when discussing the trinity today, that “God the Father is understood fairly well because the figure of a father is familiar to everyone. The Son is not hard to conceptualize, for he actually appears in human form and was reported upon. But the Spirit is

⁶² For an extensive portrait of God in Hebrews, see Bateman, *Charts*, 109.

⁶³ The term “father” never appears in Psalm 2:7, but merely the verb γεγέννηκά (“begotten”; KJV, RSV, NASB, NRSV, ESV). Nevertheless, γεννάω conveys, however, the concept of “fathering” (NIV NET NLT; BDAG, s.v. “γεννάω,” 1b). Speaking metaphorically, “I have fathered you” sometimes served to identify God’s initiation of his unique relationship with the nation Israel (Deut 32:18–19; cf. Exod 4:22, Hos. 11:1) or, as it was the case in Psalm 2:7, with the anointed Davidite (cf. 2 Sam 7:14, Ps 89:27–28). Whereas a human father–son relationship began at physical birth or adoption, for God the father–son relationship with a royal Davidite began the day of his coronation / exaltation (Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5–13*, 323 n. 39, 219; Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 179).

⁶⁴ The term father is also used in Hebrews to recall the fact that Melchizedek has no earthly father or mother (7:3) and to point out that Levi was in the loins of his earthly father, Abraham (7:10). Some translations insert *Father* in Hebrews 2:11. “He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*” (NASB; cp. NRSV). Yet, it seems reasonable to render ὁ τε γὰρ ἁγιάζων καὶ οἱ ἁγιαζόμενοι ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντες as “for indeed he who makes holy and those being made holy all have the same origin” (NET; cf. RSV, ASV). Or other translations render ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντες as “all of one” (KJV) and “of the same family” (NIV).

⁶⁵ Speaking metaphorically, “I have fathered you” sometimes serves to identify God’s unique relationship with the nation Israel (Deut 32:18–19; cf. Exod 4:22, Hos 11:1) or, as is the case in 2 Samuel 7:14 and Psalm 2:7, with an anointed Davidite (cf. Ps 89:27–28). Whereas a human father–son relationship begins at physical birth or adoption, for God, the father–son relationship with a royal Davidite began the day of his coronation/exaltation. So then, the repetition of Psalm 2:7 throughout Hebrews not only reminds the reader of Jesus’ status as regal son defined in Hebrews 1, it also transitions and expands the reader’s understanding about Jesus and the high priest he became (2:17, 5:5, 6:20, 7:16).

⁶⁶ The word “spirit” (πνεῦμα) actually occurs twelve times in Hebrews: once to an “eternal spirit” (9:14); once to a “spirit of grace” (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας), “insulted the spirit of grace”; 10:15); twice to angelic beings (1:7, 14); three times to human spirits (4:12; 12:9, 23); and five times the “holy spirit” (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, 2:4; 3:7; 6:4; 9:8; 10:15).

intangible and difficult to visualize.”⁶⁷ Visualizing the “holy spirit” (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον) especially as the third person of the deity in Hebrews is also difficult because of the infrequent appearances of the “holy spirit” (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον).⁶⁸ And while Levison argues that there is “an indispensable pneumatology in Hebrews that must be taken into careful consideration in all future studies of early Jewish and Christian pneumatology,” he fails to engage pneumatology in any early non-biblical Jewish writings of the second temple period.⁶⁹ So, we have done so here. It is clear that the appearance of God’s spirit” in second temple Jewish texts is synonymous for God himself without any tri-unity implications.

Holy Spirit as a Synonym for God in Qumran Literature ⁷⁰		
God Speaks	1 QS 8:16–17 4Q266f2ii:12 4 Q258 6:8 1 Q34bis f3ii:7	and by what the prophets have revealed by His holy spirit. No man belonging to the Covenant of the <i>Yahad</i> who flagrantly deviates from any commandment is to touch the pure food belonging to the holy men. He taug]ht [them through those anointed by the holy spirit, the seers of (CD 2:13) truth.) from a[ge to age, and as the prophets have revealed by His holy spirit . And no ma]n from men of the covenant [Community who removes from any commandment] Your holy [spirit], by the works of Your hands and the writing of Your right hand, in order to declare to them the foundations of glory, and the eternal works
God Guides or Encourages	IQHa 4:38	[I give thanks to You, O Lord, for] You have spread [Your] holy spirit over Your servant [...] his heart

⁶⁷ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3: 847. Chafer likewise observes that the combination of the first and third Persons godhead is far less frequent than the combination of the first and second Persons (*Pneumatology*, VI: 27).

⁶⁸ The word “spirit” (πνεῦμα) occurs twelve times in Hebrews: once to an “eternal spirit” (9:14); once to a “spirit of grace” (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας), “insulted the spirit of grace”; 10:15); twice to angelic beings (1:7, 14); three times to human spirits (4:12; 12:9, 23); and five times the “holy spirit” (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, 2:4; 3:7; 6:4; 9:8; 10:15).

⁶⁹ Jack Levison “Theology of the Spirit in the Letter to the Hebrews,” *CBQ* 78 (2016), 90–110.

⁷⁰ Bateman IV, *Charts*, 113–14; Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 254–55. These citations, which appear with limited lacuna, are based upon a search in Accordance, Qumran/Qumeng. However, they may appear differently in other translations. For instance, 1QHa 4:38 appears as 1QW IV 26 and reads [I give you thanks, because] you have spread [your] holy spirit (רוח קודשך) upon your servant [. . .]. Furthermore, 1QHa 8:30 appears as 1QW VIII 14-15 and reads “to ask [forgiveness. . . fo]r my offence, to look for the spirit [. . .] to be strengthened by [your] ho[ly] spirit (רוח קודשך) to adhere to the truth of your covenant. . .” For these two translations see Florentino Garcia Martinez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, Volume 1 1Q1–4Q273 (Lieden: Brill and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 149, 157. I provide a translation from Wise, Abegg, and Cook for 1QS 8:16, which reads “and by what the prophets have revealed by His holy spirit (רוח קודשך).” 4Q258 6:8 reads “from a[ge to age, and as the prophets have revealed by His holy spirit (רוח קודשך).” For other translations, see Martinez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1:89, 523.

	1 QHa 8:15 1 QHa 17:32	encouraging myself by [Your] h[oly] spirit, clinging to the truth of Your covenant [serv]ing You in truth and a perfect heart, and loving [Your holy name.] With a sure truth You have supported me, and by Your holy spirit You have delighted me; even until this day [...]
God Indwells or Anoints	CD 2:12 4Q504 1-2 V, 15 4Q287 f1O:13 4Q266 2 II, 12	the surface of the earth with their descendants. He taught them through those anointed by the holy spirit, the seers of [In]deed, You have poured out Your holy spirit upon us, [...] against the anointed of [His] hol[y] spirit [...] with [their] des[cendants]. He taug]ht [them through those anointed by the holy spirit, the seers of (CD 2:13) truth.]
God's Empowerment	4Q444 fi 4i+5: 1	And I am among those who fear God, who opens his mouth aided by His veritable knowledge, and [...] empowered by His holy spirit. [...]
God's Illumination	CD 2:12 1QHa 6:24 (Accordance) 1QHa 20:15 4Q427 f8ii: 18 4Q266 f2ii: 12	the surface of the earth with their descendants. He taught them through those anointed by the holy spirit, the seers of that by Your favor for m[an ...] Your holy [sp]irit, and thus You bring me to Your understanding. As which You gave me, and I have Listened faithfully to Your wondrous counsel by Your holy spirit. by [Your holy] spirit. [(I QHa 20:16) You have opened within me knowledge in the mystery of Your insight, and a spring of Your strength and your ... (1QHa 20:17) There shall] with [their] des[cendants]. He taug]ht [them through those anointed by the holy spirit, the seers of (CD 2:13) truth.]
God's Salvation or Sanctification	1QHa 8:30 1QHa 23:33 4Q255 12:1 (Accordance)	Your [mer]cy with [Your] servant for [ever,] to cleanse me by Your holy spirit, and to bring me near by Your grace according to Your great mercy [...] in [...] [...] Your [hol]ly [spirit] You have spread out, atoning for guilt ... and so be joined to [His] truth by His holy spirit purified from all]

It should not be construed, however, that the author of Hebrews has connections with Dead Sea sectarians but rather that they share similar first century Jewish traditions about God's spirit as holy. So then, how should the disclosures about the "holy spirit" in Hebrews be understood?

On the one hand, two disclosures of the "holy spirit" involve divine actions that appear in two warning passages: 2:1–4 and 6:4–6b. In 2:1–4, Jewish Christians in Rome are warned of the inability to escape God's future eternal punishment for those who lose sight of "the Son" through whom God has spoken (1:1–14). In 2:4, God, according to his will, divinely endorsed verbal testimonies about his divine regal priest through his "holy spirit" (πνεύματος ἁγίου). Similar

statements exist in other first century texts (4Q444 fl 4i+5:1) about God's spirit who empowers people. In 6:4–6b, Jewish Christians who experienced the promise of salvation and then ditched it are warned about the inability to repent again. Closely associated with discarding the promise of salvation is abandoning their “partnership” (μέτοχος) with the “holy spirit” (πνεύματος ἁγίου). There are, however, various “partnerships” featured in Hebrews: partnerships with fellow community members (3:1),⁷¹ with Jesus, the Son (3:14),⁷² and with God's spirit (6:4). Yet, in 6:4, μέτοχος emphasizes the community's partnership with the divine spirit that appears to be similar to the relationship Judeans had with God after being cleansed and brought near to God (1QHa 8:30). They also believed they were joined to God's truth by his spirit, which is deemed holy (4Q255 12:1). Consequently, Judeans who spoke of the holy spirit did so with no tri-unity implications but as a synonymous rendering for God.

On the other hand, three disclosures of the “holy spirit” involve divine speech introducing Old Testament scripture. God's speech or God's message is an important theme throughout Hebrews (1:1, 2:2, 4:12–13). God's speaking at times is introduced with “he said” or “has said.”⁷³ For Attridge, what God says in Old Testament scriptures has direct and special relevance for the Jewish Christians in Rome in that (1) scripture contains warnings (Ps 95:7–11 in 3:7–11) and exhortations (Prov 3:11–12 in 12:5–7) that ought to be heeded by believing communities living “in these days”; (2) scripture offers promises fulfilled in Jesus (Gen 22:17 in 6:13–20); and (3) scripture provides vehicles for understanding the nature and salvific work of Jesus himself (some important OT texts are Ps 45 in 1:5–13; Ps 8:4–6 in 2:5–18; Pss 2:7, 110:4 in 5:1–5:10; Jer 31:31–34, and Ps 40:6–8 in 7:1–10:18).⁷⁴ God's word in Old Testament scriptures, then,

⁷¹ In 3:1, μέτοχος emphasizes the community's partnership in a “heavenly calling” who are joined together as members of the same family in a technical and moral sense due to their call from God via Jesus, the son (cf. 2:11–12. Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 131–33).

⁷² In 3:14, μέτοχος emphasizes the community's partnership with the divine regal priest and thereby its joining together with God. Yet, three slightly different nuanced translations exist. “We have become partakers of Christ” (KJV, NASB) and the closely related “We share in Christ” (RSV, NIV, ESV, NLT) apply both to possession of and activities with Christ. The better rendering, however is “We have become partners with Christ” (NRSV, NET). It implies that the community takes part in activities and experiences with King Jesus. The added presence of βέβαιος (“firm”) appears to emphasize an associate “partnership” with Jesus. It is used in a legal sense, one that is similar to a business relationship elsewhere in the New Testament. “Simon and the others who were in the same boat. . . signaled to their associates in the other boat that they should come help them” (Luke 5:7; cf. 2 Cor 6:14; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 87). So, it may be said that believers are described as having a legally binding partnership “with Christ.” Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 149.

⁷³ Hebrews 1:5, 13; 3:10, 4:3–4; 5:5–6; 7:21; 8:8; 10:9, 30; 13:5). In Hebrews 1:1–2a, God's message is described as having come in “various portions and various ways” (i.e., visions, dreams, angels; cf. Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 72–73).

⁷⁴ Attridge, *Hebrews*, 38.

is recontextualize, interpreted, and reapplied to or through the Son (i.e., Jesus) and foundational for the message of encouragement (13:22) throughout Hebrews.⁷⁵

So, in the former era, God spoke his word (the law) through a voice (angels, Moses, prophets) to Jewish ancestors intending a blessing of rest and inheritance, but they responded in disobedience. In this new era, God has spoken his word (of salvation) through the Son intending a blessing of rest and inheritance and thereby expecting obedience.⁷⁶ In both cases, God remains the source who sends essentially the same message. In both cases, God speaks, and he expects a response. In both eras when God spoke to his people, his relationship with them is described in terms of a covenant. Linking the “holy spirit” with God’s voice in 3:7 (quoting Ps 95) and in 10:15–17 (quoting Jer 31) as well as signaling the significance of the tabernacle in 9:8 merely signifies another way a first century Jewish person traditionally spoke of God’s revealing information through the prophets with no Trinitarian intent.

Finally, disclosures about God as father are mere allusions to a human father and do not speak of God as divine Father to whom religious Jews of the first century would traditionally pray. Referring to God as living, creator, rational, and judge are all familiar Old Testament descriptions of God. Similarly, disclosures about the “holy spirit” reflect a typical Jewish manner of referring to God. Linking the holy spirit with God’s voice was a traditional first-century way of God’s relaying information through the prophets and psalmists with no tri-unity intent. So, as it was the case within first-century Jewish writings, God and holy spirit are used synonymously in Hebrews. Any distinction between God and his “holy spirit” appears elusive in Hebrews.⁷⁷

Conclusion

Historically, people who questioned trinitarianism were perceived as betraying an “unholy inquisitiveness.”⁷⁸ Yet, there is no denying here that “God is a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy

⁷⁵ Donaldson argues rightly that though Jesus may mediate the divine message to people, it is God who ultimately speaks throughout the Book of Hebrews. Amy M. Donaldson, “‘In Many and Various Ways, God Spoke. . .’ (Heb 1:1): Divine Communication in Hebrews,” SBL Student paper (2002).

⁷⁶ Bateman and Smith, *Hebrews*, 158–64. For various perspectives about God’s rest, see Bateman, *Charts*, 135.

⁷⁷ Among the Church Fathers, the spirit in Hebrews does not play a prominent role in the development of Trinitarian thought (Irenaeus (ca. 180–199) in *Against Heresies*, 2.30.9; Didymus the Blind (ca. 381–392) in *The Trinity*, 3.2.8; Cyril of Alexandria (ca. 423–431) in *Memorials on the True Faith*, 2(1).3; Gregory Nazianzen (ca. 423–431), 3” *Theological Oration on the Son*, 29.17; Basil, *Letter to his Brother Gregory* concerning the difference between *ousia* and *hypostasis*). Clear passages supporting the Spirit of God are found in John’s discussion of the Paraclete (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; cp. 1 John 2:1). See Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 3:223.

⁷⁸ Cyril of Jerusalem contends in his catechetical lectures: “The Father through the Son with the Holy Spirit gives every gift. The gifts of the Father are not this, and those of the Son that, and of the Holy Spirit the other. For there is one salvation, one power, and one faith. There is one God, the Father; one Lord, His only-begotten Son; and

Spirit, each an uncreated person, one in essence, equal in power and glory.” Nevertheless, the doctrine of the trinity and its subsequent vocabulary are admittedly a third- and fourth-century phenomenon that emerged predominately due to Gentile Christian debates about Jesus as God-man. And despite its mystery and our Trinitarian predisposition in the definitions in several non-canonical creeds, the propensity to label Hebrews a Trinitarian work not only seems unwarranted, it is anachronistic.

Unlike the church Fathers, we refrain from de-Judaizing Hebrews. Such an avoidance is crucial when examining Hebrews as to whether Hebrews is or is not a Trinitarian writing. Understanding Hebrews involves allowing the mindset and traditions of a first century Jewish author, writing to first century Jewish Christians in Rome about a first century Jewish audience, to rise to the surface. First-century Jewish convictions about their one God is intentionally nuanced in Hebrews. Clearly, the intra-trinitarian relationship between God and Son that connects Jesus and God as creator, sustainer of creation, ruler along with God, eternal, and directly called God cannot be disputed. Yet, disclosure about the “holy spirit,” when taking into consideration second temple texts, argue against the third person of the trinity even playing an ancillary role in Hebrews or that the author is less concerned about the Holy Spirit.⁷⁹ God and Jesus are the main characters whereby perseverance in believing Jesus as God’s divine royal priest is expected because Jesus is the one through whom God speaks and through whom he fulfills his promises. Belief in a Chalcedonian-like confession about the deity of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, is not necessary for the argument of Hebrews to hold together as proposed by some systematic theologians today.

one Holy Spirit, the Advocate; and it is enough for us to know these things. Do not inquire curiously into His nature or substance. *If it had been written, we would have said so; but since it is not written, let us not be reckless.* It is sufficient for us, in regard to our salvation, to know that there is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 1:357, 368n. 77 (emphasis mine). For Cyril’s defense of the trinity see his dialogues on the Holy and consubstantial trinity (426) in Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 3:213–16

⁷⁹ Brook Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 331–32. Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 66.